



Student Behaviour Vs Learning Process and Outcomes

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Abstract

Approaches aimed at improving school and classroom environments, including reducing the negative effects of disruptive or distracting behaviours, can enhance the chances that effective teaching and learning will occur, both for the students exhibiting problem behaviours and for their classmates. An estimated one-third of students fail to learn because of psychosocial problems that interfere with their ability to fully attend to and engage in instructional activities, prompting a call for new directions for addressing barriers to learning. Visakhapatnam is called “Oxford of the East” is now facing the problem of unusual behaviour of the school students at large scale. Increased academic pressure in addition to lots of exposure to audio-visual media has changed the mind set of secondary students alarmingly causing behavioural problems. Schooling is an intrinsically social enterprise. Student behaviour is shaped by and exhibited and interpreted in a social context that involves multiple actors viz. teachers, students, school staff etc. It includes multiple settings like classrooms, corridors, common areas, laboratories, lunch room, and playground. Schools are institutions with multiple goals like enhancing academic performance, encouraging a holistic development of the student. Positive behaviour is more likely to thrive when relationships at all levels are trusting and supportive and reflect a shared commitment to establish a healthy school and community. Problem behaviour of students not only interrupts teacher’s lesson plans but also disturbs other student’s learning process. Such students test teacher’s patience as a result many feeling overwhelmed, helpless and make teaching as one of the most difficult aspects of a teacher's job. The most common problem behaviours in the classroom teachers notice are a student's lack of focus, and the inability to sit/stand for an appropriate length of time required for effectively learning.

Key Words: academic performance, behaviour, interaction, learning, process, sources

DOI: 10.48047/ecb/2023.12.Si6.713

Introduction

Student’s behaviour reflects the interaction of their temperament and inherited personality, the history of their experiences, and the particular nature of each situation. In most circumstances it is impossible to determine what proportion each of these elements contributes to a given manifestation. It also differs in proportions which vary from student to student and even from situation to situation for a single student. Although it is difficult to modify personality of a student having problem behaviour, it is possible to modify behaviour by identifying and correcting adverse situations in the environment and by introducing appropriate interventions. If adverse environmental conditions are corrected at an early stage, there is a greater possibility of preventing or diminishing their impact on behavioural pattern of student in question.

Problem Behaviour

Behavioural disorders also known as conduct disorders are one of the most common forms of psycho pathology among children and young adults and is the most frequently cited reason for referral to mental health services in schools. The appearance of behavioural disorders is increasing dramatically in Visakhapatnam's secondary school classrooms in last decade. As a result their presence severely constrains the ability of the school systems to educate students effectively. The prevalence of behavioural problems among children and young adults is substantial.

Surveys indicate that behavioural disorders vary among young adults, ranging from 2 and 6% in secondary school students. Behavioural disorders become apparent when the student displays a repetitive and impact persistent pattern of behaviour that results in the significant disruption in other students. Such disturbances may cause significant impairments in academic, social, and or occupational functioning. Such a behaviour pattern is consistent throughout the individual's life. Among the characteristics of a behavioural disorder among students of secondary schools are:

- a. Initiation of aggressive behaviour and reacting aggressively towards others.
- b. A display of bullying, threatening, or intimidating behaviour.
- c. Being physically abusive of others.
- d. Deliberate destruction of other's belongings and property.
- e. Showing little empathy and concern for the feelings, wishes, and well being of classmates.
- f. Showing callous behaviour towards others and lack of feelings of guilt or remorse.
- g. They may readily inform on their companions and tend to blame others for their own misdeeds.

Behaviour as a phenomenon

The notion that behaviour is learned student's behaviours are shaped by the expectations and examples provided by important adults like parents and teachers in their lives and by their peers. In the elementary to secondary grades, general education classroom teachers are arguably the most important adults at school for the large majority of students. As such, they can play a critical role both in proactively teaching and reinforcing appropriate student behaviours and in reducing the frequency of behaviours that impede learning. Accepting responsibility for the behavioural learning of all students is a natural extension of the responsibility for the academic learning of all students that general education teachers exercise with such purpose every day. Factors affecting Student's behaviour include socioeconomic status, number of students in the grade, gender, parental education, type of school attended and academic ability.

A combination of nature and nurture may make some students more likely to develop behavioural problems. Young children who had both a stressful home life and an exaggerated nervous system response to stress were more likely than their peers to develop behavioural problems over the next six years. In the case of students who are surrounded by stressful conditions and have a stronger physiological response to stress, the combination may set them on a course toward an "under controlled" personality. Students of secondary schools students with this personality type have difficulty adapting their behaviour to different circumstances, tend to be plagued by negative emotions, and often have behavioural problems such as fighting with their classmates. Some of the behavioural indices as identified are as below:

- a) Losing one's temper
- b) Arguing with adults
- c) Actively defying requests
- d) Refusing to follow rules
- e) Deliberately annoying other people
- f) Blaming others for one's own mistakes or misbehaviour
- g) Being touchy easily annoyed or angered, resentful, spiteful, or vindictive.

Objectionable behaviour is usually diagnosed when a student has a persistent or consistent pattern of disobedience and hostility toward parents, teachers, or other adults. The primary behavioural difficulty is the consistent pattern of refusing to follow commands or requests by adults. Students with objectionable behaviour often are stubborn test limits and push boundaries and they easily become annoyed. The criteria for objectionable behaviour are met only when the problem behaviours occur more frequently in the student than in other students of the same age and developmental level. These behaviours cause significant difficulties with family and friends, and the oppositional behaviours are the same both at home and in school. Sometimes, objectionable behaviour may be a precursor of a conduct disorder. Risk factors for students of secondary standard who are teenager's behaviour problems include:

1. Family conflict
2. Academic failure in elementary school
3. Friends who engage in alcohol and drug use, delinquent behaviour, violence, or other problem behaviours
4. Peer rejection
5. Family history of a problem behaviour
6. Favorable parental attitudes to problem behaviour
7. Witnessing family violence

Family instability, including economic stress, parental mental illness, harshly punitive behaviours, inconsistent parenting practices, multiple moves, and divorce may also contribute to the development of oppositional and defiant behaviours.

Sensory processing disorder

Students generally tend to avoid or appear fearful of particular activities like playground equipment, certain sounds messy play, movement experiences, smells, or tastes. They seemed to be uncoordinated and react in an undesirable manner like crashing and banging into or on objects, sometimes accidentally breaking objects nearby. They generally have difficulty with social interactions and relating to their peers. These problem behaviours in the classroom exhaust children and teachers both. Such students need some additional help on a daily basis.

Students display a wide range of behaviour problems in classrooms ranging from disruptive talking in the classroom to fighting and name-calling on the playground because of simple reasons. Problem behaviour will depend upon an individual teacher's tolerance. Classroom behaviour is one of the trickiest issues teachers face today as it creates a classroom environment that is not conducive to learning. In order to overcome behavioural problems is to promote positive behaviour before problems arise. Disruptive classroom behaviour needs to be explored because it could signal that something more is going on than meets the eye. There are many conflicting theories about how to manage classroom behavioural problems like logical consequences, behaviour management and assertive discipline etc.

Avoidance Behaviours

Student's self acceptance largely depends on their competitive performance. Students who are not able to fulfill the academic requirements because of a number of reasons are not necessarily capable of doing so but this is normally considered as the evidence of their inability and is reason to despair. They are uncertain about their ability to face challenges and competition and they generally follow strategies that deflect attention from their activities in order to protect self-worth. As per Covington these are "ruses and artful dodges" that are used as ploys in "the struggle to escape being labeled as stupid. In addition students start avoiding seeking help, resisting novel approaches to academic work, and purposefully withdrawing effort which is a sort of self-handicapping. While contemplating seeking help they are scared of to be criticized and perceive a threat to self-worth from not only from teachers but also from their classmates. Some students have a passive attitude and they prefer to avoid to attempt of solving problems and doing their work because they feel that they may make mistakes and demonstrate their low ability. In this way they succeeded to stave off the chance of to be exposed as incapable but this strategy to avoid undermine their performance.

Students show aggressive, withdrawn, and inattentive-hyperactive behaviours because of peer rejection. Acceptance by peers depends on student's behaviour and rejection results from deficits in student's social skills. Aggressive students show deregulated behaviours, they are inattentive, reactive and disruptive. Because of their unskilled behaviours along with their aggression, they are at high risk for peer rejection. Their inattentive and hyperactive behaviours impair their ability to interact effectively with peers. Aggressive behaviour is adopted for self protection proved instrumental for goal attainment. Aggressive students also establish and maintain friendship and are not always rejected by peers, while students with inattentive and hyperactive behaviours results in peer rejection.

Motivation

Psychological research has pointing out that dominant perspectives are "varieties of cognitive approaches to motivation. They focused on attributions, perceived ability, perceived control and competence, intrinsic motivation, interest, learning strategies, and goal orientations. In educational research focus is on the teacher behaviours which are capable of promoting student motivation. Students can be motivated with the help of different teacher behaviours such as guidance, modeling, enthusiasm, provision of choice, sincere praise, reinforcement, and curiosity, dissonance, and interest-induction. four basic strategies are viz. attention focusing, relevance, confidence building, and satisfaction. Both the disciplines psychology and education provide complementary perspectives on the links between teacher behaviour and student motivation. Motivation is largely influenced by student engagement in the classroom and relevant dimensions of teacher behaviour. Motivation represents the intensity and emotional quality of student's involvement in initiating and carrying out learning activities where engagement includes both behavioural and emotional components.

The Class Room Response

It is observed that certain classroom discourse practices proved supportive as far as student's behaviour in classroom is concerned. It includes instruction, motivation, and organizing classroom time and activities. In majority of schools surveyed general education classrooms are generally orderly, teacher-student and student-student relationships are positive, and teaching and learning go on without major disruption. Teachers in such classrooms recognize the importance of preventing significant behaviour problems and are effectively using fundamental prevention tools, engaging instruction, well-managed classrooms, and positive relationships with students. Looking to these prevention fundamentals should always be the

first step in promoting good behaviour at school. However, it has been noticed that some teachers have a class in which one or a few student's exhibit persistent or significant problem behaviours, those that are disruptive, oppositional, distracting, or defiant. Sometimes when a number of students in a classroom demonstrate such behaviours, it can create a chaotic environment that is a serious impediment to learning for all students. In these cases teachers have exhausted their classroom management strategies without successfully eliminating the obstacles to learning that problem behaviours pose.

Student's Behaviour in Classrooms

To understand the very cause of behavioural problems, it is important to study specific behaviour a student exhibits, its effects on learning, and when, where, and how often it occurs. This information can provide important clues to the underlying purpose of the problem behaviour and a foundation for developing effective approaches to mitigate it. Many times classroom conditions or activities if changed or modified can influence the frequency or intensity of problem behaviours. If the teacher understands the behavioural hot spots in the classroom in terms of timing, setting, and instructional activities, they can proactively develop class wide and individual student strategies. It is evident that a change in instructional groupings, the seating plan, or the order or pace of reading proved instrumental to reduce the contribution of these classroom factors to students' problem behaviours.

In many cases students' failure to meet behavioural expectations reflects deficits in specific social or behavioural skills. In such a case explicit instruction can help students overcome some academic deficits in addition to this it can help students learn the positive behaviours and skills they are expected to exhibit at school. It has been observed that it is very difficult for a teacher at one time or another to remedy an individual student's behaviour problem that is not responsive to preventative efforts. The success of a behavioural intervention hinges on identifying the specific conditions that prompt and reinforce the problem behaviour. For this it is necessary to analyze the behaviour's antecedents and consequences. It can be done by careful observation of the conditions in which the problem behaviour is likely to occur and not occur. This information can be used to tailor effective and efficient intervention strategies that respond to the needs of the individual student within the classroom context.

Role of School

There are many factors within the schools that contribute to antisocial behaviour. Anti social behaviour of student may be because of setting events which are defined as antecedents that precede the antisocial behaviour and occur within the same setting and affect subsequent stimulus-response relations. Many times a series of instructions followed by several errors act as a setting event for the next instruction which result problem behaviour such as aggression.

School staff has to play a crucial role to solve behavioural problem in classrooms. If the staff provides adequate guidance to the students regarding how they can use appropriate behaviours to replace problem behaviours. Provision of positive reinforcement consistently when student do so can increase students' chances of experiencing social and behavioural success. It can be done by the collective wisdom and the success depends on problem-solving abilities of school staff. Teachers should be encouraged to reach out to colleagues in the school, other classroom teachers, special educators, the school psychologist, or administrators to help meet the behavioural needs of their students.

Functional Behavioural Assessment

Functional behavioural assessment is an approach that incorporates a variety of techniques and strategies to diagnose the causes and to identify likely interventions intended to address problem behaviours. It looks beyond the overt topography of the behaviour, and focuses, instead, upon identifying biological, social, affective, and environmental factors that initiate, sustain, or end the behaviour in question. This approach is important because it leads the observer beyond the symptom or the behaviour to the student's underlying motivation to escape, avoid, or get something which is, to the functional analyst, the root of all behaviour. The behaviour intervention plans stemming from the knowledge of why a student misbehaves based on a functional behavioural assessment are extremely useful in addressing a wide range of problems. The function of behaviour is to modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behaviour. Many effective classroom-focused interventions to decrease students' problematic behaviour alter or remove factors that trigger them. These triggers can result from a mismatch between the classroom setting or academic demands and a student's strengths, preferences, or skills. Teachers can reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behaviour by revisiting and reinforcing classroom behavioural expectations; rearranging the classroom environment, schedule, or learning activities to meet students' needs; and/or individually adapting instruction to promote high rates of student engagement and on-task behaviour.

School Education in Visakhapatnam

About 38,476 children between 6 and 14 years are seeking admission to schools across Visakhapatnam district. School education in Visakhapatnam begins from the primary level. Primary schools in Visakhapatnam are either run by the Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (PMC) or privately by Trusts and individuals. The schools in Visakhapatnam are broadly categorized into Public schools and private schools. Majority of the people in the city prefer private schools, due to their modern infrastructural facilities and good quality of education.

Methods

A qualitative cross sectional study was conducted in 2 selected schools in Visakhapatnam among 4 age groups of children, studying in different standards from Junior KG to Xth. Focus groups and interviews with randomly selected children were conducted. The sample was worked out from total 1525 students studying in 35 sections of class V to X in the two schools, by a two stage random sampling technique. In the first stage, lots have been drawn, from each of the six classes one section was selected to be included in the study. In the second stage, the students from the selected six sections, which worked out to 450 were examined thoroughly

Diagnostic analysis of situations that foster disruptive behaviour in students

A sample of 450 secondary school children, aged 4–14 yrs. in Visakhapatnam, was evaluated with the help of questionnaire survey with reference to student behaviour. The frequency of behaviour problems in classrooms of secondary schools was 6.8%–8.2% antisocial behaviour while 0.78% neurotic behaviour.

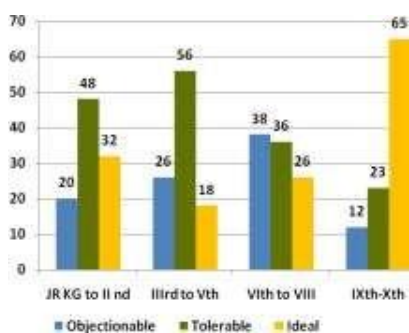


Figure 1. Student's Behaviour Pattern Objectionable behaviour was noticed redominantly noticed in students studying is standard VIth to VIII, which is observed least at higher level as students became more mature and serious about studies. Objectionable behaviour at lower level is found to be because of adjustment problems. Students of standard IIIrd to VIIIth were found to be stubborn and difficult to handle (see Figure 1).

Student's performance and behaviour in classroom depends on the subject taught and teaching, instruction method adopted by the teacher (see Figure 2). In mathematics class majority of students show reluctance and problem behaviour as it is a comparatively difficult subject to learn. In science a large number of student's have behavioural problem as they are not finding the subject interesting if it is taught as a theoretical based method and in the absence of experiments. A mixed response was observed for geography subject where students showed reluctance as well as cause disturbance to others. In language classes like English and Marathi which is one of the native language most of the student found interactive and participating in the classroom activities at the same time many of them had objectionable behaviour as they did not have aptitude for the subject and they found instruction method tedious and boring.

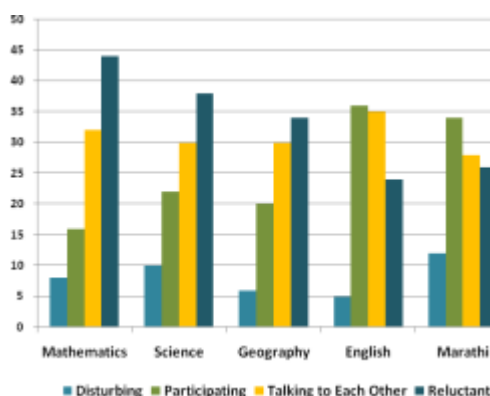


Figure 2. Students Behaviour with reference to subject taught

Student's relationship to the teacher is a matter of concern which largely depend on teacher's attitude and way how they handle students. Many teachers are found to be very strict; many are lenient while many adopt a balanced friendly behaviour in class. Less behavioural problems noticed in class of teachers who prefer to be friendly with students as compared to strict or lenient teachers (see Figure 3).

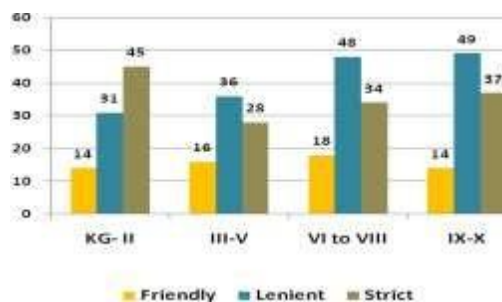


Figure 3. Effect of Teacher's Personality

Student's relationship with teacher also has an influence with the age of teacher. Students studying at lower standards like in junior or senior KG prefer either young teacher because

they are more comfortable with them or elder ones (Figure 4 is showing preference of students studying in various standards based on age group). Behaviour problems were found higher in boys than girls. Antisocial behaviour was dominant in boys, while neurotic behaviour was common in girls. The frequency of behaviour problems varied significantly with the different social environments in which the children were brought up.

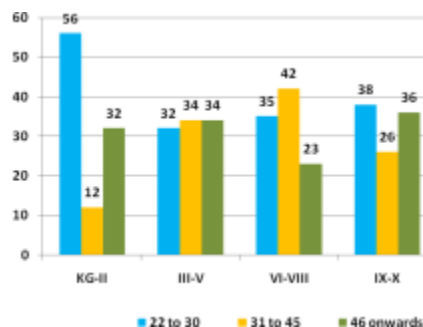


Figure 4. Influence of Age of Teacher

Disciplinary Strategies

Management of disruptive behaviour in classrooms includes adoption of appropriate strategies with reference to disciplinary procedures and behaviour-intervention plans. Many activities act as reinforcers to teach desirable behaviour. There are five identified categories of responses available for teaching desired behaviour:

1. The use of words
2. Physical expressions
3. Physical closeness
4. Activities, and things used as rewards
5. Positive feedback

Classroom is a work place where positive teacher-student interactions modify classroom environment and improve student behaviour. There is a deep rooted association between positive interactions with teachers which increases students' social skills, emotional regulation, motivation, engagement, cooperation with classroom rules and academic performance. A good teacher should have

- a. Knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy
- b. Knowledge and student friendly beliefs about managing student behaviour,
- c. Student-focused views of instruction,
- d. Ability to carefully reflect on students' learning.

Teachers must be able to adapt strategies to meet students' needs, and have ability to organize instruction, create a well-managed and supportive environment for instruction, carry out cohesive instruction and be professional and reflect on student learning and instruction. They should adopt specific strategies or content to teach high risk students and struggling learners. They must be very aware of the student's understanding [of content] and present things more systematically. The students need things broken down. The teachers need to be willing to make adjustments, take longer, try new things. Teachers have to be tuned in to what is going on with the children. Sometimes they have to restructure their activities based on the students' needs. Their instruction has to be explicit, and content should be relevant and interesting to students. They should articulate why they were teaching a particular concept or strategy and develop instruction that was clear and engaging.

Conclusion

Teachers show the warmth, respect, and sensitivity they feel for their students through small gestures, such as welcoming students by name as they enter the class each day, calling or sending positive notes home to acknowledge good behaviour, and learning about their students' interests, families, and accomplishments outside of school. Teachers also can help students develop peer friendships by having them work together, thereby learning to share materials, follow directions, be polite, listen, show empathy, and work out disagreements. Fostering students' social and emotional development can improve their interactions and attitudes towards school, thereby reducing problem behaviours.

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