



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2017; 3(7): 1544-1549
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 26-05-2017
Accepted: 02-07-2017

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A study on the influence of school environment on behavioural problems among school going children of Bareilly district

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Abstract

The study investigates the influence of the school environment on behavioral problems among school-going children. School environments, including physical infrastructure, teacher-student relationships, peer interactions, and the general atmosphere, play a critical role in shaping students' behavioral patterns. This research explores how factors such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate facilities, teacher attitudes, and peer pressure contribute to various behavioral issues like aggression, defiance, and anxiety in children. A mixed-method approach was employed, incorporating surveys, interviews, and observation to gather data from a sample of primary and secondary school students. The findings indicate a significant correlation between negative school environments and increased behavioral problems, suggesting that improving the school atmosphere, promoting positive teacher-student interactions, and fostering a supportive peer environment can mitigate behavioral issues. The study underscores the need for educators and policymakers to prioritize creating conducive learning environments to support children's holistic development and well-being.

Keywords: Environment, supportive, pressure

Introduction

Behavioral problems among children have become an increasing concern for parents, educators, and mental health professionals. School going children, typically defined as the period between 3 and 12 years of age, is a critical developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. During this time, children begin to assert their independence and develop a sense of identity, which can sometimes manifest in behavioral challenges. These may include issues such as aggression, defiance, anxiety, hyperactivity, and difficulties in social interaction.

The prevalence of such behavioral issues has been the subject of extensive research, with studies indicating a growing trend worldwide. Factors contributing to these problems may range from genetic predispositions and family dynamics to environmental stressors like school pressures and societal expectations. Understanding the prevalence of these issues is crucial for early identification and intervention, as untreated behavioral problems can have long-term implications for academic performance, peer relationships, and overall well-being. Behavior problems in children can manifest in various ways, ranging from minor disobedience to more serious behavioral disorders. Understanding the causes, types, and strategies to manage these behaviors is crucial for parents, educators, and caregivers to support a child's development effectively. Here's a detailed look at this topic:

1. Types of Behavior Problems in Children

Children's behavior problems can be grouped into different categories depending on the severity, duration, and context of the behavior:

2. Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

ODD is characterized by a consistent pattern of defiant, disobedient, and hostile behavior toward authority figures. Common symptoms include:

- Frequent temper tantrums
- Argumentative with adults
- Refusing to follow rules

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- Blaming others for mistakes or misbehavior
 - Deliberately annoying others
- a. Conduct Disorder (CD)**
More severe than ODD, conduct disorder involves aggressive behavior that violates social norms and the rights of others. Some common signs include:
- Bullying or threatening others
 - Physical fights
 - Lying or stealing
 - Destroying property
 - Truancy from school
- b. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**
ADHD can lead to behavior problems due to a child's difficulty with attention, impulse control, and hyperactivity. Symptoms include:
- Inability to sit still
 - Difficulty focusing on tasks
 - Acting without thinking
 - Interrupting others
 - Difficulty organizing tasks
- c. Anxiety and Mood Disorders**
While not strictly behavioral, anxiety and mood disorders can lead to behavior problems. Children with anxiety may act out due to feelings of stress or fear, while those with mood disorders (such as depression) may exhibit irritability, defiance, or withdrawal from social interactions.

Behaviour problems are deviations from the accepted pattern of behaviour on the part of a child when he is exposed to an inconsistent social and cultural environment. "Problem behaviour is the undesirable conduct or behaviour which parents, guardians or teachers fail in their efforts to cure. It is fundamentally a faulty development of personality." "Problem behaviour is frequently viewed as "abnormal". Abnormal means "away" or "from" while normal refers to the average or standard. Thus abnormal or problematic behaviour simply means something that deviates from the average." Behaviour problems in children can be broadly classified to externalising problems (Aggression, hyperactivity, delinquency and disobedience etc.) & internalising problems (i.e. social withdrawal and depression etc.)

The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping the development of children, both academically and socially. It is more than just a place for acquiring knowledge; it is a space where children learn social skills, emotional regulation, and moral values, which are all essential for their overall development. The impact of the school environment on children's behavior has been a subject of growing concern, particularly with the rise of behavior problems among school-going children. These behavioral issues can range from disruptive classroom behavior, aggression, bullying, defiance, to more severe forms of antisocial behavior.

School-going children spend a significant portion of their day within the confines of the school, interacting with teachers, peers, and administrative staff. The school environment, therefore, becomes one of the primary social contexts in which children's behavior is molded. The dynamics within the classroom, the school's discipline

policies, peer relationships, and the broader school culture all contribute to the child's behavioral development. A nurturing, structured, and inclusive school environment promotes positive behaviors, while a chaotic, unstructured, or overly punitive school setting can foster behavior problems.

Various factors within the school environment can influence children's behavior, including the physical environment of the school, teacher-student relationships, the peer group influence, the teaching methods employed, and the disciplinary measures in place. For instance, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient recreational facilities, and lack of teacher engagement can contribute to frustration and stress among students, potentially leading to behavioral problems. Additionally, peer interactions and social dynamics within the school can also significantly impact behavior. Children may experience peer pressure, bullying, or exclusion, which can manifest in behavioral issues like aggression, withdrawal, or defiance.

The teacher's role in managing classroom behavior is particularly crucial. Teachers who create a supportive, engaging, and respectful environment can mitigate many behavior problems by promoting a sense of belonging and encouraging positive interactions among students. On the other hand, inconsistent discipline, poor communication, or negative teacher-student relationships can exacerbate behavioral issues. Furthermore, a school's overall approach to discipline—whether it leans toward restorative practices or punitive measures—can also influence the prevalence and intensity of behavior problems among students.

The psychological and emotional well-being of students is often linked to the quality of the school environment. Schools that prioritize mental health, provide emotional support, and promote a sense of safety and inclusion can help reduce behavior problems. In contrast, a lack of attention to students' emotional needs, or a hostile and unsupportive school climate, can lead to increased behavioral issues such as anxiety, depression, and aggression.

In summary, the school environment is a critical determinant of children's behavior. A positive, structured, and supportive environment can prevent or minimize behavior problems, while a negative or chaotic school setting can exacerbate these issues. Understanding the various aspects of the school environment that contribute to behavioral outcomes is essential for educators, policymakers, and parents to create interventions that foster healthier, more conducive learning environments for children.

Objectives

The following objectives have been set forth for the present study:

1. To study the prevalence of behaviour problems in children in the age range of 3-11 Yrs in rural and urban schools of Bareilly Districts.
2. To study the effect of School Environment in behaviour problems among children.
3. To study age wise variation in behaviour problems among children.
4. To propose a guidelines for children and the teacher to help them to check the prevailing situation as ascertained through objective number 1.

Hypothesis 1: There is no effect of age on the behaviour problem

Hypothesis 2: There is no effect of School Environment on the behaviour problems of school going children

Materials and Methods

The present study was undertaken "A study of the behaviour problems of school going children with special reference to Bareilly district." Systematic procedures were followed for drawing the sample, using appropriate tools for data collection and subsequently analysing and interpreting the data. The research methodology followed has been discussed under the following subheadings:

1. Locale of the study

The study was conducted in rural and urban area of Bareilly district. For the rural area and Bareilly city for the urban area

were purposively selected for the study, the reason for selecting these places were:

1. Block is the closest block from the researcher's residence.
2. Physical proximity of the Bareilly city hence easy approachability.
3. Bareilly city is larger and more developed.

2. Selection of Sample

As the objective of this study is based on the prevalence of behaviour problems in children aged 3-12 years hence first of all schools were selected as a sample so as to locate such children.

Selection of Schools

The list of schools in Bareilly city was obtained from the B.S.A. office of district Bareilly. The sample schools were selected randomly. Four Anganwadi centers, and three playgroup centers were selected purposely to obtain the children of age group 3-5 years as government primary schools selected do not admit 3-5 years old children.

Sample Selection

The total sample approached for the study was 4820(2410 from urban areas and 2410 from rural areas). Out of these 200 children with behaviour problems were detected by interviewing the teacher's class, the schools and Anganwadi workers by using the pretested Teacher's interview schedule. Selection of sample was done on the basis of following criteria:

1. Only those children were selected who were presently attending the pre-primary/primary/middle school.
2. Only two parents' homes were selected.
3. Only those children were selected who were having behavior problems.

The selected sample was equally distributed over four yearly age groups i.e. 3-5 years; 5-7 years; 7-9 years; 9-11 years with equal numbers over the two sexes at each age level.

Tools for Data Collection: The following standardized/modified tools were used for various assessments/observations on the selected sample subjects, their parents and teacher. For preparing the survey schedule, literature pertaining to the prevalence of behaviour problems

in children and the influence of various ecological factors on child's behaviour was reviewed thoroughly. The opinion of parents was also solicited in order to facilitate the development of schedule. The prepared survey schedule was then sent to a few experts related to the field and later questions were modified according to their suggestions and comments.

Child Behaviour Checklist

This checklist was based on the Achenbach's Child Behaviour Checklist (1960) which was prepared to evaluate the child's behaviour problem. The checklist consisted of 52 items. The first 27 items were of externalizing behaviour problems and item numbers 28-44 were of externalizing behaviour problems, item no. 47 & 48 indicated eating problems, item no 49 indicated bed-wetting problem, item no 50 and 51 were for learning problems, item no 52 was for any other behaviour problem which could be reported and was not included in the list.

Socio-Emotional School Climate Inventory

This inventory was developed by Singha and Bhargava in 1994 And has been designed to evaluate the social as well as the emotional climate of school organization as perceived by the pupils themselves; separately as well as globally. It consists of three dimensions spread over 70 items in all\:

- Warmth and support
- Structure
- Autonomy

Pre- Testing Of Research Instrument

Pre- testing was done to find out the nature of responses and clarity of statements the test was administered to 10 children. It was found that children had difficulty in understanding the English language therefore the test was translated into Hindi.

Collection of Data and Scoring

The sample subjects were contacted in the schools; first of all, class teachers of the school and Anganwadi workers were interviewed to study the prevalence of behaviour problems in children. Assessment of socio economic factors and parenting styles was made by contacting parents of the selected sample subjects in their respective home settings.

Analysis of data

The collected data was analyzed using the following statistical frequencies:

1. Frequency
2. Percentage
3. Test of significance between two proportions
4. Chi-Square Test

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1: There is no effect of the school environment on behavior problems of school going children: The results of association of behaviour problems and school environment are shown in table 4.5.2. The chi square value for urban children is 7.49 and for the rural children is 8.57 was found to be significant at 5 percent level thus, showing an association between behaviour problems and school environment of both rural as well as 6% respondents who faced behaviour ord school environment as poor whereas 33% viewed their school

environment Research in the field of education has consistently found that school environment, its physical philosophies and teacher parent interaction patterns play a major role in determining the level of behaviour problems , in the present study also, most of the children who faced behaviour problems reported that their school environment

to be "poor "or "average". Mishra (1993) also pointed out that the internal environment of the school was the most dominant factor for achieving success in school thus preventing maladjustment. In yet another study, Pandya 1998 ^[9] highlighted that the quality of facilities in schools greatly influence the behavioural outcome of students.

Table 1: Association between behaviour problem and School Environment

School Environment	POOR (0-23)		Average (24-46)			Difference
	N	%	N	%		
Urban	112	56	88	44	8.57	Significant
Rural	124	62	76	38	7.49	Significant

The above results depicted that the school environment greatly affects the behavioural outcomes of the children. This may be due to the fact that school caters to the educational needs of the student, the learning processes involved in a syllabus, teachers and their teaching methods, extracurricular activities etc affect the strategies needed for general performance. These findings are in accordance with Gakhar (1991) ^[4]. he revealed that children from private schools have few behaviour problems as compared to government schools because private schools employ strict supervision by the school management, have better student-teacher interaction, and a good and healthy emotional environment. It can be inferred that schools are the vital forces in children's development, affecting their modes of remembering, reasoning, problem solving and understanding. Hence it is imperative to know the details of the school environment.

educational institution is a bridging concept between pupils and the school in which they stay, and is the perception of the structure, process, and values which directly shapes the behaviour of the child. The teachers being unaware of the problems of children go on continuing their way of behaviour and it aggravates the problems between children and teacher and it has its impact on healthy student teacher relationship. Schools are flooded with an increasing number of students who have socio- emotional difficulties. Such difficulties with aggression on other overt behaviors

Hypothesis 2: There is no effect of the age wise variation on behavior problems of school going children

Table 3: Age wise variation in behaviour problems in children

Age	3-7 Years			7-9 Years			9-11 Years			X value calculated	Difference
	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%		
Urban	400	15	7.5	200	9	4.5	200	24	12	12.64	Significant*
Rural	200	12	6	200	25	12.5	200	28	14	26.21	Significant*
Total	400	27	6.75	200	36	9	200	52	13	12.4	Significant*

* Statically significant at 0.01 level of significance

Table 2: percentage showing response in behaviour problem in context of the school environment

Sr No.	Variables	Scores of urban		Scores of Rural	
		Respondent	%	Respondent	%
1.	Teacher - Student	95	37.6	176	76
	Student-Student	750	44.5	233	65
2.	Student-Administrator	478	60	375	45
	Teacher-Administrator	198	61.1	98	34
	Academic	350	59	128	28
3.	Extra-Curricular	530	42	340	54
	Group Interaction	324	39	162	37

Urban respondents were not satisfied with student- student interaction; they perceived it to be very low (94.5%). Regarding student administrator interaction, it was observed that 60 percent of the children who feel behaviour problems viewed an appropriate and were satisfied with socio academic interactions, were analysed, it was rated to be satisfactory the 61.5 percent of students

As far as academics are concerned, students perceived a very low (30%) and were not satisfied with it. Regarding extracurricular activities, the majority of respondents 62 percent found to be unsatisfied, it was the scenario with group interactions and 30 percent of respondents viewed it as inappropriate. Rural respondents perceived Teacher student, student, student administrator, Teacher-administrator, academics, extracurricular activities and group interaction to be very low 33%.00%-40% d 37% respectively.

It could be concluded that perception of social and emotional aspects of the organizational climate are considered to be of great significance for the betterment of educational institution the socio emotional climate of

Table value of x at 0.01 level of significance 9.210 Table 4.4.1 a indicates that among all the age groups, behaviour problems were most prevalent in the age group of 9-11 years for both rural and urban areas followed by the age group of 7-9 years and then in the age group of 3-7 years. 9-11 years is the period of pre-adolescent period, this period is said to be the period of stress and storm by G Stanley Hall, as children are entering into this phase of life there are dramatic physical and mental changes are taking place, and at the same time the child lacks maturity, the new drives and needs assail the boys and girls during these years. Most of these drives and needs are understood imperfectly by elders and so they develop frustration because they do not even know what they want so intensely and much less how to attain it. Many of their emerging drives and needs bring almost inevitable conflict with parental concepts of responsibility and property.

However, in urban areas, the behaviour problems are rising with the rise in age. This might be due to the pressure of academics and parental expectations.

Inferences Null hypothesis were rejected as both age as well as School environment has found to be remarkable effect on behavioural problems among

Guidelines for teachers and Students

Managing behavior problems in schools is critical for creating a positive learning environment. Effective guidelines for students and teachers can help reduce

disruptions and promote respect, cooperation, and academic success. Below are some key strategies and guidelines:

For Teachers

1. Set Clear Expectations

- Establish and communicate clear rules and routines from the start of the school year.
- Post classroom rules where they are visible and review them regularly.
- Ensure students understand the consequences of both positive and negative behaviors.

2. Build Positive Relationships

- Develop rapport and trust with students by showing interest in their well-being.
- Use positive reinforcement to encourage good behavior (praise, rewards, or privileges).
- Get to know students' individual needs and triggers for misbehavior.

3. Use Consistent and Fair Discipline

- Apply consequences consistently and fairly for all students.
- Use progressive discipline that matches the severity of the behavior (e.g., verbal warnings, loss of privileges, time-outs).
- Avoid public shaming; deal with issues privately where possible to maintain student dignity.

4. Engage in Proactive Classroom Management

- Use seating arrangements, classroom layout, and structured routines to minimize opportunities for disruption.
- Implement active supervision, moving around the classroom to maintain presence and prevent misbehavior.
- Keep lessons engaging, varied, and at an appropriate difficulty level to prevent boredom-related behavior problems.

5. Teach Social-Emotional Skills

- Incorporate lessons on empathy, conflict resolution, and self-regulation into the curriculum.
- Teach students how to identify and express their emotions in a healthy way.
- Encourage problem-solving strategies and model appropriate responses to stressful situations.

6. Collaborate with Parents and Support Staff

- Maintain open communication with parents about their child's behavior and progress.
- Work with school counselors or psychologists to develop individualized behavior plans for students with persistent issues.
- Attend professional development on managing challenging behaviors.

7. Use Restorative Practices

- Implement restorative justice techniques where students reflect on their behavior and work to make amends with those affected.
- Encourage peer mediation and conflict resolution to help students resolve their issues in a constructive manner.

For Students

1. Understand Classroom Rules

- Learn and follow the classroom rules and expectations set by the teacher.
- Ask questions if something is unclear or you're unsure how to behave in a certain situation.

2. Take Responsibility for Your Actions

- Recognize that your actions have consequences, both positive and negative.
- Own up to mistakes, apologize when necessary, and learn from them.

3. Practice Self-Control

- Use techniques like deep breathing, counting to ten, or taking a break if you feel upset or frustrated.
- Avoid reacting impulsively in situations that make you angry or upset.

4. Respect Others

- Treat classmates and teachers with respect, even when you disagree.
- Listen when others are speaking and avoid interrupting.
- Avoid bullying, teasing, or excluding others.

5. Work Cooperatively

- Participate in group activities respectfully and fairly.
- Help classmates and contribute positively to group work.
- Respect the opinions and contributions of others, even when they are different from yours.

6. Seek Help When Needed

- If you are struggling with a personal issue or are having trouble controlling your behavior, talk to a teacher or school counselor.
- Ask for assistance if you don't understand the rules or expectations, rather than acting out.

7. Focus on Learning

- Stay engaged during lessons and avoid distractions like talking or using phones.
- Do your best to complete assignments on time and with effort.
- Take pride in your learning and contribute positively to the classroom environment.

Collaborative Guidelines (For Both Teachers and Students)

1. Create a Supportive Environment

- Teachers and students should work together to create an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Encourage open dialogue where students can express concerns or frustrations without fear of punishment.
- Set goals together as a class for behavior, learning, and community-building.

2. Use Positive Reinforcement:

- Acknowledge good behavior frequently. Teachers can offer praise and rewards, while students can support and encourage each other.
- Celebrate successes, whether academic or behavioral, as a class.

Conflict Resolution

- When conflicts arise, handle them respectfully and calmly.
- Use “I” statements (e.g., “I feel upset when...”) to express feelings rather than blaming others.
- Work together to find solutions to problems rather than allowing issues to escalate.

4. Foster Inclusivity

- Encourage a culture of inclusivity where every student feels valued and respected.
- Teach students to appreciate differences and to support peers who may be struggling behaviorally or academically.

By adhering to these guidelines, teachers can create a structured, supportive environment where students feel respected, engaged, and empowered to succeed academically and socially.

Conclusion

The impact of the school environment on children's behavior is significant. Private schools tend to have better management, student-teacher interactions, and a positive emotional climate, contributing to fewer behavior problems. The data shows that urban and rural students perceive different levels of satisfaction regarding their interactions within the school. The school's social and emotional environment is crucial in shaping children's behavior and development. Educators and administrators must be aware of these dynamics to foster healthy student-teacher relationships and address socio-emotional challenges effectively for a better learning environment.

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