

Teacher's Proactive Approaches to Classroom Behavioral Management: Implications to Guidance Program

Saturnino I. Singian, EdD., RGC, Rpm, LPT

Pangasinan State University, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan, Philippines

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Email of Corresponding Author: saturninosingian@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined teachers' proactive approaches to classroom behavioral management and their implications for a guidance program. Guided by Coombs' Systems Approach using the input-process-output model, the study focused on teacher profiles, students' behavioral problems, factors causing such problems, classroom management approaches, and guidance program implications. A descriptive research design was employed among 50 public elementary school teachers from Cabanatuan City during the school year 2024–2025. The respondents were selected through simple random sampling, and data were gathered using a validated questionnaire adapted from a previous study. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and related statistical procedures were used to analyze the responses. Findings showed that most respondents were female, aged 31–40, married, with master's units, holding Teacher I positions, with 6–10 years of service, handling mostly Grade VI learners, and having attended only one to two training sessions. Teachers strongly agreed that students' behavioral problems, including vandalism, absenteeism, bullying, technology misuse, inattention, disrespect, cheating, and lack of learning skills, were serious classroom concerns. They also strongly agreed that these problems were influenced by inadequate values education, social media and technology, weak parental guidance, poverty, peer influence, and inconsistent discipline. Teachers strongly supported proactive, student-centered, and non-punitive strategies, particularly supportive school culture, parent collaboration, respectful guidance, emotional regulation, and clear expectations. The study aligns with SDG 4, SDG 3, SDG 16, and SDG 17 by promoting quality education, student well-being, safe school environments, and stakeholder collaboration. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening educational, institutional, social, and community-based support systems for positive student behavior and effective classroom management.

Keywords: Behavioral Problems, Classroom Behavioral Management, Elementary Teachers, Guidance Program, Students Behavior, Proactive Approaches, School Discipline, Teacher Strategies, Values Education, Positive Discipline

1. Introduction

Students' behavioral problems remain a major concern in schools because they affect classroom order, learner safety, instructional time, teacher effectiveness, and academic performance. Problem behavior in schools is described as a worldwide phenomenon, with school authorities, teachers, and parents expressing concern over its adverse effects on the teaching-learning process. The study of Zafar and Irsa (2024) emphasized that students' behavioral problems may be influenced by unhealthy family relationships, peer pressure, community conditions, and unregulated access to social media. Since schools are expected to provide safe spaces for learning, behavioral problems must be addressed because they may threaten student safety and hinder effective instruction (Nasiru & Cornish, 2020).

Classroom behavioral management is a continuing challenge for teachers because learners' disruptive behaviors consume valuable instructional time and affect the delivery of academic goals. When behavioral problems are not properly managed, they may result in teacher frustration, stress, burnout, anger, negative emotions, and feelings of inadequacy in teacher performance (Li et al., 2022). Learners' misbehavior also disrupts the rights of others to learn, reduces teacher effectiveness, and wastes time and energy (Charles & Senter, 2005). Disruptive behavior and disciplinary issues have been shown to interfere with classroom learning (Gomez Marmol et al., 2020; Wangdi & Namgyel, 2022) and contribute to diminished academic performance (Granero-Gallegos et al., 2020). Behavior broadly refers to any action or function performed by a person in a given situation, including how learners make choices, relate with peers, engage in activities, and respond to school expectations (Moore et al., 2020). A behavior becomes problematic when it negatively affects the learner or the people around them, particularly when it interrupts instruction, harms relationships, or disrupts the learning environment.

The literature shows that common classroom behavioral problems include disruptive talking, avoiding assignments, harassing classmates, interrupting lessons, verbal abuse toward teachers, rudeness, and hostility (Jacob & Aloka, 2023; Ngwokabuenui, 2015; WO & Akinola, 2020). Students may also display behaviors such as talking during class, making

aggressive gestures, and disrespecting teachers, which interfere with the teaching-learning process. These behaviors may be shaped by the home environment, classroom conditions, social media use, peer influence, and community exposure (Zafar Iqbal & Irsa Zahoor, 2024). School-related factors also contribute to improper behavior, particularly when school rules and classroom instructions are unclear. When teachers and school leaders fail to present clear expectations, learners may become more likely to display behavioral problems. Conversely, clearer classroom and school regulations may reduce the frequency of improper behaviors during instruction (Lekli, L. 2020). Effective classroom behavior management therefore requires proactive and student-centered communication skills that help teachers create positive and productive learning environments (Karasova & Nehyba, 2023). Studies further emphasize the importance of identifying the causes of disruptive behavior to develop effective intervention strategies (Jacob & Aloka, 2023; Kollerova et al., 2023; Rafi et al., 2020). Teachers and parents both face challenges in addressing learners' behavioral problems, especially when these behaviors negatively affect instruction and academic performance. Societal changes and environmental conditions outside school must also be considered because they influence the frequency and nature of problematic behaviors (Lekli, 2020).

Globally, problem behavior in schools affects classroom safety, student discipline, and the quality of instruction. Nationally and locally, the issue is relevant to basic education because teachers are expected not only to deliver lessons but also to manage students' behavior and support their holistic development. In the local setting, this study focused on elementary school teachers from three selected elementary schools from Cabanatuan City during the school year 2025–2026. The study examined teachers' proactive approaches to classroom behavioral management in handling elementary school students. Specifically, it sought to identify students' behavioral problems as perceived by teachers, determine the factors causing these behavioral problems, identify the classroom behavioral management techniques used by teachers, and discuss the implications of the findings for the teaching-learning process.

The study was guided by Coombs' Systems Approach, using the input-process-output model. The input included the profile of teacher-respondents in terms of sex, civil status, age, highest educational attainment, rank position, years of service, number of learners handled, grade level, number of seminars attended, learners' behavioral problems perceived by teachers, causes of learners' behavioral problems, and classroom behavioral management techniques used by teachers. The process involved the administration of the survey form, collection of data, statistical treatment, analysis, and interpretation. The output focused on the implications of the findings for a guidance program. The study also recognized proactive classroom behavior management as an antecedent-based strategy used to prevent disruptions before they occur and to create a positive and engaging learning environment (Wehby & Lane, 2009). According to Bear and Manning (2014), proactive approaches foster self-discipline and reduce dependence on punitive and reactive interventions, allowing school programs to support holistic learner development.

Although previous studies have examined student misbehavior, disruptive classroom conduct, and factors affecting behavior, there remains a need to examine how teachers perceive behavioral problems and what proactive classroom behavioral management approaches they use in the local elementary school context. The study addresses this gap by focusing on teachers' views regarding learners' behavioral problems, the causes of such problems, and the classroom management strategies used to respond to them. The rationale of the study is anchored on the role of teachers in shaping students' attitudes, character, self-discipline, and classroom behavior. Since behavior management is closely tied to teaching effectiveness, academic achievement, and learner development, teachers need appropriate approaches that support rather than merely punish learners. The findings are expected to inform a guidance program that may strengthen teacher support, learner discipline, parent-school collaboration, counseling interventions, and socio-emotional development.

This study aligns primarily with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it focuses on improving classroom behavioral management, protecting instructional time, and supporting learners' academic success. By identifying behavioral problems, their causes, and proactive teacher responses, the study contributes to creating more effective and supportive learning environments. The study also relates to SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being because it recognizes the emotional and psychological dimensions of learner behavior, including the need for guidance, counseling, emotional regulation, self-management, and supportive teacher-learner relationships. It also connects with SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions because it emphasizes safe, respectful, disciplined, and non-punitive school environments. Lastly, it supports SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals through its emphasis on collaboration among teachers, parents, guardians, guidance counselors, school administrators, and other stakeholders in addressing learner behavior.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by providing evidence that may help schools strengthen classroom management practices, reduce disruptions, and improve the quality of teaching and learning. It also supports public health and well-being sustainability by emphasizing proactive, respectful, and guidance-oriented approaches that promote learners' socio-emotional development rather than relying only on punishment. The study has relevance to institutional sustainability because its findings may guide school administrators and guidance advocates in designing intervention programs, professional development activities, and guidance services for teachers and learners. It also contributes to community and socio-economic sustainability by recognizing that learner behavior is shaped by family, peer, school, social,

and economic factors. Through stronger home-school collaboration and proactive classroom behavioral management, schools may help learners develop discipline, responsibility, self-awareness, and positive social behavior that support long-term personal and academic growth.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design. Descriptive research, also known as statistical research, describes the data and characteristics of the population or phenomenon being studied. It answers questions related to who, what, where, when, and how, and is used to present existing facts or educational phenomena with adequate interpretation (Manuel & Meddle, 2008). In this study, the descriptive method was used to discover and interpret facts concerning teachers' proactive approaches to classroom behavioral management.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Cabanatuan City. The locale involved public elementary schools where teachers handled students from Grade I to Grade VI. The setting was appropriate because the study focused on classroom behavioral management practices among elementary school teachers.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were public elementary school teachers from Cabanatuan City during the school year 2024–2025. They were selected because of their direct involvement in managing learners' classroom behavior and implementing teaching-learning strategies in elementary education.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study involved fifty teacher-respondents. Simple random sampling was used to give all target participants an equal opportunity to be included in the study. This sampling procedure allowed the researcher to gather responses from teachers handling different grade levels within the selected elementary school context.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary data-gathering instrument was a questionnaire adapted from a previous study and re-aligned with the present research. The questionnaire included items on the respondents' personal profile, perceived causes of learners' behavioral problems, and classroom behavioral management techniques used by teachers. It used a rating-scale format, ranging from strongly agree to disagree, where respondents marked their answers based on their views and experiences in managing learners with behavioral problems.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The study utilized a validated questionnaire adopted from previous research. To ensure that the items were clear and understandable, the instrument was pre-tested among a group of teachers who were not part of the target respondents. After validation and pre-testing, the questionnaire was administered to the selected respondents, and the completed responses were collected for classification, tallying, computation, analysis, and interpretation.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data gathered from the questionnaire checklist were classified, tallied, summed, tabulated, computed, and organized for presentation, analysis, and interpretation. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' profile and responses. The percentage formula was based on Barrozo and Tablante, where the percentage is computed by dividing the frequency by the number of respondents and multiplying the result by 100. Weighted mean was also used to determine the general assessment of responses, while chi-square was indicated as part of the statistical treatment. The responses were interpreted using a Likert scale, with mean ranges corresponding to strongly agree, agree, moderately agree, slightly agree, and disagree.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of Teacher-Respondents

3.1.1 Gender

The findings showed that most of the teacher-respondents were female, comprising 58% of the total respondents, while male respondents accounted for 42%. Although the difference was not very large, the result indicated a slightly higher representation of female teachers in the sample. This result suggests that female teachers were more represented in the study, which may reflect the common observation that women often outnumber men in elementary teaching contexts. However, since the sample consisted of only 50 respondents, the sex distribution may have been influenced by sampling availability and may not fully represent the broader teacher population.

3.1.2 Age

The largest group of respondents belonged to the 31–40 age range, representing 30% of the sample. This was followed by respondents aged 25–30 at 26%, those aged 41–50 at 24%, and those aged 51–60 at 20%. The results indicate that the respondents were mostly young adult and middle-aged teachers. This age distribution suggests that many respondents were likely in active professional development stages, where classroom management skills are continuously refined through teaching experience. The presence of both younger and older teachers also indicates that the study captured varying levels of maturity, adaptability, and experience in handling student behavior.

3.1.3 Civil Status

The findings showed that 70% of the respondents were married, while 30% were single. This indicates that most of the teacher-respondents may have family responsibilities alongside their professional duties. The predominance of married respondents may have implications for classroom behavioral management because experiences in family life may strengthen patience, empathy, conflict resolution, and nurturing skills. Meanwhile, single respondents may have greater flexibility for professional development and experimentation with new teaching and management strategies.

3.1.4 Educational Attainment

The results showed that 54% of the respondents had earned units in a master's degree program, 38% held baccalaureate degrees, and 8% were master's degree graduates. This indicates that most respondents had pursued graduate education or professional advancement beyond the undergraduate level. This finding suggests that many teachers were committed to continuing professional development. Graduate-level exposure may help teachers acquire advanced theoretical knowledge, research-based strategies, and practical approaches for managing classroom behavior, while those with baccalaureate degrees may rely more on foundational pedagogical training and classroom experience.

3.1.5 Designation and Years of Service

In terms of designation, 46% of the respondents were Teacher I, 24% were Teacher II, 20% were Teacher III, 4% were Master Teacher I, and 6% were Master Teacher II. For years of service, the largest group had 6–10 years of experience at 28%, followed by 0–5 years at 24%, 16–20 years at 16%, 11–15 years and 21–25 years at 14% each, and 26–30 years at 4%. These findings indicate that many respondents were still in early to mid-career stages. Teacher I respondents may still be developing classroom management skills, while Teacher II, Teacher III, and Master Teachers may already have more refined strategies. Teachers with 6–10 years of service may have enough practical experience to manage classroom behavior effectively, although they may still need professional support to adjust to changing learner behavior patterns.

3.1.6 Number of Students and Grade Level Handled

Most respondents handled 41–45 learners per section, representing 72% of the sample. Smaller classes of 35–40 learners were handled by 14%, while 10% handled 46–50 learners and 4% handled 51–55 learners. In terms of grade level, the largest group handled Grade VI learners at 26%, followed by Grade II and Grade III at 16% each, while Grade I, Grade IV, and Grade V each represented 14%. The findings suggest that most teachers handled moderately large classes, which may increase the difficulty of monitoring learner behavior and providing individualized attention. Teachers handling Grade VI learners may also face more complex pre-adolescent behavioral concerns, while those handling lower grades may focus more on basic routines, social skills, and positive reinforcement. This indicates the need for differentiated classroom management strategies based on class size and developmental level.

3.1.7 Training Attended

The findings showed that 38% of the respondents had attended only 1–2 training sessions, 32% had attended 3–6 training sessions, and 30% had attended 7–10 training sessions. This shows varied levels of exposure to professional development related to classroom management. The result implies that a considerable number of teachers may still need additional training in behavioral management. Teachers with fewer training sessions may depend more on traditional or experience-based strategies, while those with more training may have broader knowledge of proactive and learner-centered approaches. This supports the need for continuous capacity-building programs for teachers.

3.2 Students' Behavioral Problems as Perceived by Teachers

The findings showed that teachers strongly agreed that all listed student behaviors were serious classroom concerns, with an overall average weighted mean of 4.76. The highest-rated concern was vandalism and damaging classroom properties, followed by lateness, cutting classes, truancy, absenteeism, attending classes after playing online games, bullying, lack of effective learning skills, inattention, inappropriate cellphone use, disrespect, cheating, and stealing or destroying belongings. These findings indicate that teachers perceived learners' behavioral problems as significant disruptions to classroom order, peer learning, and academic performance. Destructive behaviors, absenteeism, bullying, inattention, and technology misuse may reduce instructional effectiveness and weaken classroom discipline. These results support the view that behavioral problems must be addressed because they affect both the teaching process and learners' academic goals.

3.3 Factors Causing Students' Behavioral Problems

The findings showed that teachers strongly agreed with all identified causes of students' behavioral problems, with an overall average weighted mean of 4.76. The highest-rated factor was inadequate time to integrate values education in every subject, followed by the influence of social media, technology, and apps; lack of role models; lack of knowledge of school policies; poverty; poor parental guidance; broken family circumstances; parental tolerance of wrongdoings; teacher tolerance of wrongdoings; peer influence; and lack of fear of teachers and parents. These results suggest that learners' behavioral problems are shaped by interconnected school, family, peer, technological, and socio-economic factors. The high rating for inadequate values education indicates that teachers see moral development as essential in preventing negative behavior. The influence of technology and social media also shows the need for clear digital discipline, while family-related factors point to the importance of stronger parent-school collaboration.

3.4 Teachers' Proactive Approaches to Classroom Behavioral Management

The findings showed that teachers strongly agreed on the use of proactive classroom behavioral management approaches, with an overall average weighted mean of 4.74. The highest-rated approaches were developing a supportive school culture and collaborating with guardians, parents, and guidance counselors. Other strongly supported strategies included creating positive connections with students and parents, supporting students during challenges, teaching the effects of actions, teaching students how to manage negative behaviors, providing respectful guidance rather than punishment, allowing breaks during difficult activities, modeling appropriate behaviors, involving students in rule-setting, using home-school reinforcement, creating a cooperative classroom atmosphere, and providing clear expectations. These findings indicate that teachers favor supportive, student-centered, and non-punitive approaches in managing classroom behavior. The emphasis on supportive school culture, family collaboration, respectful guidance, emotional regulation, and learner participation suggests that teachers view behavior management as a developmental process rather than merely a disciplinary function. This supports the importance of proactive systems, as Bear and Manning (2014) stated that proactive approaches foster self-discipline and reduce the need for punitive and reactive interventions.

3.5 Implications to the Teaching and Learning Process

The findings showed that school conditions, teacher responses, peer interactions, and family-related factors may influence learners' emotional and behavioral development. The results also indicated that classroom behavioral problems may affect academic performance, learner engagement, teacher effectiveness, and the overall classroom environment. Because of this, the study emphasized the need for self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, decision-making, and relationship management among learners. These findings imply that schools should strengthen proactive and developmental approaches to behavior management instead of relying mainly on punitive methods. Learners with behavioral problems should be guided, counseled, and supported so they can become part of the solution. The results also suggest the need for social-emotional learning, counseling support, teacher training, parent collaboration, and guidance programs that address both minor classroom disruptions and more serious behavioral concerns.

3.6 Guidance Program Implications

The findings showed that proactive classroom management can reduce minor disruptions and allow guidance personnel to focus more on prevention, consultation, targeted counseling, and data-driven program planning. Guidance counselors may support teachers by serving as behavioral consultants, assisting in classroom climate design, and helping identify learners who need Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. This implies that guidance programs should move beyond reactive disciplinary responses and adopt preventive, collaborative, and evidence-based practices. Proactive tracking of classroom behavior may help guidance personnel identify trends, design group counseling sessions, address concerns such as anxiety or anger management, and strengthen student self-regulation and school connectedness.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the teacher-respondents were mostly female, generally within the 31–40 age range, commonly holding Teacher I positions, largely with 6–10 years of service, frequently handling Grade VI students, and mostly having attended only one to two training sessions. Teachers strongly agreed that students' behavioral problems are serious classroom concerns that affect both teaching effectiveness and students' academic goals. They also strongly agreed that several factors contribute to students' behavioral problems and may affect the teaching-learning process and academic performance. Moreover, teachers recognized the importance of supportive, student-centered, and non-punitive classroom behavioral management approaches that promote positive discipline, relationship-building, emotional intelligence, and student involvement in achieving academic goals.

Based on the findings, teachers should be encouraged to pursue advanced education and training to strengthen their professional and personal development and improve their skills in managing students' behavior. Future studies may examine teacher responses by district, compare behavioral problems across private schools and sexes, and determine the effectiveness of approaches used by teachers in both elementary and high school settings. The study also recommends the

integration of values education across subject areas, strict implementation of positive discipline guidelines, and the use of the findings as a basis for strengthened school policies and guidance programs that support desirable behavioral changes among students.

The study was limited to teacher-respondents and therefore reflected teachers' perceptions of learners' behavioral problems, their causes, and classroom behavioral management approaches. The manuscript also recognized that including students' perspectives would make the findings more comprehensive because it could help explain the underlying reasons for the reported behavioral problems and reduce possible assumptions or biases arising from the teachers' social role. It further suggested that future inquiry may include different education levels and examine curricular-based interventions for mitigating classroom behavior problems.

Compliance with ethical standards

The study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards, ensuring that teacher-respondents participated voluntarily and were properly informed about the purpose of the research. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and all responses were treated with confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Ethical approval and necessary permissions were observed before administering the questionnaire. The author declares no conflict of interest, acknowledges the contributions of all respondents, and concerned school personnel, and affirms responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and copyright ownership of the research.

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