



DO TEACHER' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MATTER IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS?

Dele P. Melekewei

Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin with a campus at Odo-Noforija, Epe

Abstract

The absence of corporal punishments in schools has been observed to result in the higher rate of disruptive behavior among secondary school students. This is linked to the instructors' lack of emotional intelligence which in turn affects classroom instruction and administration. The study adopted the focus group discussion. Purposive sampling technique was used. The simple random sampling technique was used to select seven (7) teachers from two (2) schools (Public and Private). The research instrument comprised seven items discussed in an unstructured format and the result was transcribed. The participants comprised both male and female teachers whose teaching experience ranges between 5-12 years. The result showed that teachers identified disruptive behavior to include students' non-challant attitude towards basic instructions; teachers' highlighted strategies for managing disruptive behaviors to include having right attitude towards school learning; chooses to stay away from aggressive situations and admit that emotional intelligence is a requirement in the management of disruptive behavior in schools. The study recommends that emotional intelligence training should be incorporated into the school teacher development programme and teachers' should be trained and re-trained in other to manage disruptive behaviors in schools.

Keywords:

Emotional Intelligence, Disruptive Behavior, Behavior Management.

Word count: 186

Corresponding Author Email:

melekeoweidp@lasued.edu.ng

How to cite: Melekewei D.P. (2024). Do Teacher' Emotional Intelligence Matter in the Management of Disruptive Behaviour Among Students? *Educational Perspectives*, 12(3),



Introduction

Corporal punishment (CP) is a physical force used or intended to cause a degree of pain or discomfort to students, pupils or learners (United Nations, 2006) and is widely practiced across schools in developing countries especially Nigeria. The debate as regards its advantage or disadvantage has been severally discussed. However, public and private schools in Nigeria have resorted to banning the use of corporal punishment.

According to Iremeka (2023) “there has been a global tendency to abolish corporal punishment in order to challenge the old method of reforming children’s behaviour. This tendency is supported by the contemporary call for protection of human rights, including the right to security, and decent human treatment as well as child right and to a large extent school authorities, particularly teachers have been restrained from punishing students for unruly behaviours”.

Furthermore, the Lagos state government through the commissioner of education stated that the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools and homes has resulted in negative outcome and to avert such ugly incidents, the government of Lagos has enacted a policy prohibiting teachers from inflicting CP on students and pupils in school (Adefisayo, 2022).

The central focus of teaching and learning is the impartation of the learner with relevant knowledge, skill and character that will enable him or her fit into the society. This is the core mandate of classroom instructors who are professionally trained and equipped to handle such critical component of the individuals’ developmental phase. This is enshrined in the Federal Government of Nigeria (2014) National Policy on Education which states that no nation rises above the quality of her education. According to the United Nation Development Programme (2015) Sustainable Development Goal, education is a key component in the attainment of equitable and quality, primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcome among boys and girls. This in effect will lead to the eradication of poverty, disease and hunger, thereby setting up a healthy environment.

The teachers’ professional training is covered within the curricular and extracurricular activities. The curricular activities emphasis the core courses, contents and knowledge based activities and the extracurricular activities include all others that are offered to enhance the quality of the teacher (field experiences, psychotherapy and trainings) and according to Melekewei (2023), teachers should possess some psychological (personality, self efficacy, locus of control, self esteem etc) traits to become effective in their classroom delivery. What is then the alternative approach or skills require for managing disruptive behaviour among students in both public and private schools? This paper therefore examines the role of emotional intelligence in the management of disruptive behaviour among students in schools.

This paper is motivated from a video posted on twitter on the 20th of April 2023 where a teacher got into a fight with a student over the seizure of her cell phone. The video reveal a situation where the student was in a serious argument with the teacher over the seizure of her cell phone and this led the student to assaulting the teacher during a struggle to secure back her cell phone and which was consider very unruly, however the teacher was observed to retaliate by overpowering, and beating the student.

This classic case was reviewed and the following issues were noted as lessons from the video: That:

- i. The student was rude and deserved to be discipline by the college authority.



- ii. The teacher reserves the right to discipline the student but not through physical assault and
- iii. The teacher must be taken through emotional intelligence training.
- iv. This was followed by unruly comments because my views were considered to be at variance with public opinion which expectedly in their compelling view, the teacher was right to have provided an immediate reinforcement by teaching the child a lesson of her life, for instance, some of the responses are presented below;

S/N	RESPONSE
1	Comrade I suppose ginter your second eye
2	In conclusion, you dey craze
3	Herbalist doctor
4	You spoil your write-up at the end sir. The girl raised her hand on the teacher first
5	I am not sure you know what you're saying, so the teacher was suppose to stay calm when a student slapped her, which planet are you from brother?

Disruptive behavior in and around the classroom environment are common place in the global community and Nigeria inclusive. They are considered as behaviour(s) that interfere with the teaching, learning, administrative functions and services rendered in the school. In the school environments, such acts negate rules and regulations, hinders school instruction or curriculum activities and can lead to loss of human resource and affects students' growth (khan et al, 2022).

Disruptive Behaviour

In this study, disruptive behaviour is considered in relation to verbal attack, violent assault, bullying, aggression, fighting or threat between and among students and instructors. Turanovic and Siennick (2022), reviewed the causes and consequences of school violence leading to classroom disruption and posited some predicting factors such as:

- (i) Individual factors: criminological risk factors (antisocial attitudes, deviant peers, low self-control/impulsivity): Risky, pro-social and avoidance behaviors (delinquent/antisocial behaviors, pro-social behavior, risk avoidance, substance use weapon carrying); personality traits (agreeableness, callous unemotional traits, conscientiousness, extroversion, neuroticism, openness): psychological risk and protective factors (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), empathy, hostility, internalizing problems, moral disengagement, self-esteem/self-efficacy): victimization and exposure to violence/child maltreatment, exposure to domestic violent, peer victimization); parent factors (negative parenting, parental attachment/bonds, parental supervision), academic and extracurricular factors (extracurricular, school attachment/bond, school performance/functioning); demographic characteristic (Age, Sex, gender): others individual factors/disability, overweight LGBT.
- (ii) School and Community factor: Features of school settings (School climate, school disorder, school size, urban school, violent school); school security factors (school security devices, officer or guard at school): Community risk factors (community



crime/disorder, community economic deprivation). These predicting factors are likely to find application in the classroom or school environment because of the teachers' insufficient knowledge and skill poor management of containing disruptive behaviour among students. For instance, Turi (2019) reported that the traditional method of modifying disruptive behaviors in Pakistan is through the use of corporal punishment which has since been banned by the government after passing one hundred and thirty one bills at the national assembly. This inadvertently has led to increase in disruptive behavior due to teachers' poor capacity and skills in managing DB. Rodriguez (2009) contended that in cases of verbal or physical threats, the instructor as a general rule should consult education specialist for advice immediately. Khan et al (2022) reported that DB affects peers, colleagues, and school mate of different ages and classroom instruction among others.

Tsagem (2021) investigated school-based violent behavior among secondary school students in katsina and found that some causes of violent disruptive behaviors in schools are learner, school and home based factors. Fakhruddins (2019) listed steps towards managing disruptive behavior in the classroom to include: (i) describing the problem as clear as poor (ii) understanding reasons for the disruptive behavior (iii) modifying instructor and students behavior and (iv) managing coordination among stakeholders. Wangdi and Namgyel (2022) investigated classroom to reduce student disruptive behavior and found six common types of disruptive behaviors in the language classroom and they posited that most of the observed disruptive behaviors can be reduced by using sitting arrangement as an intervention. Simpson (ND) in a study, how can educators curtail disruptive classroom behaviors? outline some guideline to effective classroom management techniques; (i) Utilization of a preventive approach (ii) Establishment of fair limits (iii) Setting of positive examples (iv) Restoration of order immediately a crises occurs (v) Managing once behavior in a challenging situation (vi) Identification of the main problem (vii) Changing the classroom environment when required (viii) Provision of alternatives to disruptive behaviors (ix) Helping students to understand the consequences of their behavior (x) Create time out space within the learning environment (xi) Helping student undertake behavior modification training (xii) Utilization of group counseling to promote positive behavior (xiii) Avoid reinforcement of negative behavior (xiv) Build student self concept (xv) Deal with cases of pathological behavior. Mansor and Yusoff (2016) found in their study, "The effectiveness of strategies used by teachers to manage disruptive classroom behavior; that teachers has never been exposed to any intervention programmes and they have never been trained in applying different strategies in dealing with students misbehaviors, however, they agreed to having encounter some disruptive behaviors among students in their classroom.

Sunday et al (2022) reported in their study of "classroom management strategies and disruptive behavior among pupils in Calabar municipal; lack of classroom management can affect or bring about DB among pupils and therefore recommended that effective management style and positive, supportive discipline climate should be encourage in schools in other to help pupils overcome the challenge of disruptive behaviors in schools.

Teachers' Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has been widely conceptualized to include an individual capacity to understand and manage one feeling or self and to acknowledge and react effectively to those of others. Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as the capacity to recognize once owns feelings and those of others, for motivating the self, and for managing emotional situation in our

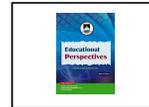


relationships. The teacher emotional intelligence is a key factor, if he/she must succeed in the teaching and learning process. Accordingly, teachers' EI is viewed as the teachers' capacity to understand, use and adjust his own behavior in positive ways to relieve stressful conditions, communicate efficiently, empathize with students and others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict (Segal, Smith, Robinson and Shubin, 2023). Goleman (1995) summed the emotional intelligence quadrant to include the Self; (Self-awareness, which covers emotional self-awareness, self-assessment, and self-confidence; Self-management, which captures emotional self control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative and optimism). Others; (Social awareness which covers empathy, organizational awareness and service; Relationship management which covers influence, inspirational leadership, developing others, building bond, conflict management, teamwork and collaboration). These emotional qualities are essential tools for proper resolution and management of disruptive behaviours among students.

Dey and Roy (2022) citing Goleman (1995); Merida – Lopez and Extremera (2017), Brockbank and McGill (2007) opined that emotional intelligence accounts for 80%, while general intelligence accounts for 20% of all achievement gained by teachers. That is, EI has been found to improve teachers' effectiveness, teaching role, leadership quality, personal well-being, group work and establish their purpose for professional life". Teachers' EI is characterized by his/her capacity to be a good listener, should be able to add value by contributing toward meeting learning expectation of the learner, should enjoy teaching, empathy, self awareness, managing the behavior of their non-threatening, approachable, open to experience positive, attentive amongst others (Barlozek, 2018).

Abiodullah et al (2020) in their study, emotional intelligence as a predictor of teacher engagement in classroom found that teachers' had moderate emotional intelligence with reference to attachment to students, school climate and colleagues. Valento et al (2019) reported that teachers' who have greater capacity to deal with emotion demonstrated apt management of discipline in the classroom. Gallar (2015) concluded from her study emotional intelligence and positive classroom climate that outstanding teachers constantly monitored students emotions in the classroom, expresses empathy in response to student complaints, experience and modeled more passion about their teaching subject, engages more in emotional regulation techniques in response to frustrating classroom behavior, engages in fewer negative classroom management strategies and uses student centred approach instead of self-revelation to forge relationship with students. Jelondaret al (2011) revealed from their study that teachers' with high levels of EI scored higher in classroom discipline strategies, while teachers' with moderate level of EI scored higher in the use of aggression and no significant relationship with the use of punishment as a classroom discipline strategy.

The various methods mentioned are specifically meant to combat disruptive classroom behavior with few studies taking into consideration the required psychological construct of the classroom teacher to effectively manage the various disruptive behaviour. This study therefore seek to clarify the role of the teachers' emotional intelligence in the management of schools disruptive behavior in the classroom, the teachers' emotional intelligence is a critical factor towards successful classroom interactions.



Statement of Problem

Emotional intelligence of classroom teachers are critical to effective and efficient conduct of classroom activities including the management of disruptive behaviors among students, this inability to resist students confrontation and subsequent attack cast doubt on classroom teachers' capacity to relate and manage students behaviors in an aggressive classroom situation. The implication from the foregoing is the loss of meaningful interactive classroom activities, while students and teachers' are subject to boardroom investigation. Some studies have focus on strategies for managing disruptive behavior while fewer studies have investigated teachers' emotional intelligence and management of disruptive behavior. This study therefore seek to investigate whether emotional intelligence matter in the management of disruptive behaviours in schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out whether teachers' emotional intelligence matter in the management of disruptive behavior in the classroom. The study also seeks to determine the following: Teachers' awareness of emotional intelligence skills, teachers' strategies for managing disruptive behaviors in the classroom, teachers' attitude towards the utilization of emotional intelligence, teachers' knowledge, perception, experiences or practice of emotional intelligence.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study;

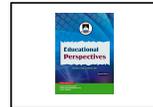
1. What is the behaviour you consider as disruptive within the classroom?
2. Have you been involve in a disruptive classroom situation (share your experience) and how did you manage it.
3. What are your strategies for managing students' aggressive behaviours towards you?
4. If you are attacked by your student in the course of an argument, what will you do to the student in such a situation?
5. What do you understand by emotional intelligence?
6. Have you been trained in emotional intelligence skill?
7. Does emotional intelligence matter in the management of students disruptive behavior, especially when teachers are attacked by their students?

Methodology

This study adopted a focus group discussion (FGD) which is a form of qualitative research method and data collection technique, in which participants are asked to discuss some given topics and moderated by an expert. This method requires participants to share their attitude, perception, knowledge, practice and experiences.

The population of the study will comprise senior secondary school teachers' in Lagos state whereas the purposive sampling method was used to select two groups of seven (7) participants each, and was drawn from both public and private secondary schools in Lagos state.

The instrument for the study was an open-ended or unstructured questionnaire in which the respondents were allowed to express themselves freely. The qualitative data generated was analyzed through data transcription.



Transcription and discussion of findings

What are the behaviors you consider as disruptive within the classroom?

The teachers' listed a number of disruptive behaviors within the classroom which includes and not limited to the following: "Non-challant attitude of students towards basic and environmentally hygienic instructions, destruction of school furniture, not writing note, students having less regard for teaching staff, parent's asking teachers to complete task that should have been done at home, disobedient to teachers instruction, A student slapping a teacher (being a special student), students been disruptive and having negative attitude. This is consistent with the early report of Turanovic and Siennick (2022) who highlighted disruptive behavior to include individual school and community factors. Tsagem (2021) who pointed out that disruptive behavior are individual, school and home related factors.

What are your strategies for managing students' disruptive (aggressive) behaviours in your classroom?

The teachers' highlighted some strategies which includes educating students on the need to have right attitude towards their school learning experience. Paiget reported his experience with an unruly student, having observed that he was not writing his note and when confronted, the student left the school and never returned until one month later. It found that the "students" was already a parent and was on self sponsorship. Hence, he brought him closer and supported his learning experience. This finding is in agreement with the steps outlined by Simpson (ND) who posited that one way of helping the student is to let him know the consequence of his behavior and also create adequate time within the learning environment. Sunday et al (2022) further summed that effective management style and positive climate should be encouraged within the classroom environment.

If you are attacked by your student in the cause of an argument, what will you do to the student in such situation?

All the teachers submitted that the withdrawal of corporal punishment from the school system has contributed to the absence of managing disruptive behavior, such as physical attack. For instance, "Palo argued that when a student recently slapped a teacher in his school, nothing was done to the student because it was found that the student was considered a special student" and that impacted the decision of the teacher to stay away rather than respond in her own way. The implication from the foregoing is the absence of requisite skills to manage the observed behavior. This is consistent with Turi (2019) who reported that traditional method of modifying disruptive behavior is through the use of corporal punishment which has since been abolished, thereby increasing elements of aggressiveness among students.

What is emotional intelligence?

Paiget "view emotional intelligence to include teachers feeling, capacity to interpret a given situation, as well as control temperament to bring about positive behaviors change". Tata "expressed emotional intelligence as ability to manage once feeling/emotion and helping students to understand his/her behavior and consequence of such behavior with a view to developing the right attitude. Teachers also view emotional intelligence in terms of ability to relate will colleagues and meeting students expectation. These views are in agreement with Barlozek (2013) who argued that EI is characterized by teachers' capacity to be a good listener, should add value to the learning process, be empathic, non threatening, approachable and open to new experiences.



Have you been trained in emotional intelligence skill?

The teachers contended that they have not been trained in emotional intelligence skill. According to Paiget “teachers’ are conversant with the use of corporal punishment and they sometimes deal with students as parents in instances when students become unruly.” Another responded Palo “said that they have not been trained in emotional intelligent skills, but when a student become unruly, such a student is suspended and the parent is invited by the school management for a meeting”. This finding is consistent with the early conclusion of Mansor and Yusoff (2016) who argued that teachers are incapacitated to manage disruptive behavior because they have never been exposed to any intervention programme.

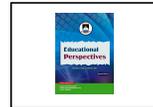
Does emotional intelligence matter in the management of students’ disruptive behavior, especially when teachers are attacked by students? All the teachers agreed that emotional intelligence is a requirement for the management of disruptive behavior in public and private schools since most schools have banned corporal punishment. This finding is consistent with the finding of Abiodullah et al (2020), Valento et al (2019) and Gallar (2015) who posited that teachers’ who have greater capacity to deal with their emotion demonstrated apt management of discipline and they constantly manage students emotion in the classroom.

Conclusion

Based on the outcome of the study, teachers’ identify disruptive behaviour to include students’ non-challant attitude towards basic instruction and having no regard for teaching staff among others; they highlighted strategies for managing disruptive behaviours to include students developing the right attitude towards their learning experience and staying away from aggressive situations; emotional intelligence is a requirement in the management of disruptive behaviour; it was concluded that teachers should be exposed to emotional intelligence training and retraining in other to ensure smooth classroom interaction and transition. Teachers’ should also appreciate that the 21st century students are protected by laws, hence they must begin to engage new perspectives of managing students’ behaviour rather than re-echoing the old ways (use of corporal punishment) of doing things.

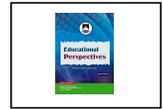
Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made towards improving and managing disruptive behaviours in schools. The teachers should be taken through emotional intelligence training and re-training in other to enhance their capacity towards understanding and managing students with disruptive behaviours. The school management should be committed towards enhancing capacity building of classroom teachers by organizing periodic training of teachers. Parents and students should also be made to appreciate the role of the teacher in fostering and developing the right behaviour and attitude towards learning experience



REFERENCES

- Abiodullah, M. Sameen, D. and Aslam, N. (2020) Emotional intelligence as predictor of teacher engagement in classroom. *Bulletin of Education and Research* 42 (1) 127-140.
- Adefisayo F. (2022, May 25) Lagos state government prohibits corporal punishment in public schools. *Vanguard Newspaper*. [www. Vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com)
- Barlozek, N. (2013) Teachers' emotional intelligence: a vital component in the learning process. <https://www.oai.dspace.uro .1002p1:11089/14974>.
- Day, A. and Roy, N.R. (2022) Construction and validation of emotional intelligence scale for secondary school teachers. *Educational, Cultural and Psychological Studies Journal*. 74-95
- Fakhrudin, M.Z. (2019) Managing disruptive behavior in the classroom. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330039674>.
- Gallar, D. (2005) Emotional intelligence and positive classroom climate, an exploration of how outstanding teachers use emotional intelligence to create positive classroom climates. A Dissertation Submitted to the graduate school of the State University of New Jersey.
- Iremeke, C (2023, May 20) Tackling behavioural consequence of banning corporal punishment in lagos schools. *The Guidance Saturday Magazine*. www.guardian.ng
- Jeloudar, S.Y. Yunus, A.S.M, Roslan, S. Wor, S.M. (2011) The Influence of emotional intelligence of secondary school teachers in classroom discipline strategies. *Journal of America Science* 7(7) 882-889.
- Khan R.V. Tahir, T. Ishfaq V. and Nawaz H. (2022) Teachers' role in dealing with students' disruptive behavior in the classroom. *Social Science Journal*. 12 (6) 2195-2207.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2014). National policy on education. Lagos. NERDC Press
- Mangdi, T. and Namgyel, S. (2022). Classroom to reduce students' disruptive behavior. An action research. *Mextesol Journal* 46(1) 1-11.
- Melekeowei, P. D (2023) Pert analytic effect of psycho-demographic factors determining teacher'effectiveness in secondary schools in Lagos state. 9th International Academic Forum.
- Rodriguez,L (2009). Classroom management.<http://www.4faculty.org//Includes/10gr2.jup>.
- Simpson, R. (ND). How can educators curtail disruptive classroom behaviours? The guide to effective strategies to be applied. <https://stratfordjournals.org>.
- United Nations (2006) Forms of punishment: physical punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment. <http://.www.violenceagainstchildren.un.org>
- Sunday, M.O. Ogbeche, M.M. and Adie, R.V. (2022) Classroom management strategies and disruptive behavior among pupils in calabar municipal, cross river, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Educational Research* 21, 77-85. <https://dx.doi.org.10.4314/giedr.v21:1:10>.
- Tsagem, S.Y. (2021) School-based violent behaviors among secondary school students in Katsina State, Nigeria. causes and origins. *Katsina Counsellors, Journal of Counselling*, 3(1) 143-153.
- Turanovic, J. J. and Sunnick, S.E. (2022) The causes and consequences of school violence: A review. National Institute of Justice Washington, DC.
- Turi, J.A. (2019) Types and cause of students' disruptive behavior in classroom at comprehensive level of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *International Journal of Humanities Technology and Civilization* 1(6) 25-30.
- United Nations (2006) Forms of punishment: physical punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment. <http://.www.violenceagainstchildren.un.org>



- United Nation Development Programme (2015) Sustainable development goals. <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>
- Valente, S.N, Monteiro, A.P. and Lourenco, A.A. (2019) The relationship between teachers' emotional intelligent and classroom discipline management. *Psychology in the Schools* 56(5) 741-750
- Yabaleftonline (2023, April 20). Teacher and student fighting over phone seizure. <http://blog.Yabale.;ftonline.ng/2023/04/20>
- Yusoff, W.M.W. and Mansor, N. (2016) The effectiveness of strategies used by teacher's to manage disruptive classroom behavior. A case study at a religious school in Rawong, Selangor. *Ilum Journal of Educational Studies*. 4(1) 133-150.