

# What factors influence teachers' acceptance of evidence-based interventions?

## Rationale and Aims:

Although the importance of evidence based interventions (EBIs) are emphasised throughout the educational literature there is a growing concern that they are struggling to make it from science to school.

This research aimed to further our understanding of the development work that can be done prior to the implementation of EBIs in schools. This is in keeping with the first stage of the quality implementation framework developed by Meyers et al. (2012).

## Research Questions:

- Does **giving an explanation for why change may occur** increase staff acceptance of an EBI?
- Is **attitude toward evidence-based practice** associated with staff acceptance of an EBI?
- Is **previous experience** with an EBI related to staff acceptance of that EBI?

## Measures:

**Intervention Rating Profile 15** (IRP-15) (Martens, Witt, Elliott, & Darveaux, 1985) was developed as an instrument to measure teachers' acceptance of school-based interventions.

**Evidence Based Practice Attitude Scale** (EBPAS) (Aarons, 2004) was developed to examine attitudes towards EBP in the health sector and provides an overall score for attitudes towards evidence-based practice and four subscale scores.

## Design and Procedure:

A mixed 2 x 6 between-within experimental design was employed to assess the impact of three theoretically derived variables (additional theoretical explanation, attitudes, and past behaviour) on secondary school staff acceptance of different EBIs.

Participants (N=207) were randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups and the EBIs were presented to them via 40 minute Power Point presentation. Data was collected via self-report questionnaires.

## Results:

- 1) The results indicate that there was no significant effect of giving staff an additional theoretical explanation about the EBI.
- 2) Attitude towards evidence based practice was found to be a significant predictor of teachers' acceptance for four out of the six EBIs.
- 3) Teachers who had previous experience with similar EBIs were significantly more likely to report a higher rate of acceptance of an EBI.

## References:

- Aarons, G. A. (2004). Mental health provider attitudes toward adoption of evidence-based practice: The Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS). *Mental health services research, 6*(2), 61-74.
- Martens, B. K., Witt, J. C., Elliott, S. N., & Darveaux, D. X. (1985). Teacher judgments concerning the acceptability of school-based interventions. *Professional psychology: Research and practice, 16*(2), 191.
- Meyers, D. C., Durlak, J. A., & Wandersman, A. (2012). The quality implementation framework: A synthesis of critical steps in the implementation process. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 50*(3-4), 462-480.

## Implications for practice:

- Investing time in providing staff with theoretical explanations of how the current EBIs improve attainment will not increase the acceptance of EBIs.
- The EBPAS may be used in educational settings to build a profile of staff attitudes towards evidence-based practice prior to implementation.
- Sourcing staff with previous experience with an intervention may increase the likelihood of staff accepting that intervention.

## Future research recommendations:

- Replication of this research using a measure of actual behaviour.
- Using EBIs that encourage the participants to think more deeply about the potential advantages and disadvantages of the intervention.
- A qualitative component to help identify the reasons for a non-significant relationship between 'additional theoretical explanation' and teachers' acceptance of that EBI.
- Multiple outcome measures (e.g. ratings of effectiveness and self-efficacy with the intervention) to develop our understanding of the predictive relationship between 'acceptance' and actual implementation in relation to school-based interventions.