Original Article

Class Room Behavior, Class Size, Oral Skills among Children and their School Performance

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ABSTRACT

Background: Teachers place a great deal of emphasis on good Class Room Behaviour (CRB). CRB is one of the important issues teachers face today. *Objective:* the aim of this paper is to examine association of classroom behaviour, with school performance among subjects, class size and oral skills among subjects. It also examines whether subjects in government and private schools differ in class room behaviour. This study has been carried out on subjects from 4th to 6th grades. *Sample:* 306 subjects from regular schools ranging from 4th to 6th standard. *Design:* The study made use of descriptive method of research. *Tool:* CRB assessed the subjects in six areas, seating behaviour, questioning behaviour, behaviour seeking permission to go out, keeping belongings, interactive behaviour, lending help behaviour, and some miscellaneous items. *Result and Conclusion:* When class size is increasing class room behaviour is decreasing. It also shows that sizeable differences in class size led to significant difference in class room behaviour. Class room behaviour is significantly positively related with oral skills and school performance.

Keywords: Classroom behaviour, class size, oral skills

INTRODUCTION

Class Room Behavior (CRB) is stimulus driven response that occurs specifically within the classroom or how students are acting in the class room in response to what is given on or present around them (http://education.gov.gy/web/index.php/teachers/tips-for-teaching/ item/1982-what-is-classroom-behavior). Students in the class room are always engaged in behaviors of some sort like listening to the teacher, completing independent work, talking to a friend, looking out of window, sharpening pencils, erasing, taking things out of the bag etc.

For students to be successful, their classroom behavior must be consistent with teachers' demands and academic expectations. For reasons both outside and inside the class room, behavior of some students may interfere with their own learning and others' learning along with socialization. It is at school level that appropriate class room behavior can be best learnt for good outcomes. Study of various aspects of school life which influence CRB and in turn get influenced assumes tremendous significance at school level.

Children learn to listen and speak well before they can read and write. Children learn to manipulate their environment with spoken words before they learn to do so with written words (Britton, 1983). The class environment and oracy both in turn influence class room behavior. Lingard and coworkers (2003) observe that class room talk is frequently limited and is used to check comprehension rather than develop thinking. Frey et. al (2009) indicated that productive group work structures provide students more opportunities to talk and use oral language. The present author is of the opinion that productive group work structures will be an important part of environment and a significant factor to change class room behavior.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is plethora of researches on association in class room size and student behavior, class room behavior and academic performance. Some of those have been mentioned below briefly.

Class room behavior of students in a school can very well determine and predict his/her academic performance. In

fact, converse may also be true that academic performance may affect his class room behavior. Both seem to be intimately related. Few of the ample researches which support this conjecture are: Mckinney et al (1975), Hoge and Luce (1979), Wentzel (1993), Entwisle and Dauber (1993), Daly and Roghar (1994), Covington (2000), Thakur (2011), Borg (2015), Kausar et. al. (2017) and Thomson (2018).

Researchers have examined association of class size with various elements of class room behavior. It has been found that former affects student behavior (Blatchford, 2001), class activities and attention (Finn et.al., 2003), perception of school climate as safe w.r.t. order and discipline (Koth et al, 2008), a disciplined culture and culture of excellence (King, 2008), connection to school setting and better gains for disadvantaged students (Babcock, 2009), ratio of attendance (Dynarski et al 2011), varied class behavior (Anjali, 2014), student teacher interactions in class (Thng, 2017), solve class behavioral problems (Lynch, 2017) etc.

Glass and Smith (1979) identified 77 empirical studies, on class size and pupil learning, involving 725 comparisons coming from data on 900,000 pupils of all ages and subjects. Using regression analysis, they integrated these comparisons into a single curve which revealed a definite inverse relationship in class size and pupil learning.

Literature on relationship in class room behavior and oral skills has not received so much of attention as have the other two variables of class size and academic performance (Singh,2013; Tsou, 2016 and Arifin, 2017).

OBJECTIVE

Present study examines association of classroom behavior with school performance among subjects, class size, and oral skills among subjects. It also examines whether subjects in government and private schools differ in classroom behavior. The study has been carried out on subjects from fourth to sixth grades.

METHOD

Sample:

For studying class room behavior, 306 subjects from various regular schools ranging from 4th standard to 6th standard were studied. Cities were taken conveniently, schools were taken randomly and cluster sampling was used for subjects.

To assess oral skills, out of a total of 306, 70 subjects were taken. For school performance, 36 regular subjects in schools were taken. A total of 100 subjects, falling in three classes were taken for class size. A hundred subjects were taken to study differences in Class room behavior in government and private schools Geographical areas from where subjects were taken were Manimajra, Parwanoo in Himachal Pradesh, Mohali and Patiala in Punjab, and Chandigarh.

Design:

The study made use of descriptive method of research.

Tools:

The tool on CRB assessed the subjects in six areas: seating behavior, questioning behavior, behavior seeking permission to go out, keeping belongings, interactive behavior, lending help behavior and some miscellaneous items. Each question has five different options in the form of always, often, sometimes, rarely and never. Researcher had to tick the option which was applicable as per observation of class room behavior of students. This tool has been prepared to study CRB by Duggal (2007). Difference in CRB of Government and private schools was studied. Reliability was found to be 0.93 by split half method ($n=60$, $p>.01$). Validity was established by expert judgment and discriminant validity ($t=17.8$; $p<.01$, $n=60$).

To study oral skills, an informal tool on oral skills comprising of ten topics was prepared. The topics were: My school, My mother, My teacher, My friend, My favorite festival, My favorite game, Favorite cartoon character, My favorite player, My favorite season and My country. Out of these ten, any three topics were randomly selected by each student to speak on. Responses of students were observed, heard and recorded in written form by researcher. At times it was recorded electronically and later transcribed (Singh, 2013).

Oral skills have been studied in terms of word points (number of words), sentence points (number of

sentences), compound sentence points and errors in sentence making, illegible pronunciation. Oral skills can also be labeled as speaking skills.

School performance was taken from school records. Total yearly performance of subjects was taken.

Class size was the number of students available in that class for whom observation of class room behavior were being made. Three such classes were taken. Number of students in these classes totaled a hundred.

Procedure:

After seeking required permission from authorities of schools, subjects in class rooms were observed for classroom behavior and details filled in the questionnaire. There were some areas which could be filled in during the stipulated time by observation. Later, help was sought from teachers to know more. This task consumed lot of time because students were observed individually or in pairs or in very small groups.

For oral skills, subjects were taken individually. Their utterances were written, recorded and later transcribed. Scoring was done from recordings and transcriptions both. For oral responses, sentence points (total number of sentences), word points (total number of words), compound sentence points and errors in spoken language (pronunciation and formation of sentences) were calculated.

Class size was recorded from school registers.

Academic performance of just previous year's attempts, was taken from school records.

RESULTS

Class Room Behavior (CRB)

The mean of CRB obtained on the total sample from Chandigarh, Manimajra, Parwanoo and Mohali was 190.55 (n=306) with an SD of 28.166. For differences in Government and private schools, a sample of 100 was used. There was no significant difference in CRB of Govt. and private schools (t= 0.319; p > .05) (Sharma, 2013). Skewness of CRB ranged from 0.050 to -0.659 and kurtosis ranged from -.302 to -1.4616 in various situations. Skewness is in normal range, whereas kurtosis is high in some situations.

ORAL SKILLS

Means of sentence points, word points, compound sentence points and errors (n=70) were 8.86, 45.31, 0.786 and 2.21 respectively. Compound sentences uttered were minimum in number. Values of standard deviations were 5.45, 30.49, 1.17, and 0.92 respectively. Skewness values ranged from 0.25 to 2.07, with minimum in errors and maximum in compound sentence points. Kurtosis ranged from -0.15 to 5.35, minimum in sentence points and maximum in compound sentence points. Skewness and kurtosis both were high in case of compound sentence points.

Class Size:

Number of students in a section of a grade ranged from 34 to 45 in selected schools for the purpose.

School Performance:

Average of school performance was found to be 1155.58 (n=36) with a standard deviation of 206.08. Skewness and kurtosis values were calculated as -0.50 and -0.749 suggesting negatively skewed and platykurtic distribution.

INFERENTIAL ANALYSIS

Class Room Behavior and Class Size

Results indicated when class size was similar, class room behavior was also similar. Following table shows when class size is increasing, there is decrease in scores of class room behavior.

TABLE 1

Class Size And Class Room Behavior

S.N.	Class size	Mean CRB scores
Class 1	34	95.11
Class 2	43	86.45
Class 3	45	86.25

A sizable difference in class size leads to a significant difference in class room behavior. A difference of 11 students makes a significant difference in scores of class room behavior as shown in table 2.

Table 2

t-ratio In Class Room Behavior W.r.t. Different Class Size

Class	Size	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Significance
1	45	86.25	9.58	3.78	.01 level
2	34	95.11	11		

Class Room Behavior and Oral Skills

The following table indicates the association in oral skills and class room behavior.

Table 3
Correlation coefficient in oral skills and CRB

S. N.	Variables	Value of correlation	Significance df=68
1	CRB and Sentence Points	0.702	Significant
2	CRB and word points	0.687	Significant
3	CRB & compound sentence points	0.381	Significant
4	CRB and errors	0.216	Not significant

Classroom behavior is significantly and positively correlated with all elements of oral skills viz. sentence points (including compound sentence points), word points, except the errors in it. The relation errors bore with class room behavior had no consequence since it was not significant.

Class Room Behavior and School Performance:

The index of association in two variables was found to be 0.645 ($p< 0.01$). The better the class room behavior better will be the performance scores.

DISCUSSION

Class size has been found to effect a) student behavior (Blatchford, 2001), b) social behavior (Achilles, 2003), c) class activities and attention (Finn et. Al. 2003), d) perception of school climate as safe w.r.t. order and discipline (Koth, Bradshaw and Leaf, 2008), e) a disciplined culture and cuture of excellence (King, 2008), f) connection to school setting and better gains for disadvantaged students (Babcock, 2009), g) ratio of attendance (Dynarski, Hyman and Schanzenbach, 2011), and h) student teacher interactions in class (Thng, 2017), solve class behavioral problems (Lynch, 2017)) besides many other important school aspects. Finn et al (2003) indicate when class sizes are reduced, major changes occur in students' engagement in the classroom. Engagement is composed of "learning behavior" and pro- and antisocial behavior. Englehart (2006) hypothesized that social loafing, de-individuation, and social facilitation can explain patterns of student participation, off-task behavior, and in-class performance, respectively, as a function of the size of the class. Blatchford et. al. (2011) found that at primary and secondary levels smaller classes led to pupils receiving more individual attention from teachers, and having more active interactions with them. Classroom engagement decreased in larger classes, and this was particularly marked for lower attaining pupils at secondary level. Low attaining pupils can, therefore, benefit from smaller classes at secondary level in terms of more individual attention and facilitating engagement in learning. Another author (Linsin, 2014) marks that behavior worsens not so much because of the increase in students, but because the teacher doesn't have the classroom management skills to deal with it. Present findings are amply corroborated by literature. Author is of the view that in smaller classes, better class room behavior prevails because each student is visible to teacher most of time, they are better engaged, it is less chaotic as compared to full class rooms where students can indulge in mischief since they may not be noticed and it is more difficult to engage all at the same time.

Class room behavior of students in a school can very well determine academic performance. In fact, converse may also be true that academic performance will affect a student's class room behavior. Both are intimately related. Few of researchers who support this conjecture are Hoge and Luce (1979), Wentzel (1993), Multon et.al. (1991), Entwisle and Dauber (1993), Daly, Kreiser and Roghaar (1994), McClellan and Kinsey & Susan (1999), Covington (2000), Duggal (2007), Thakur (2011), Kausar et. al. (2017) and Thomson (2018). Borg (2015) examined how classroom behavior categories are related to gender and school performance and showed that behavior categories did contribute to the explanation of variance

in students' academic marks above and beyond gender. Another study (Wagner and Ruch, 2015) points out that character strengths contribute to positive classroom behavior, which in turn enhances school achievement. A research on classroom behavior (Cortes et.al. 2018) indicated that an additional non-disruptive student in attendance increases the probability of passing English I and Algebra I, with larger effects for students in remedial versus regular classes. For regular English I students, we estimate a positive relationship between the number of non-disruptive students in attendance and own reading test score (which is part of school performance). All above studies and many more clearly lead one to conclude that good, undisruptive, helpful classroom behavior will result in better academic outcomes. Results of present study are supported by literature and in turn support it.

Oral skills and class room behavior: Oral skills can be simply looked at as speaking skills. No speaking could signify boring class room (https://www.teachingenglish. org.uk/article/teaching-speaking-skills-2-overcoming-classroom-problems). Oral communication is the process of expressing information or ideas by word of mouth. Bad or limited oral skills to communicate would cause frustration in the class room and that would lead to bad class environment. As per a source, when communication is effective, both student and the teacher benefit. Communication makes learning easier, helps students with their goals, increases opportunities for learning, strengthens the association between student and teacher, and creates an overall positive experience (http://www.educationgy.org/web/index.php/teachers/tips-for-teaching/item/1570-importance-of-communi-cating-in-the-classroom). Conversely, good class room behavior encourages good speaking skills. Tsou (2016) mentions that instruction about classroom participation with appropriate behavior modification strategies was provided to students in the experimental group to see whether this treatment can (a) increase students' oral participation in class, and (b) lead to the improvement of students' speaking proficiency. Both the oral participation in class and students' speaking proficiency improved after treatment. Arifin (2017) indicates that less-confidence, speech anxiety, and low self-esteem are almost common behavioral problems in classroom and students who exhibit these problems perform poorly in their speaking skills. According to a source, teaching speaking skills can overcome class room problems (https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/ article/teaching-speaking-skills-2-overcoming-classroom-problems). Findings of present study corroborate this kind of mutual relationship between class room behavior (which ultimately builds environment) and oral skills. Results of a study (Wing, 2013) suggest an inverse relationship between expressive language skills and behavior problems in young children at social risk. The present study does not indicate any relationship in class room behavior and errors in expressive language, as found in case of other elements of expressive language, though it is not negative. Also, the sample of Wing's study has behavioral problems and are at social risk, subjects of present sample don't.

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