



Strategies to manage learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom and its implications for post-pandemic teaching – A case study of township secondary schools

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ABSTRACT

Discipline in the classroom has an impact on learner performance. School indiscipline reduces instructional contact hours since more time is spent regulating behaviour, rather than teaching. This disruptive behaviour or other forms of misconduct are typically detrimental to learners who have lost the culture of respect and trust toward educators. The purpose of this study was to identify the factors contributing towards learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom, categorize how those factors impact the teaching and learning process and their implications to the schooling system. This qualitative study followed a phenomenological research approach where semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were utilized to collect data at three secondary schools at Kutloanong. Learners, teachers and principals from three selected township high schools of Lejweleputswa district participated in the study. Data was categorised and thematically analysed. Findings revealed family/home and societal factors, school-related factors, and curriculum-related factors as the main contributing factors toward learners' disruptive behaviour. It is recommended that school governing bodies (SGB), school management teams (SMT), parents, and teachers establish programs and techniques for dealing with disruptive behaviour. This research will contribute to the scholarship by adding to the understanding of how to deal with disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The Department of Education (DoE) could use the findings to ensure that measures are taken to ensure that learner behaviour is monitored in schools.

Keywords: Academic performance, behaviour, classroom management, culture, discipline

INTRODUCTION

For a long time, indiscipline among learners in schools has been a source of concern for teachers, policymakers, and the public. The incidence and seriousness of indiscipline in schools are a worldwide issue.¹ This issue has not always been as concerning, particularly in South African high schools.

¹ Petro Marais and Corinne Meier, "Disruptive Behaviour in the Foundation Phase of Schooling," *South African Journal of Education* 30, no. 1 (2010).

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According to Jacobsen, the prevalence of disruptive behaviour in South African schools is becoming a severe concern for teachers.²

Learners' disobedient behaviour is typically linked to a lack of respect for adults, particularly teachers. "Gone are the days when a black African child treated elderly people with respect and reverence regardless of whether they were related or not."³ Well-behaved children are a thing of the past in an African setting. "A shift in attitude toward indiscipline is essential to restore order and discipline in schools. Evidence demonstrates that effective learning and teaching cannot take place without punishment in a school context.

In the past, corporal punishment was used as a deterrent for ill-discipline among learners and to preserve classroom discipline.⁴ As physical punishment is a violation of human rights, the South African government prohibited it after 1994.⁵ The South African School Act prohibits corporal punishment (Act 84 of 1996). Everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman, or humiliating manner, according to Section 12 of the South African Act 108 of 1996.⁶ The SGB gave parents the authority to create a code of conduct for learners in schools. The SGB is empowered by sections 8 and 20 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 to make decisions on school policy and discipline. This study sought to investigate strategies to manage learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom and its implications for post-pandemic teaching.

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify the factors contributing towards learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom and its implications for post-pandemic teaching.
- Categorize how those factors impact the teaching and learning process in township secondary schools.
- Determine the different types of learners' disruptive behavior as viewed by the teachers in the township secondary school.
- Recommend the strategies that the school can utilize to rectify learners' disruptive behavior in township secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disruptive Behavior

Behavior that disrupts classes, demeans others, or generally breaks social or legal norms is referred to as disruptive behavior or misbehaviour. Any conduct that upsets teachers' learning processes and infringes learners' and teachers' rights to teaching is disruptive behavior.⁷ Since learner misbehaviour and emotional disturbance have increased over the past 20 years, many teachers have developed a sense of disdain towards disobedient learners in the classroom.⁸ Rasheed asserts that in addition to negatively affecting their own learning, disruptive learner behavior also negatively impacts the learning and engagement of the other learners in the class.⁹ It also contributes to schools losing instructional and administrative time, negatively affects teachers' responses, and negatively affects learners' disruptive behavior.¹⁰

² Kari Jacobsen, "Educators' Experiences with Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom" (University of St. Thomas, 2013).

³ Jacobsen, "Educators' Experiences with Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom."

⁴ Ndinannyi Eunice Singo, "Teachers' Perceptions on Alternatives to Corporal Punishment in Vhembe District" (Central University of Technology, Free State, 2017); Vusumzi Nelson Ncontsa and Almon Shumba, "The Nature, Causes and Effects of School Violence in South African High Schools," *South African Journal of Education* 33, no. 3 (2013): 1–15.

⁵ Mark Hunter and Robert Morrell, "Corporal Punishment and Gender Equality: Regimes of Care and Rights in South African Schools," *Journal of Gender Studies* 30, no. 3 (2021): 344–57.

⁶ Jacobsen, "Educators' Experiences with Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom."

⁷ Walifa Rasheed-Karim, "Wellbeing, Policy and Practice among Further Education Teachers.," *Psychology Teaching Review* 24, no. 1 (2018): 3–14.

⁸ Chingching Chang, "Imagery Fluency and Narrative Advertising Effects," *Journal of Advertising* 42, no. 1 (2013): 54–68.

⁹ Rasheed-Karim, "Wellbeing, Policy and Practice among Further Education Teachers."

¹⁰ Chang, "Imagery Fluency and Narrative Advertising Effects."

Ogando et al. contend that children's academic performance and the growth of their attentive, persistent, and motivated skills are negatively impacted by learners' disruptive behavior.¹¹ Hossain found that 73% of parents and 85% of teachers in the United States thought that the majority of children's learning experiences are negatively impacted by a small number of disruptive learners.¹² Learners' social and academic backgrounds aid in our comprehension of their behavior.

Latif found that the majority of teachers employed a variety of techniques, such as threatening, disciplining, and punishing learners as well as using innovative questioning, teaching civics lessons, and engaging in activities to manage disruptive behaviour.¹³ Teachers must use psychological strategies to deal with learners' disruptive behavior. Latif believes that school learners are at the peer group stage, teenagers, emotionally very difficult, and socially very disturbed due to limitations from parents, elders and teachers. They cause a lot of problems in schools, so it is necessary to investigate the causes of their disruptive behavior in order to comprehend the causes and develop effective management strategies.¹⁴

Disruptive behaviour and the classroom context

It is rare for behavior to be expressed in school to occur alone; it is always part of a larger context. Rarely can the behaviour be ascribed to one specific source, and it may be a reflection of both the learner's and the teacher's personalities as well as how the classroom and educational programs are set up and carried out.¹⁵

The demands placed on learners in the complex, dynamic, and social contexts of the classroom include when to talk, when to be quiet, when to be active, and when to be still. When a learner engages in disruptive behavior, it may be because they are in a specific situation in the classroom, they are seated with a particular group of learners, the class period is long, they are expected to work on a particular task or subject, or they are given a particularly challenging task.¹⁶ Kubat and Dedebeali state that disruptive behavior in the classroom is the result of complicated interactions.¹⁷ Learners constantly interact with their surroundings, and their surroundings have an impact on them. The interaction is dynamic and reciprocal. Kubat and Dedebeali further state that children who act out in school frequently do so as a result of receiving unfavourable attention from others and frequently failing academically, which can lead to low self-esteem and poor coping mechanisms.¹⁸ The learners who exhibit the behavior may have entered a vicious cycle in which the activity can bring about unfavourable attention, which in turn may lead to the release of yet another disruptive behavior. Khasinah notes that it is vital to look beyond the behavior portrayed and that the source of disruption can vary.¹⁹ It is possible that a learner's interpretation of the conduct and the motivation behind it will be different from the professors' interpretation.

Although a teacher may view the conduct as disruptive, the learner may have been bored or found the assignment to be too difficult, for example, and was trying to get rid of that sensation by participating in some alternative behavior. Depending on the learner, this behavior may range from

¹¹ María José Ogando Portela and Kirrily Pells, "Risks and Protective Factors for Children Experiencing Adverse Events," in *Growing up in Poverty: Findings from Young Lives* (Springer, 2014), 71–94.

¹² Sarowar Hossain, "Effect of Regulatory Changes on Auditor Independence and Audit Quality," *International Journal of Auditing* 17, no. 3 (2013): 246–64.

¹³ Muhammad M M Abdel Latif, "Unresolved Issues in Defining and Assessing Writing Motivational Constructs: A Review of Conceptualization and Measurement Perspectives," *Assessing Writing* 42 (2019): 100417.

¹⁴ Latif, "Unresolved Issues in Defining and Assessing Writing Motivational Constructs: A Review of Conceptualization and Measurement Perspectives."

¹⁵ V. Anuradha and R. Pushkala, "Disruptive Behaviour Managing the Challenges and Issues. A Case Study," *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation* 24, no. 5 (2020): 245–68.

¹⁶ Lwazi Sibanda and Mabhena Mpofu, "Positive Discipline Practices in Schools: A Case of Mzilikazi District Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 7, no. 3 (2017).

¹⁷ Ulas Kubat and Nurhak Cem Dedebeali, "Opinions of Science Teachers for Classroom Management.," *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research* 5, no. 2 (2018): 110–17.

¹⁸ Kubat and Dedebeali, "Opinions of Science Teachers for Classroom Management."

¹⁹ Siti Khasinah, "Managing Disruptive Behavior of Students in Language Classroom," *Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2017): 79–89.

struggling to stay seated to staring out the window. So, it may be crucial to research not only the child who exhibits the behavior but also the environments that encourage it, such as the classroom.²⁰

Many elements that could encourage disruptive behavior in the classroom are mentioned by Sibanda and Mpofu.²¹ Kubat and Dedeali connect it to the learner, the peer group in class, the learning environment, and the teacher.²² According to Khasinah, a learner may interrupt class in an effort to avoid failing or in order to gain the teacher's or their peers' attention.²³ There is a theory that the class-peer group is affected by contagious group behavior or by provocation from other learners. It is assumed that the conditions are boring in the learning environment. When a learning task needs sustained attention, a learner may start to fidget or move around. This is especially true if the material is thought to be difficult, unappealing, or meaningless.

When asked to do assignments on subjects they do not understand, feel serve no purpose, or find uninteresting, a learner may become disconcerted. The learner's disruption may also be influenced by the teacher. For instance, if the teacher behaves in a way that the learners see as ambiguous or unjust, they may respond in kind.²⁴

Kubat and Dedeali affirm that it is untrue that learners only seek attention, lack motivation, or have a negative attitude. They further interpret the challenging conduct as a response to expectations being placed on the learner that go beyond his or her ability to react appropriately to the circumstance and view the behavior demonstrated as a reaction to the skills youngsters may be lacking.²⁵

Anuradha and Pushkala highlight that if the teacher is aware of the abilities the learner is lacking, it will be simpler to understand why they are challenging in class.²⁶ Academic issues could be the root of disruptive behavior. In other words, a variety of justifications and implications have been advanced for the disruptive behavior that has been seen in the classroom.

The Impact of Covid-19 On Learners' Behaviour

Munawaroh and Nurmalarari agree that the physical separation required during the pandemic sparked questions about how Covid-19 may influence occupants' perceptions of and use of space, as well as how the architecture of public spaces will need to be modified.²⁷ Manea and Gări-Neguț suggest that redesigning floor plans as a quick and low-cost strategy to guarantee minimum distance and maximum occupant capacity,²⁸ despite the fact that others have suggested engineering techniques to improve air quality through natural or mechanical ventilation.²⁹ In light of this, the majority of schools have worked to preserve the continuity of the educational process and have created COVID-19 safety criteria, which include sitting arrangements for their indoor areas employing particular limits and desk spacing.

Classrooms, a crucial component of an academic institution, play a key role in learners' learning processes by offering a setting that improves their learning experience and supports their intellectual and academic growth. Learners who are seated according to their needs and preferences tend to stay in class longer and are more motivated, which affects their moods and capacity for learning.³⁰

Goldman et al. highlight that the way people used the indoor environment, or their relationship to the space, altered during the pandemic, and it is expected that this will also happen with how people

²⁰ Anuradha and Pushkala, "Disruptive Behaviour Managing the Challenges and Issues. A Case Study."

²¹ Sibanda and Mpofu, "Positive Discipline Practices in Schools: A Case of Mzilikazi District Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe."

²² Kubat and Dedeali, "Opinions of Science Teachers for Classroom Management."

²³ Khasinah, "Managing Disruptive Behavior of Students in Language Classroom."

²⁴ Sibanda and Mpofu, "Positive Discipline Practices in Schools: A Case of Mzilikazi District Secondary Schools in Zimbabwe."

²⁵ Kubat and Dedeali, "Opinions of Science Teachers for Classroom Management."

²⁶ Anuradha and Pushkala, "Disruptive Behaviour Managing the Challenges and Issues. A Case Study."

²⁷ Eem Munawaroh and Yuli Nurmalarari, "Student Resilience after Pandemic: Learning Loss Recovery," *Psikoeduko: Jurnal Psikologi Edukasi Dan Konseling* 1, no. 2 (2021): 1–10.

²⁸ Claudia-Neptina Manea and Oana Gări-Neguț, "When 'Face-to-Face' Is No Longer an Option: Classroom Management Challenges during the Covid-19 Pandemics," *Educational Challenges* 26, no. 2 (2021): 13–25.

²⁹ David T Marshall, David M Shannon, and Savanna M Love, "How Teachers Experienced the COVID-19 Transition to Remote Instruction," *Phi Delta Kappan* 102, no. 3 (2020): 46–50.

³⁰ Anna Dabrowski, "Teacher Wellbeing during a Pandemic: Surviving or Thriving?," 2020.

use classrooms.³¹ So, a deeper comprehension of these areas is necessary to ensure the learners' health, well-being, and pleasure with the classes.³²

Nearly every element of life, from sleep and energy levels to mood and level of productivity, is influenced by our indoor environment. In contrast, exposure to appropriate lighting can help to enhance mental states, reduce stress and anxiety, and boost mood and productivity. For example, poor indoor quality has been associated with cognitive impairment, stress, depression, and even suicidal propensity this contributed towards learners' disruptive behaviour.

Lohmann et al. state that for learners' mental health and wellbeing, it is crucial to create environments that meet their needs and expectations.³³ This is especially true after a period like the pandemic, which increased cases of learners' anxiety and depression from 22 to 27% and 30 to 44%, respectively, while globally increasing the prevalence of both conditions by 25%. Uncertainty exists around the manner in which learners have resumed their activities and used classrooms following the lifting of the limitations put in place to stop the coronavirus from spreading.

Negative Implications of Learner Disruptive Behavior

The benefits of disruptive learner behavior in the classroom are clearly minimal. As was already said, these distractions cause a breach in the learning environment and make it harder to achieve the overall objective of education. Disruptive learner behavior generally has a negative effect on teaching and also reduces learners' ability to learn.³⁴

Negative effects on teaching

Negative behaviour reduces the amount of educational time available to teachers who are trying to follow strict curricular structures while undermining their power to govern the boundaries of the classroom. According to Director's Circular P35, over 20% of teachers polled by the American Federation of Teachers believed they missed two to three hours of education per week, and 17% felt they lost upwards of four hours of instruction in a single week due to disruptive learner behavior.³⁵

Stress among teachers is also linked to the problem of disruptive learner behavior. A teacher may experience unpleasant, negative emotions, such as wrath, worry, tension, annoyance, or despair, as a result of some aspect of their work as a teacher. According to a study done with classroom teachers from three schools in the same city, disruptive learner behavior is a major source of stress for many teachers.³⁶ This work-related stress can emerge as strain on both personal and professional relationships as well as harm to a person's mental and physical health.

Evidence also points to a connection between disruptive learner behavior and teacher attrition. Although there are many factors, such as inadequate pay and strict demands from the school management, that drive teachers to leave their jobs, disruptive learner behavior is also identified as a factor. According to Director's Circular P35. (2018), 44% of those who left the profession and 53% of those who transferred to another school both cited learner behavior as the reason for their decisions.³⁷ Lentfer and Franks state that "experiences with learners among starting teachers are frequently seen as one element that determines beginning teacher turnover and retention."³⁸ This factor focuses on problems with classroom management. It is realistic to expect that disruptive behavior by learners in the classroom can have a negative effect on even seasoned teachers, leading to many of them being irritated and frustrated and ultimately prompting them to leave the classroom.

³¹ Samantha E Goldman, Jamie B Finn, and Melissa J Leslie, "Classroom Management and Remote Teaching: Tools for Defining and Teaching Expectations," *TEACHING Exceptional Children* 54, no. 6 (2022): 404–13.

³² Lorna Hepburn, Wendi Beamish, and Clair L Alston-Knox, "High School Teacher Perceptions of Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices for Classroom Management," *Teacher Development* 25, no. 5 (2021): 669–86.

³³ Marla J Lohmann, Kathleen M Randolph, and Ji Hyun Oh, "Classroom Management Strategies for Hyflex Instruction: Setting Students up for Success in the Hybrid Environment," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 49, no. 5 (2021): 807–14.

³⁴ Victoria Lentfer and Bridget A Franks, "The Redirect Behavior Model and the Effects on Pre-Service Teachers' Self-Efficacy," *Journal of Education and Practice* 6, no. 35 (2015): 71.

³⁵ Director's Circular P35, *Disciplinary Procedure in School* (Harare: Government Printers, 2018).

³⁶ Lentfer and Franks, "The Redirect Behavior Model and the Effects on Pre-Service Teachers' Self-Efficacy."

³⁷ Director's Circular P35, *Disciplinary Procedure in School*.

³⁸ Lentfer and Franks, "The Redirect Behavior Model and the Effects on Pre-Service Teachers' Self-Efficacy."

Negative effects for learners

Behavior disruptions in the classroom have far-reaching impacts that extend beyond the disruptive learner. According to Jati et al., disruptive learner behavior has an impact on other learners' ability to succeed academically in the same environment as well as the child who is engaging in the disruptive behavior.³⁹ When a child interrupts class by talking loudly or distracting other learners who are trying to participate in activities, the teacher must spend extra time dealing with that learner and managing the problem.

This situation decreases the likelihood of education, and it is only reasonable that learners who are not considered disruptive may perform worse academically as a result.⁴⁰ According to the assumption that elementary-aged learners are frequently impacted socially by their peers, supplementary research asserts that non-disruptive learners may lose interest in learning when their friends are distracting. Both the negative consequences of disruptive learner behaviour and its root causes are widespread.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Choice Theory

William Glasser, a well-known American psychologist and psychiatrist, created Choice Theory. According to Glasser, behavior is a decision made by a person based on his or her feelings and wants, and thus is not determined or controlled by external conditions.⁴¹ To put it another way, each person has the power to choose how he or she will respond to the demands of the social and physical environment. Humans should thus be seen as self-determining beings who take responsibility for the consequences of their actions, rather than as victims or slaves of circumstance. According to Choice Theory, teachers cannot directly regulate learner behavior since students choose how to react to their feelings. Teachers can assist learners in identifying the situations that cause them to act out, allowing them to adjust their responses to those sentiments. Their actions will change as a result of this.⁴²

For the purpose of this study, the rational choice theory was used to understand the strategies teachers may use to manage learner disruptive behaviour in the classroom post the pandemic. Acheson states that individuals employ logical calculations to make rational choices and attain outcomes that are compatible with their own personal goals, according to rational choice theory.⁴³ The findings are also linked to optimizing one's own self-interest. Given the restricted options available, rational choice theory is supposed to produce results that offer people with the most benefit and happiness.⁴⁴

Three notions were examined in rational choice theory: rational agents, self-interest, and the invisible hand.⁴⁵ Rationality can be utilized as a foundation for human behavior in a variety of areas other than economics. Political science, sociology, and philosophy all employ it.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative research approach. For the purpose of this study, the researcher followed an interpretative paradigm, which enabled the researcher to observe the world from the perspectives and experiences of the participants. The researcher modified a case study technique for himself. Single

³⁹ Anida Fadhillah Jati, Endang Fauziati, and Agus Wijayanto, "Why Do the Students Do Disruptive Behavior in English Classroom? A Case Study on Senior High School Students in One of the Small Town in Indonesia," *International Journal of Language Teaching and Education* 3, no. 2 (2019): 130–41.

⁴⁰ Jati, Fauziati, and Wijayanto, "Why Do the Students Do Disruptive Behavior in English Classroom? A Case Study on Senior High School Students in One of the Small Town in Indonesia."

⁴¹ William Glasser, *Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*. (HarperPerennial, 1999).

⁴² Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being.," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 68–78, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>.

⁴³ James M Acheson, "Rational Choice, Culture Change, and Fisheries Management in the Gulf of Maine," in *Research in Economic Anthropology* (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2002), 133–59.

⁴⁴ Bob Sullo, *Activating the Desire to Learn* (ASCD, 2007).

⁴⁵ S. Lindenberg, "Social Rationality versus Rational Egoism," in *Handbook of Sociological Theory*, ed. J. Turner (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Press, 2001), 635–68.

Participants

The participants were chosen using non-probability and selective methods. The target population for this study were thirty learners, ten teachers, six DHs and three principals from three township secondary schools at Kutloanong in Lejweleputswa District.

Data instruments

In-depth, one-on-one interviews and focus-group interviews are the most common interview forms used by qualitative researchers. Semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used in the research.

Ethical considerations

The researcher received ethical approval from the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee (FRIC) of the Faculty of Humanities at the Central University of Technology, Free State, which was the first step in obtaining informed consent. This was necessary to do research under the guidance of the supervisor, who is at the Central University of Technology, Free State. Following that, approval to conduct research was obtained from the Department Head of the Free State's Department of Basic Education. The researcher sent out consent letters to the participants and the pertinent School Principals before any data collection at various research sites started.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 1: *What are the factors contributing towards learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom and its implications for post-pandemic teaching?*

Learner performance is impacted by classroom discipline. A lack of discipline in the classroom results in fewer hours of education since more time is spent controlling conduct than on instruction. The problem of school indiscipline has persisted over time. The majority of teachers arrive at work lacking motivation due to the challenges they encounter when delivering classes. Teachers are supposed to be productive even in situations where the behavior of the learners makes things unpleasant. Parents and schools do not favor the present government law that encourages school governing bodies to enforce discipline in the classroom. Four main factors were highlighted and they are as follows: school-related factors, curriculum-related factors, home-related factors and social-related factors.

School-related factors state that for the teaching and learning process to be successful, strict disciplinary measures are necessary for effective classroom management. The results demonstrated that more learners in public schools exhibit disruptive behavior since the majority of them lack good discipline. Teachers who have unruly learners may become burned out because they find it too difficult to stick to their original lesson plan and instead punish disruptive behavior. Because policies favor learners over teachers, learners act as they like. According to Närhi et al., a number of teachers perceived learner discipline policies as barriers to effectively handling improper behavior.⁴⁶

The literature review stipulated that it is difficult to manage time for curriculum coverage because of the time taken by disruptive learner behaviours, which are made worse by, among other things, overcrowding as a curriculum-related factor. It is more difficult for teachers to keep an eye on learners in packed classes, especially when some learners are known to participate in illegal activities. Participants indicated that *"There are learners who disturb teaching and learning. Sharing a class with more than 65 learners. Sharing everything in the classroom."* L16 *"Sharing the same classroom with more numbers of learners leads to noise, which causes some learners to lose concentration in the classroom."* L23

The responses to open-ended questionnaires indicated that negative school-related factors exacerbate the already existing problem of learners' disruptive behaviour. The findings further prove that overcrowded classrooms negatively impact learners' performance. The demands placed on learners in the complex, dynamic, and social contexts of the classroom include when to talk, when to be quiet,

⁴⁶ Vesa Närhi et al., "Reducing Disruptive Behaviours and Improving Learning Climates with Class-Wide Positive Behaviour Support in Middle Schools," *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 30, no. 2 (2015): 274–85.

when to be active, and when to be still. *“In the school classrooms, we can be more than 50 in the classroom because the school don't have enough classrooms for the children.”*L5

The study indicates that learners' distraction during the teaching and learning process is largely caused by other learners' disruptive behavior. Due to this, learners are unable to complete their homework to the best of their abilities. According to the study, disruptive behavior causes individuals to get so distracted that they give up on whatever they are doing and become totally unfocused. This is unfortunate because learning is the first step toward achievement. The findings state that disruptive behavior has a negative impact on them since it is challenging to cope in such situations.

The results showed learners come from a variety of backgrounds and homes (home related factor). The learner's academic achievement may suffer as a result. Participant L1 stated that *“A learner might not be able to attend school accordingly because of home situations. A learner's home life and family background can affect the learner academically and overall educational experiences.”*

Some aspects of their upbringing are so distressing that they follow the learners around, even if they are far from home. This psychological impact prevents the learner from focusing in class. The learner's family can have a big impact on their behavior because they are their closest network of support. Both the literature review and the findings support the idea that home-related issues influence learners' behavior in the classroom. Another participant, L19, said that *“Learners are constantly disruptive because of the way things are at home e.g Parents abusing one another or certainly them being abused or not taken care of, so they try by all means to get attention.”*

The results show that some learners originate from areas where drug use, violence, and abuse are commonplace. They see and do things that could have an effect on their mental health. According to Khasinah, disruptive behaviors are those that deviate from cultural standards, such as those found in the classroom or in the school's culture.⁴⁷ Whether they are spoken or not, every culture has its own moral code, standards, and behavioral expectations. Some behaviors, including attacking a peer or teacher, are more or less seen to be equally serious across cultures. L3 highlighted that *“Well, socially related factors are mostly the ones to have an efficacy in the behaviour of learners because of peer pressure to end up drinking and doing other things as well. Some get abused by people in the streets eg. rape, sexual harassment and others as well.”* The gravity of these actions varies throughout groups.

Social-related factors are one of the factors that state that peer pressure has an impact on learners' disruptive conduct, since learners who behave well tend to associate with other well-behaved learners. The participants showed that learners are motivated to join disruptive learning groups because they want to fit in with specific groups. Peer pressure kills the majority of young people (learners) since it is hard for them to resist being affected. According to the study, the majority of learners lack the strength of character to stick up for what they believe in, so they follow their friends' positions and yield to peer pressure.

Disruptive behaviour factors hinder learners' positive behaviour as it has a lot of negative influence. The study found that peer pressure contributes to a high volume of learners' disruptive behaviour within the classroom. The study continued to present that learners who are ill-disciplined are more likely to influence learners who are well behaved. The verbal quotes below support the above statement. *“Most of the time, I get distracted by my friends, and I want to make them happy. That affects my time for learning. I can't make time to study, and I can't make time to have fun. Most of the time, I don't manage my time, I let people/friend to manage my time for me.”*L22 *“The type of friends you associate yourself with may influence you to behave like them. Places you go to may also contribute to your disruptive behaviour.”* L26

Learners come from different backgrounds and display different behaviour. All learners at school should be treated equally and with love so that there may be no need to be disruptive. Learners with poor performance due to the disruptive behaviour should be prioritised as they will affect the school's goal. Learners with disruptive behaviour must be reprimanded as soon as possible because they influence other learners. *“Learners are constantly disruptive because of the way things are at home, e.g.*

⁴⁷ Khasinah, “Managing Disruptive Behavior of Students in Language Classroom.”

Parents abusing one another or certainly them being abused or not taken care of, so they try by all means to get attention.” L19

Research question 2: How do those factors impact the teaching and learning process in township secondary schools?

The question was about the impact of factors on learners' disruptive behaviour. The key factors resulting from the study data collection tools were that the factors influence learners' disruptive behaviour negatively. The impact included the low performance, lack of concentration, and emotional impact on the learners, while teachers experienced poor performance, time-consuming and not completing lessons or ATP. In order to guarantee the achievement of the learner, parents and the school must collaborate. Parental and school engagement may shed more light on and provide solutions for handling troublesome learners. The evaluation of the literature recommended that teachers and parents collaborate to track the progress of learners, and it has been demonstrated that learners do better when their parents are actively involved in their education.⁴⁸

Teachers spend more of their teaching time reprimanding the disruptive learners. Over and above that, teachers deal with the issue of overcrowded classes, which makes it more difficult and time-consuming as well. DH2 supported by saying *“that I perceive disruptiveness to be so I intended to use an hour to deliver 5 concepts so somebody decides to disrupt that for 20 minutes so I shall not cover the curriculum if the disruptive behaviour perpetuates, especially for a longer period of time.”* Teaching and learning time can never be overlooked, as teachers must teach according to the lesson plan and ATP. *“It impacts our academic performance negatively, as the teachers may have to stop teaching and reprimand the disruptive learner/learners. It sometimes consumes much time as this kind of learners need to be taken to the principal's office, although time is going by,”* said L18. Due to the challenges brought forth by the learners' disruptive behaviour, most teachers do not complete the ATP, which becomes a challenge. Participant P3 said *“Poor performance and you would find that teachers don't complete the ATP because they spend a lot of time dealing with learner behaviour.”*

The literature stated that learners' disruptive behavior not only affects learners' performance but also affects teachers' well-being. Literature continues to state that there is a connection between the issue of disruptive learner behavior and teacher stress. Some aspects of teaching might cause a teacher to feel unpleasant and negative emotions, including anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or hopelessness. L3 said *“They influence me in a negative way as a learner because it is not easy to cope with their disruptive behaviours it affects me emotionally... “This affects me emotionally because having a disruptive behaviour can lead to a life with no bright/successful future, with some regrets and failing in class.”* L7. *“Such things cause a lot of anger and hatred in me, knowing that these are the things that really influence me, and I cannot sort them out, but instead, why not join them, and I fail.”* L14. A study conducted found that a significant cause of stress for many teachers is learners disruptive behavior. Workplace stress can manifest as strain on one's personal and professional relationships, as well as negative effects on one's physical and mental well-being.⁴⁹

Behavior disruptions in the classroom have far-reaching impacts that extend beyond the disruptive learner. According to Jati et al., disruptive learner behavior has an impact on other learners' ability to succeed academically in the same environment as well as the child who is engaging in the disruptive behaviour.⁵⁰ L2 stated that *“.... I would be failing that subject because of a topic I do not understand, or get low marks.....me in a way of being demotivated and not performing well.”* I sometimes get disturbed when I am studying because some learners will be making noise in the class, like singing and running in the class, so my academic performance will drop because I will not be able to study enough while we are given some time to study at school.” L30. When a child interrupts class by talking loudly or distracting other learners who are trying to participate in activities, the teacher must

⁴⁸ Martin Banda and Godfrey Mweemba, “The Nature of Deviant Behaviour Patterns That Are Prevalent among Pupils in Secondary Schools in Zambia: A Case of Central Province,” *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education* 3, no. 10 (2016): 57–64.

⁴⁹ Lentfer and Franks, “The Redirect Behavior Model and the Effects on Pre-Service Teachers' Self-Efficacy.”

⁵⁰ Jati, Fauziati, and Wijayanto, “Why Do the Students Do Disruptive Behavior in English Classroom? A Case Study on Senior High School Students in One of the Small Town in Indonesia.”

spend extra time dealing with that learner and managing the problem participant. L28 said, *“it affects me because when people are fighting in front of you, you become traumatised and you cannot focus on your studies. When the learners are making noise in the classroom, you lose focus on what you want to learn.”*

Research question 3: *What are the different types of learners’ disruptive behaviour as viewed by the teachers in township secondary schools?*

Participants gave the examples of violent and confrontational behavior on the part of learners, including using any tool in a class to fight with, having harsh arguments with teachers, threatening other learners, turning on music in class, and questioning the authority of teachers. However, these kinds of inappropriate behaviors are rarely reported. Dealing with this misbehavior gets challenging if it happens. Learners demonstrate a range of actions, including snatching other learners' attention, obstructing others, not finishing their work, whining, and refusing to do it. In addition, they utilize their mobile gadgets in class, act bored, wander around the room, and ignore what their teachers are saying.

Marzulina discovered nine distinct types of misbehavior: fighting with others, rushing about the classroom, bullying, vandalism, self-failure, destroying one's own property, and harming the school's equipment.⁵¹ Abeygunawardena and Vithanapathirana list the following as examples of learner misbehaviors: clowning, verbally abusing classmates, harassing peers, engaging harshly with teachers, chronic procrastination, interfering with instructional activities, and resistance.⁵²

Research question 4: *Which strategies do school utilize to rectify learners’ disruptive behaviour in township secondary schools?*

This question was posed to learn how the school minimise learners’ disruptive behaviour. There are some strategies that are highlighted, even though the theoretical part was not included. It was discovered that the schools used the following as their strategies: excused from the class, individual counselling session, parents meeting, suspension and cleaning the toilets. The findings continue to highlight that schools should provide learners with counselling, so that they may express their feelings and bring into the light what might be the cause of the disruptive behavior and get assistance. P2 stated that *“... then we use the social workers and we even intervene with the adopted cop so that the learner can get the necessary help at times, our learners we have learnt.”* There are educational psychologists and school social workers who work closely with the school to provide support to the learners who are in need of their help. DH2 highlighted that *“we also invoke the functionality of the district’s support team, they’ve got good psychologies there, they’ve good personnel sometimes for counselling and whatever that, so basically in a nutshell the policies are assisting us.”* This could contribute positively towards improved learners’ behavior and performance.

The findings indicated that the school management would first speak with learners in an effort to determine what might be causing such behavior. In the event that the issue cannot be resolved at that level, they refer it to other pertinent parties for assistance, such as social workers. Calling parent meetings is one of those tactics since parental involvement in their children's education is crucial and greatly aids in instilling positive behavior in their offspring DH1 and DH5 supported by saying *“We usually call the parents, but it depends on the type of misconduct the learner is engaged in and then usually we call the parents and then we try to minimise this disruptive behaviour.”* DH1. And *“We support each other by going to the classroom or calling the parents together with teachers so that they can talk to the learners and parents must also hear what their children are doing at school, and give advice to the learners so that they can open up to teachers when they misbehave.”* DH5. Should the disruptive behavior persist despite multiple attempts to address it, the principal will use the highest level of the code of conduct, which entails a 7–10 day suspension for the learner. *“Definitely should be to ensure that the code of conduct is implemented to the latter that is the only policy that can assist us as*

⁵¹ Lenny Marzulina, “Challenges in Teaching English,” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 11, no. 12 (2021): 1581–89.

⁵² K. A. Vidyanjalie Abeygunawardena and M. V. Vithanapathirana, “The Role of Teacher to Address Issues of Disruptive Behaviour of Student Learners in Mathematics Classrooms: A Study in the Sri Lankan Context,” *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning* 2, no. 3 (2019): 152–73.

the school.” P1. Another participant mentioned that the policies are used and important to the school. “...we just use the policies, schools code of conduct...” P2. The study states that having disruptive learners maintain the school's environment and wash the restrooms for a month is one of the greatest ways to deal with their behavior.

Although school management was not proficient in utilizing all the theoretical methods' elements, they were not even implemented. Data collected showed that, despite some participants' accusations that school management failed them by not offering them enough support to learners, the theoretical framework employed in this study is beneficial in managing learners' disruptive behavior. Still, it is affordable and functional. It makes sense for other school management to implement it since it greatly reduces learners' disruptive behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the literature and collected data, the researcher proposed the following recommendations to manage learners' disruptive behaviour. The school and DBE should address the lack of learning materials at the school. The schools the researcher was dealing with are in quintile 2, which means they are covered by Section 20, in which the state provides funds to the school, and the Department fulfills its promise by distributing the resources to the school. The availability of resources will increase learners' morale and improve their behaviors because there will be no more sharing in class, which generates a lot of distractions.

School management should arrange meetings with parents to emphasize the importance of parental involvement in school. They should be valued, made to feel comfortable, and given the opportunity to express their feelings. Teachers should engage with parents in a respectful and supportive manner, making them feel as if they own the school. They will be able to collaborate with teachers in this way, improving their lives. The principal and SMT should collaborate to support teachers dealing with disruptive behavior, since happy teachers lead to happy learners. To ensure that quality education is provided, an open-door policy should be implemented between all school workers and the Department of Education. SMT and teachers should prioritize fostering emotional components in learners to promote positive behavior. They should encourage learners to cultivate happy feelings in order to increase their behavior. To make things easier for learners, teachers, and school management should instill a pleasant spirit in the school environment. Furthermore, teaching learners the value of confidence, trust, and eager knowledge may help them behave positively.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors contributing towards learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom, categorize how those factors impact the teaching and learning process and their implications to the schooling system. This study has demonstrated that, more intriguingly, disruptive behavior in the classroom can be caused by both teachers and learners. This has a negative effect on the environment of the classroom, the instruction provided by the teachers, and the learning of the learners. The current research supports the idea that one of the main issues in education is the disruptive behavior of learners. It also came to attention that when classmates act inappropriately in class, not only do teachers feel burdened, but learners do as well. Various strategies have been provided to manage learners with disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

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