School children's Behavioral and Emotional Issues: Teacher's and Parent's Views

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Abstract

This study explores the behavioral and emotional problems of schoolchildren from the perspectives of 100 teachers and 100 parents of children aged 6 to 12 years. A mixed-methods approach was used, with quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews conducted to collect data. The findings showed that there were significant behavioral and emotional problems, with teachers reporting more aggression/defiance and attention deficit, while parents reported anxiety and social withdrawal. Both identified familial and environmental factors, but the teachers identified classroom stressors as key causes, and the parents focused on family dynamics. Some common strategies were open communication and structured routines, while teachers put more emphasis on interventions, and parents on emotional support. The research highlights that there is a need for increased collaboration between teachers and parents, professional development for teachers, and also additional support for parents on managing the issues of children.

Keywords: Behavioral Issues, Emotional Issues, Teachers' Perspectives, Parents' Perspectives, School children, Parent-Teacher Collaboration

Introduction

Behavioural and emotional problems of school-going children have become increasingly important areas of concern among educators, parents, and policymakers. From disruptive classroom behaviour to anxiety and depression, these problems have a marked impact on a

child's academic performance, social development, and well-being as a whole. Since the educational environment is the primary domain in which children grow and learn, their perceptions of the nature of challenges must be understood by their prime stakeholders: teachers and parents. The perceptions of these critical stakeholders can help identify underlying causes, develop effective intervention programs, and create positive support environments both at home and at school.

The present children face a plethora of stressors that lead to behavioural and emotional problems. These factors include academic stress, family relationships, friendship circles, and the exposure of digital media. Other significant societal factors, such as economic instability, social inequalities, and the after-effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, have further amplified these challenges. All these combine to manifest themselves in a combination of attention deficit, emotional dysregulation, and maladaptive coping mechanisms. To manage these issues, collaboration and teamwork between the teacher and the parent will be absolutely necessary.

Teachers, as frontline observers of children's behaviour in a classroom, have a unique viewpoint to observe early signs of behavioural and emotional problems. They observe children every day and note behaviours that may not occur at home, which a parent or caregiver may be unaware of. Teachers' perspectives are highly useful since they can provide a contextual setting as to how children would act in structured settings, get along with peers, and interact with authority figures. Unfortunately, teachers face the following difficulties when dealing with such problems: They receive very minimal training on mental health; there are fewer resources and even time for such interventions. These challenges limit their capacity to deliver appropriate support for needy children.

Parents, on the other hand, have a different perspective over understanding children's emotional and behavioural challenges. They see their child in a more intimate or unstructured environment where even different factors may influence how the child behaves. Of course, parents' mental health awareness and attitudes, as well as their parenting styles and overall home dynamics, are more significant in determining children's emotional well-being. However, parents may struggle to recognize or acknowledge issues due to stigma, lack of knowledge, or their own emotional burdens. This gap between recognition and action highlights the importance of fostering effective communication and collaboration between teachers and parents.

Review of Literature

Mathews et al. (2021) conducted a cross-sectional survey to assess British teachers' concerns about the mental health of their pupils. It depicted the increasing awareness and the critical importance of issues regarding mental health in the classroom context. Anxiety, emotional regulation difficulties, and behavioural problems were the significant concerns mentioned by the teachers. These concerns show the need for incorporating support regarding mental health into teaching activities for better school child welfare.

İman et al. (2019) has studied the influence of Montessori methodology on social competence and emotional regulation among preschool children. Results have found that the Montessori model significantly improved the social ability to communicate and regulate emotions of the child. It is worth highlighting that such methods of education focused on a child are beneficial in acquiring socio-emotional skills through childhood.

Chen et al. (2020) explored internet-related behaviours among school children during COVID-19 school suspensions and their psychological effects. The study found a direct correlation between excessive internet usage and increased psychological distress, which included anxiety and depression. These findings emphasize the requirement for balanced technology use and mental health support during remote learning periods or crises that undermine traditional education systems.

Wenter et al. (2022) relied on a mixed-methods strategy to explore the mental well-being of children during their first two years of lockdown due to COVID-19 from the parents' side. It has been realized that several risk factors such as seclusion, changed routines and stress in parents contribute toward mental health problems. Meanwhile, there were aspects that depicted post-traumatic growth where children were found robust and adaptable. This study brings out a more nuanced take on dual effects of the pandemic on children's mental health, calling for proactive strategies to minimize risks and foster resilience.

Research Methodology

1. Study Design

The mixed-methods design used quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews in this study to gather the data comprehensively. Measurable data was obtained through structured

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surveys, and the perspectives of the participants were probed through semi-structured interviews for robust and reliable findings.

2. Participants

200 participants, consisting of 100 teachers and 100 parents of children aged between 6 and 12 years from urban and rural schools, participated in this study. Purposive sampling was used to ensure participants who are relevant to the objectives of the research.

3. Data Gathering

Quantitative data was gathered through structured questionnaires and qualitative data through the use of semi-structured interviews. This ensured that quantitative data provided standardized metrics while qualitative data provided the depth.

4. Analysis

Quantitative data analysis used descriptive statistics so as to understand trends; however, the qualitative data themes were determined through thematic analysis where key themes are found and presented.

This ensured providing a deep understanding of results.

Data Analysis and Result

1. Prevalence of Behavioural and Emotional Problems

Teaching staff and parents reported a high prevalence of behavioural and emotional challenges, but discrepancies occurred in the identification and emphasis of particular issues.

Table 1: Teacher and Parent Reports on Prevalence of Behavioural and Emotional Problems

Behavioural/Emotional Issue	Teachers (%)	Parents (%)
Aggression/Defiance	65	50
Attention Deficit	60	55
Anxiety	45	60
Depression	30	35
Social Withdrawal	25	40

Table 1 shows the number of reports of behavioural and emotional issues by teachers and parents. Teachers reported more aggressive/defiant behaviours (65%), as well as attention deficit (60%). Parents found anxiety (60%) and social withdrawal (40%) to be more pronounced in their children. Both parties found that the children exhibited emotional issues. While teachers noted more behaviour within the classroom that were problematic, parents found internalizing issues like anxiety. The differences between the two groups suggest that they have different perceptions of the nature and manifestation of children's behavioural and emotional challenges.

2. Perceived Causes

While both groups stated that familial and environmental factors played a role, they differed on which aspects to emphasize. Parents would mention family dynamics, whereas the teachers pointed to classroom-related stressors.

3. Strategies used

Common strategies included open communication, consistent routines, and positive reinforcement. However, parents emphasized emotional support, while teachers focused on structured interventions.

Table 2: Strategies Used to Address Behavioural and Emotional Issues

Strategy	Teachers (%)	Parents (%)
Open Communication	70	85
Positive Reinforcement	60	75
Counselling/Professional Help	50	40
Structured Routines	80	65
Peer Support Groups	40	20

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Table 2 Reports teachers' and parents' approaches toward the children's behavioural and emotional problems both respondents claimed open communication to be highly significant; however, it is observed that parents ranked more significance to open communication (85%) than the teachers do (70%). The group that used structured routines the most was teachers (80%) followed by parents with a percentage of 65%. Positive reinforcement is an approach commonly used by both; teachers scored 60%, whereas parents scored 75%. Teachers indicated the greater utilization of counselling professional help and peer support groups than parents reported; indeed 50% used professional help and 40% participated in peer support groups, but again the professional help utilized was far more in parents only at 40%, whereas those that applied peer support group usage reported 20%. Such distinctions imply teachers apply formalized interventions whereas communication and reinforcement at home can be an important function.

Discussion

The results indicate both convergence and divergence. While both teachers and parents agree that issues exist, they diverge with respect to the perceived reasons and remedies.

Implications for Practice:

1. The Relationship Needs Improvement: Frequent parent-teacher conferences and collaborative seminars can bridge both knowledge gaps and approach's gaps.
2. Staff Development: Behavioural and emotional skill training can improve the performance of the teachers in the workplace.
3. Parent Involvement: Equipping parents with knowledge and skills on managing children's needs is very empowering.

Limitation: Self-reported data may bias the findings. The demography of the sample could limit the generalizability.

Future Research: Longitudinal effects and the influence of cultural factors on perceptions and strategies can be further explored.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study shows that there is a shared concern between teachers and parents about behavioural and emotional problems among schoolchildren, including common challenges such as aggression, attention deficits, and anxiety. However, they had different

perceptions of causes and strategies. Teachers focused on stressors in the classroom, whereas parents placed emphasis on family dynamics. Thus, the findings call for increased communication between parents and teachers, better teacher training, and improved parental support. The study is, however valuable but has some limitations such as self-reported data that need further research, especially on the long-term impacts and cultural factors.

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