

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF TOKEN ECONOMY SYSTEMS TO
INFLUENCE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Relationship of Study to Psychology

This study relates to the field of psychology because it addresses three theories rooted in the psychology of learning. These theories assert that the process of learning cannot be measured or quantified; instead it is observed when there is a change in behavior (Terry, 2009). Certain factors can influence the learning process, such as the use of reinforcements. Reinforcements are often utilized in learning to produce operant behavior. Hoque's (2013) study demonstrated how the use of reinforcements in a school setting resulted in changes in the students' behavior and academic performance. The study's participants consisted of 100 students that were divided equally into a control group and an experimental group. In the study, both groups were taught by the same teacher for a month. The groups also completed the same two chapters from an assigned textbook. The experimental group was taught with a rewards system in place, whereas the control group was taught without one. Unit tests and quizzes to assess the students' learning were administered weekly. The results of the study revealed that the experimental group had higher test scores and retained more information. The control group retained less information and were unable to apply the information as well as the experimental group. The results also showed that the rewards system motivated the experimental group to become actively engaged in the learning process by being willing to ask questions or to volunteer their answers. The control group exhibited less interest and participation in class (Hoque, 2013). The researcher concluded that the study supported the importance of operant condition in the acquisition of new information.

Background of Study

Classrooms are places where students with varying interests and abilities interact in a manner that is directed and organized by the teachers. These interactions should foster learning by maximizing involvement in schoolwork and minimizing disruptive behaviors. When students assemble in groups for extended periods of time, events may occur outside of the teachers' control. The teacher must have the ability to react immediately and refocus student attention on the current lesson. Teachers working in these settings require a high level of adaptability and flexibility to manage these unexpected events. Teachers utilize classroom management skills to guide classroom activities and students' academic performance. Classroom management involves creating a structured environment that is conducive to learning while proactively supporting appropriate behaviors. The teacher uses a set of expectations which align with the behavioral and academic goals of each student in the classroom (Zakszeski, Thomas, & Erdy, 2020).

Teacher-student and student-student relationships can be positive, and the learning process can persist without any disruptions. This dynamic exists in classrooms where the teacher demonstrates effective classroom management skills through the use of behavior intervention tools, engaging instruction and positive teacher-student relationships (Welch, 2008). However, some classrooms can include one or many students who engage in disruptive behaviors. Such behaviors can create chaotic environments which can influence students' ability to learn the material.

Research provides various intervention methods for disruptive classroom behavior for teachers to utilize. One intervention method in particular is the token economy system

(Hirst et al., 2016). Token economy systems are largely based on the concept of operant conditioning. The tokens represent the neutral stimulus that may be presented in the form of points, activities, or tangible items. The token is then awarded to the economy participants for demonstrating the targeted behavior (Welch, 2008). The token is repeatedly paired or presented before the reinforcing stimulus, until the neutral stimulus (token) eventually becomes the reinforcer (Doll, McLaughlin, & Barretto, 2013).

For example, classroom point systems are a form of token economy, which have traditionally been used as a method to deter disruptive behavior in the classroom. The class point systems consist of defining expectations for classroom behavior and assigning points to students who display the desired behaviors (Homer, Hew, & Tan, 2016). The points can serve as positive or negative reinforcers based on the effect that they have on the target behavior. If the target behavior increases after points are given, the points become the positive reinforcer. If the target behavior decreases after the removal of points, the points become the negative reinforcer. Teachers utilize these point systems in different ways which influences the level of student engagement and their perception on how well the point system works in their classroom (Homer et al., 2016).

There are multiple variations of token economy systems. They all work to produce a similar outcome; increase the target behavior. Token economies are widely used in classroom settings due to their efficacy and flexibility. Tangible objects such as tickets or coins represent the token, which can be rewarded or removed. Two such token economies that are commonly used in schools today, are response-cost and lottery token economy systems (Doll et al., 2013).

Response-cost token economies teach students offer an immediate consequence for non-compliant behaviors. Students must relinquish their tokens if they engage in behaviors outside of certain target behaviors. A pre-determined cost is associated with each inappropriate behavior. The tokens are relinquished as a way to cover those costs (Doll et al., 2013.). This type of token economy uses punishment to change maladaptive behaviors. The students learn that there is an immediate consequence for engaging in inappropriate behavior. They also learn that they have control over how often they engage in the behavior.

Lottery token economy systems focus on rewarding the target behaviors. The target behavior is rewarded with a ticket that is exchanged for a backup reward. Glascott and Belfiore (2019) conducted an experiment at an urban public charter school which included 10, 3rd grade students who were assigned to the same guided reading groups based on the similarity of their scores from the Grey Oral Reading Tests (GORT). The GORT is an assessment that is administered to students between the ages of 6 and 23 to measure their oral reading comprehension and fluency (Glascott & Belfiore, 2019).

The students received reading intervention sessions in an enclosed area in the library and were asked to sit on a carpet in a half circle, in front the teacher who was seated in a chair facing them. During these sessions, students were informed that they could earn tickets by following teacher instructions, remaining seated on the carpet, raising hands for permission to talk, and reading on task (Glascott & Belfiore, 2019). Tickets were rewarded to the students exhibiting on-task behavior on a variable schedule. The time intervals varied from 75 seconds to 225 seconds. When the auditory cue was delivered, only students engaging in on-task behavior were rewarded with half of a raffle

ticket. The other halves of their raffle tickets were kept in a container held by the teacher. At the end of the 30 minute-intervention session, the teacher randomly selected two tickets from the container and read the numbers on the tickets aloud. The students who had the raffle tickets with the “winning numbers” exchanged them for a tangible reward. The researchers concluded that the lottery system intervention presented in the study, provided evidence for the effectiveness of token economies in reducing noncompliant student behavior (Glascott & Belfiore, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

The problem that this study will address is the use of behavior modification tools in classrooms settings to influence students' academic performance and behavior.

Behavior modification tools, such as token economy systems, utilize reinforcements to increase appropriate behaviors and interactions, and decrease maladaptive ones.

Disruptive behaviors within the classroom setting cause interruptions in instructional time which can influence students' academic performance. More time is spent on classroom management rather than on academia. Students are unable to receive continued instruction along with the ability to adequately learn the material within the allotted time (Homer et al., 2016).

Research shows that disruptive student behavior is prevalent in schools which have large concentrations of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. These schools are referred to as Title 1. Title 1 schools receive federal funding to assist in meeting the educational goals of its students. An observational study conducted by Stichter, Stormont, and Lewis (2008) which compared the classroom behavior of 723 elementary students from four Title 1 and Non-Title 1 schools in the Midwest (Stichter et

al., 2008). This study examined teachers' use of literacy instructional time with students from Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools. Students and teachers from 35 classrooms were observed by the researchers for 5 hours, which resulted in a total of 175 observation hours. Results from the study indicated that teachers spent much the literacy instruction al time in whole group. Whole group consists of instruction that is led by the teacher. Additional results concluded that elementary school teachers from Title 1 schools engaged in more noninstructional related talk, had more down time in which there was no instruction, and a greater frequency of student exits throughout instruction. There were also more instances of negative feedback given to students about their behavior (Stitcher et al., 2008).

Statement of the Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this research is to identify what teachers' perceptions are regarding the use of token economy systems to influence the academic performance and behaviors of students. The types of tokens used vary from classroom to classroom; however, some examples include chips, stars, check marks and digital ratings. Token economies are a type of behavior intervention that teachers use to reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Research has also shown that token economies improve students' academic performance.

This study is significant because has the potential to add to the literature in various ways. First, it may offer administrators, educational counselors, school psychologists and career counselors, insight on how teachers perceive the use of token economies in their classroom. It may also provide insight on or offer an alternative way to reduce disruptive classroom behavior. Lastly, it may shed light on why achievement

gaps exist, and foster the development of new research around behavior modification in schools.

Research Question

Phenomena seek to answer the researcher's question (Al-Busaidi, 2008). In this study, the researcher will identify teachers' perceptions on the influence of token economy systems on students' academic performance and behavior.

1. What are teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence students' academic performance?
2. What are teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence students' behavior?

Definition of Terms

Behavior modification

A systematic approach to changing behavior based on learning theories of operant condition, classical conditioning and observational learning (Wood, Wood, & Boyd, 2014).

Operant conditioning

A type of learning that manipulates the consequences of behavior in order to increase or decrease an already existing response or to shape a new one (Wood et al., 2014).

Token economy systems

A behavior modification method that rewards socially appropriate behaviors with tokens which can be exchanged for desired privileges or other tangible items (Wood et al., 2014).

Academic performance

A measurement of achievement of goals or mastery in academic subjects (Leone, 2015).

Disruptive behavior

Behavior that impedes the learning progress in a classroom setting (Miller et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study will be based on learning theories proposed by three theorists – B.F. Skinner, Vygotsky and Bandura. Learning describes the process of acquiring new information, which may modify existing knowledge, behaviors, values and perceptions (Terry, 2009). According to these theorists, a change in behavior indicates that learning has occurred.

B.F. Skinner proposed that learning occurs in the presence of a reinforcement (Terry, 2009). Skinner demonstrated this phenomenon through the use of a small experimental chamber often referred to today as the Skinner Box. He used a reinforcer to condition the response of the rats placed inside the chamber. A pellet of food would be delivered to the rat through a chute each time the rat pressed a handle. Skinner referred to the pellet of food as the reinforcer, and the act of pressing the handle as the operant response (Terry, 2009). He theorized that once the rat learned the connection between pressing the bar and the delivery of the food pellet, there would be an increase in the bar-pressing response. The rat was conditioned to press the bar in order to obtain the reward.

Operant conditioning is an associative learning process which utilizes rewards and punishment to influence behavior. Humans and animals learn to modify their behavior in

order to obtain a reward and avoid punishment (Terry, 2009). Token economy systems are behavior modification tools that are based on the theory of operant conditioning. These rewards systems have widely been used across different populations and settings such as penal institutions, rehabilitation centers, treatment facilities, psychiatric hospitals and schools. School-based token economy systems reinforce or reward appropriate behaviors through the use of tokens. The students learn that if they engage in appropriate behaviors, they will obtain a reward and simultaneously avoid punishment.

Albert Bandura theorized that we learn by observing the behaviors of others. For example, Bandura's studies demonstrated that children learn socially aggressive behaviors by watching others who display this same type of behavior (Terry, 2009). In Bandura's studies, children watched a video which depicted adult models punching, kicking and throwing an inflated clown doll or Bobo doll. There were two experimental conditions which were observed on the videotape. In one condition, the adult model received positive feedback for playing aggressively with the Bobo doll. In the other condition, the adult model received negative feedback for playing aggressively with the Bobo doll. The children were allowed to play with the inflated clown doll. Those who had seen the videotape with the model being praised for their aggressive behavior, imitated specific behaviors shown in the video. When the experimenter offered rewards for the children's aggressive behaviors, the frequency at which these behaviors occurred increased. The children who viewed the videotape of the adult model who had been scolded for playing aggressively with the Bobo doll, displayed fewer occurrences of aggressive behavior towards the doll.

Applebaum (2013) applied Bandura's theory by using the example of tattling. Tattling occurs when a student reports the actions or misbehavior of another student to the teacher. She described tattling as a form of disruptive classroom behavior, because it disrupts classroom routines and promotes disharmony between children. Children learn that tattling gains sympathy and attention from teachers. The student observes a difference in the teacher's behavior immediately after completing the act of tattling. They are encouraged to tattle if rewarded with attention from the teacher. Thus, the more sympathy and attention the child receives, the more the child will engage in this disruptive behavior. Applebaum (2013) suggested that teachers remain calm when hearing tattles because a visible reaction to the tattle, may actually reinforce the disruptive behavior.

Lev Vygotsky would interpret tattling as disruptive because it interferes with the collaborative relationship built between students. Vygotsky's theory purports that collaboration between students in academic settings promotes the acquisition of new skills and knowledge bringing them closer to operating within their zone of proximal development (ZPD) and ultimately improving their academic performance (Rezaee & Aziz, 2012). Vygotsky described the ZPD as the difference in what a learner can do through the guidance of a teacher or working with other students, and what the learner can do on their own (Rezaee & Aziz, 2012).

Limitations

Limitations in research occur outside of the researcher's control. They influence the generalizability and the application of the results of the study. The limitations of this study included the following:

1. The survey that will be used for self-reporting will utilize the snowball effect. The researcher will have no control over the number of responses.

Delimitations

Delimitations are characteristics that arise from the decisions and boundaries set by the researcher throughout the development of the study. Delimitations of this study will include the following:

1. The participants in this study will be current or former teachers who have used classroom-based token economy systems in school districts located in South Texas.

Assumptions

There are three general assumptions of this study:

1. The survey that will be used in this study is valid for the purpose intended.
2. The participants will understand the content in the survey and respond objectively and honestly to the questions.
3. Interpretation of the data collected from the survey will accurately reflect what the participants intended.

Organization of the Study

This study will be organized into five chapters. Chapter I includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose and significance, research questions, definition of terms, theoretical framework, limitations,

delimitations, assumptions, and organization of the study. In Chapter II, the researcher provides a systematic review of the literature to include the following topics: (a) classroom management; (b) theories of classroom management; (c) schedules of reinforcement; (c) punishment; (d) applicable settings for token economies; and (e) summary. Chapter III describes the study's methodology which will consist of the research design, participants, context and setting, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV will include the discussion, implications, and recommendations for future research.

In the wake of the current Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing guidelines are in place to prevent the spread of disease. It is neither feasible nor socially responsible to collect interview data at this time. Subsequently, there will be no results to report.

Summary

In this first chapter, the researcher provided a brief overview of the study pertaining to (a) relationship of study to psychology; (b) background of the study; (c) statement of the problem; (d) statement of the purpose and significance; (e) research questions; (f) definition of terms; (g) theoretical framework; (h) limitations; (i) delimitations; (j) assumptions; and (k) organization of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parents and guardians send their children to school in hopes that they will receive a quality education. They entrust their children's futures to the educators who have taken on the responsibility of preparing them for academic success. York, Gibson and Rankin (2015) define academic success as the process of reaching an academic goal through the acquisition of new information or knowledge on a subject matter. Students' academic success relies heavily on the ability to learn in a non-disruptive classroom environment. In addition, students must have a positive and collaborative relationship with their teachers. Their academic performance is predicated on their ability to apply what they have learned so that they can achieve their academic goals. Student behavior also plays a significant role in academic performance because it can influence the learning environment and the teacher-student relationship (York et al., 2015). Therefore, the utilization of effective classroom management skills is key in ensuring that students receive a quality education. Behavior modification techniques such as token economy systems, is an important component of classroom management skills.

Classroom Management

Classroom management begins with the teacher. It is a concept that generalizes the actions of teachers in classroom settings. The teachers' actions create the learning environments which foster social and personal growth, self-esteem and effective learning (Hue & Li, 2008). Although classroom management skills vary from teacher to teacher, the management style can be identified based on the teacher's level of involvement with the students and the degree of control exerted over the students (Hue & Li, 2008). The

four types of management styles include – authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian and permissive (Walker, 2008). These styles are similar to the parenting styles identified by Baumrind. Baumrind proposed that parents use authoritative, authoritarian or permissive parenting styles to control their children's behavior. She theorized that these styles of parenting also contributed to the child's ability to interact with peers and the environment (Wood et al., 2014). Baumrind explained that the different parenting styles can best be understood as a two-dimensional model of child socialization. One dimension representing demandingness and the other responsiveness. Demandingness refers to the level of control maintained by the parent, whereas responsiveness includes the degree of involvement of the parent. Variations between the two dimensions are what create the distinct parenting styles (Walker, 2008).

Authoritative Style

Walker (2008) asserted that the authoritative classroom management style is highly demanding, yet highly responsive. Furthermore, teachers who adopt this management style have a high degree of control over activities and interactions inside the classroom. These teachers establish their expectations of appropriate behaviors early on in the student-teacher relationship. They enjoy being around their students and are actively engaged in the learning process (Rauf & Ahmed, 2017). According to Rauf and Ahmed (2017), the authoritarian classroom management style is much like the authoritative parenting style; both styles promote autonomy, self-efficacy and engagement in personal interests. Walker (2008) conducted a study which expanded on this idea by linking classroom management styles to academic performance. The study's participants were from a public middle school in a rural community in the mid-South

region of the United States. Walker assessed teachers' teaching styles and practices, student engagement and standardized achievement test scores (Walker, 2008). Walker (2008) concluded that children who had experienced authoritative teaching were socially and academically competent and had performed better academically in comparison to their peers.

Authoritarian Style

Baumrind describes the authoritarian parenting style as one which commands unquestioned obedience to authority. Authoritarian parents punish transgressions against arbitrary rules, and they are described as uncommunicative, distant and unresponsive. Teachers with an authoritarian classroom management style are highly demanding, yet unresponsive to the students' emotional and social needs. They focus on enforcing rules rather than building positive student-teacher relationships.

Baumrind's research revealed that preschool children who had experienced authoritarian parenting were withdrawn, unhappy, and anxious. This parenting style is associated with poor socialization skills and low intellectual performance, particularly in male children (Wood et al., 2014). Rauf and Ahmed (2017) demonstrated the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and poor academic performance in a study which included 100 male and female students between the ages of 9 and 17 from multiple educational institutions in Karachi, Pakistan. The researchers identified a 38% gap in academic performance scores amongst students who had experienced authoritarian parenting in comparison to those who had not.

Permissive Style

In the permissive classroom management style, there is little to no involvement and very few demands are placed on students. The level of demandingness and responsiveness is low. Students are given the freedom to guide the learning process and to interact with their environment without the constraint of rules and high expectations. The students are supported in their learning; however, feedback necessary to guide the learning process is limited (Rauf & Ahmed, 2017).

Similarly, the permissive parenting style places the responsibility of decision making on the child. Parents with this style of parenting may view their permissiveness as a way to maintain the child's affections for them. The permissiveness may also be an expression of their affection towards the child. Children who experience this type of parenting style are typically impulsive, immature, and dependent on others. As a result of they tend to have behavioral issues, low social skills and are unsure of how to interact with their environment appropriately (Wood et al., 2014).

Society teaches children to behave in a way that is ideal and reflective of the way adults should behave (Miller, 2016). According to Miller (2016), correlations exist between the parenting styles and the child's personality. Miller and Dollard (1941) proposed that children learn to imitate behaviors that are reinforced. Moreover, children observe and imitate their parents' behaviors, regulating their own behaviors by internally repeating the statements of approval or disapproval from their parents. For example, children who observe the teacher praise a hard-working classmate attempt to emulate that behavior.

Theories of Classroom Management

The application of the various classroom management theories is what help to develop the instructional styles of teachers today. There is no one, universal theory that indicates the most effective way to teach. Rather, there are several theories pertaining to classroom management which address the different epistemological and psychological traditions (Bucher & Manning, 2012). Various key theorists that have been influential to the field of education include – William Glasser and Gordon Thomas. Glasser and Gordon emphasized relationship building as a classroom management strategy.

William Glasser's Choice Theory

The basis of choice theory asserts that our behaviors are motivated by our needs. We choose to engage in behaviors that we believe will satisfy five basic needs: power, belonging, freedom, love and fun. For example, a student may desire to be friends with other students in the classroom in order to satisfy their need of belonging and love. As a result, the student may behave inappropriately to gain the attention of their peers, which may make it easier to secure friendships with some of the students.

According to Glasser, teachers who focus only on the behavior of the children in the classroom, miss the fact that the child's behavior is an attempt to satisfy their needs. Classroom management strategies that apply choice theory to learning, create environments that are safe and free from disruption (Bucher & Manning, 2012). Teachers take on the role of managers, guiding students in understanding the importance of obedience and hard work. They also create lessons designed to satisfy the needs of their students. Such an environment encourages students to act responsibly and to make better choices regarding their behavior. Classrooms that apply choice theory have three

characteristics in common: minimal coercion, high-quality work, promotion of self-evaluation (Bucher & Manning, 2012).

Coercion is not necessary to inspire learning in these classrooms. The students do not choose to behave appropriately in order to obtain a reward or avoid punishment. Instead, teachers focus on building positive relationships with students individually and with the classroom as a group. Teachers also establish the expectation for quality schoolwork. They expect students to master and apply key concepts as well as demonstrate competency by providing high-quality work. In turn, teachers provide students with helpful feedback regarding their academic progress and encourage students to take ownership of role in the process (Bucher & Manning, 2012).

Choice theory, when applied appropriately to the field of education, enriches the student-teacher relationship which positively influences the students' academic performance (Bucher & Manning, 2012). Glasser identified seven habits that educators should use to build strong relationships. He referred to them as caring habits, which include encouraging, supporting, accepting, listening, trusting, working through differences and respecting.

Glasser also identified seven habits that can destroy student-teacher relationships – blaming, criticizing, complaining, threatening, punishing, nagging and bribing. When these habits are used by educators, it results in a disconnection from the student-teacher relationship. Disconnection occurs when there is an inability to find satisfaction in the relationship. Glasser asserts that relational disconnection leads to school failure (Zeeman, 2006).

Thomas Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training

Thomas Gordon's classroom management model is similar to William Glasser's Choice Theory. The focus is on building collaborative relationships between the student and the teacher. Teachers assist students with making better choices and equip them with skills necessary to solve their problems. Students learn that they are ultimately responsible for their learning and that they can choose to be successful. Gordon's model is called Teacher Effectiveness Training (T.E.T.). T.E.T. uses a conceptual framework that is referred to as the Behavior Window. The Behavior Window focuses on problem ownership. The training assists teachers with recognizing problems that could potentially disrupt the learning environment. It also helps in determining whether the problem lies with the student or the teacher. Once teachers identify the origin of the problem, they can work to resolve it based on a set of communication skills (Gordon, 1974).

For example, teachers utilize active listening if the problem originated from the student. When teachers use this form of communication, it demonstrates that the teacher is accepting and understanding what the student is feeling and saying. Students have the opportunity to ventilate and to feel relieved; however, active listening places the responsibility of problem solving onto the students (Gordon, 1974).

Conversely, teachers must have their needs met too. Disruptions in the learning environment interfere with the teachers' right to accomplish this. T.E.T. offers teachers the ability to reduce disruptive behaviors by using "I-Messages". These are messages that teachers use to communicate with students in a non-judgmental way. I-Messages convey to students that their actions are problematic to the learning process and it influences them to respect the needs of the teacher. The responsibility to modify behaviors are

placed on the students (Gordon, 1974). The following comments are examples of I-Messages: "I cannot sit with you any longer because there are other students waiting for me to help them." "When you throw toys on the floor, I have to spend more time cleaning up and that makes me sad."

There are times in which conflicts can occur between students and teachers. When this happens, both parties own the problem that caused the conflict. T.E.T. offers a conflict resolution method called the No-Lose Conflict Resolution. This form of conflict resolution considers the needs of the students and their teachers by utilizing a six-step method to arrive at an acceptable solution. In Step 1 the problem is identified. This is done through active listening and the use of I-Messages. Step 2 focuses on discussing possible solutions to the problem. In Step 3, the solutions are evaluated to determine which solution would be the most appropriate. Step 5 calls for action. A plan is developed to carry out the proposed solution. In Step 6, both parties check back with one another to ensure that the solution was effective (Gordon, 1974).

B.F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning

Operant conditioning is a psychological theory developed by B.F. Skinner to explain the association between behavior and its consequences. This method of associative learning is commonly used in classroom management techniques today. Operant conditioning offers an explanation behind why students are motivated to learn.

Goldberg, Merbaum, Even, Getz, and Safir (1981) conducted a study evaluating the effectiveness of training mothers of third and fourth grade students in operant conditioning. The forty-four participants and their mothers were divided into four groups – Operant, Psychotherapy, Feedback and Control. The mothers in the Operant group

learned how to use prizes as a reinforcement tool to influence the behaviors of the students. The results of the study concluded that the participants in the Operant group showed a significant improvement in their academic performance when compared to the other groups.

According to Skinner (1969), students' motivation to learn is derived from the fear associated with the consequences of not learning. Therefore, students come to school, study, and behave appropriately to avoid the consequences associated with not doing so. The fear reinforces their children's behavior. Reinforcement is anything that influences a specific response and increases the likelihood that the response will be repeated. Reinforcement can be positive or negative. Positive reinforcement increases the behavior as a result of an added consequence. It is usually a desirable or pleasant consequence that influences the individual's response and increases the likelihood that their response will be repeated. Negative reinforcement occurs when the behavior is increased as a result of removing a consequence. The individual increases the behavior in order to eliminate an unpleasant condition (Wood et al., 2014). Positive and negative reinforcements are commonly used in schools to modify students' behavior and influence their academic performance.

Teacher feedback can reinforce student behavior. Positive teacher feedback may be delivered in the form of smiles, praises and reprimands. According to Altman & Linton (1971), such feedback may affect the student-teacher relationship and influence students' academic performance and self-perceptions. When teachers engage students, provide clearer directions and offer positive feedback, it reinforces appropriate classroom

behavior by making the students feel encouraged and motivated to continue to demonstrate the target behavior (Altman & Linton, 1971).

In some cases, negative feedback is delivered more often than positive feedback, particularly in classrooms with challenging behaviors. Negative teacher feedback may work to increase disruptive behaviors. Sprouls and colleagues (2015) evaluated how students' intrinsic factors influenced the nature and rate of teacher feedback. The researchers hypothesized that the rate of negative teacher feedback would increase during interactions with children presenting with challenging behaviors. Negative teacher feedback was defined in the study as nonverbal and verbal reprimands. The study's participants included 786 students in grades K – 5 from eight public schools in the southwestern region the US. The children were identified by their teachers as being at risk for having emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The researchers concluded that students identified as the high risk for presenting with EBD, received negative teacher feedback more frequently than their peers in the same setting.

Schedules of Reinforcement

A reinforcement schedule is the systematic delivery of a reinforcement. It is essentially a rule that determines how frequently behavior will be reinforced. Therefore, some behaviors may be reinforced with each occurrence or not at all. For instance, continuous reinforcement refers to the continuous delivery of reinforcement each time a specific action occurs. The desired behavior is acquired rapidly because the individual is rewarded with each behavioral occurrence. However, once the reinforcement stops, the behavior stops. This is referred to as extinction. Extinction occurs when there is a disappearance of the desired behavior as a direct result of withdrawing the reinforcement

(Wood et al., 2014). Reinforcement schedules are designed to reinforce slow and steady responses. The two types of reinforcement schedules are interval and ratio; each schedule influences behavior differently (Wood et al., 2014).

Interval Reinforcement Schedules

Interval schedules are based on the intervals of time between each reinforcement. The two types of interval schedules are a fixed-interval schedule and a variable-interval schedule. In a fixed-interval schedule, a certain amount of time must elapse before the response is reinforced. When an individual is exposed to this schedule the response pattern increases as the interval progress. There is an initial pause in behavior, which is followed by accelerated responding (Wood et al., 2014).

An experiment was conducted to study the reinforcement of aggression in food-deprived pigeons by rewarding food for attacking a target pigeon. The food was delivered based on a fixed-interval schedule and the attacks were recorded. The attacks on the target pigeon were conditioned by the researchers. The amount of time the pigeons spent in an attack was directly proportional to the frequency of the reinforcement delivered. The rate of attacks increased during the intervals between the reinforcements. The study showed that behavior can be influenced in a predictable manner based on the frequency and scheduling of operant reinforcements (Azrin & Hutchinson, 1967).

On a variable-interval schedule, reinforcement is delivered based on an average time between the last reinforcement (Wood et al., 2014). Hulac, Benson, Nesmith, and Shervey (2016) detailed examples in their report of how variable-interval schedules can be used to eliminate inappropriate behaviors in children. One example included Fiona, a five-year-old who presented with excessive thumb-sucking behavior resulting in dental

problems and socialization issues. Fiona worked with an interventionist who created a token economy system which involved presenting a reward following the sound of a chime. The interventionist scheduled the chime to sound at irregular intervals. If Fiona was not sucking her thumb when the chime sounded, she would be allowed to make a tally on a piece of paper. Once the piece of paper contained 100 tally marks, Fiona would be rewarded with a pack of chewing gum. Fiona's thumb-sucking behavior was reduced when the rewards system was in place.

Ratio Reinforcement Schedules

Ratio reinforcement schedules are when the reinforcement is given after a number of correct responses. The two types of ratio schedules are a fixed-ratio schedule and a variable-ratio schedule. In a fixed-ratio schedule, the reinforcer is given upon the completion of a fixed number of correct responses. Slow rates or pauses in responses can occur following the delivery of a reinforcement or when there is a low probability of receiving another reinforcement (Wood et al., 2014). Pinkston and McBee (2014) evaluated the efficacy of fixed-ratio schedules in demonstrating the relationship of work and effort in rats. The rats in the study were rewarded with sucrose after pressing on an isometric force transducer. The presses resulted in the release of sucrose immediately after ten or twenty consecutive responses. The force delivered to the transducer by the rats increased initially, then began to decrease across the ratio (Pinkston & McBee, 2014).

On a variable-ratio schedule, the reinforcer is given after an unpredictable number of responses. This schedule produces steady responses at a high rate, and with a low probability of extinction. Common examples of rewards based on variable-ratio

schedules include lottery games and gambling. Gamblers are unable to predict how they will win and when they will win. The motivation to continue playing the lottery or to gamble is driven by the unpredictability in receiving the reward (Wood et al., 2014).

Scientists have evaluated the use of variable-ratio reinforcement schedules in various behavioral studies. One study compared the productivity level of part-time workers on continuous and variable-ratio reinforcement schedules. The part-time workers were informed that they would be paid \$1.50 an hour to grade students' exams, and then separated into three groups. The workers in Group 1 were informed that they would receive a \$0.25 bonus for each graded batch of examinations. Group 1 was paid based on a continuous reinforcement schedule. Group 2 was informed that they would receive a \$0.50 bonus that was contingent upon grading the exams and correctly predicting the outcome of a coin toss. This group was paid based on a variable-ratio reinforcement schedule. Workers in Group 3 were informed that they would receive a \$0.25 bonus that was contingent upon grading the exams and correctly predicting the outcome of a coin toss. Group 3 workers were also paid based on a variable-ratio reinforcement schedule. The researchers concluded that the productivity level of the workers in Group 2 was significantly higher (Yukl, Latham, & Pursell, 1976).

Punishment

Punishment is unlike the concept of reinforcement because it does not result in an increase in behavior. Instead, punishment is used to decrease the frequency of a specific behavior. According to Wood et al. (2014), there are two types of punishment – positive punishment and negative punishment. Positive punishment occurs when an aversive event is presented. For instance, a driver may choose to avoid certain routes based on

previous experiences of being stuck in traffic jams. The driver's avoidance of those routes illustrates a decrease in behavior based on the added consequence of being stuck in traffic.

Negative punishment occurs when a pleasant event is removed. Edelman (1971) provides an example of how this form of punishment is used in the treatment of encopresis. According to the case study, a 12-year-old girl was treated for chronic encopresis by subjecting her to periods of isolation for fecal soiling. The young girl's ability to interact with others was taken away as a result of her punishment. Her behavior stopped after 41 weeks of treatment (Edelman, 1971).

In a recent study, Guimarães, Tourinho and Picanço (2019) analyzed the effects of negative punishment on social environments. Nine participants were divided into three microcultures and given a task in which each of the group's participants selected a row from a figure displayed on a computer, which contained four numbered rows. Three blue tokens were produced for participants who chose odd-numbered rows. One red token was produced for participants who chose even-numbered rows. Certain contingencies were programmed into the activity to predict the consequences on the Impulsive Culturant and the Self-controlled Culturant. The Impulsive Culturant was a descriptor for participants who chose three odd-numbered rows or two odd-numbered rows and one even-numbered row. Whereas, the Self-controlled Culturant was a descriptor for participants who chose three even-numbered rows or two even-numbered rows and one odd-numbered row. In Condition A, one item was added to the item counter for both culturant types. In Condition B, an item was removed from the item counter for the Impulsive Culturant; however, one item was added to the counter for the Self-controlled Culturant. In

Condition C, neither culturant resulted in the loss or gain of items. The results illustrated that negative punishment, the removal of items, decreased the percentage of the Impulsive Culturant and resulted in high percentages for the Self-controlled Culturant (Guimarães, Tourinho, & Picanço, 2019).

Applicable Settings for Token Economies

A token is a symbol that is given in exchange for services or goods. Token systems have been in use for centuries, initially appearing in human history as clay coins during the transition from nomadic societies to agricultural societies (Hackenberg, 2009). Token systems have provided the basic framework for barter economies and complex monetary-based economies. Most recently, these systems have been used in rehabilitation facilities, correctional institutions and educational institutions for behavioral and academic purposes.

Rehabilitation Facilities

Phillips (1968) evaluated the efficacy of token economy procedures in a home-based rehabilitation setting for pre-delinquent boys. The study's subjects consisted of three boys who had been placed in a facility called Achievement Place. The boys were from low-income families and had committed minor offenses consisting of theft, fighting. They also had histories of academic failure, school truancy and general disruptive behavior. Target behaviors were defined in areas of social, self-care and academics. Token reinforcers in the form of points were used to modify behavior. The children earned points displaying specified appropriate behaviors and they lost points for displaying specified inappropriate behaviors. The points were tracked on index cards and redeemed later for back-up reinforcers that allowed them certain privileges at the end of

the week. Examples of the privileges included allowance, watching television, snacks, riding bicycles, games, permission to stay up late, come home late and go downtown. The utilization of a token economy at Achievement Place helped to reduce the frequency of aggressive statements and the use of poor grammar. There was also an increase in the completion of homework, tidiness and punctuality (Phillips, 1968).

Similarly, LePage and colleagues analyzed the effects of a token economy on reducing aggression in psychiatric patients. The researchers compared the number of patient-led assaults before and after the implementation of the token economy. Tokens were provided to patients in the form of ink stamps on a sheet of paper that was divided into seven columns representing the days of the week. The sheets were handed in each Sunday and the points redeemed for additional smoke breaks, movies, shopping trips, off-unit passes, store items, and other positive activities. The number of patient-led assaults were reduced while the token economy was in use (LePage et al., 2003).

Glosser (1983) studied the effects of using a token economy to reduce the illicit drug use of 97 methadone maintenance clients within a two- and half-year period. The study's participants received points when their urinalysis reports were drug-free. The points could be redeemed to acquire methadone; however, the daily dosage level varied based on the participants' point balance. The results of the study showed a rapid decline in illicit drug use. At the end of six months, the participants' urine samples were 14% positive for the presence of illicit drugs, which was 25% lower than the traditional treatment group. Illicit drug use continued to decline as treatment time increased (Glosser, 1983).

Correctional Institutions

Milian and McKee (1976) conducted two experiments to explore the applicability of a token economy system in a male only maximum-security correctional institution. The researchers also wanted to determine the extent at which a token economy would disrupt the daily lives of the inmate participants. The participants consisted of 56 young inmates who were either eligible for parole or who could be released from the institution within 90 days following the termination of the experiments. The inmates were rewarded with points that were obtained and spent through a simulated banking system. They were supplied with book of standard, blank checks. This system of acquiring and expending points earned prevented inmates from exchanging points amongst themselves. It also ensured that the recipients of the rewarded points had engaged in target behaviors. Specific target behaviors included completing morning activities which consisted of waking up at a determined hour, making bed and cleaning area around bed, and maintaining a well-groomed appearance. In addition to this, the inmates were responsible for attending educational activities and completing assigned maintenance tasks. The assigned tasks included sweeping the main hall, emptying trash, mopping the floor and dusting and arranging furniture in the television room.

The backup reinforcers were restricted to items and activities that could be maintained within the token economy cell block. Inmates were rewarded with access to popular event areas like the lounge, poolroom and the television viewing room. They could also spend time outside of the token economy cellblock which allowed them access to activities in other areas of the institution such as club meetings, weekend movies, and the ability to interact with friends or family members. Additionally, the inmates purchase

items from the token economy canteen. Sears' and Penney's catalogues sold in the canteen, which inmates used to order items from.

The researchers concluded from the first experiment that praise combined with the token economy system was most effective in modifying the behaviors of the inmates to align with the target behaviors. The second experiment demonstrated it was possible to attain the high levels of performance displayed by the inmates in the first experiment without disrupting their daily lives (Milan & McKee, 1976).

Educational Institutions

Many studies exist demonstrating the effectiveness of token economy systems in classroom settings. The use of token economies in educational institutions has been primarily to improve students' academic performance and behavior. The structure and the method of implementation of these systems significantly influences their effectiveness (Doll et al., 2013). Wexler (1973) suggests that in order for a token economy to be succeed in any setting, the backup reinforcers must be desirable to the economy's participants.

McLaughlin and Malaby (1972) studied the effects of token economy procedures in a classroom consisting of approximately 29 fifth and sixth grade students. The token economy was maintained for one year, and data pertaining to students' academic performance in language, handwriting, spelling and math was collected. The introduction of a point-based token economy system yielded an increase in assignment completion and decreased variability in students' academic performance. The study's results further concluded that a token economy which allowed for a point exchange every four days

resulted in an assignment completion rate of approximately 100% (McLaughlin & Malaby, 1972).

Badejo and Anyanwu (2016) conducted a study comparing the effectiveness of Rational Emotional Behavior Therapy (REBT) and a token economy in improving students' academic performance in a Basic Science course. The study included 90 male and 90 female students from private and public schools in Lagos, Nigeria. The token economy was in place for 6 weeks. Students received tokens when they exhibited positive behavior, such as paying attention in class, answering questions, taking notes and submitting completed homework assignments on time. The results of the study showed that 43% of the participants who were exposed to token economy procedures performed better academically, than 36% of the participants in the REBT group. The researchers concluded that classroom-based token economy systems become a part of the learning experience for students with negative perceptions about Science. Badejo and Anyanwu (2016) further suggested that this would facilitate student interest, which would also help to improve academic performance in the subject.

Chevalier (2012) investigated the effects of token economies as an intervention method for disruptive behaviors in an open-concept third grade classroom. A raffle-style drawing was used in combination with a token reinforcement. The students were rewarded with tokens on a variable reinforcement schedule for exhibiting target behaviors such as completing assignments and being on task. The results of the study indicated a significant decline in disruptive behavior; however, there was no change in the completion rate of outside academic assignments. The researcher concluded that

token economies are more effective in reducing disruptive behavior rather than in motivating students to complete outside academic assignments (Chevalier, 2012).

Baker, Stanish, and Fraser (1972) evaluated the comparative effects of a token economy at a nursery school. Tokens were used as reinforcements in combination with time-out procedures to control the disruptive behaviors of nine intellectually disabled children. The experimental group consisted of students who were selected by their teachers based on their behavior problems. Then the students were compared with the students in the control group based on age and IQ. Baselines were taken in the experimental and control groups before the implementation of the token economy. The token economy was active for seven weeks until the treatment was suspended for a period of one week. The purpose of the suspension was to test the efficacy of the token economy. The students in the experimental group exhibited more disruptive behaviors than the students in the control group. It took one week to reintroduce the token economy, at which time the experimental group exhibited superior performance compared to the control group (Baker et al., 1972).

Summary

The literature reviewed provides evidence to support the use of token economy systems as a behavior modification tool in various settings, particularly in the classroom. Studies also reflect the use of these systems to influence students' academic performance. Classroom management strategies which utilize token economy procedures must ensure that the contingencies are appropriate and applicable.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study will be to examine teachers' perceptions of token economy systems on students' academic performance and behavior. This study is significant because has the potential to add to the literature in various ways. First, it may offer administrators, educational counselors, school psychologists and career counselors, insight on how teachers perceive the influence that token economies have on their students. It may also provide insight on or offer an alternative way to reduce disruptive classroom behavior. Lastly, it may shed light on why achievement gaps exist, and foster the development of new research around behavior modification in schools.

Classroom management techniques often employ different behavior modification tools that vary from teacher to teacher depending on the educational and behavioral needs of the students. The goal of these techniques is to create an environment that promotes learning and academic growth. The level of skill required to implement these techniques also varies amongst teachers, which could ultimately affect how they perceive the influence of behavior modification tools have on student's academic progress and behavior (Homer et al., 2016). This chapter details the methodology that will be used in the study, including research design, selection of participants, context, and setting, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

In this descriptive study, the researcher will use the qualitative research methodology of hermeneutical phenomenology to explore and describe the perceptions of teachers on

the influence of token economy systems on students' academic performance and behavior. In doing so, the researcher will gain knowledge as participants share their opinions about the use of token economies systems in their classrooms. The following research questions will be used to understand the phenomenon:

1. What are teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence students' academic performance?
2. What are teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence students' behavior?

According to Davidsen (2013), qualitative research findings are inspired by concepts from phenomenological philosophy. These concepts are used to analyze the researcher's findings and to promote greater theoretical analysis. Phenomenology is the objective or subjective, descriptive study of phenomena (Davidsen, 2013). The overall goal of phenomenological qualitative research is to capture meanings and experiences through rich contextualized descriptions. The researcher must be prepared to describe the phenomena as it is revealed to them (Davidsen, 2013).

The teaching backgrounds of the participants will be diverse; however, they will share the common experience of having used classroom-based token economy systems. The researcher must understand and acknowledge the group's diversity in order to correctly interpret the data, while maintaining impartiality throughout the inquiry process. In this study, the researcher will examine teachers' perceptions of token economy systems on students' academic performance and behavior.

Context and Setting

The researcher will conduct the study using a non-probability sampling which will consist of the snowball sampling of graduate students at a private, Baptist university in an urban area of Southeast Texas. The graduate students will be teachers in the process of completing courses in the university's Education program.

Participants

The participants for this study will be purposefully selected from the graduate students attending a private, Baptist university in Southeast Texas, who are teachers and currently taking courses in the university's education program. The selection of the participants will be made based on their interests in completing the online survey that will be posted onto the university's online learning platform resource, Blackboard. Purposeful sampling involves the selection of cases based on the phenomenon of interest (Daividsen, 2013). The criterion sampling strategy will be used to select the study's participants.

The criteria will include graduate students attending a private university in Southeast Texas, who are teachers and currently taking courses in the university's education program. The graduate students must have previous or current experience using classroom-based token economy systems. The professor for the course will give students the option of completing the online survey by accessing a link to the survey from Blackboard.

Instrumentation

In reviewing the literature, the researcher compared surveys currently being used to measure perceptions regarding student behavior in classroom settings. However, the

researcher was unable to identify a survey currently in use to research teachers' perceptions on the use of token economy systems to influence students' academic performance and behavior. Therefore, the researcher created a survey to measure this construct. The survey developed by the researcher that will be used for this study will be Teachers' Perception on the Use of Token Economy Systems to Influence Students' Academic Performance and Behavior Survey. The survey will include 11 questions which will consist of six questions related to demographics, four open-ended questions and one question based on a Likert scale. The open-end questions will be used to provide the researcher with more knowledge regarding the participants' experiences with token economy systems in classroom settings.

Reliability and Validity

Content validity for the data collection tool will be developed through the reviewal process of the researcher's thesis committee chair and members. They will serve as experts in the design of the instrument. Survey questions will meet the following criteria: truth, value, applicability, neutrality and consistency (Sullivan, 2011). This study will meet the five criteria to ensure that it is valid.

The criterion of truth will be attained by including the participants' unaltered responses from the survey. The responses will be entered into tables in a Microsoft Excel document and then coded into specific categories. The participants' perceptions regarding token economy systems in classroom settings may be applicable to teachers in other regions of Texas who have experience using classroom-based token economy systems. The criterion of value will be addressed by evaluating the perceptions of teachers in the study with other teachers. The researcher will maintain consistency throughout the study

by ensuring that all participants are provided with the same survey questions. Neutrality will be maintained by the researcher in order to reduce the potential for research bias during the data collection process. The researcher will make a sincere effort not to influence the responses of the participants. Participants will not be given feedback regarding the researcher's experience with classroom-based token economy systems.

The participants' responses to the open-ended survey questions will be provided in direct quotes and serve as raw data for qualitative evaluation. The open-ended questions will elicit the participants' thoughts, feelings, experiences and perceptions. The researcher will invite the committee chair, who is also a professor in the university's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences to evaluate the responses to ensure that the process is consistent and fair.

Data Collection

Teachers taking graduate courses in education at a private, Baptist university in an urban area of Southeast Texas will participate in the study. The Human Subjects Form will be submitted to the Houston Baptist University Institutional Research Board in order to obtain approval to conduct the study.

Certain ethical considerations will be taken throughout the study. The researcher will obtain the participants' consent and their responses will be concealed. The consent form will be provided with the survey to ensure that participants understand the expectations prior to including their responses to the questions. The researcher will reduce the potential for bias by not communicating with the participants unless there is a question, or the participant chooses to withdraw from the study. The participants will be notified that their responses will be kept for seven years, and then destroyed. Data will

be gathered in two ways: (a) survey containing demographic questions and (b) open-ended questions and Likert scaled questions.

Research Bias

Research bias exists when the researcher influences the results of the study to depict a certain outcome. This can occur from the creation of the instrumentation tools, the methods used to analyze the data, and how it is ultimately reported (Berger, 2013). Therefore, it is important that the researcher is aware of their own biases prior to the proposal of a study. Reflexivity is a concept that describes the act of self-reflection. The researcher will use reflexivity to reflect on her personal biases and predispositions in order to minimize the likelihood of research bias. The researcher was a substitute teacher in an urban school district in Southeast Texas that utilized school-wide token economy systems. The researcher will be cautious not to include her own personal experiences in the participants' responses. As such, the documentation of the participants' responses verbatim is paramount. The researcher will analyze the participants' responses providing insight into their perceptions. Prior to the analysis of the responses, the researcher will remain open-minded to the data gathered throughout the study.

Data Analysis

In this section, the researcher will describe the procedures that will be used to analyze the survey containing demographic questions. The written open-ended responses from the survey will be typed and placed in tables. The researcher will code the text from the survey to determine teachers' perceptions on the use of token economies to influence students' academic performance and behavior.

According to Thorne (2020), qualitative analytical reasoning relies heavily on the process of inductive reasoning to interpret valuable meanings from collected data. It also involves interpreting the entire data set which requires transforming raw data into a coherent depiction of what the researcher is studying.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented the proposed methodology for the study. The researcher will purposefully select the study's participants. The instrumentation section of this chapter describes the contents of the online survey, which will include demographic information, open-ended questions, and a question on a Likert scale. Analysis procedures will be discussed for two methods of data collection: (a) survey containing demographic questions; and (b) open-ended questions and Likert scaled questions. Chapter IV will include the discussion, implications and recommendations for future research.

In the wake of the current Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing guidelines are in place to prevent the spread of disease. It is neither feasible nor socially responsible to collect interview data at this time. Subsequently, there will be no results to report.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this research is to identify what teachers' perceptions are regarding the use of token economy systems to influence the academic performance and behaviors of students. The researcher will evaluate what teachers' perceptions are regarding the use of token economies in their classrooms. The data that will be collected will provide insights on teachers' experiences using a classroom-based or school-wide token economy system. The findings of the study will address two research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence students' academic performance?
2. What are teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence students' behavior?

The participants of the study will be purposefully selected. The participants will be certified teachers, enrolled in a masters and doctoral level program and taking courses in education at a private, Baptist university in an urban area of Southeast Texas. The researcher will provide Dr. Dianne Reed, Professor of Education at the University, with a link to the online survey to post onto Blackboard's student portal. Dr. Reed will post the link in the online courses she currently teaches which contain graduate students who are teachers. The students will be randomly selected to participate in the study based on their interest in completing the online survey.

The survey that was developed by the researcher and will be used for this study is the *Teachers' Perception on the Use of Token Economy Systems to Influence Students' Academic Performance and Behavior Survey*. The survey will consist of 11 questions.

The theoretical framework for this study will be based on learning theories proposed by B.F. Skinner, Vygotsky and Bandura. B. F. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning is the foundation of all token economy systems because it is based on the idea that behavior is influenced by its associated consequences (Wood et al., 2014). Lev Vygotsky's theory demonstrates that children learn through social interaction (Rezaee & Aziz, 2012). Albert Bandura's theory is similar to Vygotsky's in that the process of learning is driven by social interactions. Learning through observations is also prevalent in Bandura's theory. Token economies provide children with the ability learn acceptable behaviors and to engage in positive social interactions with their peers and the environment (Zlomke & Zlomke, 2003).

Implications

Research suggests that token economies are utilized in public and private school settings due to the influence on students' academic performance and behavior. As the field of education continues to evolve, the structure of token economy systems will also change. Teachers must develop ways to not only motivate their students to learn, but to also manage their behaviors effectively and promote academic success. Teachers who use token economies in their classrooms have had different experiences regarding their manageability and effectiveness. Providing administrators, educational counselors, school psychologists and career counselors with insight on how teachers perceive the use of token economies in their classroom may help in offering alternative ways to reduce

disruptive classroom behavior. It may also shed light on why achievement gaps exist and foster the development of new research around behavior modification in schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study will reveal teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence the academic performance and behaviors of students. In addition, the researcher will explore the personal experiences the study's participants have had using token economies in their classrooms. The literature review process revealed an absence of articles that adequately addressed the research questions. Therefore, the following recommendations for future research are included below:

1. Examine teachers' perceptions regarding the use of classroom-based token economy systems to influence students' academic performance and behavior.
2. Examine teachers' perceptions regarding the use of school-wide token economy systems to influence students' academic performance and behavior.
3. Explore differences in teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economies to influence students' academic performance and behavior amongst newly certified teachers and experienced teachers.

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Appendix A
CONSENT FORM

Teachers' Perception on the Use of Token Economy Systems to Influence Students' Academic Performance and Behavior

My name is Nneka Akpotaire and my faculty advisor is Dr. Joseph Pelletier. I am requesting your participation in my study, **Teachers' Perception on the Use of Token Economy Systems to Influence Students' Academic Performance and Behavior**, which is the topic of my Thesis Proposal for the Master of Arts degree in Psychology from Houston Baptist University, Houston, TX.

The purpose of this project is to examine teachers' perception on the use of token economy systems to influence students' academic performance and behavior. Information obtained can be used to provide administrators, educational counselors, school psychologists and career counselors with insight on how teachers perceive the use of token economies in their classroom. It may also provide insight on or offer an alternative way to reduce disruptive classroom behavior. Lastly, it may shed light on why achievement gaps exist, and foster the development of new research around behavior modification in schools.

Your participation in completing the online survey is voluntary. Your completion of the survey questionnaire serves as your consent to participate in the study. You may decline or withdraw from participation in this study without any effect to the grades in your courses by contacting Nneka Akpotaire at akpotairenn@hbu.edu. There are no foreseeable risks to answering the survey questions, and the benefit is that the information will help to identify teachers' perceptions on classroom-based token economies.

Every effort will be made not to reveal personally identifiable information. To accomplish this, no records will be created or retained that could link you to personally identifiable descriptions, paraphrases, or quotations. Your actions or things you say may be presented without specific reference to you, reference only by pseudonym, or combined anonymously with the actions and words of other participants. Your responses will be kept for seven years, and then destroyed.

What are my rights as a research subject?

If you believe that you have not been treated in accordance with the descriptions provided in this form, or you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Dr. Joseph Pelletier, Department Chair of Psychology at (281) 649-3501 or email Dr. Pelletier at jpelletier@hbu.edu.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Teachers' Perception on the Use of Token Economy Systems to Influence Students'
Academic Performance and Behavior Survey

Research Questions: What are teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence students' academic performance? What are teachers' perceptions regarding the use of token economy systems to influence students' behavior?

Please read the questions below and choose the answer that best describes you.

1. What is your age? (Please round to the nearest whole number. For example, if you are 26 and 7 months, you would type "27". If you are 26 and 3 months, you would type "26".)

2. What is your gender? Please specify below (do not abbreviate).

3. Specify the highest level of training received in the area of teacher licensure
Please specify your type of training under the "Other" section, if you have received other training outside of teacher licensure.

- _ Bachelor's Degree
- _ Master's Degree
- _ Education Specialist (Ed.S.)
- _ Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)
- _ Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)
- _ Other (Please list below)

4. How many years have you been a teacher? (Please round to the nearest whole year)

5. What grade(s) do you currently teach? (Please enter the grade level number below. For example, if you currently teach 1st grade, you will enter "1". If you currently teach Pre-K, you will enter "PK". If you currently teach Kindergarten, you will enter "K". For multiple grade levels, please enter the grade number/letter followed by a comma, then enter the other grade level. For example, "1,2" indicates that you currently teach 1st and 2nd grade students).

6. Please specify what your teaching certification is in.

7. Have you used a token economy system in your classroom? (A token economy system is a behavior intervention tool that uses tokens or tickets to reward "good behavior". They are exchanged for tangible items that are appealing to the student. If yes, click on the arrow to continue the survey. If not, select "Done" to end the survey).

_ Yes

_ No

8. How long have you used a token economy system in your classroom? Please round to the nearest whole number.

9. Do you use token economy systems in your classroom daily? (Please briefly explain why in 3 sentences or less)

10. Describe your experiences in using the token economy system in your classroom. (Please briefly explain the obstacles you experienced and the benefits)

11. Do you think token economy systems have a positive influence on academic performance? (Please briefly explain why in 3 sentences or

Thank you for participating in this study. Please note that the completion of this survey signifies informed consent on the part of the respondent.