

Behavioral Problems of Intermediate Pupils as Perceived by the Teachers in Selected Public Elementary Schools

Jennylyn A. Amado, Precy I. Guerra

College of Education, Arts and Sciences, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Batangas City, Philippines

Abstract - *This study determined the behavioral problems of intermediate pupils as perceived by the teachers in selected public elementary schools. It specifically aimed to determine the teachers' profile in terms of age, sex, length of service, employment status and grade level handled; determine the teachers' perception of behavioral problems and their causes; establish relationship between profile and perception on the pupils' behavioral problems; and propose possible measures to reduce behavioral problems of pupils. The researcher used the descriptive method of research with 91 teacher-respondents who are teaching intermediate pupils in selected public elementary schools. Findings showed that majority of the teachers in selected public schools in this study are 37 years old and above, mostly female and have been teaching for not more than ten (10) years yet they have permanent employment status and are teaching Level 5 pupils. The researcher concluded that absenteeism, laziness and naughtiness are the most common behavioral problems observed among the pupils; over protection of the parent, poor parental guidance, and broken family due to certain circumstances were identified as the main causes of behavioral problems; perceptions on the behavioral problems of pupils observed varies on the years of service of the teachers; and a proposed program was formulated to address the behavioral problems observed to the pupils.*

Keywords: Behavioral Problems, Teachers' Perceptions on Behavioral Problems, Causes of Behavioral Problems

INTRODUCTION

Behavioral problems are likely to exist in most schools. Because of House Bill 4907 known as the "Positive Discipline Act" which promotes positive and non-violent forms of discipline, children nowadays feel that they are invincible and think that they can do whatever they want without being reprimanded. Teachers then are having a hard time in disciplining and guiding the pupils.

Behavioral problems of the pupils became the most challenging and difficult hurdle that the teachers encountered inside the classroom. Many public school teachers also cite student attitudes, such as apathy and disrespect for teachers, as a major problem facing schools today (Chen, 2015). Banning of corporal punishment in schools cause a great trouble to teachers because students became aware of the law and they affirm that they cannot be given punishment at any cost. This burgeoned the intensity as well as the frequency of behavioral problems which slacken the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and also impede the learning of the pupils and their classmates.

Public school teachers experience difficulty at one time or another in trying to remedy the situation. Public school teachers are exposed to the behavioral problems of pupils and they are one of the many teachers who can tell what, when, why and how these pupils behave. Behavioral problems among intermediate students are rampant and hard to restrain. Teachers who are

teaching in intermediate class greatly witness the behavioral problems of the pupils depending on the length of their service in the school. Teacher's observance of one's child behavior could restrain behavioral problems from transpiring. Since teachers cannot wait for behavior to be evident, they must provide students opportunity to help themselves shape their own behavior through their guidance.

Engania's et al. (1999) study appears that the most common behavioral problems encountered were inattention, stubbornness, absenteeism, clowning, lying, cheating, disrespectful and bullying. The cause of behavioral problems of the students showed includes: poverty due to unemployed parents; poor discipline due to lack of attention and time; and poor parental guidance because parents are both working. According to the study of Rehman and Sabruddin (2012), basically children are not stubborn by birth; they learn to misbehave from environment and strict policies urge them to misbehave. While many parents work hard to reach the pinnacle of their careers, the same intense effort is often not put into rearing their children. They are so exhausted from a hard day at work that they just want to come home and mentally shut down (Miller, 2014).

The researcher conducted this study to determine the behavioral problems of intermediate pupils as perceived by the teachers in public elementary school. Behavioral problems are very alarming and should be

given effective measures that shall reduce the intensity of this grave issue that most schools are facing now. The researcher, once a part of a public-school institution, was also exposed to behavioral problems where teachers caught their pupils shoving, clowning, laughing, whispering and doing other serious problems such as troublemaking, absenteeism and stubbornness.

This study is intended to help parents and all educators especially elementary school teachers, guidance counselors as well as school administrators to develop and implement effective strategies that will promote positive behavior towards pupils. Corollary to this, teachers also as pupil's second parent would greatly benefit from this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to determine the behavioral problems of the intermediate pupils as perceived by the teachers in selected public elementary schools. Specifically, it sought to determine the teachers' profile in terms of age, sex, length of service, employment status and grade level handled; determine the teachers' perception of behavioral problems and their causes; establish relationship between profile and perception on the pupils' behavioral problems; and propose possible measures to reduce behavioral problems of pupils.

METHODS

This study used the descriptive method of research to determine the behavioral problems, causes and possible measures to behavioural problems of intermediate pupils as perceived by teachers in seven public elementary schools. A descriptive study is one in which information is collected without changing the environment (i.e., nothing is manipulated). It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation.

Ninety- one (91) teachers who are handling intermediate (Grades IV, V & VI) pupils from seven (7) public schools served as respondents of the study.

The study used a modified questionnaire from the study of Engania, et.al (1999). Part I consists of the respondent's profile, part II focuses on the perceived behavioral problems and part III discusses the causes of the perceived behavioral problems.

The researcher initiated the information gathering by using different libraries in Batangas. The adviser gave her a research protocol that will guide her in making this study possible. After validating the instrument, the researcher prepared copies for the selected respondents. But before the researcher

disseminates the questionnaire, she prepared a letter of request to the Dean, Principals and respondents. The researcher personally delivered the questionnaire to all respondents. During the delivery of the questionnaire, the researcher explained the details and instructions to help the respondents in answering the items in the instrument. After sufficient time, the researcher personally retrieved the questionnaire. After retrieving the questionnaire from the respondents, the researcher tallied all the data and let the university statistician to tabulate the results.

All data gathered were tallied, encoded and interpreted using different statistical tools. This includes frequency distribution, weighted mean (WM), and chi- square. All data gathered will be treated using (PASW) version 18 to further analyze the results of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the findings about the respondents' profile in terms of their age, sex, years in service, employment status and grade level handled. The data are shown in frequencies and percentage.

The respondents have been classified into four groups of age: 22-26 years old; 27-31 years old; 32-36 years old; 37 years old and above. Majority of the respondents were 37 years old and above having a frequency of 43 or 47.30%. It is followed by respondents whose age range from 32-36 years old by having a frequency of 32 or 35.20%. On the other hand, only 8 or 8.80% fall on the bracket of 27-31 years old same with respondents whose ages range from 22-26 years old. Majority of the population were 37 years old and above probably because of change of profession thinking that they will make more money rather than being a teacher. Also, there are only a few who are taking the education program that is why the trend of having old teachers is common.

As indicated from the table above, there were 5 or 5.50% male respondents while the female dominated by 86 or 94.50% respondents. This implies of what Rich (2014) have said that teaching is an overwhelmingly female profession, and in fact has become more so over time. More than three-quarters of all teachers in kindergarten through high school are women, according to Education Department data, up from about two- thirds three decades ago. The disparity is most pronounced in elementary and middle schools, were more than 80% of teachers are women. In addition, Catalino, et.al (2009) mentioned that female teachers outnumbered the males because females are more nurturing than males and more attached to children of the bachelor degree of

education are more preferred to be taken by females in the Philippines.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Profile Variables	f	%
Age		
22- 26 years old	8	8.80
27- 31 years old	8	8.80
32- 36 years old	32	35.20
37 years old and above	43	47.30
Sex		
Male	5	5.50
Female	86	94.50
Years in Service		
0-10	45	49.50
11-20	31	34.10
21 and above	15	16.50
Employment status		
Permanent/ Tenure	88	96.70
Contractual	2	2.20
Provisionary/ Non- tenure	1	1.10
Grade Level Handled		
IV	31	31.10
V	32	35.16
VI	28	30.80

Based on Table 1 45 or 49.50% of the respondents were 0-10 years in service. It is followed by 31 or 34.10%, which fall in 11-20 years in service while 15 or 16.50% of the respondents were 21 years and above in service. Almost half of the respondents are neophytes in teaching profession while the veterans have the least number in population probably because of a big influx of retirees during the time that eventually leads to hiring new teachers.

Table 1 also explains the employment status of teachers. As observed, there is a big interval between permanent/tenure, contractual and provisionary/non-tenure. Most of the respondents have permanent/tenure having a frequency of 88 or 96.70% while 2 or 2.20% were contractual and at the least rank were provisionary/non-tenure with 1 or 1.10%. There is a huge number of permanent teachers probably because other jobs are very hard to find and obviously they enjoy the job that they are doing.

With regards to grade level handled, thirty-two respondents or 35.16 percent teach in Grade V. Teachers who are handling grade IV were thirty-one or 34.10 percent of the population and twenty-eight or 30.80 percent out of 91 respondents are teaching in grade VI. There were more teachers in Grade V rather than in Grades IV and VI probably because there were more Grade V level enrollees during that time.

Table 2 presents the perception of teachers on the students' behavioral problems. It was found out that the respondents often encountered the different behavioral problems of their students with a composite mean of 2.5. It can therefore conclude that teachers in public schools are one of the many teachers that can tell us what, when, why and how pupils behave. Teachers in public schools greatly witness the behavior problems of pupils in the classroom.

Among the indicators cited, absenteeism ranked first with a weighted mean score of 3.42, verbally assessed as often. Absenteeism is now prevalent due to many factors like being bullied by their classmates/ schoolmates, parents prompting to be absent or they don't have money to buy snacks that leads to academic underachievement and loss of self-esteem. According to the study of Loren Murcia (), the top 10 reasons of student absenteeism are flu/fever, can't wake up early, noise inside the classroom, headache, other diseases such as diarrhea, parents asking them to be absent, preoccupation with household chores, toothache, no money to buy snacks in school, and bullied by a classmate/schoolmates. Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson, and Kirk (2003) also stated that teachers identified effects of absenteeism on children as: academic under-achievement, difficulty in making friends which could lead to boredom, loss of confidence. Also, prolonged absence can have deleterious effects for the child in later life. Students who are absent from school are at the great risk of dropping out of school early.

Even before, laziness of the pupils is one of the headaches of teachers in public schools. Pupils are lazy in doing the activities, assignments, and projects because they experience the subject as very incomprehensible or they are afraid to their teacher.

Naughtiness ranked 3 as shown in table 2. Naughtiness of the students is hard to control since being naughty among pupils are just normal. According to Steer (2014) "All children are naughty: scribbling on walls, fighting with siblings, cheekiness and ignoring requests are all part and parcel of growing up. Sometimes this behavior is isolated to one-off incidents, or it may be a phase the child is going through. Naughty behavior may be caused by your child testing your reaction to find out what's allowed or triggered by a change in his or her environment (eg worries about school).

Inattention ranked 4 as behavior problem encountered by teachers in selected public schools. Because of the population of the students in public schools, inattention is intemperate. "Newspapers reported that in Metro Manila 82 percent of the 764 public schools in the metropolis were congested, and

were conducting classes in two shifts. The first shift starts as early as 6 a.m. and the second ends as late as six in the evening.

Table 2. Teachers' Perception of Behavioral Problems of Pupils

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1.Absenteeism	3.42	Often	1
2.Vulgar language	2.76	Often	8
3.Dishonesty	2.54	Often	17
4.Disrespect	2.52	Often	18
5.Gambling	2.12	Sometimes	29
6.Inferiority complex	2.27	Sometimes	23
7.Laziness	3.26	Often	2
8.Aggressiveness	2.75	Often	9
9.Day- dreaming	2.34	Sometimes	21.5
10. Muscles twisting	2.18	Sometimes	25
11. Self- conceit	2.38	Sometimes	20
12. Naughtiness	3.16	Often	3
13. Troublemaking	2.69	Often	12.5
14. Selfishness	2.34	Sometimes	21.5
15. Stubbornness	2.77	Often	6
16. Shyness, timidity	2.59	Often	15
17. Stealing	2.15	Sometimes	27
18. Tardiness	2.68	Often	14
19. Unresponsive	2.69	Often	12.5
20. Threatening			
classmates/schoolmates	2.15	Sometimes	27
21. Physical abusiveness	1.70	Sometimes	33
22. Destroying other's property	1.93	Sometimes	32
23. Inattention	2.86	Often	4
24. Whispering	2.77	Often	7
25. Laughing	2.74	Often	10
26. Clowning	2.49	Sometimes	19
27. Lying	2.26	Sometimes	24
28. Defiance	2.15	Sometimes	27
29. Impertinence	2.04	Sometimes	31
30. Maliciousness	2.11	Sometimes	30
31. Bullying	2.71	Often	11
32. Temperamental	2.57	Often	16
33. Inability to express one self	2.81	Often	5
Composite Mean	2.51	Often	

Scale: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Sometimes; 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

There were reported to be as many as 80 students in each classroom. School authorities resorted to cutting classes in half and cramming the excess students into “science labs, libraries, corridors and even the principal’s office.” (Dante Pastrana,2014).

Inability to express oneself and stubbornness were observed often by the teachers. Patricia Woodbury states that many children who have behavioral problems also have learning difficulties or delays in their development. In addition, Wolpert-Gawron (2014) mentioned that being unable to express oneself is one

of the most frustrating feelings a human can experience. And it is often this frustration that lies at the heart of what drives pupils to be so rebellious, so depressed and so difficult to inspire.

Teachers able to witness these behavior problems especially who are in public schools due to the fact that public schools in the Philippines are congested, overcrowded and dilapidated. The classroom atmosphere or environment itself is not conducive for learning, rather, it is the root of behavior problems to escalate and accumulate.

Other behavioral problems were sometimes observed by the respondents' such as clowning, self-conceit, day- dreaming and selfishness. Clowning, self-conceit, day-dreaming and selfishness among pupils are sometimes encountered by the teachers in public schools because these problems are more on the personality of the pupils where hard to observe. Schaefer and Millman (1994) noted that some children clown more to gain revenge against the punitive parents. However, children who seek and crave attention repeat the behavior that gains attention and causes a strong parental reaction. Also, peer influence is very powerful. Frequently, peers encourage or even provoke a child to act foolishly. Positive or negative peer reaction can reinforce clowning in the lonely child who is desperate for attention.

Self-conceit was sometimes observed by the teachers because some pupils have too much pride in their own appearance or achievements. Day-dreaming still encountered by the teachers in public schools due to pupils personal or family problems that affects students' learning because when pupils' day-dream, they lost the chance to hear, interpret, analyze and participate in the discussion of the lesson. On the other hand, selfishness which have a verbal interpretation of “Sometimes” still subsist in the classroom. Selfishness is one of the major causes of excessive anger and defiant behaviors in children and in teenagers. In our practice it is the leading cause of the angry behaviors in children. Selfishness in children regularly creates serious stress in parents, in siblings, in peer relationships and in educators (Fitzgibbons, 2015).

Even though other behavioral problems were sometimes observed, gambling (2.12), impertinence (2.11), defiance (2.10), destroying other's property (1.93) and physical abusiveness (1.70) were rated the least and obtained the lowest mean scores. Gambling, impertinence, defiance, destroying other's property and physical abusiveness ranked as the lowest behavior problems that respondents have been observed because these problems are the most serious among the lists of behavior problems in the questionnaire. Even it is the

most serious problems among intermediate pupils, it is still verbally interpreted as sometimes observed since teachers witnessed some of the pupils are involved with these behavior problems.

Although gambling, impertinence, defiance, destroying other's property and physical abusiveness were sometimes observed, it is still encountered by teachers which is very harmful for those people who surrounds them. These problems take time and enormous effort to intervene or prevent such behavioral problems from occurring.

Students who are defiant on non-compliant can be the most challenging to teach. They can frequently interrupt instruction, often do poorly academically, and may show little motivation to learn. There are no magic strategies for managing behaviors of defiant students. www.interventioncentral.org. According to Richert (2016), students with oppositional and defiant behavior tend to have a pattern of negative and abrasive interactions with others (teachers and peers).

Most children lie sometimes. Although an occasional lie is not a reason for serious concern, teachers should be concerned about a student who lies frequently. Students who lie can become skilled at the behavior, the lying then might become habitual to the point that they lie with little concern for the consequences, which can be considerable. Frequent lying can cause classmates distrust, and lead to peer rejection, which can give rise to additional or academic problems (Shore, n.d.).

Abraham, K. (2014) states that sometimes destructive behavior serves a different purpose: intimidation. A child may learn that by breaking things, punching holes in the wall and behaving in a violent manner he will effectively frighten a parent into doing what wants, such as giving in or allowing him to have his way.

Physical abusiveness is not only present among students, but also among teachers. According to a 2009 report of PLAN Philippines, a children's organization, at least 5 out of 10 Filipino children in grades 1-3, 7 out of 10 in grades 4-6, and 6 out of 10 in high school have experienced some kind of violence in school. It was discovered that violence – whether physical, verbal, or sexual- usually results in low self-esteem, fear, anger, and helplessness among children. The most common forms of physical violence experienced by Filipino children are: pinching, having objects such as books, chinks, erasers thrown at them and being kicked, choked, hit on the head or nape area, or having one's head banged (Rico & Rodriguez, 2012).

Table 3 presents the causes of behavior problems of intermediate pupils as perceived by the teachers.

Table 3. Causes of Behavioral Problems of Students

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Over protection of the parents in to children's activities.	3.68	Strongly Agree	1
2. Poor parental guidance because parents are both working.	3.67	Strongly Agree	2
3. Broken family because certain circumstances.	3.59	Strongly Agree	3
4. Poverty due to unemployed parents.	3.45	Agree	6
5. Lack of understanding about the children's needs, feelings and interest.	3.47	Agree	5
6. Poor discipline due to lack of time and attention.	3.25	Agree	7
7. Mental ability of the child in learning.	2.82	Agree	9
8. Nagging and scolding of the parents.	2.53	Agree	10
9. Kinds of environment where child lives.	3.54	Strongly Agree	4
10. Favoritism of the teachers among their pupils.	2.11	Disagree	12
11. Teacher's lack of careful planning of school activities.	1.84	Disagree	13
12. Lack of interest of teachers to teach.	1.78	Agree	8
13. Sibling rivalry.	2.51	Agree	11
14. Illness of the child.	3.19	Disagree	14
Composite Mean	2.96	Agree	

Based on the teachers' response, over protection of the parents in to children's activities ranked first with a weighted mean score 3.68 (strongly agree). Over protective of parents can have negative effects to their children.

It is followed by poor parental guidance because parents are both working having a weighted mean score of 3.67 (strongly agree). Because parents are too busy making money for the family, they forget their main responsibility to their children. "While many parents work hard to reach the pinnacle of their careers, the same intense effort is often not put into rearing their children. They are so exhausted from a hard day at work that they just want to come home and mentally shut down. In addition, according to a clinical review published in 2009 in the "Michigan Family Review," factors such as nonstandard work schedules and financial stress may have a negative impact on a child's social, emotional and behavioral development, resulting in issues like behavioral problems and poor academic performance (Miller, 2014).

Broken family because of certain circumstances ranked third as the most common causes of behavioral problems among pupils having a weighted mean score of 3.59 (strongly agree). Kinds of environment where child lives ranked fourth as the most common causes of behavior problems among intermediate pupils with a verbal interpretation “Strongly Agree” and mean values of 3.54. As indicated in table 3, favoritism of teachers among their pupil, teacher’s lack of careful planning of school activities, and lack of interest of teachers to teach were rated the least and obtained the lowest mean scores of 2.11, 1.84 and 1.78, respectively with a verbal interpretation of “Disagree”.

As seen from the result of Table 4, only years in services show significant difference on the respondents’ perception on behavioral problems.

Table 4. Difference in Responses and Profile Variables

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value
Age	2.568	0.060
Sex	0.455	0.650
Years in Service	3.688*	0.029
Employment Status	1.711	0.187
Grade Level Handled	2.410	0.055

*Legend: *Significant at p-value < 0.05*

This was observed since the obtained p-value of 0.029 is less than 0.05 alpha level, thus the null hypothesis under this variable is rejected. This means that the perception of the respondents on students’ behavioral problems varies as to the respondents’ length of service.

Table 5. A Proposed Program to Address the Behavioral problems of Students

Goals/ Objectives	Activities	Persons Involved	Expected Outcome
1. To witness the home background of the students that can be the cause of Behavioral problems to occur.	Home visitations with letter to parents and students.	Homeroom advisers and subject teachers.	Lessen the intensity and frequency of absenteeism among pupils and teachers establish a much needed connection or relationship with parents and their children to improve attendance and achievement. Also, teachers are able to select appropriate approaches in handling students with behavioral problems.
2. To discuss topic concerning the pupil’s health and nutrition, proper caring and nurturing of them, and possible measure to reduce Behavioral problems with the help of parents.	Teacher- Parents meeting.	Homeroom advisers, subject teachers and parents.	Boost family involvement at child’s activities and students are less likely to exhibit behavioral problems.
3. To provide effective and useful Counselling approaches in handling pupils with behavioral problems.	Counseling technique seminar.	All teachers, principal, parents, behavior therapist, and guidance counselors.	Most active and positive in promoting the growth and development of the students and making easier for teachers handle students with behavioral problems.
4. To develop pupils’ character and spiritual formation and encourage positive values and behavior.	Spiritual recollection/catechism	All teachers, students, parents, principal, and priest.	Holistic development of the child is formed through spiritual growth and development. Children exhibit positive values and behavior.
5. To edify the participants on how to behave in a highly acceptable manner and to promote positive values towards other people.	Seminar/workshop on values formation.	All teachers, students, parents, and guidance counselors.	Students impart positive values and attitudes towards other people. Classroom environment becomes more conducive for learning.
6. To widen teacher’s knowledge and skills in managing the classroom successfully.	Seminar on classroom management.	Homeroom adviser, teachers, principals, and an expert in classroom management.	Improve the smoothness and effectiveness of teaching and learning. Behavioral problems are Reduced dramatically.
7. To edify and train teachers or parents about the nature and approaches to behavioral problems of pupils in order to help them how to handle those children with such behavior.	Training and seminar about the nature and approaches to behavioral problems of pupils.	All teachers, sociologist or psychologist, and parents.	Teachers and parents have gained knowledge and acquired skills in reducing and preventing behavioral problems from occurring.

This also shows that those who are in the profession for a long time have different observation on their students' behavioral problems. Those educators who are in the field of teaching for a long time and have been through a lot, perceived behavioral problems of pupils differently this is because they have met a lot of pupils with different race, religion and background.

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the teachers in selected public schools are 37 years old and above, mostly females and have been teaching for not more than ten (10) years yet they have permanent employment status and are teaching Level 5 pupils. Absenteeism, laziness and naughtiness are the most common behavioral problems observed among the pupils. Over protection of the parents, poor parental guidance, and broken family due to certain circumstances were identified as the main causes of behavioral problems. Perceptions on the behavioral problems of pupils observed varies on the years of service of the teachers. A proposed program was formulated to address the behavioral problems observed among pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers may not get tired of knowing and exploring ways that will help them reduce the behavioral problems of pupils. Parents may always take considerations of their children's needs and feelings, in that way, children are less likely to exhibit behavioral problems. Parents may let their children participate in school activities to further develop their confidence and skills in decision making, have the courage in facing different challenges and consequences, and strengthen their interpersonal relationship with other people. The proposed program to address behavioral problems of students may be implemented and evaluated thereafter.

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