



Common Disruptive Behaviors of Children at ECE Level: A Case Study from Public Schools

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Abstract: This research article explores common disruptive behaviors of children at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level. Through a systematic categorization of ten identified behaviors, the study examines their frequency and impact within educational settings. The behaviors are grouped into five main categories: Verbal Disruptions, Behavioral Disruptions, Attitudinal Disruptions, Destructive Actions, and Interference with Instruction. It was a case study on the population of a public school. An observation checklist was constructed to obtain a record of common disruptive behaviors in a purposive sample. Analysis reveals that Offensive Talk is the most prevalent disruptive behavior, highlighting a significant issue that necessitates immediate attention. Other notable behaviors include Not Following Rules and Threatening, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to address both verbal and behavioral disruptions. The study also identifies lack of interest as a critical attitudinal disruption, indicating widespread disengagement among students which could negatively impact educational outcomes. Despite their lower frequencies, behaviors such as Damages Property and Interrupts or Interferes During Instructions still pose significant challenges to the learning environment. Continuous monitoring and proactive interventions are recommended to prevent these behaviors from escalating. The findings underscore the importance of addressing Offensive Talk and Lack of Interest as priority areas. This research provides a foundation for future studies and interventions aimed at reducing disruptive behaviors.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Disruptive Behaviors, Behavioral Disruptions, Threatening Behavior, Educational Environment, Intervention Strategies

1. Introduction

Disruptive behaviors commonly observed in children at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level include lack of self-control, non-compliance, physical aggression, and hyperactivity, which are characteristic of childhood disruptive disorders (James et al., 2022). These behaviors, if not addressed promptly, can lead to significant disruptions in the learning environment, affecting social interactions and the educational process for both the child and their peers (Afdal et al., 2022). Children who lack social and emotional competence run a greater risk of long-term maladaptive health, well-being, and vocational outcomes, as well as escalating behavioral and academic challenges (Blewitt, C. et al., 2021). Research emphasizes the importance of implementing psychoeducational interventions in ECE settings to mitigate disruptive behaviors effectively, as these interventions focus on building strengths and coping mechanisms to manage problems and reduce stress associated with disruptive behaviors (Afdal et al., 2022). Additionally, disruptive behavior disorders like oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder are prevalent among children and adolescents, underscoring the need for early assessment and intervention to prevent these issues from escalating over time (Disruptive Behavior Disorders in Children and Adolescents. 2022). Common disruptive behaviors include

Aggression, defiance, tantrums, noncompliance, impulsivity and attention-seeking (Marni et al., 2016). Problematic ways of behaving make agitation, upset beat of the classes and at last impact the class execution and results (Turi, J. A. 2019). ECE circumstance in Pakistan is very uncomfortable, where the area is gotten in a tight spot, because of human and material assets (Alam J. Et al 2022). According to Pihlaja, P. et al. (2015) these behaviors can manifest in various forms, ranging from minor disruptions like talking out of turn or fidgeting to more severe disruptions such as aggression, defiance, or refusal to follow instructions. Many educators are particularly concerned about externalizing behaviors, such as being aggressive or hyperactive (Jacobsen, K. 2013). Talking too much while teaching, throwing things around, and walking into and out of the classroom without permission are all examples of disruptive behavior in early childhood education classrooms (Azeem Ashraf et al., 2024). As per examination of composed depictions from proprietor of Finnish Day Care in Finland, educators don't have adequate abilities or apparatuses to resolve social issues and they feel stressed realizing that such issues have huge adverse results (Pihlaja, P. et al 2015). It is first important to comprehend how educators are seeing these ways of behaving and what impacts these. In addition, they investigated the characteristics of teachers that are linked to ratings of children's behaviors (Yoder, M. L., and Williford, A. P., 2014). According to a survey on challenging behaviors, children in early education are expelled at more than three times the rate of children in primary and secondary education for disruptive behavior (Garrity, S. M. et al., 2019). Therefore, this research is based on the following objective:

- a) To investigate the common disruptive behaviors of students of grade two in a public primary school.

The following research questions were developed:

- b) What disruptive behaviors are common in the Government Girls Primary School Aurangabad of tehsil Sarai Alamgir?
- c) What kind of disruptive behaviors exist in students of grade 2 in the perspective of teachers?

2. Review of Literature

Recent studies indicate that common disruptive behaviors in early childhood education (ECE) settings often include aggression, inattentiveness, and defiance (Fitzpatrick & Pagani, 2022). These behaviors are typically driven by developmental factors, socio-emotional challenges, and inadequate support systems in public school environments (Kern & Clemens, 2021). In public school case studies, such behaviors are shown to negatively impact not only the individual child's learning but also the overall classroom environment, leading to increased teacher stress and a disrupted learning process (Loomis & McClain, 2020). Interventions focusing on positive behavior reinforcement and individualized support are emphasized as effective strategies for mitigating these issues (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2023). Homerooms are stuffed, and ECE instructors are in many cases more established and inadequately qualified people who have gotten no in service preparing and need suitable educating learning materials (Azeem Ashraf, et al 2024). Students' actions are typically categorized as attention-seeking, power-seeking, retaliatory behaviors, and inadequacies in learning and performance. These are troublesome ways of behaving that make homeroom the board troublesome (Saleem, et al 2021). In 2006, Schaeffer and colleagues found various disruptive behavior trajectories in a community sample of at-risk kids, including an early-starter pathway, a group with rising disruptive conduct, and a group with low levels of disruptive behavior across the course of development. Disruptive behavior encompasses concepts like misconduct and misbehavior (Marais, P., and Meier, C., 2010). According to Marais, P., and Meier, C. (2010), moral behavior is mostly learned in families. Problematic way of behaving generally show troublesome way of behaving, for example, declining to work, offending others, backchat and other attention seeking strategies in the homeroom (Javed, et al 2023). Bullying, lying, using profane language, making noise, engaging in naughty activities, being aggressive, stealing, and physically fighting with other students are all examples of these behaviors (Saleem et al., 2021). Delano and Stone (2008) state that students exhibit behavioral issues when they seek attention, evade demands, or obtain something, which can be assessed through interviews and observation. As per Pisacreta et al., Concerns about the high rates of disruptive behavior among students are frequently raised by educators and school staff. Malak, Deppeler, & Sharma (2014) found that 22 elementary school teachers in Bangladesh conceptualized disruptive behavior through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. In this sample, teachers thought that students were to blame for inappropriate behavior. According to Martin Retuerto D., et al. 2020, working on emotional intelligence could be a useful and effective tool that should be incorporated into programs to combat bullying. Triangle that makes up the school system (understudy family-educator), three support points are major for food and positive advancement (Martin Retuerto D, et al 2020). Hayes (2007) found that temper

tantrums, disobedience, fighting, lying, theft, disrespect, restlessness, inability to focus, lack of attention and reckless behavior are among gender-specific behaviors that preschoolers exhibit. 20% children have mental health issues, but lack services (Kristin, K., Meany-Walen. 2010). Disruptive behaviors hinder normal class development, affecting academic performance (Ana et al., 2015). Disruptive behavior in classrooms negatively impacts teaching and learning quality (Jose et al., 2016). Common disruptive behaviors of children at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level include defiance, aggression, inattention, and impulsivity, impacting educators' perceptions and classroom dynamics (Paula, Robarts. 2014).

3. Research Methodology

This case study is aimed to explore common disruptive behaviors among grade two students of a public primary school named as government girls primary school Aurangabad, tehsil Sarai Alamgir, district Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. The population of disruptive students of grade two of school is selected through the nomination of their teachers. The sampling technique is purposive/judgmental by obtaining an expert sample from one of the expert teachers of ECCE. The research tool was developed as an observation checklist for disruptive students from the teachers. The research tool has been validated through expert opinion and criteria for expert selection was having at least five years of experience in the field of ECE with relevant qualification of educational psychology. Data was analyzed through SPSS and findings revealed frequencies and percentages of different existing disruptive behaviors. The following results were drawn after data collection from 2 teachers of grade two. Although literature shows a vast variety of disruptive behaviors, teacher's support was also used for the selection of behaviors. In this way, 10 finalized disruptive behaviors were selected to include in the research tool. The tool was having options of constantly, frequently, occasionally and rarely to measure the behaviors. Criteria for these scales was to exhibit a specific disruptive behavior as 7 to 10 times, 5 to 6 times, 3 to 4 times and 1 to 2 times, respectively. The class in charge and subject teacher of grade two started observation of students to be able to give relative answers to the checklist of research tool. They explained their agreement for the existence of ten common disruptive behaviors in students of grade two.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of Data Set obtained from Teachers through Observation Checklist

The data for the nomination of grade 2 disruptive students was obtained by the ECE teachers. Then Analysis of disruptive behaviors in the form of frequencies, percentages and cumulative percentages is presented:

To categorize these 10 disruptive behaviors, grouping is based on their nature and impact:

- a) **Verbal Disruptions** (e.g., shouting, offensive talk, threatening)
- b) **Behavioral Disruptions** (e.g., hyperactive to assignments, not following rules, stubbornness)
- c) **Attitudinal Disruptions** (e.g., lack of interest, lack of respect to elders)
- d) **Destructive Actions** (e.g., damages property)
- e) **Interference with Instruction** (e.g., interrupts or interferes during instructions)
- f) The tables categorizes ten disruptive behaviors observed in an educational setting, highlighting their frequency and levels of occurrence. These behaviors have been grouped into five main categories: Verbal Disruptions, Behavioral Disruptions, Attitudinal Disruptions, Destructive Actions, and Interference with Instruction. Each category comprises specific behaviors, and their frequencies and percentages are detailed below.

Table 1: Verbal disruption as a disruptive behavior in ECE children

Category	Types of disruptive behaviors	Levels of disruptive behaviors	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Verbal Disruptions	Shouting	Constantly: 1 Frequently: 0 Occasionally: 1 Rarely: 0	2	4.54	4.54
	Threatening	Constantly: 2, Frequently: 2,	4	9.09	13.63

	Occasionally: 0, Rarely: 0			
Offensive	Constantly: 2, Frequently: 1, Occasionally: 1, Rarely: 7	11	25	38.63

The above table reveals following results:

Verbal Disruptions

Shouting: Occurred occasionally and constantly, with a frequency of 2 (4.54%), contributing to a cumulative percentage of 4.54%.

Threatening: Observed frequently and constantly, with a total frequency of 4 (9.09%), raising the cumulative percentage to 13.63%.

Offensive: Exhibited across all levels, particularly rarely, with a significant frequency of 11 (25%), bringing the cumulative percentage to 38.63%.

Notably, Offensive stands out with the highest frequency (25%), indicating a significantly prevalent issue that demands immediate attention.

Table 2: Behavioral disruption as a disruptive behavior in ECE children

Category	Types of disruptive behaviors	Levels of disruptive behaviors	Frequency n	Percentage %	Cumulative percentage
Behavioral Disruptions	Hyperactive to assignments	Constantly: 0, Frequently: 1, Occasionally: 1, Rarely: 0	2	4.54	43.17
	Not follows rules	Constantly: 1, Frequently: 4, Occasionally: 1, Rarely: 0	6	13.636	56.81
	Stubborn	Constantly: 2, Frequently: 1, Occasionally: 3, Rarely: 0	6	13.636	70.446

The above table reveals following results:

Behavioral Disruptions:

Hyperactive to Assignments: Occurred occasionally and frequently, with a frequency of 2 (4.54%), contributing to a cumulative percentage of 43.17%.

Not Follows Rules: Predominantly observed frequently, with a total frequency of 6 (13.636%), raising the cumulative percentage to 56.81%.

Stubbornness: Occurred at varying levels, particularly occasionally and constantly, with a frequency of 6 (13.636%), bringing the cumulative percentage to 70.446%.

With the moderate occurrences of **Threatening** (table 1.1) and **Not Following Rules** (table 1.2), it suggests a concerning trend in verbal and behavioral disruptions that could escalate if not addressed promptly.

Table 3: Attitudinal disruption as a disruptive behavior in ECE children

Category	Types of disruptive behaviors	Levels of disruptive behaviors	Frequency n	Percentage %	Cumulative percentage
Attitudinal Disruptions	Lack of interest	Constantly: 7, Frequently: 0, Occasionally: 0, Rarely: 0	7	15.9	86.346
	Lack of respect to elders	Constantly: 2, Frequently: 0, Occasionally: 0, Rarely: 0	2	4.54	90.886

The above table reflects following results:

Attitudinal Disruptions

Lack of Interest: Consistently observed, with the highest frequency in this category at 7 (15.9%), contributing to a cumulative percentage of 86.346%.

Lack of Respect to Elders: Occurred constantly, with a frequency of 2 (4.54%), raising the cumulative percentage to 90.886%.

Lack of Interest is a critical area, with a frequency of 7 (15.9%), highlighting a widespread disengagement among students. This attitudinal disruption can have long-term impacts on educational outcomes and needs targeted strategies to re-engage students.

Table 4: Destructive actions as a disruptive behavior in ECE children

Category	Types of disruptive behaviors	Levels of disruptive behaviors	Frequency n	Percentage %	Cumulative percentage
Destructive Actions	Damages property	Constantly: 0, Frequently: 2, Occasionally: 0, Rarely: 0	2	4.54	95.426

The above table reveals following results

Destructive Actions

Damages Property: Frequently observed, with a frequency of 2 (4.54%), bringing the cumulative percentage to 95.426%.

Table 5: Interference with instruction as a disruptive behavior in ECE children

Category	Types of disruptive behaviors	Levels of disruptive behaviors	Frequency n	Percentage %	Cumulative percentage
Interference with Instruction	Interrupts or interferes during	Constantly: 1, Frequently: 1, Occasionally: 0,	2	4.54	99.966

Category	Types of disruptive behaviors	Levels of disruptive behaviors	Frequency n	Percentage %	Cumulative percentage
	instructions	Rarely: 0			

The above table reflects following results:

Interference with Instruction

Interrupts or Interferes During Instructions: Occurred constantly and frequently, with a frequency of 2 (4.54%), raising the cumulative percentage to approximately 100%.

Damages Property (table 1.4) and **Interrupts or Interferes During Instructions** (table 1.5) occur less frequently, their presence still poses a disruption to the educational environment. Continuous monitoring and early intervention for these behaviors can prevent them from becoming more severe.

Table 6: Summary

Total Categories	Types of disruptive behaviors	Levels of disruptive behaviors	Frequency n	Percentage %	Cumulative percentage
5	10	4 for each	44	99.962	Approx. 100

The total recorded frequency for all disruptive behaviors is 44, with the percentages summing up to approximately 100%, indicating the distribution of these behaviors across different levels. This categorization and frequency analysis provide a comprehensive understanding of the disruptive behaviors prevalent in educational settings, aiding in targeted interventions and strategies for mitigation. Practice of observation checklist by teachers also revealed that some behaviors like stealing things, spitting and biting were not found in sample.

In conclusion, the data indicates that while various disruptive behaviors are present, Offensive Talk and Lack of Interest are particularly alarming and warrant focused attention. So, addressing these behaviors through appropriate disciplinary measures, counseling, and engagement strategies is essential to fostering a conducive learning environment.

4.2 Discussion

In this research study, disruptive behaviors were explored. In order to ensure that children receive services that reflect evidence-based practices, the study agrees that early intervention is essential and that programs should vary. (Garrity, et al 2019). For different public and private schools, the case can be varied as different type of disruptive behaviors can be found in different schools. There lacks a synthesis of research on the effectiveness of ECEC-based intervention within the response-to intervention framework, that is, programs for children experiencing social, emotional or behavioral challenges, without a formal diagnosis or assessment of a mental health condition or developmental delay (Blewitt, C. Et al 2021). In Primary Education, the predominant behaviors that cause a distortion in the order are noise and verbal and aggressive behavior, being in the last years of this educational stage where these take greater relevance. In the same line, several authors recommend that programs to prevent and correct disruptive behaviors should be implemented in the first years of life to avoid greater problems in the future. Interestingly, other authors suggest that parental education style may be one of the sources generating such behaviors (Martin Retuerto D., et al 2020). Rather dealing with individual children interpretation, there is need of a wider meaning structure that helps to turn the gaze toward the pedagogical setting and the processes in it as a whole (Pihlaja, et al 2015). To better understand the benefit of targeted programs within a response-to-intervention framework, longitudinal research that examines the differential impact of both universal and targeted components, engages caregivers in the research and implementation process, and considers a comprehensive range of outcome measures is needed (Blewitt, C. Et al 2021). All of the ‘criminal acts’ involve some external implement. In other words, using an object during the disruptive behavior intensifies the degree of the disruption even when the disruption is considered moderate or minor

(Cohen, E. h., and Romi, S. 2010). According to Jacobsen, K. (2013), social workers and other professionals in the field of mental health play an important part in schools in providing additional support for children. Educators who used to depend on receptive measures, for example, whipping to address troublesome conduct currently need to foster option proactive measures to seize troublesome way of behaving (Marais, P. furthermore, Meier, C. 2010). In addition, the findings of Marais, P., and Meier, C. have demonstrated that serious disruptive behavior, such as fighting (concordant with Rayment's 2006:99 findings) and bullying (concordant with Bott's 2004:1-5) and Nesor et al.'s findings) in Booyens, 2003:35), vandalism (breaking windows and scratching cars), theft of lunch boxes, toys, cell phones, and other items, and so on. also exhibited by students during the Foundation Phase. Exactness in view of organized conduct by educators is must to be viewed as to shape educator preparing and proficient turn of events, consequently it very well may be smarter to address issues of preschool instructors and their understudies (Yoder and Williford, 2014). When children are placed in a supportive environment that is beneficial to their well-being, these kinds of behaviors can be reduced (Azeem Ashraf et al., 2024).

5. Conclusion

The alarming situation is having a higher number of constantly existing disruptive behaviors in students. This study highlights the prevalence and distribution of various disruptive behaviors in educational settings through five categories. The analysis reveals that Offensive Talk is the most prevalent disruptive behavior. This high occurrence indicates a significant issue that requires immediate intervention to maintain a respectful and conducive learning environment. Additionally, the behaviors of Not Following Rules and Threatening also stand out, emphasizing the need for strategies that address both verbal and behavioral disruptions. Lack of Interest among students, is another critical area of concern. This attitudinal disruption suggests a widespread disengagement, which could adversely affect educational outcomes. Therefore, it is imperative to implement targeted measures to re-engage students and foster a more engaging and supportive educational atmosphere. While Damages Property and Interrupts or Interferes During Instructions are less frequent, their impact on the learning environment is nonetheless significant.

The findings underscore the importance of addressing Offensive Talk and Lack of Interest as priority areas. By focusing on these key areas, educators and administrators can work towards creating a more positive and productive educational experience for all students. This study provides a foundation for future research and interventions aimed at reducing disruptive behaviors and enhancing the overall learning environment.

5.1 Recommendations

Following recommendations are presented for future researchers in this area:

- a) A private school could be selected so that effects of disruptive behaviors on students can be compared with those of a public school.
- b) ECE curriculum can be adapted to include social emotional learning and behavioral management components, fostering a supportive learning environment.
- c) Insights into common disruptive behaviors can inform educational policies and help develop targeted interventions and support systems for early childhood education.
- d) Research is needed to develop teacher's training modules for removal of disruptive behaviors.
- e) Research is also needed to design counselling and training sessions for parents of children having disruptive behaviors.
- f) Research can be conducted to find a general effective remedy for the improvement against all or most of the disruptive behaviors.
- g) It is highly recommended to do research for finding misconceptions against disruptive behaviors.

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