

## TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN MANAGING BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Ching Yee Ng<sup>1</sup>  
Kee Jiar Yeo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Educational Psychology, Education Faculty, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia

Accepted date: 8 April 2018

Published date: 28 June 2018

**To cite this document:** Ng, C. Y., & Yeo, K. J. (2018). Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Managing Behaviour Problems. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 3 (12), 46-61.

---

**Abstract:** *Students' behaviour problems have become an issue in schools that prevent students from performing in class. The purpose of this study was to examine the students' behaviour problems in classroom, the causes of behaviour problems, teachers' practices of managing behaviour problems, and the need of help in managing behaviour problems. A total of 113 teachers from six National Type Chinese Primary Schools in Johor Bahru, Malaysia participated in this study. The results substantiated that the teachers spent more time on dealing with students' behaviour problem (72.6%). Teachers also felt stressed up with students' behaviour problems (65.5%). They agreed that behaviour problems adversely affected teaching and learning process (92.0%). Further, boys (87.6%) had more behaviour problems than girls (8.8%). Particularly, the most common disruptive was hyperactivity behaviour (60.20%), followed by conduct behaviour (22.1%), emotional behaviour (9.7%) and peer problems (8.0%). In fact, talking out of turn (75.25%) was the most common hyperactivity behaviour problems in school. Family, school, teacher and Student were the roots of the problems. Moreover, teacher adopted reasoning with students (36.3%) as a conventional strategy in the classroom to overcome behaviour problems. They reported that they would like to assist in getting knowledge on psychological development of children (96.4%), suggestions from experienced teachers (95.6%), practical strategies or advice (90.3%), consultations from expert (97.3%), trainings and instructions (94.6%), as well as educational system reformation (93.0%). The findings ascertained that student behaviour problems required intervention from teachers.*

**Keywords:** *Behaviour Problems, Teachers' Beliefs, Teachers' Practices*

---

### Introduction

Students' behaviour problems have always been the school's focus in Malaysia (Lee, Yeo, & Hadijah Jaffri, 2015a). According to the ex-Deputy of Education Minister Senator Chong Sin Woon, approximately 2% of the Malaysian school's students have committed disciplinary cases since 2012 (Sundaily, 2016). These statistics indicated that behaviour problem remained unsolved. This is due to the fact that teachers do not show supportive towards ill-behaved students, thereby developing severe behavioural problems continuously. This phenomenon implies that emotional and psychological well-being of the students have not fully mature. As

a result, they are likely to experience academic failure and peers rejection in future (Sun & Shek, 2012).

Fundamentally, mental health problems can be considered as behavioural and emotional problems. Accordingly, to the fifth National Health Malaysia Survey (NHMS, 2015), male students experienced mental health issues at a younger age. In general, mental health issues can be categorized into both externalizing and internalizing behaviour. Externalizing behaviour includes hyperactivity and conduct behaviour, whereas internalizing behaviour include emotional and peer problems. The survey also revealed that 13.1% of the students (10-15 years) showed lower prevalence of behavioural problems as compared to younger student (5-9 years). In fact, male students (12.4%) have more behaviour problems than girls (11.9%).

Most studies of teachers' beliefs have been conducted in Western countries (Sullivan, Johnson, Owens, Conway, 2014) In China, Ding, Li, Li, Kulm (2008) reported that day-dreaming is the biggest problem among China students, followed by talking of turn. However, talking out of turn is common in Western countries (Sullivan et al., 2014). Although trivial, teachers' teaching and learning process will be adversely affected and that increase teachers' stress level. Undoubtedly, students' behaviour problems are the main cause of stress among primary school teachers (Shen et al., 2009; Sun & Shek, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2014). They spend of most of their time in handling students' behaviour problems (Shen et al, 2009; Sun & Shek, 2012).

In the Malaysian context, pre-service teachers perceive students' behaviour problems can disrupt the learning and teaching process (Norzila Zakaria, Andrea Reupert, & Umesh Sharma, 2013). These problems can also impair teachers' confidence and ability to teach. Students' disturb these processes face school dropout and negative social influence. Moreover, their learning difficulties and behaviour problem can affect academic achievement. Notably, teachers' practices are expected to improve students' learning progress, socio-emotional and behavioural development, and teacher-child relationship (O'Conner, Dearing & Collins, 2011).

Based on the above discussion, issues related to teachers' ability to manage students' classroom behaviour have become a shared concern. Hence, subsequent studies are required to further explore this scenario in different contexts. Undeniably, teacher beliefs in behaviour problem and practices have attracted considerable attention from researchers.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Teacher Beliefs of Students' Behaviour Problems***

In previous literature, different descriptions have been used to define students' disruptive behaviours or problematic behaviours. For Instance, Azizi Yahaya et al. (2009) referred students who do not obey to the rules and regulations in school and classroom as a "discipline problems". These behaviours referred to disciplinary violations in school, for examples, truancy, stealing, bullying, vandalism, and fighting. Nevertheless, disturbing and inappropriate behaviour, which is not rule breaking is also viewed as problematic behaviour, for example, inattention, daydreaming in class, not completing homework, calling out, talking in class, disrupting the lesson, and disrespect to the teacher are viewed as "problem behaviours" (Sun & Shek, 2012), "classroom behaviour problems" (Shen et al., 2009), "classroom misbehaviour" (Ding et al., 2008; Yuan and Che, 2012), or "disruptive behaviours" (Marais & Meier, 2010, Sullivan, et al., 2014). However, according to Sun and Shek (2012), school misconduct is the

signs of the problem behaviour, so the term “problem behaviour” is viewed as all externalising behaviours that involve violating rules or expectations or norms, behaving inappropriate in the class, interrupting the classroom order, and disrupting the teaching and learning process.

Externalizing behaviour is characterised by behaviour that student exhibit on their external environments. It reflects on a child’s internal psychological environment. Externalizing behaviours are aggressive behaviour and rule breaking behaviours described as disruptive, aggressive, acting-out, and hyperactive behaviours. Examples of externalizing behaviours include dominating classroom discussion, talking when the teacher or others are speaking, interrupting the teacher’s during instructions, disrespect the right of others to express their viewpoints, overt inattentiveness, bad temper, overly anxious behaviour, aggressive behaviour, conduct behaviour, creating excessive noise, and inappropriate demands for attention. Some of the most extreme examples of externalizing behaviours include verbal abuse of teacher or other student, harassment of teachers or other student, threats to harm oneself or others, and physical violence (Shek & Sun, 2009; Sullivan et al., 2014).

Furthermore, Goodman (2001) defined students’ behaviour problems into four difficulties: Emotional behaviours, hyperactivity behaviours, conduct behaviours and peer relationship problems. Emotional behaviours relate to depression and anxiety; hyperactivity behaviours relate to restlessness, inattention and over activity; conduct behaviour problems relate to fighting, and cheating; and peer problems relate to loneliness, and having peer’s problems. Externalizing behaviour include hyperactivity behaviours and conduct behaviour, whereas, internalizing behaviour include emotional behaviour and peer relationship problems.

In summary, student with behaviours problem patterns are externalizing (behavioural) and internalizing (emotional). A change that occurs in a child externalizing behaviour is an early sign of internalizing disorder. Student with internalizing behaviours patterns are inward behaviours, but the internalizing behaviours less noticeable and disruptive to the learning environment.

Student who exhibit externalizing and internalizing behaviour problems which disturb learning and violate the rules and regulations will usually be reprimanded or punished. Externalizing and internalizing behaviour problems in the classroom may cause the student being removed from the classroom or being referred to the school counsellors or discipline teachers.

Based on a study in South Australia, students’ behaviour problem impedes the learning process of other students (Sullivan et al., 2014) and academic performance (Abdul Hussein, 2009; Sun & Shek, 2012). However, it is challenging for educators to teach learners with misbehaviour (Marais & Meier,2010). Usually, these learners have poor academic achievement and also involved in delinquent behaviour (Sun & Shek, 2012). They are often reluctant to attend school and complete their homework as they face difficulties. They also found to have conflicts with their peers, parents, teachers and community (Sajida Abdul Hussein 2009; Sun & Shek, 2012).

Lugubriously, students’ behaviour problems are likely to worsen the stress level of teachers. In a nutshell, 45.5% of the teachers had difficulties in solving them. There are noticeable differences in the amount of time teachers have allocated in classroom management. For instance, Shen et al. (2009) reported nearly 45% of teachers spent more time on settling students’ behaviour problems. In contrast, Ding et al. (2008) found only 34% of the teachers.

Furthermore, Sullivan et al (2014) revealed that student with minor behaviour problem and disruptive behaviours are commonly seen in Australia, but they do not involve in serious anti-social behaviour. This finding is inconsistent with the finding in Africa, which contended that serious behaviours, such as fighting, bullying, and stealing are observable in the foundation phase (Marais and Meier, 2010). Particularly, teachers perceived day dreaming and talking out of turn are the most frequent behaviour problem in China and Western countries (Ding et al 2008; Shen et al., 2009), respectively. However, talking out of turn is the most frequent in Western culture (Sullivan et al., 2014). In addition, Lee, Yeo, Hadijah Jaffri (2015b) revealed that conduct problems are more severe problems, as compare to hyperactivity problems, emotional problems, and peer problems.

The findings (Ding et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2014) showed that teachers encountered minor behaviour problems daily. Although the problems are minor, they hinder the teaching and learning process from becoming effective, thereby leading to increase stress among teacher. The results also revealed that teachers always deal with unmanageable trivial student disruptive behaviours. When these trivial behaviours are persistent, teachers will feel exhausted to manage them (Shen et al., 2009; Sullivan et al., 2014). In summary, most of the existing studies have concluded that student misbehaviour is considered some sort of trivial disruptive behaviour.

The existing studies are taken into consideration to allow further investigation of students' behaviour problem to be carried out across culture. However, majority of the researches on teachers' perceptions in problem in Chinese context are conducted in China (Ding, Li, Li, Kulm, 2008; and Shen et al., 2009). These empirical findings cannot be made generalizable to the Malaysian population context.

### ***Factors Contribute to Behaviour Problems***

Student misbehaviour in the classroom should not be treated as an isolated factor, but as the whole environment of the students' life. The three groups that cause misbehaviour are student, teacher, and the society (Yuan and Che, 2012). Generally, the risk factors come from external and internal systems. Under external systems, the factors are related to the society, school and family. On contrary, under internal system, learner-related factors are involved which include the developmental of the foundation phase learners, such as need for recognition, inexperience or ignorance, need for belonging, curiosity, and anger release. Although, family is the most influential system of an individual, there are other possible school social factors such as overcrowded schools, teachers' incompetence, and inadequate teacher role models, medical services, poor housing and racial conflicts.

In Africa, Marais & Meier (2010), focused on general system theory in managing behaviour problem. A system is a set of interdependent, interacting, and interrelated elements. The relationship between these elements is the key to understanding the system. Societies, schools and families, can be influenced by each other, within a social system. In general system theory, individual focus has become the primary concept of the interactive processes. This theory provides a different theoretical framework for understanding behaviour in a larger context.

As suggested by industry versus inferiority in Erikson's stage theory, the foundation phase learners (6-12years old) are categorized under the fourth stage of development. They exhibit behaviour problems because they learn from their world by touching and doing. In this stage, they obtain life skills, primarily by noncompliant to the laws or rules in the society. Marais &

Meier (2010) emphasized that teachers need to review children's developmental to assist them in making age-appropriate rules.

There are different contributing factors students' behaviour problem in term of gender, teachers' experiences, grade, school location (urban/rural), and classroom setting (Ding, et al., 2008; Shen et al., 2009). Location school and school quality a showed both key school and rural schools reported students with frequent behaviour problems than urban school (Shen et al., 2009; NHMS 2015). In particularly, male students display behaviour problems frequently as compared with female students (NHMS, 2015; Shen et al., 2009; Sullivan, et al., 2014). In other words, gender is considered as an important factor of behaviour problems.

Apart from that, ability and character of teachers are the three leading reasons to student misbehaviour. Undoubtedly, teacher's inappropriate action can provoke caused student misbehavior (O'Conner et al., 2011; Poulou, 2017). However, Norzila Zakaria, Andrea Reupert, and Umesh Sharma (2013) reported that student who misbehave in school because of they encounter emotional issues, family and parenting issues, and unsuitable teaching practices. Most importantly, students' behaviours problems cannot be neglected by the society. However, problematic students tend to imitate their peers, who are likely to worsen their own negative behaviours (Azizi Yahaya et al., 2009).

According to Azizi Yahaya et al. (2009), students with misbehaviours have difficulty in coping with challenging tasks. Clearly, there is a strong relationship between students' behaviour problems and learning difficulties. These students always find their lessons dull and boring. When they are unable to manage their school work in, they loss focus and talk to another student.

Since there are many causes of students' behaviour problem, it is possible to view the behaviour from different angles. Therefore, a teacher must understand the causes of students' misbehavior before dealing with them. The teacher has to pay addition responses to each student who come from different backgrounds. The causes come from the individual, family, teachers, school, or the community. In order to address these behaviour problems, the causes are the basis of the solutions: in terms of the knowledge of the child development, causes of the misbehavior and the most obvious behaviour problems in classroom. When the causes of disruptive behaviours are identified, the problems can be prevented easily in future

### ***Teachers' Practices in Managing Behaviour Problems***

Marais and Meier, (2010) suggested that teachers reprimand students for misbehavior by neutralising the attention seeking and changing the tone of voice of statement. Teachers can also rely on different problem-solving methods to deal with students' disrupting behaviours, verbal aggressiveness. Through these methods, learners can understand the consequences of performing negative behaviour, as they have the ability to think from others' point of view in the foundation phase (Marais & Meier, 2010). Therefore, learners will become more attentive in the class if the preparations of the curriculum involve games, interesting learning activities, and interactive learning resources. Marais and Meier, (2010) also suggested that understandable and enforceable class rules can assists learners in understanding the expected behaviours. These rules should be displayed and read aloud by students. Through discussion among students, it is hoped that the problem of fighting, bullying and vandalism can be minimized.

In Malaysia, Lee, Yeo and Hadijah Jaffri (2015b) contended that when students are expelled or suspended by schools, they develop unproductive behaviours that affect their academic achievement, life trajectory and social-emotional development. The problems might emerge when students are not taught to behave and cope with uncertainties, thereby increasing the school dropout rates. Lee (2016) focused on the implementation of the SEL curriculum to ameliorate behaviour problems. This particular study demonstrated that social-emotional learning is the best solution to enhance students' behaviour.

Norzila Zakaria, Andrea Reupert, and Umesh Sharma (2013), reported that Malaysia pre-service teachers changed their teaching strategies, use punishment and provide reinforcement for positive behaviour to reduce students' disruptive behaviours adjusting teaching strategies is more effective. Thus, teachers should engage their students in various tasks to prevent misbehaviour.

In addition, Sullivan, et al., (2014) pointed out that teachers can be benefitted from the effect of classroom ecology, such as students' curricula and resources, teaching methods, and physical learning environment. Teacher can also consider different aspects of the classroom as an ecosystem that involves the interactions between the curricula such as pedagogy and resources, teacher characteristics, students' behaviours and physical environments. As a result, students can identify their own behaviours, while teachers can manage their behaviour effectively.

One of the most common management strategies used by teachers is reasoning with a student in the classroom (Sullivan et al., 2014). In China, Ding et al. (2008) posited that teachers are keen to understanding psychological reasons that give rise to behaviour problems. In other words, teachers intend to develop knowledge about the underlying causes of students' behaviour. Besides that, Ding et al. (2008) pointed out that educational system that focus on "Teaching for Testing" does not allowed to nurture their students' development.

To deal with different behaviour problems, educators need different strategies to solve them. Implementing effective prevention and intervention is possible to reduce behaviour problems. It is important for teachers to ensure that students are not only have to academically outstanding, they also have to portray positive manners in school. Therefore, early prevention program is needed to change the foundational stages of the developmental trajectory in order to avoid serious students' behavioural problems in future.

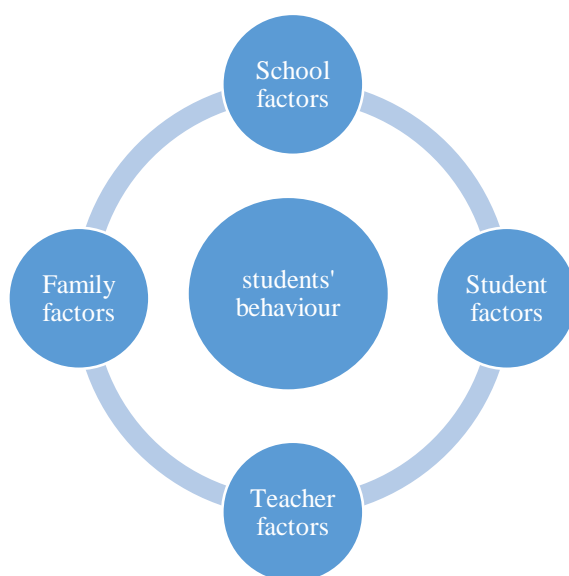
The present study extends the existing studies in investigating the most disruptive behaviour problems, the causes of behaviour problems and the practices of managing behaviour. In addition, this study further explores different kinds of assistance in managing the aforesaid problems.

### **Objective**

The current study investigates Chinese teachers' beliefs in behaviour problems examines the practices of managing these problems in the foundation. The objectives of this study are (a) to examine the students' behaviour problems in classroom; time spend on managing behaviour problems, stress in managing behaviour problems(b) to identify the causes of students' behaviour problems; (c) teachers' practices in managing students' behaviour problems and (d) the kind of assistance in managing behaviour problems.

## Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework in this study reported that learning ecosystem influences students' behaviour. There is a link between students' behaviour, family factors, school factors, teacher factors, and student factors. This is importance of considering classroom conditions that promote positive students' behaviour. These are crucial in establishing good behaviour. This study draws on an ecological approach in exploring and managing students' behaviour. In the ecological model, the classroom is thought of as an ecosystem involving interactions between the family factors, school factors, teacher factors, student factors, and behaviour problems (see Figure 1). Explanations of students' behaviour must therefore reflect the interactions of all four factors of the learning ecosystem: School factors, family factors, teacher factors and student factors. The key value is that student behaviour occurs not in isolation, but within the interaction of the learning ecosystem.



**Figure 1: Ecological Model**

## Methodology

### *Research design*

This research design is in the form of description of quantitative method.

### *Sampling procedure*

Non-probability sampling involving purposive sampling is used in this study. Teachers with experienced teaching Year Three students rated Year Three students from Johor Bahru on their belief and practices in managing behaviour problems.

### *Participants*

The participants of this study came from six schools in Johor Bharu. Different schools were selected to obtain the sample from different geographical area. This study recruited teachers, who came from different gender, with different teaching experiences to get a personal opinion about the issue. Participants also reported their teaching experiences, which was divided into four categories: over 20 years 11-20 years, 6-10 years, and 0-5 years. The participants were subject teacher, and homeroom teachers. The participants comprised 120 national Chinese primary teachers. 20 teachers from each school. 120 questionnaires are collected. 7

questionnaires have missing responses, so only 113 responses are used in the analysis of this study.

### ***Instrument***

A self-administered survey questionnaire concerning teachers' beliefs and practices in managing behaviour problem was designed and used in this study. There were nine demographic sections included in the questionnaire. Participants required approximately 20 minutes to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire had three lists:

1) The list of behavioural problem. The lists were connected with the students' behavioural problems (Ding et al., 2008; Goodman, 1997; Marais & Meier, 2010; Sullivan, et al.,2014). There were 18 types of behaviours from both externalizing (10types) and internalizing (8types) categories. The 18 items of behaviour problems were further divided into four groups, specifically hyperactivity behaviour, conduct behaviour, emotional behaviour and peer relationship behaviour. Some researchers determined the Cronbach alpha value based on the guidelines (Haggerty, Elgin, & Woolley, 2014): for instance, Good (0.70 and above); Adequate:(0.60-0.69); Poor (0.59 and below). In the present study, the cronbach alpha for hyperactivity behaviours was 0.80, conduct behaviour was 0.78, emotional behaviour was 0.81 and peer relationship behaviour was 0.89.

2) The list included the causes of behaviour problems among students and teachers. The causes were related to students, teacher, family and school. The design of the list was based on the causes presented to the research results of Sullivan, et al. (2014).

3) The list of teachers' practices in managing behaviour problems, included 11 types of practices. The design was connected with the studies by many researches (Dings et al., 2008; Lee, Yeo & Hadijah Jaffri.,2015a; O'Conner et al, 2011; Sullivan, et al.,2014; and Norzila Zakaria, Andrea Reupert, & Umesh Sharma,2013).

Apart from that, there are five structured questions regarding teachers' beliefs in behaviour problems: Do you think you have spent a lot of time to manage behaviour problems? Do you feel stress in managing behaviour problems? Do you feel behaviour problems hinder the teaching and learning process? Assuming a 30-minute class in a week, how long do you spend in managing students behaviour problems? Do the girls or boys' have more disruptive behaviour problems?

In the questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate students' behaviours for the past one week by identifying the frequency of their behaviours in school. The respondents were also asked to identify the causes of students' misbehaviour and the approaches they took to handle the problems.

### ***Procedures and Measures***

The researchers with the support of the school principals distributed the questionnaire to teachers. Each of the school principals granted permission for the researcher to distribute the questionnaire. Teachers gave their consent prior to take part in this study. The researcher provided individual guidance and explanations to teachers when needed. Approximately 20 minutes was required in answering the questionnaires. All questionnaires were completed and collected. Participants were promised that the survey was confidential and the information collected was only for research purposes.



## **Data Analysis**

The findings were reported according to the teachers' beliefs in students' behaviour problem and practices of managing behaviour problems in classroom. The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages were calculated for the teacher' perceptions of students' behaviour problems, causes of behaviour problems and assistance in managing behaviour problems.

## **Result and Analysis**

### ***Demographic***

The majority of the participants were females (87.6%). Clearly, a large number of participants (71.7%) were over 30 years old. Further, more than half of them (55.8%) were 30-39 years old, 9.7% of them were 40-49 years old and 6.2% of them were over 50 years old. Besides that, 71.7% of the respondents had more than 5 years teaching experiences, particularly, 29.2% of them had 6-10 experience, 28.3% had 11-20 experience, and the remaining 14.2% had more than 20 years experiences. Most participants (76.1%) were homeroom teachers and the remainders (23.9%) were subject teachers. Furthermore, a total of 81.4% of the respondents taught lower grade level (Year 1 to Year 3) only, and the rest (18.6%) taught lower level and upper level (Year 1 to Year 6). Most of the classes (57.5%) had around 30-35 students, and 24.8% of the classes had around 36-40 students, 9% of the classes has more than 40 students. The remaining 16.8% had less than 30 students.

### ***Students' Behaviour Problems***

Table 1 shows that teachers encountered students' hyperactivity behaviours frequently. As a matter of fact, talking-out of turn (75.2%) was the most common behaviour problem, followed by inattention (74.3%), out-of seat (57.5%), impulsivity (30.1%) and restlessness (28.3%). Besides, teacher also encountered minor conduct behaviour such as: disrespectful behaviour (20.3%), and verbal aggressive (21.2%). Occasionally, they had to handle students' serious conduct behaviour such as: cheating (7.1%), physical aggressive (5.3%), and stealing (2.7%). In term of emotional behaviour, anger (17.7%) was the most common problem, followed by anxiety (11.5%), sad (10.6%), fear (8.9%) and cry (7.1%). Moreover, peer relationship problems included difficulties to get along with others (15.1%), do not like to share with peers (12.4%), and disliked by peers (11.5%).

**Table 1: Behaviour Problem in Classroom**

Types of the Behaviours problems	Construct of the behaviour problems	% of all teachers (n=113)				
		Not at all	1 or 2 days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily	%of the common encounter behaviour problems
Hyperactivity Behaviours	Talking out of turn	1.8	23.0	53.1	22.1	75.2
	Out-of seat	9.7	32.7	41.6	16.0	57.6
	Restlessness	29.2	42.5	18.6	9.7	28.3
	Inattention	2.7	23.0	53.1	21.2	74.3
	Impulsivity	22.1	47.8	23.0	7.1	30.1
Conduct Behaviours	Disrespectful behaviour	23.9	55.8	15.0	5.3	20.3
	Verbal aggressiveness	16.8	61.9	16.0	5.3	21.3
	Physical aggressiveness	62.8	31.9	4.4	0.9	5.3
	Stealing	68.1	29.2	2.7	0.0	2.7
	Cheating	25.7	67.3	6.1	0.9	7.0
Emotional Behaviours	Anger	18.6	63.7	13.3	4.4	17.7
	Sad	40.7	48.7	9.7	0.9	10.6
	Cry	45.1	47.8	5.3	1.8	7.1
	Anxiety	44.2	44.2	12.0	0.0	12.0
	Fear	48.7	42.5	8.0	0.9	8.9
Peer Relationship Problems	Disliked by peers	26.5	62.0	9.7	1.8	11.5
	Have difficulties to get along	36.3	48.6	14.2	0.9	15.1
	Do not like to share with peers.	29.2	58.4	10.6	1.8	12.4

In Table 2, although all behaviour problems occurred among students, hyperactivity behaviour (60.2%) was the most challenging aspect for teachers to solve. Then it followed by conduct behaviour (22.1%), emotional (9.7%) and peer relationship (8.0%).

**Table 2: The Troublesome Behaviour Problems**

Types of the Behaviour Problems	Frequency n	Percent %
Hyperactivity Behaviours	68	60.2
Conduct Behaviours	25	22.1
Emotional Problems	11	9.7
Peer Relationship Problems	9	8.0

Table 3 shows that 72.6% of the participants spent too much time on managing students' behaviour problems. However, 65.5% of the participants felt irritated by those behaviour problems. In a nutshell, 92% agreed that students' behaviour problems affected their teaching and learning process. On average, participants allocated 10 minutes (41.6%) of their teaching time on behaviour problem. Surprisingly, boys (87.6%) had more behaviour problems than girls (8.8%).

**Table 3: Teachers' Beliefs of Behaviour Problems**

Structured questions		Frequency n	Percent %
Do you think you have spent a lot of time to managing students' behaviour problems?	Yes	82	72.6
	No	31	27.4
Do you feel stressed up when managing students' behaviour problems?	Yes	74	65.5
	No	39	34.5
Do you feel behaviour problems hinder the teaching and learning process?	Yes	104	92.0
	No	9	8.0
Assuming a 30-minute class in a week, how long will you spend in managing students' behaviour problems? _____minutes	None	1	0.9
	<5	1	0.9
	5	43	38.1
	10	47	41.6
	15	12	10.6
	20	3	2.6
	>20	6	5.3
Do boys' or girls' have more disruptive behaviour problems?	None	1	0.9
	Boys	99	87.6
	Girls	10	8.8
	Both	3	2.7

As depicted in Table 4, the main causes of students' behaviour problems under external system, were family, school environment, and teachers. Being said that, 92.9% of the participants reported that the lack of attention was the roof of behaviour problems. Besides, 72.6% of them focused on academic related to family factors. More than half of them 58.4% stated that classroom environment caused students' behaviour problems as compared to classroom (71.6%), overemphasis on academic achievement (71.7%), and lack of time on teaching behaviour (80.5%). In addition, teacher-related factors included teaching strategies (69.9%) and classroom management (74.3%). However, 52.1% of the participants considered negative teacher-child relationship and lack of classroom rules and expectations (53.9%) were determinants of behaviour problems. Under internal system was student factor. The respondents reported that 84.9% of students lack of self-awareness, social awareness (86.8%), self-management (87.6%), relationship management (85.9%) and responsible decision making (90.30%).

**Table 4: Causes of Behaviour Problems**

No	Causes of Classroom behaviour Problems	% of all teachers (n=113)		
		Agree	Disagree	
1	<b>Causes Related to Family</b>	Lack of attention on students' behaviour	92.9	7.1
		Pay attention to academic achievement	72.6	27.4
2	<b>Causes related to School Environment</b>	Classroom settings	71.6	28.4
		Classroom environment	58.4	41.6
		Overemphasis on academic achievement	71.7	28.3
		Overemphasis on teaching academic skills	77.0	23.0
		Lack of time on teaching behaviour	80.5	19.5
3	<b>Causes Related to Teachers</b>	Teaching strategies	69.9	30.1
		Classroom management	74.3	25.7

		Negative teacher-child relationship	53.1	46.9
		Lack of classroom rules and expectation	53.9	46.1
4	<b>Causes Related to Students</b>	Self-awareness	84.9	15.1
		Social-awareness	86.8	13.2
		Self-management	87.6	12.4
		Relationship Management	85.9	14.1
		Responsible decision making	90.3	9.7

Next, Table 5 demonstrated that the most common practice that is used to manage behaviour problem is reasoning with a student in the classroom (36.3%). The second common practice was establishing teacher-child relationships (35.4%). Then is followed by issuing a strong verbal reprimand or warning (32.7%), teaching social-emotional skills (25.7%), discussing the issues, problems with others students (22.1%), and reasoning with a student outside classroom (19.5%). The least common practices were sending the student to the senior teacher, principal, or counsellor (3.5%), seeking caregiver or parental involvement (6.2%), punishing students (7.1%), asking students to leave the classroom (9.0%) and deliberately ignoring minor disruptions (4.4%). To add, 55.8% of teachers never asked their students to get out from the class.

**Table 5: Teachers' Practices in Managing Behaviour Problem**

Practices	% of all teachers (n=113)			
	Not at all	Once or twice	Sometimes	Often/very often
Reasoning with a student in the classroom	1.8	23.0	38.9	36.3
Reasoning with a student outside classroom	5.3	37.2	38.1	19.4
Deliberately ignoring minor disruptions	24.8	30.1	40.7	4.4
Issuing a strong verbal reprimand (warning)	0.9	22.1	44.2	33.0
Discussing problems and issues with the whole class	1.8	24.8	51.3	22.1
Asking students to get out from the class	55.7	25.7	17.7	0.9
Punish students of their behaviour problem	5.3	41.6	46.0	7.1
Seeking caregiver or parental involvement	6.2	40.7	46.9	6.2
Sending the student to the senior teacher, principal, or counsellor	26.5	46.0	24.0	3.5
Establishing the closeness of teacher-child relationships	3.5	17.7	43.4	35.4
Teaching social-emotional skills	2.7	21.2	50.4	25.7

According to Table 6, it shows that the participants required various aspects of assistance in managing students' behaviour problems. The aspects included knowledge on psychological development of children (96.4%), suggestions from experienced teachers (95.6%), practical strategies or advice (90.3%), consultation from experts (97.3%), training and instruction (94.6%), and educational system reformation (teaching for testing) (93.0%).

**Table 6: Teachers Assistance in Managing Behaviour Problems**

Assistance	% of all teachers (n=113)	
	Agree	Disagree
Knowledge on psychological development of children	96.4	3.6
Suggestions from experienced Teachers	95.6	4.4
Practical strategies or advice	90.3	9.7
Professional consultant from expert	97.3	2.7
Training and Instruction	94.6	5.4
Reforming Educational System (teaching for testing)	93.0	7.0

## Discussion

The findings of this study were consistent with previous studies that which found that teachers encountered minor students' disruptive behaviour problems (Ding et al., 2008; Shen et al., 2009; Sullivan et al., 2014). In this case, all problems occur in classroom. However, hyperactivity was the most difficult problem for teachers to handle. This finding contrasted with Marais and Meier (2010) claimed that serious behaviour problems emerged in foundation phase. Teachers indicated that all categories of behaviour problems exist in classroom. Hence the findings confirm earlier studies that revealed that teachers frequently come across relatively trivial student behaviour.

Undeniably, students' hyperactivity behaviours were challenging for teachers. Talking out of turn was the most common behaviour among students, followed by inattention. These results were consistent with similar studies in the Western countries (Suvillan, et al., 2014). On contrary, inattention was the most common behaviour among students in china, followed by talking out of turn (Ding et al., 2008; Shen et al., 2009). In this study, average number of each class size was around 30, which is smaller than those in China with around 50 (Ding et al., 2008). However, greater number of students is likely to increased inattention.

On top of that, 72.6% of the teachers encounter students' behaviour problem, and 41.6% of them spent a lot of time on managing these behaviours. This finding was consistent with Shen et al.'s (2009) research which found that 45.5% of the students had behaviour problems. Regrettably, 86% of them had difficulty resolving their problems. This research reveals that of all that occur in classroom are extremely prevalent and teachers consider that difficult to manage. The theoretical framework underpinning this study suggests that student behaviour have to do with factors within family, school, teachers, and students. This research revealed that teachers can consider aspects related to the physical environment.

The findings also suggest that practices in managing behaviour problems may not consider the fundamental causes of that behaviour. This study requires educators to rethink what is acceptable classroom behaviour. The key in this study is to redirect practice to consider for ecological factors in managing behaviour problems.

Obviously, boys had more behaviour problem than girls. This finding was consistent with (Ding et al., 2008) study. 65.5% of the participants felt stressed with students' behaviour problems, which was also consistent with previous findings (Shen et al., 2009; Sun & Shek, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2014). Additionally, 92% of the participants agreed that students' behaviour problems negatively affected their teaching and learning process. this subsequently confirmed the

definition of behaviour problem by Zakaria, Reupert, and Sharma (2013). All these findings indicated that behaviour problem should be addressed instantly for students to achieve high academic performance.

Apart from that, teachers were interested in understanding the psychological reasons behind students' behaviour problems. Curiosity is considered part of the psychological development students experience when they grow up that, result in misbehaviour. Therefore, teachers need to understand the students' developmental stage when making age-appropriate rules that must be clear to relieve ignorance (Marais & Meier, 2010). Moreover, participants also pointed out that teaching for testing was likely to worsen students' behaviour problems, because of the pressure for achieving excellent results. To add teachers did not have sufficient time to nurture students (Ding et al., 2008). As a matter of fact, education policy makers have to take corrective measures to address these issues effectively.

Usually, teachers used reasoning with a student in the class to manage his or her behaviours. This result was consistent with a previous study (Sullivan et al., 2009). Teachers agreed that internal system factors were primary causes of students' behaviour problems. Furthermore, teachers needed help in teaching strategies, reforming educational system (teaching for testing), establishing teacher-child relationship, which are under external system. In other words, both internal and external systems are important for teachers to manage students' behaviour problems.

Last but not least, the findings revealed that teachers adopted different strategies to deal with students' behaviour problems can assist teachers in improving their classroom management and deal with students misbehave. Results showed a need of teachers for training in classroom management.

### **Limitations and Future Study**

This study is limited to Malaysian context. Comparisons have been needed between previous and this research in the Asian and West. Specifically, this study examined Chinese teachers' beliefs, but not examined in non-Chinese population. Future research might focus on in depth qualitative data by exploring how teachers interpret students' behaviour problem, causes of behaviour problems and practices in managing behaviour problems. Finally, future studies using longitudinal methods would be useful in confirming how student behaviour changed over time.

Teachers report on all the questionnaires might lead to information bias. Combination method of a questionnaire, systematic observation, and interviews with teachers is required. This research focuses on the urban schools. This finding might not explain the rural areas school.

Urban teachers reveal that they intend to have knowledge on students' psychological developmental in managing behaviour which suggest that more training in this area might be helpful.

### **Implication of the Study**

Family, school, teachers and student's factors have been recognized as major factors in related to the students' behaviour. In comparison to findings from the Western studies, this information is useful in understanding the problem in Malaysia context. This study provides us with important information in order to design and develop the content of an intervention program in managing behaviour. It has been suggested that behaviour problems may take a

different perspective from Western countries given the cultural differences. It will also contribute in developing a culturally acceptable local behaviour intervention program.

In summary, the results suggest that the prevalence of behaviour problems is very concerning in classrooms. Teachers revealed that these behaviours exist frequently and challenging to manage in a daily basic. Furthermore, teachers use practices that are not necessarily effective in managing behaviour problems. Given that many students are exhibiting behaviour problems, educators should consider other aspects of schooling that improve student behaviour. It might be tempting to take the results of this study and call for more controlling ways of managing student behaviour. Teachers are argued to gain a greater understanding of how the ecology of the classroom can influence students' behaviour in managing behaviour problems.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of the current study were consistent with past studies in China (Shen et al., 2009; Ding et al., 2008) which contribute to the literature of the teachers' beliefs in student behaviour problems. Similar studies have been conducted in other countries, but they are limited in Malaysia. This study revealed that cultural differences of teachers beliefs in disruptive behaviour. Similar factors were also found to contribute to teacher beliefs in the causes of student behaviour problems in Malaysia, China, Africa and Australia. Therefore, teacher beliefs in these problems should be need further investigate within and across cultures.

Teachers adopted different practices to manage the students' negative behaviours. These practices were likely to be misdirected. The teachers' ability to cope with student misbehaviour is vital to good discipline and effective classroom management. Thus, educators need to identify students' behaviour problems and help them become more successful life in school and life. The key solution to address students' behaviour problem lies within system theory approach that involves multiple relationships.

In summary, serious student behaviours are scarcely found. Although minor behaviour problems are trivial, teachers always struggling for solving them. In this regard, it is possible to consider other strategies that focus on the causes of misbehaviour in order to portray positive image in future.

### **References**

- Azizi Yahaya., Jamaludin Ramli., Shahrin Hashim., Mohd Ali Ibrahim., Raja Roslan Raja Abdul Rahman., and Noordin Yahaya. (2009). Discipline Problems among Secondary School Students in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(4), 659-675.
- Sajida Abdul Hussein. (2009). Social and educational determinants of child mental health: effects of neighborhood, family and school characteristics in a sample of Pakistani primary school student. *Journal Pakistan Psychiatry Society*, 6(2), 90-98.
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research Design:Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed methods Approaches* (4<sup>th</sup>ed). Thousand Oaks, CA:Sage.
- Ding, M., Li, Y., Li, X & Kulm,G. (2008). Chinese teachers' perception of students' classroom misbehaviour. *Educational Psychology*, 28(3), 305-324.
- Goodman, R. (1997). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire:A research Note. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, 38(5),581-586.

- Goodman, R. (2001). Psychometric properties of the strengths and difficulties questionnaire. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40(11),1337-1345
- Haggerty, K., Elgin, J., & Woolley, A. (2011). Social-emotional learning assessment measures for middle school youth. *Social Development Research Group. University of Washington: Raikes Foundation.*
- Lee, M. C. (2016). *Enhancing social-emotional competence to promote mental health through social-emotional learning for primary school student.* Doctor of Philosophy, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai.
- Lee, M. C., Yeo, K. J., & Hadijah Jaffri. (2015a). Assessing mental health status among primary school student. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 2 (3). DOI:10.14738/assrj.23.1014.
- Lee, M. C., Yeo, K. J., & Hadijah Jaffri. (2015b). Developing discipline among students through social-emotional learning: A New Model to Prevent and Reduce Behaviour Problems. *Journal of Education and Vocational Research*. 6(2) 80-90
- Marais,P., & Meier,C. (2010).Disruptive Behaviour in the Foundation Phase of Schooling. *South African Journal of Education*.30(1) ISSN 2076-3433
- National Health Morbidity Survey. (2015). Non-communicable diseases, Risk factors and other health problems volume II. Topic 8: mental Health problems of student. Retrieved on June 8, 2017 from <http://www.iku.gov.my/images/IKU/Document /REPORT/ nhms report2015vol2.pdf>
- O'Conner, E. E., Dearing, & E, A., Collins. (2011). Teacher-child relationship and externalizing and internalizing behaviour trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational Research Journal*. DOI:10.3102/0002831210365008
- Poulou, M, S. (2014). A theoretical framework towards understanding of emotional and behavioural difficulties. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 15(2), 191-198. DOI:10.1007/s12564-014-9313-1
- Shen, J., Zhang, N., Zhang, C., Caldarella, P., Richardson, M. J., Shatzer, R. H. (2009). Chinese elementary school teachers' perceptions of students' classroom behaviour problems. *Educational Psychology*, 29(2), 187-201.
- Sullivan, A. M., Johnson, B., Owens, L., & Conway, R. (2014). Punish them or engage them? Teachers' views of unproductive student behaviours in the classroom. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(6), 43-56.
- Sundaily. (9 May 2016). Statistics show drop in disciplinary issues among school students. <http://www.thesundaily.my/news/1794969>
- Sun, R. C., & Shek D. T. (2012). Student classroom misbehaviour: an exploratory study based on teachers' perceptions. *The Scientific World J Journal*, DOI:10.1100/2012/ 208907
- Yuan, X., & Che, L. (2012). How to deal with student misbehaviour in the classroom? *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*. 2(1), 143. DOI:10.5539/jedp.v2n1p143
- Norzila Zakaria., Andrea Reupert., & Umesh Sharma. (2013). Malaysian primary pre-service teachers' perceptions of students' externalizing and internalizing behaviour. *Asia Pacific.EducationReview*. 14(3), 371-380