



## Challenges Confronted by Primary School Teachers in Classroom Learning Environment

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**Abstract:** Teachers often grapple with challenges related to classroom management, including disruptions, non-participation, and inattentiveness of the students. Studying the challenges, teachers encounter in classroom management is essential for finding strategies to improve teaching quality and student performance. Objectives of this study were to find out the perspectives of teachers regarding students' non-participation, inattentiveness, and disruptive behavior within the classroom and to identify the most challenging problem faced by the teachers in the context of non-participation, inattentiveness, and disruptive behavior. This study utilized an exploratory research design and a quantitative approach, collecting data through a survey utilizing questionnaires. A sample of 400 teachers from 93 government primary schools were selected in Tehsil City of District Lahore. Data was analysed by using SPSS v 21.0. About 60% of the teachers found it challenging to teach when students were not participating in class activities, over 70%, either agreed or strongly agreed that student attention is crucial for effective teaching and over 80%, either agreed or strongly agreed that disruptive student behavior can hinder effective teaching. The study findings highlight that disruptive student behavior is the most significant challenge, faced by teachers in the classroom environment. This indicates a strong consensus among teachers that disruptive behavior is a top concern.

**Key words:** Classroom learning environment, Non-participation, Inattentiveness, Disruptive Behaviour

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### 1. Introduction

School education plays a crucial role in the personal, social, and intellectual development of individuals. It provides a strong foundation for future success and contributes to the overall well-being of society. School education imparts essential knowledge and skills, including literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking, which are fundamental for personal growth. School provides a structured environment for students to interact with peers, develop social skills, and form friendships. These interactions are important for emotional intelligence (Elias, 1997). School education is instrumental in shaping individuals, fostering personal and social development, and contributing to the overall well-being and progress of society. The problems faced by Pakistani school children have been extensively documented and studied. Pakistani school children encounter various challenges. Children in the school face many challenges in the learning environment of the classroom which effect their educational achievement. There are problems i.e. overcrowded classrooms, disruptive behavior, bullying etc., due to which students cannot concentrate in the classroom. There is need to tackle these challenges to create well-resourced, supportive class environment in order to promote educational well-being of the students. Problem of "inattention," has a significant effect on student and

is a big concern for students, parents and teachers. Lack of attention in the class can hinder the critical thinking of the students. This problem can be reduced by utilizing interactive and attractive teaching methodologies used by teachers in the class that can ensure active participation of the students. Students' disruptive behavior in the classrooms can disturb the other students, teachers and overall classroom environment. Similarly, disruptive behavior of the students can be managed through techniques, student teacher relationship and through creating a conducive learning environment in the class. All these above mentioned problems i.e., students' inattention, disruptive behavior and non-participation, in the class can affect the teachers' ability to concentrate on lecture delivery. This requires teachers to give more time and effort to deliver lecture. This situation emphasizes to employ strategies to engage students' active participation in the learning process. Therefore, it is significant to identify the challenges faced by the teachers in classroom environment in order to identify effective interventions and strategies to enhance teachers' ability to deliver lecture. Findings of this research can be utilized by the teachers and policy makers to create more favorable learning environment in the class.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

Following were the objectives of this study:

- a) To find out the perspectives of teachers regarding students' non-participation, inattentiveness, and disruptive behavior within the classroom.
- b) To identify the most challenging problem faced by the teachers in the context of non-participation, inattentiveness, and disruptive behavior within the classroom.

### **2. Literature Review**

School children encounter an array of challenges that have repercussions on their educational progress, overall welfare, and future opportunities. These predicaments are shaped by diverse factors, encompassing socioeconomic disparities, cultural norms, and the quality of the educational system. The literature reviewed has predominantly focused on issues related to students' classroom attention, participation, and disruptive behavior. It is worth noting that the literature primarily pertains to these aspects within the educational context, with particular attention to their implications and resolutions. One of the prevalent challenges observed in children relates to issues with attention and concentration (DuPaul & Hoff, 1998). In schools, these attention problems manifest through different behaviors, like irregular completion of assigned tasks, shifting their focus to non-educational activities (such as gazing out of the classroom window), and difficulty remembering instructions or task directions (DuPaul & Hoff, 1998). Authors further reported that among older students in secondary school, attention problems become evident through poor organizational skills, like not having the necessary class materials, incomplete homework assignments, irregular and ineffective study habits, maintaining an incomplete notebook, and struggling with timed exams, leading to poor test performance (DuPaul & Hoff, 1998).

Inattention plays a significant role in academic underachievement, and it has been observed that some minority groups tend to have higher ratings of inattention (Rabiner et al., 2004). A study investigated the connection between inattention and academic performance in first-grade students from different racial backgrounds, including Caucasian, African American, and Hispanic children (Rabiner et al., 2004). The research involved 33 teachers who assessed over 600 students based on their academic accomplishments, inattentive classroom behavior, oppositional conduct, hyperactivity, and anxiety (Rabiner et al., 2004). Interestingly, only issues related to attention, and not other behavioral problems, were independently linked to lower academic achievement (Rabiner et al., 2004). Notably, a substantial portion of the achievement gap between African American and Caucasian students was attributed to a higher prevalence of attention difficulties among the former, even though the relationship between attention problems and achievement was more pronounced among Caucasian students (Rabiner et al., 2004).

Pallini et al., (2019) investigated that how the quality of the relationship between students and their teachers is connected to attention problems, specifically two types of attention problems: Attention Dysregulation and Attentive Detachment. Using a multi-informant approach, teachers assessed 161 school-aged children (87 boys and 74 girls) using the Emotion Regulation Checklist, Teacher's Report Form, and Student-Teacher Relationship Scale, while observers evaluated the same children's attentive behavior in the classroom using the Child's Attention Scale (Pallini et al., 2019). The findings revealed that the quality of the student-teacher relationship has an impact on a child's attentional behavior, and this influence is mediated by Emotion Regulation (Pallini et al., 2019). Therefore, when addressing children's attention problems, it's beneficial to focus on improving the student-teacher relationship, as it can subsequently contribute to the enhancement of their emotional and attention regulation

(Pallini et al., 2019).

A research delved into variations in the evolution of reading test scores and attention problems during middle childhood and examined whether these variations were indicative of future problematic behavior (Fleming et al., 2004). The study involved 783 students from 10 schools in the Pacific Northwest, utilizing latent growth curve models, the data collected annually from Grades 3 to 6 revealed notable differences in the initial status and rate of change for both reading scores and teachers' reports of attention problems (Fleming et al., 2004). These initial levels and changes in both variables turned out to be significant predictors of problem behavior in 7th grade (Fleming et al., 2004). When considering a combined model that encompassed growth factors for both reading and attention problems, it was found that only the initial level of attention problems had a distinct and statistically significant association with later problem behavior (Fleming et al., 2004).

In district Chakwal, Pakistan, a study was conducted to explore the connection between students' attention levels and their academic performance of a sample of 420 school students (Shah & Saleem, 2015). The key findings of the study indicated a direct correlation between students' attention levels and their academic achievements (Shah & Saleem, 2015). Students with high levels of attention tended to perform better academically, while a decrease in attention corresponded to a decline in academic performance (Shah & Saleem, 2015). Students with moderate attention levels achieved average academic results, whereas those with low attention levels often struggled or failed (Shah & Saleem, 2015). The study identified several factors that could distract students' attention, including noise, home environment, financial issues, health concerns, and lack of interest (Shah & Saleem, 2015). The study further underscores the importance of considering attention as a significant psychological factor affecting students' academic success (Shah & Saleem, 2015). Given the diversity in individuals' capabilities, skills, intelligence, and aptitude, their levels of attention also vary (Shah & Saleem, 2015).

Numerous research studies have explored the connections between various problematic behaviors and academic performance measures because there's often a high degree of co-occurrence of problem behaviors among school-age children (Barriga et al., 2002). A study aimed to investigate how eight different types of teacher-reported problem behavior syndromes (including withdrawal, somatic complaints, anxiety/depression, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, delinquent behavior, and aggressive behavior) related to standardized assessments of academic achievement, encompassing overall performance, reading, spelling, arithmetic, and general performance (Barriga et al., 2002). The results revealed that while syndromes such as withdrawal, somatic complaints, delinquent behavior, and aggressive behavior displayed significant correlations with academic achievement measures on the surface, these relationships were actually influenced by attention problems (Barriga et al., 2002).

Challenging disruptive behavior in classrooms poses a significant obstacle to effective learning in schools (Närhi et al., 2017). It not only jeopardizes students' academic success but also contributes to heightened work-related stress for teachers. A practical intervention can lead to noteworthy enhancements in classroom behavior (Närhi et al., 2017). A study involving 1,386 teachers aimed to take an integrative approach to investigate how occupational stressors, when combined with other factors that have been identified as contributors to teacher distress in various aspects of their lives (personal, psychosocial, and outside of work), play a role in predicting and explaining different facets of burnout (López et al., 2008). The statistical results obtained confirmed that occupational stressors related to student disruptive behaviors, attitudes, and disciplinary issues (specifically, difficulties in conflict management and the lack of support or consensus) have explanatory significance for all dimensions of the burnout syndrome (López et al., 2008). In essence, this research suggests that student disruptive behavior, challenges in managing conflicts, and the absence of support or consensus in dealing with disciplinary matters are crucial elements in effectively predicting burnout among school teachers (López et al., 2008). Another study claims that, factors such as interactions with the parents of disruptive students and various problematic behaviors among students (such as vandalism within the school premises, student-to-student aggression, verbal abuse, and challenging behavior towards teachers) significantly contribute to burnout (Otero-López et al., 2009). Identifying the factors contributing to students' lack of engagement may aid educators in creating an environment that promotes dynamic learning, encouraging every student to actively partake in classroom activities (Bahmanbizar et al., 2019).

In Pakistan, it is important to address the issue of disruptive behavior in order to promote quality education. A study in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan concluded the reasons of students' disruptive behavior as poor socio-economic status and illiteracy among families, overcrowded schools, unattractive classrooms, less trained teachers, and provision of inadequate teaching materials (Azeem et al., 2024). The above literature review underscores that the primary challenges faced by school teachers relate to students' lack of attention, their non-participation in

classroom activities, and disruptive behavior. It is noteworthy that the available literature primarily originates from middle and secondary schools, with a limited amount of research specifically from the context of Pakistan.

### 3. Methodology

The study utilized an exploratory research design and a quantitative approach, collecting data through a survey utilizing questionnaires. The population of the study was government primary school teachers in Lahore District. For the study, a sample of 400 teachers from 93 schools were selected through simple random sampling technique located in Tehsil City of District Lahore. The researcher recorded responses on five point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (S.D), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (S.A). All the received questionnaires were numbered and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) v 21.0 for analysis.

### 4. Findings

Following findings were emerged in this study:

Table 1: Frequencies of Classroom Learning Environment Problems Faced By Teacher

Sr. #	Classroom Learning Environment Problems Faced By Teacher	SD (f)	D (f)	N (f)	A (f)	SA (f)	Total
1	I find it difficult to teach when students do not participate in class.	26	120	6	128	120	400
2	I find it difficult to teach when students do not pay attention towards me.	22	80	0	158	140	400
3	I find it difficult to teach when students' behavior is disruptive in class.	14	40	0	206	140	400
4	Valid N (list wise)						400

Table 1 displays a breakdown of issues within the classroom environment as reported by teachers. It illustrates the number of participants who expressed their views using the categories of strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA).

The statement "I have difficulty teaching when students are not actively participating in class" received responses from 26 participants who strongly disagreed (SD), 120 who disagreed (D), 6 who were neutral (N), 128 who agreed (A), and 120 who strongly agreed (SA). The statement "I have difficulty teaching when students do not pay attention to me" garnered responses from 22 participants who strongly disagreed (SD), 80 who disagreed (D), 0 who were neutral (N), 158 who agreed (A), and 140 who strongly agreed (SA). The statement "I have difficulty teaching when students exhibit disruptive behavior in class" received responses from 14 participants who strongly disagreed (SD), 40 who disagreed (D), 0 who were neutral (N), 206 who agreed (A), and 140 who strongly agreed (SA).

Table 2: Mean & Standard Deviation of Classroom Learning Environment Problems Faced By Teacher

Classroom Learning Environment Problems Faced By Teacher	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I find it difficult to teach when students do not participate in class.	400	3.49	1.36
I find it difficult to teach when students do not pay attention towards me.	400	3.79	1.27
I find it difficult to teach when students' behavior is disruptive in class.	400	4.05	1.03
Valid N (list wise)	400		

Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics for the challenges teachers encounter in the classroom environment. The table includes the number of respondents (N), the mean, and the standard deviation for each issue. The statement "I



find it difficult to teach when students do not participate in class" had an average score (mean) of 3.49 with a standard deviation of 1.36. On average, respondents found it moderately challenging to teach when students didn't participate in class. The statement "I find it difficult to teach when students do not pay attention towards me" had an average score (mean) of 3.79 with a standard deviation of 1.27. On average, respondents found it moderately challenging to teach when students weren't attentive to the teacher. The statement "I find it difficult to teach when students' behavior is disruptive in class" had an average score (mean) of 4.05 with a standard deviation of 1.03. On average, respondents found it moderately challenging to teach when students displayed disruptive behavior in class. In short, respondents found challenging to teach when confronted with these classroom learning problems.

#### 4.1 Discussion

The study findings specify that approximately 60% of the respondents found it challenging to teach in the class when students were not participated in class activities, with an average mean score of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 1.36, recommending moderate variability in teachers' perceptions. In above mentioned literature, solution of students' participation issues in the classroom has been extensively recognized. Over 70% respondents emphasized the importance of students' attention for effective teaching which align with several previous mentioned studies. This study found that 80% of the respondents recognize that disruptive student behavior was a hurdle in effective teaching gin resonate with previous researches, which were mentioned in the review section.

Disruptive behavior of the students was emerged as the most significant challenging issue faced by the teachers in classroom environment, with highest mean score of 4.05. This proposes that teachers, on average, recognize disruptive behavior as the utmost problematic issue to handle in the class. Moreover, the relatively low standard deviation of 1.03 associated with this problem specifies a high level of consensus among teachers regarding disruptive behavior as a major concern. This suggests that resolving disruptive behavior should be on priority for support mechanism and interventions. Second most challenging issue was identified as attention problem of the students, showing a mean score of 3.79. While this problem has a slightly higher mean score than the problem of lack of student participation (mean score of 3.49), it is essential to note that both problems still contain significant challenges. Moderate standard deviation values (1.36 as lack of participation and 1.27 as lack of attention) direct a moderate level of variability in responses, suggesting that there may be few differences in severity of problem. In short, these findings stress the priority need for intervention to resolve the problem of disruptive behavior, to improve student attention and participation in order to develop students' learning experience meaningful.

#### 5. Conclusion

It concluded that the disruptive behavior of the students in the classroom is the most significant problem faced by the teachers. The second and third most encountered problems were found as lack of attention and participation respectively. There may be variability in the severity of these problems across different classrooms or schools. These results highlight the need for interventions and support system to address these challenges.

#### 5.1 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, following suggestions are made:

1. Policy makers, School Education Department, school administrators, and teachers should develop and recommend policies addressing problems in government school classrooms, particularly regard to the learning environment.
2. Teachers should adopt different teaching methodologies and interactive activities to ensure students' interest and active participation during lesson.

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