

## **Effect of Behaviour Modification Strategies on Secondary School Students' Classroom Misbehaviour**

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### **Abstract**

Misbehaviour in the classroom disrupts students' attention and affects the teaching-learning process. Every learner has certain needs, and when these needs are not addressed at a certain moment, students start doing something unusual during the class. The ways to deal with disruptive behaviours are to be explored and their effectiveness be gauged. Causal comparative research design was used to examine the effect of different strategies used by teachers for modification of unwanted behaviours of their students in the classroom. The perceptions of boys and girls about the classroom misbehaviors at secondary school level were also explored. The sample comprised of 408 secondary school students were randomly selected from 34 public secondary schools. A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings of the study show that students committed different misbehaviours like skipping class, sleeping in the classroom, blaming the teaching method and cheating in examinations. Teachers usually used different strategies to deal with such misbehaviors, including hand slapping, other corporal punishments, bending, and calling students names. The male and female students' have different perceptions about misbehaviors. The punitive strategies have a significant effect on students' misbehaviours. Instructional and advisory committees may be established in schools to advise teachers on the psychological needs of students. Teachers may be exposed to innovative strategies to deal with students' misbehaviour. The more courses regarding behavioral management may be added in the curriculum of teacher training programs.

**Keywords:** *Classroom misbehaviour, Motives of misbehaviour, behavioural modification strategies*

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## Introduction

The classroom is becoming challenging day by day for the teachers to handle and teach the diverse learners. Teachers face diversity in the class and need specialized skills to celebrate this diversity. If learners' basic requirements are not addressed rightly, these shortfalls emerge as misbehaviour and cause the learner to suffer from various types of complexes. They show this aggression by misbehaving with their classmates. Student misbehaviour in the classroom is a challenging and unavoidable situation for teachers. It takes a long time for teachers to solve this problem.

Classrooms misbehaviour is classified into four types (ABCD): Argument, breaking rules, conflict and disagreement. It is an unacceptable actions in which pupils satisfy one or more of the following criteria: Misbehaviour can be described using terms such as protection (avoiding failure), cheerfulness (joy), liberty (seeking effect), love (seeking attention), and enraged / avenger (Gilmore et al., 2019; Kyriacou & Roe, 2018; Maxwell, 2021; Stuart, 2020; Wheldhall & Merrett, 2021).

According to Charles (2008) and Lasley (2019), misbehaviour among students has a negative impact on their learning and training. Misbehaviour by pupils is a poor state of affairs in the classroom that can disturb teachers and students at the secondary school level. Adults' motivations for misbehaviour include recreation/fun, seeking attention, avoiding failure, gaining strength, and vengeance.

Theories of Coppersmith (1967) (Significance, competence & power), Brendtro et al. (1990/2002) (Belonging, mastery, independence and generosity), Glasser (1990) (Love, fun, power/freedom, and survival) and Kohn (1993) (Collaboration, content, choice and virtue) indicate that the non-fulfilment of the basic needs of individuals lead to misbehaviours. It arises when a learner believes that they have some needs like skills, independence, generosity, collaboration, content, choice, goodness/importance, ability/strength, love, enjoyment, and freedom. These can't be met by his or her instructors, parents, or classmates (Brendtro et al., 1990/2002; Coppersmith, 1967; Glasser, 1990; Kohn, 1993). Thorndike (1874-1949) and Skinner (1904-1990) were early behaviourists. Thorndike describes two laws, the law of effect (a rewarded behaviour will be repeated in the classroom) and the law of disuse (a non-rewarded behaviour will end). Skinner was particularly interested in operant conditioning (the link between behaviour and environmental events). He concentrates on assisting in the achievement of desired behaviour, and the behaviour is dependent on the outcome. These theories are used to build behaviour management strategy.

Teachers are unable to implement best strategies in the classroom unless they understand the causes for student misbehaviour. Studying misbehaviour at the secondary school level in Lahore is important for tailoring interventions, developing relevant policies, engaging the community, and ultimately improving educational outcomes and the well-being of students in the local context.

Students' misbehaviour, according to Myers and Holland (2020), is a problem that affects schools not just in the country but also throughout the world. International student misbehaviour has progressively increased over the last two decades. Arbuckle and Little (2021) investigate; misbehaviour can upset teachers or other classmates. It not only speeds up with time, but it also lowers academic success and promotes disorderly behaviour in secondary school. Many terms are used in the literature to describe students' misbehaviour, such as abuse, disciplinary violations, and disruptive behaviour.

If students perceive their fundamental needs are not being met in the classroom, they will misbehave. Aggression towards students or disruption of classroom attendance, constant avoidance of work, ridiculing intervention in instructional activities, and harassment of peers, verbal abuse, and rudeness to instructor, disobedience and hostility are all significant difficulties at the secondary school level. Misbehaviour commonly disturbs the normal operation of the learning process in the classrooms (Finn, Fish, & Scott, 2023; Polinsky, 2020; Rumberger, 2020).

According to Michael (2020) and Hong (2020), misbehaviour is an activity that hurts teachers, disrupts learning, and forces educators to constantly comment on students. Misbehaviour violates classroom norms, whether explicit or tacit. It disrupts the classroom environment, needed for teaching and learning. Belle (2022) claims that students like to be the centre of attention more than anything else. Making fun of others, verbally assaulting them, arguing back, or just refusing to cooperate are all ways to gain students' attention in the classroom. Teachers create a variety of strategies for enforcing classroom rules.

Bradshaw et al. (2020) articulates, for misbehaviour in the classroom, punitive (withdraw privileges/psychological punishment and corporal punishment) and non-punitive (reward, verbal praise, and building caring connections) as behavioural management strategies.

Misbehaviour in the classroom is addressed by teachers through genuine respect, fair consideration, and attentiveness. Education's relevance and knowledge growth can only be assured by successfully stimulating learner misbehaviour. Students are uneasy in a classroom where formal norms are strictly followed. They misbehave because they want to please themselves (Jenkins, 2022; Leung & Ho, 2021).

Sullivan et al. (2021) and Whitaker (2019) explain that teachers set up the classroom to instil values and provide motivation. The instructor motivates the pupils to collaborate during the educational process. If a teacher is unable to manage his or her class using different teaching techniques, the teaching process will be unsuccessful.

If teachers are unable to control classroom behaviour, they may not be able to use these strategies. Additionally, classroom management, classroom environment, and learner motivation can help teachers become more organized (Trussell, 2022). According to Yuan and Che (2020), encouraging students in the classroom can increase their enthusiasm for learning. Teachers pay attention in class, respect their students, communicate with disruptive students that need their help, and avoid labeling students as "good or bad."

Wheeler and Richey (2021) reported that for discussing a student's behaviour do it quietly. This is especially true for young individuals who must perform in front of their peers. Verbal praise (very excellent, congrats, good little girl/boy, yeah, that is true/correct) and the teacher repeating the student's answer in affirmation are used as rewards for high quality behaviour. Teachers pay special attention to parents and provide them chances to collaborate with others through presentations and exhibit work around the school. Dolan et al. (2020) explain how some forms of teacher behaviour encourages students to be disrespectful. Teachers who are disinterested cannot teach properly. They lack discipline and fair comparison.

Ghazi et al. (2021) state that there are six ways to manage a class: the teacher's method of presenting the lesson and voice, the teacher's physical appearance, lesson preparation and organization, the teacher's method of communicating with adults, the teacher's method of threatening, incentives, and punishments. As a consequence, in order to maintain the positive trend in the classroom, it must be used appropriately. According to Michael (2020) and Shann (2019), (14 to 17-year-old) students used aggressive language (swearing), insulted peers, and displayed other behaviours indicative of a hostile school environment. There were indicators that the youngsters didn't like each other. As some techniques for regaining control in the classroom, keep your eyes closed, never raise your voice, and have a sense of humour.

Effective classroom management was underlined by Stuart (2020) and Gilmore (2019). Teachers are mindful of the psychological and personal needs of their students. They put a lot of effort into creating a positive learning environment in the classroom. The development of behavioural standards among students to provide a pleasant learning environment is known as student care. Berti (2021) and Maxwell (2021) noted that certain teaching tactics consider physical punishment strategies, such as

whipping, slapping, kicking with the foot, and tapping with the fingers. These strategies are utilized at the secondary school level in the form of behavioural modification strategies. Teachers that call students names, utilize timeout techniques, pass remarks, switch students' seats, postpone classes, use harsh language, and highlight specific students have a positive impact on behaviour.

The causes of misbehaviour include media, curriculum/subject stream, instructional methods, poverty, location, and gender. Family pressure is another source of misbehaviour (Tsouloupas, Carson & MacGregor, 2021; Wheldall & Merrett, 2021; Zyngier, 2021).

These complexes lead to a wide range of misbehaviour in the classroom. According to the findings of this study, students in secondary school engage in a variety of misbehaviours such as skipping class or abandoning class. Students who believe that the classroom setting is unsuitable for them frequently skip lessons (Dolan et al., 2020; Pisacreta et al., 2019). When pupils are bored in class and the teacher's teaching style doesn't appeal to them, they begin to nod off in class (Wheldhall & Merrett, 2021). Students criticize the teaching technique, claiming they don't understand the procedures in a course they find uninteresting (Kagan & Scott, 2021). When students receive poor grades on tests or papers, they blame the teachers. According to Soodak, (2021) teachers do not understand the basic requirements of their pupils, which cause them to be uninterested in reading and to do poorly in tests and examinations. Failure is frequently not due to a lack of study and preparation, yet a lack of dedication can be a major reason of failure

Boys' classrooms are unruly (Rahman, 2022). Because Polinsky (2020) and Verkuyten (2020) argue that female teachers are more socially conscious, intelligible, accessible, and accountable than male teachers, girls are less abusive in the classroom. They are worried about students' misbehaviour and are aware of their pupils' fundamental needs and desires. That is why female (students) do not misbehave in class. According to Masling and Stern (2022), female instructors know more than male teachers about how to help students deal with misbehaviour.

As reported by Berti (2021), 70% of Pakistani teachers support the use of corporal punishment when dealing with aggressive students. The use of physical punishment as a teaching tool is a smack in the face. According to Durrant and Ensom (2020), slapping is completely outlawed in secondary schools, although Rahimi and Karkami (2019) advocate a constructive and communicative strategy. As Henly (2020) and Kounin (2022) stated that corporal punishment is necessary for misbehaviour. Physical punishment is not appropriate for classroom abuse since it causes pupils to feel upset and

creates no loving link between them (Skiba & Peterson, 2019). Parker et al. (2022) and Schleicher (2022) agree that Behaviour modification/teaching strategies have a positive effect on students' misbehaviour because when teachers use these strategies with students, misbehaviour decreases.

In conclusion, the useful strategies for dealing with students' misbehaviour in the classroom is to be completely aware of it, think about it, and manage the issue wisely. The quality of teaching and learning may be improved when student misbehaviour is effectively managed.

Students' misbehaviour causes serious problems, disrupting the classroom and wasting valuable time of teachers and class fellows involved in the teaching and learning process. The students' misbehaviour is not a new phenomenon but is a common practice in many of the classrooms where the desired needs of students are overlooked. Classroom misbehaviour is related to student separation, which is linked to alienation from teachers, classmates and parents. Classroom misbehaviour causes confusion for an activity, spoils the activity plan, and is totally inappropriate to the legal expectations of the school and teachers. As a result, tutors need to appreciate their role in monitoring students' misbehaviour and linking it to students' academic excellence. The main purpose of this study was to study the effect of different strategies in shaping the behaviour of secondary school students in the classroom.

### **Research Objectives**

This study was conducted to:

1. Identify the students' perceptions about their peers' misbehaviours at secondary school level.
2. Find out the students' perceptions about the use of strategies used to handle classroom misbehaviours at secondary school level.
3. Examine the effect of different behaviour management strategies on students' misbehaviour at secondary school level.
4. Explore the difference between male and female students' perception about classroom misbehaviours at secondary school level.

This study may be helpful in dealing with students' misbehaviours and provide solutions like effective classroom management strategies. This study may nurture awareness among teachers about their responsibilities and duties that are mandatory at the secondary school level. It is also hoped to provide teachers with a theoretical basis for managing classroom behavioural problems. It provides students as well as teachers with an understanding of unresolved classroom behavioural problems and

highlights classroom misbehaviour according to the unsuccessful approaches used by teachers.

The results of the study may help teachers, educators, parents and adults to understand the various cradles of classroom misbehaviours and to choose ways to simplify their teaching process and overcome these causes. The school administration may be able to take steps to overcome the problems by using effective strategies through this study. Finally, this study may provide more opportunities for researchers who are interested in this area. They will be able to acquire complete knowledge and solve classroom behavioural problems.

## Method and Procedure of the Study

The study was quantitative in nature pedestaled on positivistic paradigm, and causal comparative research design was employed to investigate the relationship between students' misbehaviors in the classroom and teaching strategies at the secondary school level. The secondary school level students studying in secondary schools of an historical metropolitan city of Pakistan. Generally the schools of this city have over populous classrooms and more chances of misbehaviours may exist. The sample comprised of 408 secondary school level students randomly selected from 34 public secondary boys' and girls' schools. The effect of different managerial strategies used by the teachers to handle the misbehaviour of students was studied. The data were collected by using a self-developed Classroom Misbehaviour and Management Strategies Questionnaire (CMMSQ). The questionnaire was passed through a process of pilot testing to ensure the quality through validity and reliability measures.

## Analysis and Results

**Table 1**

*Classroom Misbehaviour and Management Strategies Questionnaire (CMMSQ).*

Factors (CMMSQ)	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Misbehaviours		
• Misbehaviour as entertainment	.944	9
• Misbehaviour as avoiding failure	.902	5
Strategies		
• Withdraw privileges / psychological punishment	.786	7
• Corporal punishment	.755	6

Misbehaviour as entertainment has highest reliability .944 with 9 items and the reliability of the strategies (psychological punishment) is .786 with 7 items.

There are 21 Boys and 25 Girls public secondary schools to access the population. The male students' enrolment is 4505 and 4894 are female students.

The sample consisted of 408 secondary school students, who were selected stratified random sampling. Due to time and funding constraints, the study was limited to only Public Secondary School students (male and female). Verkuyten, (2020) articulated when a goal of a study is to compare the behaviour of participants from different subgroups of the population, stratified sampling is the best approach. For that reason the researcher selected 20% Schools from each stratum (15+19=34) at the second stage students were selected randomly from each stratum (12 students from each school  $15*12+19* 12 =180+228=408$ ). Data were collected from the sample students and it was tabulated and analyzed by using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics techniques.

**Table 2**

*Secondary School Students' Perception about Peers' Classroom Misbehavior*

Motives of Misbehaviour	M	SD
Misbehaviour as Entertainment		
Screaming sounds	3.00	1.222
Irrelevant drawing during lecture	2.90	1.264
Skipping class	3.04	1.234
Bring noisy electric devices	2.97	1.246
Giving answers without permission	3.03	1.256
Falling Sleep in classroom	3.04	1.241
Playing with paper aeroplane	2.12	1.860
Throwing ink on back of the teachers	3.01	1.254
Throwing ink on their classmates	3.01	1.259
Misbehaviour As Avoiding Failure		
Not books in bags	2.95	1.293
Reading other books while teachers teach course book	2.89	1.251
Cheating in test/exam	3.04	1.233
Unnecessarily arguing with teachers	3.00	1.220
Blaming on teachers' methodology	3.04	1.274

Table 2 indicates the students' perceptions about peers' misbehaviors as entertainment or as avoiding failure. Misbehavior as entertainment is highly perceived, Skipping the class ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.234$ ) and falling sleep in classroom ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.241$ ). Blame on teaching methodology



( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.234$ ) and Cheating in test/exam ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.233$ ) are also high perceived. It is concluded that secondary school students engage more in misbehavior as entertainment and misbehavior as avoidance of failure. These two motivations constitute the source of misbehavior.

**Table 3**

*Students' Perception about the use of Strategies to Handle Classroom Misbehaviors*

Strategies	Mea n	S.D
Withdraw privileges / psychological punishment		
Calling disgrace names	3.49	1.115
Using time out strategy	3.52	1.097
Passing comments	3.49	1.135
Changing students' seats	3.57	1.115
Delay the lesson	3.56	1.078
Mention the student's name	3.58	1.076
Additional lesson	3.53	1.090
Corporal punishment		
Hitting with hands	3.59	1.052
Slapping	3.60	1.028
kicking with the leg	3.54	1.027
Pinching with the fingers	3.53	1.115
Caning with a stick	3.58	1.010
kneel down	3.58	1.076

Table 3 shows the students' perception about adopted strategies. Students' perception about management strategies in corporal punishment 'slap' ( $M=3.60$ ,  $SD= 1.028$ ) is highly perceived, and secondly that the teachers calling disgrace name ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=1.115$ ). According to students, it is rarely accrued that teachers called students by their names during misbehavior and hit with hands ( $M=3.59$ ,  $SD= 1.052$ ), Caning with a stick ( $M=3.58$ ,  $SD= 1.010$ ) and Kneel down ( $M=3.58$ ,  $SD 1.076$ ) were equally reported. It has been concluded that secondary school teachers focus mostly rely on corporal punishment strategies rather than non-punitive strategies.

**Table 4**  
*Effect of Behaviour Management Strategies on Students' Classroom Misbehaviours*

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient		T	P	Df	F	R <sup>2</sup>
	$\beta$	Std. Error (B)	$\beta$						
(Constant)	.059	.224					1		
Strategies	.862	.063	.563		13.73	.000	406	188.50	.317

Dependent variable: Misbehaviour

Table 4 displays the linear regression analysis to predict the effect of teaching strategies on students' classroom misbehaviour ( $\beta=.563$ ,  $t(406)=13.730$ ,  $p<.001$ ). This indicates that an increase in one unit of managerial strategies decreases the misbehaviour by .563 units. The regression  $F(1,406)=188.50$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $R^2=.317$  shows that strategies create 31% of variation in the students classroom misbehaviour. The positive value of unstandardized  $\beta$  shows that strategies have a positive effect on students' misbehaviour, it means when strategies be implemented on students by their teachers than occurrence of students' misbehaviour will be low.

**Table 5**  
*Difference between Male and Female Students' perception about Misbehavior*

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	T	Df	p
Misbehavior	Male	212	3.831	0.493			
	Female	196	2.015	0.292	44.77	406	.000

An independent-sample t-test was conducted to check the difference between boys' and girls' perception about peers' misbehavior. There was a statistically significant difference between male ( $M=3.816$ ,  $SD=0.493$ ) and female students' perception ( $M=2.015$ ,  $SD=0.292$ ;  $t(406)=44.77$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) about misbehavior, the results reveal that misbehavior in male classrooms happened more frequently than in females. It is determined that male students engaged more in misbehaviors in the classroom with their peers and teachers, than female students at the secondary school level.

## Discussion

The study revealed that students in secondary schools engage in a variety of misbehaviours such as skipping class or abandoning class. Students who believe that the classroom setting is unsuitable for them frequently skip lessons (Dolan et al., 2020; Pisacreta et al., 2019). When pupils are bored in class and the teacher's teaching style doesn't appeal to

them, they begin to nod off in class (Wheldhall & Merrett, 2021). Students criticize the teaching technique, claiming they don't understand the procedures in a course they find uninteresting (Kagan & Scott, 2021). When students receive poor grades on tests or papers, they blame the teachers. According to Swinson and Knight, (2022), teachers do not understand the basic requirements of their pupils, which cause them to be uninterested in reading and to do poorly in tests and examinations. Failure is frequently not due to a lack of study and preparation, yet a lack of dedication can be a major reason of failure.

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## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Teachers need to be fully aware of the appropriate strategy to deal with student misbehavior within the classroom, think about it carefully and deal with the problem sensibly. Male students are involved in misbehavior such as skipping classes, sleeping in the classroom, accusing teaching methods, and cheating on exams. Teachers used coping strategies, such as hitting with the hands, beating with sticks, kneeling, and slapping during misbehavior. The boys and girls have different perceptions misbehaviors. Different strategies have a significant effect in managing students' misbehaviour. The working teachers and future teachers be aware of these behavioural management strategies. The curriculum of pre service teacher

education programs and continuous development programs need to be updated. This has the advantage that trained teachers will be equipped with the knowledge and skills required for effective classroom management. Guidance and advisory committees may be set up in schools to advise teachers on the psychological needs of students. Sessions or workshops may be arranged to create awareness among teachers about classroom abuse and management strategies.

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