

CAUSES OF STUDENTS' DISRUPTIVE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Mohammad Latif, Umar Ali Khan & Allah Noor Khan

Institute of Education & Research, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan,
KP, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

In Pakistani universities, Student's disruptive behavior in classrooms is at alarming rate. Both students and teachers are worried and thinking about the causes of disruptive classroom behavior. This study was conducted to compare the perceptions of university teachers and students about the causes of student's disruptive behavior in classroom. For this purpose, A 30 items questionnaire QCDCB was developed and was used for data collection. All the university students and teachers of public sector universities of Pakistan comprised the population of the study. SPSS 16th version was used for the analysis of data. It was concluded that university teachers and students in Pakistan think in a same way about the causes of disruptive classroom behavior.

Keywords: *Causes, Disruptive Classroom Behavior, Comparison*

INTRODUCTION

A wide range of studies have been conducted to investigate the various aspects of student's disruptive classroom behavior. The following studies cover the nature, causes and types of disruptive behavior in classroom situations. Nordstrom, Bartels and Bucy (2009) narrates that a short number of studies have been conducted on disruptive students at university level. According to Meyers (2003), round about twenty percent students show disruptive behavior in classrooms. Clayton (2000) argued that student's disruptive behavior is faced by almost every teacher in a classroom. Allen (2011) states that student's behavior problems result in loss of time and money paid by other students in a classroom. If a teacher is forced to stop the lesson for addressing the chatterers to stop the side conversations or to switch-off the mobile phones, it causes waste of precious time. Disruptive students are a part of almost every classroom that cause disturbance in class in many ways. Feldman, (2001) considers it a teacher's responsibility to maintain the discipline of a classroom.

In the light of the above cited studies, the researcher intended to compare the students and teacher's perceptions about the causes of student's disruptive classroom behavior.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to make a comparison of the perceptions of university teachers and students about the causes of disruptive behavior of students in classroom.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- To compare the perceptions of university teachers and students regarding the causes of disruptive behavior of students in classroom settings.
- To check the differences among the perceptions of university students and teachers regarding the causes of disruptive behavior of students in classroom settings.

Significance of the study

The significance of the study is obvious from the following points:

- The study will help the teachers to explore the possible causes of student's behavior problems.
- The study will be helpful for teacher to be equipped with the required skills for dealing with student's disruptive behavior in classroom.
- The study will contribute for the betterment of the guidance and counseling services.

Delimitations of the study

- The study was delimited only to the students studying at Master's degree level.
- The study was delimited only to the teachers teaching in the public sector universities in Pakistan.

Limitations of the study

- The findings of the study were drawn from the responses of university teachers and students to the 30 Items included in the QCDCB

(Questionnaire about the Causes of Disruptive Classroom Behavior).

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of university teachers and students about the causes of disruptive behavior of students in classroom.

H₁: There is significant difference between the perceptions of university teachers and students about the causes of disruptive behavior of students in classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Meyers, (2003) about twenty percent of students are showing disruptive behavior in university classrooms. According to Arbuckle & Little, (2004) the term "disruptive behavior" has not a specific definition. Azad, (2013) narrates that disruptive behaviors are not uncommon in university classrooms. Knepp, (2012) narrates that disruptive behavior is being seen in university classrooms at an alarming rate. Arbuckle and Little (2004) divides the student's problematic behaviors in three types; immature, inattentive and miscellaneous behaviors. In "Immature behaviors" he includes "chatting during lecture", eating or drinking, chewing gums, late arrivals etc.

In the "Inattentive behaviors", he includes the behaviors like sleeping during lecture, timeless cutting of class, Showing boredom, less attention in class work, lacking motivation, unpreparedness and packing the materials before the end of class. In the "miscellaneous behaviors", cheating while taking a test and taking more interest in marks instead of learning. According to Hubell & Hubell, (2010) the types of student's disruptive behaviors are as following: late arriving in the class, sleeping during a lecture, side conversations, using mobile phone or, being engaged in text messaging, unnecessary arguing with teachers etc.

The literature reveals a number of causes of disruptive behavior. It means that "disruptive behavior" occurs when classroom is not arranged properly. According to Schneider (1998), Seidman (2005), Dzubak, (2007), Bjorklund and Rehling (2010), and Brittany and Katie (2011) larger class size is a major cause of disruptive behavior. Clayton (2000) narrates that students show disruptive behavior if they feel that they are being mistreated. Kuhlenschmidt (1999) say that student's emotional problems are leading cause of disruptive behavior. Axup & Gersch, (2008), Schneider (1998) and Connelly, Zweig, Webster and Trougakos (2012) narrate that students attention seeking is also a leading cause of

disruptive behavior. Injustice by teachers is a key cause of disruptive behavior of students (Miller, 2000; Martin, 2002; Miller, Ferguson and Byrne, 2000; Whiteneck, 2005). Verkuyten, (2002) states that students exhibit disruptive behavior to show their power.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population

All university teachers and both male and female students studying in Public and private universities at Masters level constituted the population of the study.

The sample of this study comprised of 200 university students and 200 university teachers from all over Pakistan. Thus the total sample size was 400 only.

Table Sample of the study

Category	KPK	Punjab	Sindh	Baluchistan	Islamabad	Total
Teachers	40	40	40	40	40	200
Students	40	40	40	40	40	200
						400

Sampling

200 university students and 200 teachers were selected through convenient sampling as a sample of the study.

Research instrument

A 30 items questionnaire about the causes of disruptive classroom behavior (QCDCB) was developed by the researcher in 5 point likert type format. It was validated through pilot testing as well as consulting with 31 experts who were Ph.D in general and special education. The QCDCB was administered for checking and comparing the perspectives of university students and university teachers about the causes of disruptive classroom behavior. For the reliability analysis Cronbach alpha value was checked by using SPSS 16th version for each item of the questionnaire by using SPSS 16th version (Cronbach, 1951). The alpha value for the whole questionnaire was 0.869.

Research procedure

To study the perceptions of university students and teachers about the causes of disruptive classroom behavior, data were collected by using a self-developed questionnaire QCDCB from five public sector universities situated in each

province of Pakistan i.e. Punjab, KPK, Sindh, Baluchistan and the federal area (Islamabad). The data were statistically analyzed and conclusions were drawn.

Findings of the study

Findings of the study are presented as following:

The causes of student's disruptive classroom behavior as perceived by university teachers and students are as following:

Physical environment of the classroom

- Students exhibit disruptive behavior if the temperature of the classroom is very high or very low.
- Students exhibit disruptive behavior if their seats are not comfortable.
- Students exhibit more disruptive behavior in larger class size.

Problems relating teachers and teaching method

- Students exhibit disruptive behavior if a teacher does not communicate the expectations for appropriate classroom behavior.
- Students indulge in gossip during the class because of the teacher's weakness.

Health problems

- Students with hearing or vision problems exhibit more disruptive behavior than those with normal eye-sight or hearing ability.

Psychological environment of the classroom

- Students exhibit more disruptive behavior if the class consists of diverse population (students from different cultures).
- Less mature students exhibit more disruptive behavior than the mature ones.
- Students ask irrelevant questions to divert teacher's attention, for enjoyment and also to clear their confusions.

Psychological problems of students

- Student's rude behavior indicates some psychological problem like superiority-complex.
- Students show aggressive behavior when others misbehave with them or there is some hurdle in their needs.
- Students become hostile because of competition in class.
- Students try to be prominent to become good in others eyes.
- Students make hooting for fun and enjoyment.
- Students submit their assignments late due to their laziness.
- Students exhibit disruptive behavior when they are tired.

DATA ANALYSIS

An independent sample T-test was applied to compare the mean scores of the following two groups:

Group A: Students of Public sector universities in Pakistan

Group B: Teachers of Public sector universities in Pakistan

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Null Hypothesis

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and students about the causes of student's disruptive behavior.

To test the hypothesis, an independent sample *t*-test was applied to compare the means of both the groups:

Table-1.1 Difference in the Student's and teachers perceptions about the causes of disruptive classroom behavior

Group	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i> -calculated	<i>t</i> -tabulated	df	α
Teachers	30	3.81451	0.38561	0.199392	1.699	29	0.05
Students	30	3.80543	0.40335				

Table 1.1 indicates that the *t*-Calculated value 0.199392 was smaller than the *t*-tabulated 1.699 so we accept H_0 and conclude that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of university teachers and students about the causes of disruptive behavior. So, H_0 is hereby proved to be true and accepted. The results suggest that there is a consensus among university teachers and

students of Pakistan about the causes of disruptive behavior in classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that University teachers and students in Pakistan think in a same way about the causes of disruptive classroom behavior. Both the groups think that larger class size, attention seeking from teachers, injustice of teachers, desire for gaining power, poor teaching skills, students emotional problems, teacher's style of classroom management are the main causes of students disruptive classroom behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study leads to the following recommendations for HEC, DSDs and Teacher's training institutions:

It is recommended that the HEC and DSDs may make addition in the curriculum of teachers training programs like B.Ed, M.Ed etc. and the topics like the "Nature and causes of student's disruptive behavior and "Behavior modification strategies" may be included so that the trainee teachers may be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills required for effective classroom management.

GUIDELINES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further studies may be conducted to explore the reasons or factors that lead to student's disruptive classroom behavior in different areas or provinces of Pakistan. The methods or strategies for reducing disruptive classroom behavior are needed to be defined. Experimental studies may be conducted for the application of different behavior modification techniques that can be helpful in making classrooms more conducive place for teaching and learning.

REFERENCES

- Allen, B. (2011). *The Classroom Environment: The Silent Curriculum* (Doctoral dissertation, California Polytechnic State University).
- Appleby, D. C. (1990). Faculty and student perceptions of irritating behaviors in the college classroom. *The Journal of Staff Program, and Organizational Development*, 8, 41-46.
- Arbuckle, C., & Little, E. (2004). Teachers' perceptions and management of disruptive classroom behavior during the middle years. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*, 4, 59-70.

- Axup, T., & Gersch, I. (2008). Challenging Behavior: The impact of challenging student behavior upon teachers' lives in a secondary school: Teachers' perceptions. *British Journal of Special Education*, 35(3), 144-151.
- Azad, A., & Gracey, D. (2013). Dealing with Student Disruptive Behavior in the classroom. A Case Example of the Coordination between Faculty and Dean for Academics, *Indiana University of Pennsylvania*, Indiana, PA, USA.
- Bjorklund, W. L., & Rehling, D. L. (2010). Student perceptions of classroom incivility. *College teaching*, 58, 15-18.
- Brittany, A., & Katie, H. (2011). A Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Child Development, *California Polytechnic State University*.
- Clayton, M. (2000). Professors struggle to rout out rudeness. *Christian Science Monitor*, (3/21): 16.
- Connelly, C. E., Zweig, D., Webster, J., & Trougakos, J. P. (2012). Knowledge hiding in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(1), 64-88.
- Dzubak, C. M. (2007). Classroom Decorum: What's happening and does it Matter?
- Feldman, L. J. (2001). Classroom civility is another of our instructor responsibilities. *College Teaching*, 49, 137-140.
- Hubbell, L., & Hubbell, K. (2010). When a College Class Becomes a Mob: Coping with Student Cohorts. *College Student Journal*, 44(2).
- Knepp, K. A. F. (2012). Understanding Student and Faculty Incivility in Higher education. *The journal of effective teaching*. 12(1), 32-45.
- Kuhlenschmidt, S. L., & Layne, L, E. (1999). Strategies for dealing with difficult behavior. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 77, 45.
- Lindgren, H. C., & Ferraro, V. (1976). Educational psychology in the classroom. New York: Wiley.
- Martin, S. H. (2002). The classroom environment and its effects on the practice of teachers. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22(1), 139-156.
- Meyers, S. (2003). Strategies to prevent and reduce conflict in college classrooms. *College Teaching (Summer)*: 94-98.
- Miller, A., Ferguson, E., & Byrne, I. (2000). Pupils' causal attributions for difficult classroom behavior. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 85-96.
- Nordstrom, C. R., Bartels, L. K., & Bucy, J. (2009). Predicting and curbing classroom incivility in higher education. *College Student Journal*, 43, 74-85.

Schneider, A. (1998). Insubordination and intimidation Signal the End of Decorum in Many Classrooms. *Chronicle of Higher Education* (3/27): A12.

Seidman, A. (2005). The Learning Killer: Disruptive Student Behavior in the Classroom. *Reading Improvement* (spring): 40-46.

Verkuyten, M. (2002). Making teachers accountable for students' disruptive classroom behavior. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(1), 107-122.

Whiteneck, P. (2005). Teaching the difficult student. *Community College Week*, 17(14), 3-4.