A Cross-Sectional Survey of School Administrators’ Implementation Training, Knowledge, and Perceived Barriers

INTRO
- Implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs) within a multi-tiered framework promotes equitable student outcomes. However, there is a gap between what is identified as “evidence-based” and what students receive. Leaders who are knowledgeable about implementation and engage in strategic decision making/action planning are associated with more favorable outcomes. Research is limited in schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. To what extent are school administrators receiving pre-service/in-service training in implementation science?
2. What are school administrators’ current knowledge and perceived competency related to key concepts/findings in implementation science?
3. What are school administrators’ perceived challenges/barriers with real-world implementation in schools?

RESULTS
Research Question 1
- “81% reported receiving no university coursework on implementation science
- Specific PD on implementation science to facilitate systems change? 57% said no
- How important is implementation science in pre-service/in-service training for administrators?
  - 84% very or extremely important

Research Question 2
- Respondents felt least competent in their understanding of multi-level factors that enable or obstruct implementation
- Highest correlation, \( r(152)=.438, p<.01 \), between mean competency and “Have you received specific PD on using implementation science to facilitate systems change?”
- 3 items significantly predicted overall mean competency:
  - How well pre-service program prepared them to support implementation of EBPs
  - Overall effectiveness of PD offerings on improving influence uptake/use of EBPs
  - Whether respondents received dedicated PD on how to use implementation science to facilitate systems change

Research Question 3
- Most commonly reported barriers were staff acceptability and time

CONCLUSION
- Findings are especially concerning due to consistent research suggesting administrators as one of the most significant barriers/facilitators to successful implementation.
- As staff acceptability/buy-in was most commonly reported barrier, this highlights importance of consultation targeting staff behavior change
- Implementation science must be integrated into training programs if society expects favorable return on investment on researching EBPs.

The majority of participating administrators received limited to no pre-service training in implementation science.

School administrators’ perceived knowledge/competency were significantly and positively associated with their overall training experiences.

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