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TYPES, CAUSES AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT RESPONSES TO STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF FAISALABAD, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Student misbehavior may disrupt classroom instruction, student involvement, and/or create an environment conducive to learning. This study focused on the analysis of the most frequently reported types of misbehaviors reported by the secondary school teachers, the perceived causes of misbehaviors, and classroom management responses of the secondary school teachers to misbehaviors in Faisalabad, Pakistan. The design of the study was descriptive survey in which 119 teachers of female secondary schools of five secondary schools in Ghulam Muhammad Abad, Faisalabad were included. The respondents were selected using proportionate sampling technique from the target population of 172 teachers. Data was gathered through a structured questionnaire on a Likert scale which was content validated by five education experts and was pilot tested with 15 teachers with a reported internal-consistency reliability coefficient of 0.78. The data were analyzed by frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations and independent samples t-test in SPSS-18. As reported, there were several factors related to behaviors, environment, psychological, family, and school related factors that were associated with classroom misbehavior. The mean ratings identified for the indicators were high for students who start fights, make others feel responsible for trouble, pay no attention to teacher's signals, seek attention, and ask unnecessary questions. Other environmental factors like large classroom size, poorly designed classrooms, and high classroom temperature were also reported as relevant. Teachers indicated a range of disciplinary and supportive measures including corporal punishment, respectful treatment, goal setting, engagement in class, communication with parents, counselling and individual attention. The results point towards a classroom-management style that is based on expectations, positive teacher–learner interaction, involvement, communicating with parents, and counselling.

Keywords: *student misbehavior; classroom management; secondary schools; teachers; Faisalabad; discipline; Pakistan*

1. INTRODUCTION

The orderly, respectful and engaging classroom is an important condition for effective learning and teaching. Student misbehavior may impact instruction, decrease learning opportunities and impose extra teacher demands. Classroom violations have been documented from side talking to late arrivals, arguing, aggression, non-compliance and other behaviors which interrupt the instruction (Feldman, 2001; Nordstrom et al., 2009). The impact is not just lost instructional time; ongoing classroom-management issues can lead to teacher frustration and stress and impact the learning environment for other students (Allen, 2011; Axup & Gersch, 2008). Student misbehaviors are not a phenomenon and are not one-caused. Classroom behaviour can be seen as a result of relationships between individual characteristics, family experiences, peer relationships,

classroom conditions, teachers' practices and school-level disciplinary structures. It has been suggested that certain contextual factors, such as size of classes and organisation of classes, may result in a greater difficulty in managing classes (Benbow et al., 2007). Also, the way that rules, expectations, feedback, and consequences are communicated, as well as teacher–student relationships and classroom-management practices, can impact students' ability to be appropriate (Charles, 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2010). Among the various theories of the thesis literature review, there are points that argue that misbehavior can happen in many different ways. According to Dreikurs' democratic-discipline model, misbehaviour is directly related to misguided aims of attention seeking, power seeking, revenge and withdrawal (Dreikurs, 1968). Glasser's choice-theory perspective focuses on the need of the student to belong, to achieve, to be free, and to enjoy; and suggests that feeling deprived of any of these needs can be a factor in less desirable behavior (Glasser, 1986; Glasser & Dotson, 1998). Patterson's social-interactional model focuses on family and peer processes such as inconsistent and/or harsh discipline, lack of supervision, rejection, and deviant peer influence (Patterson et al., 1998). Other strategies focus on dignity, encouragement, participation and positive teacher–student relationships as aspects of effective discipline (Curwin & Mendler, 1999; Nelsen et al., 1997). There is also evidence summarized in the thesis that disciplinary responses have an impact. Harsh punishment and/or physical punishment have been linked in the literature cited to negative behavioral outcomes, and school-wide positive discipline focuses on teaching and reinforcing appropriate behavior in addition to punishment. (Gershoff, 2002; Lewis et al., 2006; Bradshaw et al., 2010). The thesis also considers the need to know the motivational and contextual factors that underpin the observable misbehaviour and not use punishment for punishment's sake. Classroom discipline is important in Pakistan due to the need for teachers to control the class and address students' behavioral needs in a variety of ways. But descriptions of the forms, perceived causes and management responses, grounded in local contexts, as provided by secondary school teachers, are useful in understanding the problem in its immediate educational context. The present study therefore explored the misbehaviors of students in secondary schools of Ghulam Muhammad Abad, Faisalabad, focusing specifically on the type of misbehaviors reported by teachers, the environmental and psycho-social factors attributed to misbehaviors and the methods used by teachers to manage or prevent misbehaviors. The purpose of the research was to find out the common reported manifestations of student misbehaviors, to explore perceived factors that affect student misbehaviors, and to describe the classroom-management techniques that teachers employ. These dimensions were brought together in one survey, so that the study could describe classroom behavior from the perspective of practicing secondary-school teachers.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study design and setting

A descriptive survey design was used to examine the types and perceived causes of student misbehavior and the techniques used to manage it. The study was conducted in Ghulam Muhammad Abad (G.M. Abad), Faisalabad, where five secondary schools were included. The reported target population comprised 172 female secondary-school teachers.

2.2 Sampling and participants

A sample of 119 respondents was obtained through proportionate sampling from the five schools. The thesis reports school-wise allocations of 30, 16, 64, 22, and 40; these figures sum to more than 119 and therefore appear to contain a transcription inconsistency. The article retains the reported final sample size of 119 because this is the denominator used throughout the results tables. The sample-size calculation was reported as using a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval.

2.3 Instrument and validation

Data were collected with a structured Likert-scale questionnaire covering reported forms of misbehavior, perceived causes, and classroom-management responses. The thesis describes the response scale as five-point (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), although it also

mentions a six-point coding that included no response. Content validity was assessed by five education experts, after which the questionnaire was refined. A pilot test with 15 teachers outside the study area produced a reported internal-consistency reliability coefficient of 0.78.

2.4 Data collection and analysis

The pre-tested questionnaire was administered personally to teachers after explanation of the study purpose and was collected after completion. Data were analyzed in SPSS-18 using frequency distributions, percentages, means, standard deviations, and an independent-samples t-test. In keeping with journal presentation, inferential-test/ANOVA-style intermediate tables are not reproduced; the principal descriptive findings are consolidated below using mean ± standard deviation.

3. Results

The results are presented in five consolidated tables. Analyses addressing similar constructs are grouped together, and a brief factual summary is provided immediately after each table. Descriptive results are reported as frequencies and percentages or as mean ± standard deviation, as applicable.

Table 1. Consolidated characteristics of participating teachers (n = 119).

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Qualification	Master's	57	47.9
	M.Phil.	53	44.5
	Ph.D.	9	7.6
Area of specialization	Sciences	78	65.5
	Arts	41	34.5
Class size	25–40 students	62	52.1
	40–55 students	57	47.9
Professional qualification/subject	Urdu	17	14.3
	Islamiyat	16	13.4
	Physics	7	5.9
	Biology	14	11.8
	Mathematics	32	26.9
	Pakistan Studies	7	5.9
	Chemistry	26	21.8
Mode of appointment	Contract	62	52.1
	Permanent	57	47.9
Teaching experience	1–2 years	47	39.5

	2–3 years	32	26.9
	3–4 years	40	33.6
Monthly income (as reported)	30–40	64	53.8
	40–50	40	33.6
	50 and above	15	12.6
Marital status	Married	40	33.6
	Unmarried	79	66.4

The sample comprised 119 teachers. Master's degree holders represented 47.9% of respondents and M.Phil. holders 44.5%, while 65.5% specialized in science subjects. Classes of 25–40 students were reported by 52.1% of respondents. Mathematics was the most frequently reported subject area (26.9%). Contract appointments accounted for 52.1%, and 39.5% of teachers had 1–2 years of experience. The largest reported income category was 30–40 (53.8%), and 66.4% of respondents were unmarried.

Table 2. Consolidated results for reported behavioral manifestations, teacher-related concerns, and schoolwork-motivation indicators.

Analysis group	Indicator	Mean ± SD
Behavioral manifestations	Blaming one another for mischief	4.16 ± 0.995
	Initiating quarrels among students	4.09 ± 1.040
	Making complaints against peers	4.02 ± 1.032
	Trying to gain influence among peers	3.97 ± 1.069
	Showing disruptive behavior	4.13 ± 0.933
	Showing laziness in the classroom	4.09 ± 1.040
	Sleeping during teaching	4.02 ± 1.032
Teacher-related concerns	Low satisfaction/depression	3.96 ± 0.780
	Less involvement	4.09 ± 0.697
	Educational level influence	4.10 ± 0.761
	High expectations	3.99 ± 0.946
Schoolwork motivation	Lack of empowerment	4.27 ± 0.732
	Less friendly interaction	4.21 ± 0.597
	Unfilled rules/regulations	4.22 ± 0.728
	Lack of attendance	4.17 ± 0.804
	Lack of participation	4.33 ± 0.592
	Disruptive behavior lowering test scores	4.10 ± 0.718

Among the behavioral indicators, blaming one another for mischief had a mean of 4.16 ± 0.995, while disruptive behavior had a mean of 4.13 ± 0.933. For schoolwork motivation, lack of participation showed the highest mean (4.33 ± 0.592), followed by lack of empowerment (4.27 ± 0.732). Teacher-related indicators ranged from 3.96 ± 0.780 to 4.10 ± 0.761.

Table 3. Consolidated results for environmental/classroom, psychological/interpersonal, self-regulation, and family-related factors.

Analysis group	Factor	Mean ± SD
Environmental/classroom	High classroom temperature	4.26 ± 0.728
	Classroom not designed for optimal learning	4.14 ± 0.783
	Not interested in the lecture	4.13 ± 0.859
	Looking for ways to get out of work	4.13 ± 0.921
	Diversified class population	4.05 ± 0.851
	Large class size	4.08 ± 1.128
	Uncomfortable seats	3.93 ± 0.897
	Unmet necessary needs	3.95 ± 0.993
Psychological/interpersonal	Irrelevant questions	4.26 ± 0.728
	Trying to become prominent	4.15 ± 1.095
	Ignoring teacher directions	4.14 ± 1.039
	Vision problem	4.14 ± 0.783
	Discussing religious/social issues	4.13 ± 0.933
	Superiority complex	4.13 ± 0.859
	Rough language	4.09 ± 1.040
	Challenging teachers	4.02 ± 1.032
	Shouting to create thrill	3.97 ± 1.069
	Loss of hope	4.08 ± 1.128
	Anxiety	3.14 ± 0.783
	Personalizing conflicts	3.13 ± 0.859
Self-regulation/family	Lack of attention in studies	4.60 ± 4.15*
	Lack of maintained discipline	4.30 ± 0.727
	Lack of interest in lesson	4.08 ± 0.842
	Lack of emotional management	4.05 ± 0.851
	Refusing instructions	3.96 ± 0.780
	Bad temper	3.93 ± 0.897
	Lack of responsibility	3.90 ± 0.889

	Rudeness	3.86 ± 0.969
	Poor time management	3.76 ± 0.992
	Uncaring parents	3.46 ± 0.992
	Child abuse	3.39 ± 1.063
	Low self-esteem	3.36 ± 0.913
	Family violence	3.22 ± 1.041

Environmental and classroom factors received generally high ratings, with high classroom temperature (4.26 ± 0.728) and classroom design (4.14 ± 0.783) among the higher-rated items. In the psychological/interpersonal group, irrelevant questions had a mean of 4.26 ± 0.728 and trying to become prominent 4.15 ± 1.095, whereas anxiety and personalizing conflicts were 3.14 ± 0.783 and 3.13 ± 0.859, respectively. Family-related indicators ranged from 3.22 ± 1.041 to 3.46 ± 0.992. The source-reported value for lack of attention in studies was 4.60 ± 4.15 and should be checked against the original SPSS output.

Table 4. Consolidated results for classroom management, positive reinforcement, tolerance, and classroom engagement.

Management group	Strategy/indicator	Mean ± SD
Classroom management	Corporal punishment	4.16 ± 0.995
	Teacher starts lesson appropriately	4.15 ± 1.095
	Teacher arrives/leaves on time	4.14 ± 1.039
	Set a goal	4.13 ± 0.933
	Treat all students respectfully	4.09 ± 1.040
	Group work	4.02 ± 1.032
	Imposing a fine	3.97 ± 1.069
	Course completion emphasis	3.77 ± 1.274
	Difficult teaching techniques	3.74 ± 1.020
	Checks assignments	3.70 ± 1.354
	Extra time for difficult points	3.70 ± 1.178
	Teacher punctuality	3.64 ± 1.179
Positive reinforcement	Appreciative words	3.46 ± 0.992
	Teacher behaves nicely	3.36 ± 0.913
	Call parents to report good behavior	3.22 ± 1.041
Tolerance	Ignore/minimize minor problems	3.46 ± 0.992
	Remain courteous	3.36 ± 0.913
	Give misbehaving students a chance	3.22 ± 1.041
	Never blame/ridicule	3.19 ± 1.105

	Avoid win–lose conflicts	3.42 ± 1.291
Classroom engagement	Conducive environment	3.70 ± 1.354
	Opportunities for participation	3.77 ± 1.274
	Constructive feedback	3.70 ± 1.178
	Keep students engaged	3.74 ± 1.020

Corporal punishment had the highest mean among the classroom-management indicators (4.16 ± 0.995), followed by starting the lesson appropriately (4.15 ± 1.095) and arriving or leaving on time (4.14 ± 1.039). Positive-reinforcement means ranged from 3.22 ± 1.041 to 3.46 ± 0.992. Tolerance items ranged from 3.19 ± 1.105 to 3.46 ± 0.992, while classroom-engagement strategies ranged from 3.70 ± 1.178 to 3.77 ± 1.274.

Table 5. Consolidated results for parent engagement and teacher–student relationship strategies.

Support group	Strategy/indicator	Mean ± SD
Parent engagement	Meeting parents	4.16 ± 0.995
	Ending parent call with hopeful statement	4.13 ± 0.933
	Extra parent meeting for behavior	4.09 ± 1.040
	Listening to parents	4.02 ± 1.032
	Seminars for parents	3.97 ± 1.069
Teacher–student relationship	Beware of cultural differences	3.95 ± 0.993
	Character building	4.13 ± 0.921
	Individual attention	4.14 ± 0.783
	Counselling students	4.13 ± 0.859

Parent-engagement strategies received means from 3.97 ± 1.069 to 4.16 ± 0.995, with meeting parents having the highest value. Within teacher–student relationship strategies, individual attention had a mean of 4.14 ± 0.783, while character building and counselling students had means of 4.13 ± 0.921 and 4.13 ± 0.859, respectively.

Note: The grouped tables preserve the descriptive values reported in the thesis and do not introduce new statistical calculations. The independent-samples t-test mentioned in the thesis is not presented as a separate inferential table because the complete inferential output was not available in the source manuscript.

4. Discussion

The results represent student misbehavior as a complex, classroom management issue and not a singular behavioral issue. Interpersonal conflict, disruptive behavior, disengagement, non-compliance and attention distracting behaviors are reported indicators. This aligns with literature cited in the thesis that states that classroom incivility and disruption are common obstacles to quality learning and teaching (Feldman, 2001; Nordstrom et al., 2009). The high prevalence of quarrelling, blaming peers, disruptive behavior and seeking to gain influence also fits with theoretical explanations that student behavior can have social or interpersonal function (such as seeking attention or power – Dreikurs, 1968). The environmental results are significant as several of the classroom conditions were rated relatively high. The reasons cited for misbehaviour were: high temperature, big classes, uncomfortable seating and sub-optimal classroom design. The literature reviewed in this thesis corroborates that class size and

classroom condition are factors to consider when dealing with disruptive behavior (Benbow et al., 2007; Schneider, 1998). The results of this study indicate that behavior management cannot be completely divorced from the physical and organizational contexts in which teaching occurs. Relational and psychological aspects were also dominant. Some indicators reported were ignoring teacher instructions, trying to be prominent, challenging teachers, rough language and discussing controversial social or religious issues. This can be conceptually interpreted in one way in light of Dreikurs' model, which considers attention and power seeking as incorrect motives for misbehavior (Dreikurs, 1968). Glasser's theory also highlights the importance of unmet needs and teacher–student relationships as factors that can lead to disengagement and problematic behavior (Glasser, 1986; Glasser & Dotson, 1998). While not necessarily causal explanations from this cross-sectional survey, these theoretical interpretations offer explanations for the observed patterns. Results also included family-related variables and variables related to self-regulation. Uncaring parenting, child abuse, family violence, low self-esteem, poor emotional management, lack of responsibility, and refusal to follow instructions were cited as relevant factors. This is consistent with the social-interactional approach outlined in the thesis, which focuses on parenting skills, parental supervision, peer association, rejection, and social disadvantage (Patterson et al., 1998). Another theory is social-learning theory where children can learn behaviors from their social context (Bandura, 1977). But again, the survey design does not prove that any specific family issue is the cause of classroom misbehavior; rather, the results are what the teachers said were the factors involved. One striking aspect of the results is the fact that both punitive and supportive management practices co-occurred. Along with teachers reporting use of goal setting, group work, engagement, counselling related practices, parent meetings and individual attention, the highest reported mean for the listed management responses was for corporal punishment. This mixed pattern is critical as the literature cited in the thesis does not support that only punishment should be used as a mechanism of behavior control. The research findings summarized in the thesis are linked to the negative behavioral consequences of the use of CP, while the positive behavioral support approaches highlight clear expectations, reinforcement, relationship-building, and systematic classroom management (Gershoff, 2002; Lewis et al., 2006; Bradshaw et al., 2010). Parent-engagement outcomes suggest teachers identified communication with families as a component of behaviour management. Parent related strategies with higher ratings included meeting parents, arranging additional meetings, being able to listen, and concluding calls positively. They are compatible with models focusing on coordinated social contexts around the learner, rather than responsibility only being placed on the learner. Individual attention, individual counselling, constructive feedback, and opportunities to participate were also reported as supportive practices in a similar way. The findings should be viewed, however, in light of the limitations of the study. The sample consisted of five secondary schools of one locality of Faisalabad and the study involved teacher perception as it was not possible to directly observe their behaviour. In addition, there are some inconsistencies in terminology, sample description and some labels on tables in the source thesis. A number of numerical data are hard to reconcile internally and it is unclear whether the data support the reported urban rural comparison or t-test. Hence, the present article is descriptive and the means and standard deviations presented as such, with no unsupported inferential claims included.

5. Future Perspectives

Future studies need to build upon the current study and should be conducted on a larger scale with diverse and longitudinal samples of secondary schools in various districts and settings in Pakistan. Future studies should include students' views, direct observation of classroom and school level behavioral records to get a more detailed picture of student misbehavior as the present study was conducted among female secondary school teachers in five schools in one locality of Faisalabad. The interplay between classroom conditions,

student engagement, teacher–student relationships, family conditions, socioeconomic conditions and students' behavioral and learning experiences should be given special attention. Socioeconomic factors among students in Punjab also underscore the importance of enriching the study of contextual factors together with individual and classroom factors (Riaz et al., 2026). Future research should also explore the use of technology in engaging students and managing their behaviour in the classroom. AI-driven learning has been explored in terms of its impact on academic performance and critical thinking skills, while adaptive learning systems have been linked to personalized learning outcomes and cognition (Faizi et al., 2026; Amanat & Butt, 2026). The study of the applications of the AI tools in the language acquisition and teaching strategies also indicates the possible relevance of AI-supported language teaching in educational contexts (Kamal et al., 2026). Future studies may investigate whether forms of misbehavior linked to disengagement are reduced through the adaptation of learning systems, learning activities supported by AI, differentiated digital content, and personalized learning pathways that increase student attention, participation, motivation and engagement in the classroom. This should be done using a longitudinal, experimental or quasi-experimental design and not just teachers' perceptions. An additional vital direction is developing and evaluating integrated classroom-management interventions. Future research should be conducted to compare the different methods of setting clear expectations, providing positive reinforcement, providing constructive feedback, student involvement, counselling, one on one attention, and systematic parent/teacher communication with more punitive methods. Measurable outcomes such as frequency and severity of disruptive behavior, student engagement, academic participation, teacher workload, and teacher–student relationship quality could be used to assess the effectiveness of such interventions. Intervention studies would provide information about the common use of strategies, as well as those that result in lasting behavioral changes in secondary schools. The study reveals that further research is needed on socioeconomic and family contexts and how they influence student behaviour. The current study found that factors related to the family and school environment may be implicated in misbehaviour and future research could include variables such as broader social contexts, family–school communication, parental involvement and educational expectations. Multi-district and school-type studies could be conducted to check the validity of the relationships found in Faisalabad in other socioeconomic and educational settings. Studies with populations experiencing displacement or other social disadvantage may also offer insights into the impact of broader social factors on access to and experiences in school, but these social factors should be studied through appropriately designed school-based studies (Riaz et al., 2026). The physical classroom setting is also an area that needs to be explored. Future research can be both experimental or longitudinal to investigate the effect of class size, seating configuration, classroom design, ventilation, thermal comfort, and other environmental factors on student attention, participation, and disruptive behaviors. Combining environmental measures with direct observations of students' behaviors would be more convincing than teacher perceptions alone and would facilitate the separation of environmental influences from psychological, interpersonal, and instructional influences. Lastly, in the context of Pakistan, future research needs to be aimed at the development of context specific and evidence-based classroom-management frameworks in secondary schools. Comparative study of urban and rural areas, public and private institutions, across provinces and among various student groups could provide insight to the extent of the presence or absence of such patterns in Faisalabad or its generalized or localized nature. A combination of behavioral observation, educational psychology, classroom-environment assessment, family and socioeconomic variables, and emerging approaches to instruction that utilize AI may lead to a multidimensional base of preventive classroom-management strategies. Future research should explore ways in which instructional quality, personalization, engagement, relationships, family context, and

learning environment interact to foster positive behaviors and a healthy classroom.

6. Conclusion

In the secondary schools surveyed, students' misbehaviors were reported in the following aspects: behavioral, environmental, psychological, family, and school. The results suggest that there are clusterings of disruptive behavior, interpersonal conflict, disengagement, and non-compliance along with clusterings of classroom temperature, class size, and the classroom arrangements. Both punitive and supportive disciplinary strategies were reported by teachers, including using corporal punishment, treating children respectfully, setting goals, involving children in the classroom, communicating with parents, counselling and paying attention to children individually. Classroom management, therefore, should not be solely about punishment and should focus on classroom conditions, teacher–student relationships, student participation, family communication, and appropriate behavioural expectations. School leadership and teacher training should focus on sustained, positive and context-specific behaviour management strategies that maintain the learning environment while promoting social and academic growth.

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