

Classroom Rules for Managing Unruly Behaviours in Selected Basic Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis in the Western Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The study examined classroom rules in managing unruly behaviours in selected basic schools in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis. This study adopted a case study research design. The study population consisted of twenty (20) teachers selected from five (5) basic schools: Gethsemane (4), Holy Child Practice (4), Centre of Excellence (4), Salvation Army (4) and Air Force (4) in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The schools and teachers were conveniently and randomly selected for the study. The main instrument used for data collection was interview guide. The study revealed that, the various forms of unruly behaviours that exist in the classrooms are all disruptive in nature. The study also revealed that, involvement of pupils in the formulation of rules and teachers' conscious effort to teach it will reduce the tendency for pupils to rebel against the rules. It was concluded that rules are significant for managing unruly behaviours because it ensures the efficient and effective running of a classroom. The study recommended that, the Ghana Education Service in collaboration with heads of schools should organize seminars and forums for pupils on the importance of obeying rules. It is also recommended that, teachers should be sensitized on the need to formulate classroom rules with pupils and make conscious effort to teach pupils the meaning of the rules as well as the consequences associated with the rules to ensure the observance of the rules by pupils to the latter.

Keywords

Classroom Rules, Unruly Behaviour, Basic Schools, Western Region, Ghana

Received: November 4, 2020 / Accepted: December 3, 2020 / Published online: December 24, 2020

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1. Introduction and Background

Behavioural problems and poor academic progress by children with severe behaviour disorders, as well as difficult interactions with parents can place a tremendous demand on teachers. This is because, loss of control and time taken away from instruction to deal with behaviour problems have a dramatic impact on a teacher's job, self-esteem and job satisfaction [1]. Given the seriousness of this behaviour, teachers are spending disproportionately more time on behaviour problems that take away from instructions thereby

compromising learning for both the student with behaviour difficulties and the rest of the class [2].

The management of unruly behaviour problems is a familiar concern for many schools [3] and has been a source of concern for school administrators for several years. In recent years, behaviour difficulties in schools have increased, teachers seem to be unprepared to deal with the problem and the standard classroom management strategies teachers rely on does not appear to be working [4]. A significant aspect of the teacher's daily involvement with pupils in classroom is their having to deal with indiscipline Student behaviour problems and teacher frustration particularly in the middle schools are such that more resources are needed to determine

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which student need additional services and what type of services [5]. Although regular classroom teachers indicate that, in their classrooms, emotionally and behaviourally disordered students have a detrimental effect on students who do not have disability. It is important to note that, some defiant classroom behaviours are often a function of ineffective classroom management style than the presence of students with disabilities. Traditionally, teachers have dealt with unruly student interference to classroom instruction by using various kinds of repercussive consequences of the unruly behaviour [3].

However effective classroom management focuses on preventive rather than reactive procedures and establishes a positive classroom environment in which the teacher focuses on students who behave appropriately [5]. Canter and Canter (1993) asserted that negative consequences usually are not the most effective in eliminating problem behaviour. Basically, punishment that follow inappropriate behaviour, are not only time consuming, but they fail to teach the student acceptable replacement behaviour [3].

The above situation is not different from what happens in basic schools in Ghana. In most basic schools, the main means of managing behaviour in the classroom is with the use of canes. Again, a good number of teachers react to inappropriate behaviour of children in the school by shaming, verbally reprimanding, threatening and embarrassing pupils [6]. However, maintaining a disciplined classroom conducive to learning does not necessarily mean implementing measures that will keep students clued to their seats throughout the teaching and learning period [7]. Classroom procedures that encourage appropriate behaviours and reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behaviours are necessary for strong classroom management. One would ask what then these procedures are [8]. The issue is “whenever you work with children, there will be rules. Rules are the backbone of effective classroom management and promote the success and learning of pupils”. Classroom rules can be published as in the form of unwritten expectations or they may be stated by using a more concrete or written form [9, 10].

Rules describe standards that are to be followed by students and regulate their behaviour. Rules are therefore one of the powerful preventative components to classroom organization and management plans because they establish the behavioural context of the classroom by specifying what is expected, what will be reinforced, and what will be re-taught if inappropriate behaviour occurs [11]. These among others informed us to examine classroom rules in the management of unruly behaviours in selected Basic Schools in Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis.

This study was therefore undertaken to examine classroom

rules in managing unruly behaviours in selected Basic Schools in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis. The study was guided by these four (4) research questions – (1) What categories of unruly behaviours exist in selected basic school classrooms in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis? (2) What are the causes of unruly behaviours in selected basic school classrooms in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis? (3) What challenges confront teachers in the process of implementing classroom rules as a means of managing unruly behaviours in selected basic schools in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis?

(4)What are the relevance of rules in managing unruly behaviours in selected basic school classrooms in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis?

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Unruly Behaviours in the Classroom Context

There is no simple way to distinguish and define unruly behaviour. It encompasses a wide register of expressions, terms and concepts. It can express itself in different forms and can be caused by several reasons [12]. Children who exhibit troublesome behaviour have, throughout history and in diverse literature, been referred to by a variety of labels such as behaviour disordered, emotionally disturbed, disruptive, maladjusted, deviant, misbehaving, or children with social and emotional problems, or emotional and behavioural disorders [12].

Behaviour displayed in school rarely occurs in isolation and cannot be separated from the context where it occurs. The behaviour can rarely be attributed to a singular particular cause, and might reflect both the characteristics of the student and the teacher, as well as the way the classroom and instructional programmes are organised and implemented [12, 13]. Classrooms are complex, dynamic and social environments in which students face several demands; what to do, what not to do, when to talk, when to be quiet, when to be active and when to be still. The unruly behaviour may occur when a student is in a particular situation in the classroom, when seated with other students, for long instructional periods, when expected to work on certain tasks and subjects, or when faced with particular difficult tasks [14]. Unruly behaviour is thus the end product of complex interactions that occur in the classroom. Students are continuously in interaction with their environment, and are in turn affected by their surroundings [15].

2.2. Causes of Unruly Behaviours Among Pupils' in Basic School Classrooms

There are certain factors that contribute to children

misbehaviour in the classroom. Such factors could be traced to different areas that build up children's learning experiences, the classroom environment. A classroom that is not designed for optimal learning may contribute to a student's unruly behaviour. Poor seating arrangement, high temperature in the classroom, size of the classroom and the nature of the furniture provided for the children may contribute to indiscipline in the classroom [16]. Teachers should take time to evaluate the classroom climate that they have created. They added that teachers should create a caring and safe learning environment as this provides the teacher with a better opportunity to enhance learning and less chance for student indiscipline issues. School administrators should also ensure that conducive environment is provided for children to learn. When children are comfortable in class, the occurrence of such unruly behaviours will be minimal if not controlled [17].

Problems associated with curriculum may be another cause of unruly behaviours in classrooms. When the child is not provided with age appropriate curriculum that will be challenging to him or her, it may make the learner to be mentally withdrawn out of frustration and boredom may set in resulting to manifestations of such unruly behaviours [3]. A slow pace of instruction can actually cause significant behaviour problems because the pupil becomes bored and distracted. Teachers-led instruction should be delivered at a sufficiently brisk pace to hold the pupils' attention [18]. This will help pupils to cover more academic materials more quickly and this will accelerate their learning. The teacher has to ensure that the curriculum is age appropriate to avoid pupils finding the assigned work too easy or too difficult [19].

Another factor that can cause classroom unruly behaviours is learning difficulties among school children. This is because there is a strong connection between learning difficulties and behaviour problems. Early behaviour problems that prevent children from being involved with school work will limit their progress with literacy skills. This issue has been proved from the result of a study where the researcher used 925 boys from 5-11-year-old pupils. The main finding was that those children who had early behaviour problems at age 5 years particularly had poor concentration and attention. As they become older, the type of their behaviour difficulties changed and they become more anti-social. Sometimes the pupils will experience lack of confidence on their own part. This, if not attended to by the teacher, will cause a disciplinary issue in the class [20].

Teacher's action in the classroom could be another cause of unruly behaviour. When a teacher fails to evaluate himself with regards to the teaching methods used and the mastering of subject matter these things might not be acceptable to pupils and such unruly behaviours might start off [21]. To put

it in a more plain language, when the teacher's action does not suit the children, this might be a serious issue of indiscipline in the classroom. Researchers acknowledged that teacher's may be the problem when management issues exists in the classrooms. They further explained that, teachers' self-evaluation helps them to articulate their teaching strategies and approaches to classroom management [22, 23].

2.3. Behaviour Management

Schools, today have an increase in the number of inclusive classrooms. This increase includes a variety of students being placed in one classroom as opposed to being separated by behavioural needs and or academic ability. As much as we would all like to believe that these factors do not play a role in the management of our classrooms, it is important that they do. Classrooms are becoming more diverse as years pass. With an increase in diversity, conflicts between peers as well as peer pressure to perform amongst students often results in behavioural issues. These behavioural issues demand a need for appropriate behaviour management [24]. The opinions and research on behaviour management, like most aspects in the field of education, differ greatly. While some researchers think that the goal of behaviour management is for students to comply with teachers' request and follow rules created without their input, others believe that building strong student-teacher relationships and positively encouraging students to make appropriate choices is more beneficial [25].

Teachers should evaluate how the misbehaviour is benefitting the students. Perhaps, the student is looking to get out of doing a particular task. May be they are seeking attention from their peers. If the teacher is aware of why the behaviours may be occurring, he or she can better decide how to manage the situation [26]. The researcher recommended that, when redirecting a student toward appropriate choices, there are specific dos and don'ts. For instance, the teacher should get within close proximity to the student to prevent or diffuse a potential problem. The teacher should not embarrass or call attention to the student's misbehaviour as this may cause resentment or worsen the situation [26].

Student-teacher relationships are the most significant component of classroom management and are crucial in creating an effective community of learners. These relationships are manifested in all aspects of classroom management from the choice of teaching methods to behaviour management. For some children, the student-teacher relationship created while managing behavioural issues provides emotional security and a model for future social interactions [27]. However, a research suggested that the use of reward systems used to manage behaviour simply end up doing more harm than good when it comes to building

positive student-teacher relationships. Using rewards to improve student behaviour disrupts the relationship and ignores the underlying reason for the behaviours that may have occurred otherwise [17]. A study suggested that relationships between students and teachers are strengthened through cooperation and a sense of mutual respect and when these are done students are then willing to take more risks and become more fully engaged in their [27]

2.4. Methods of Behaviour Management

Research suggests that classroom management is most effective when teachers use antecedent rather than consequent methods [28]. Consequent methods are used in an attempt to remediate an undesired or inappropriate behaviour after a child has exhibited that behaviour. Examples of consequent methods include correcting the child, removing the child's privileges, sending the child to time out, giving the child a detention or suspension, or verbally reprimanding the child. While the intent of consequent method is to decrease inappropriate behaviours, primary use of these methods may actually reinforce inappropriate behaviours [29]. A study conducted on "*Identifying the relationship between the function of student problem behaviour and teacher instructional behaviour*" revealed that this phenomenon may occur because students learn to exhibit inappropriate behaviours in order to escape academic task or to obtain teacher attention [30]. Antecedent methods are preventative and positive in nature; they are used to alter the environment before inappropriate behaviours occur or intensify and, thus, decrease the likelihood of those behaviours occurring. Examples of antecedent methods include establishing classroom rules and reinforcing appropriate behaviour [28].

With regards to potential outcomes of using an antecedent approach, three classroom management interventions were examined in terms of their effectiveness with seventh grade students. The three interventions were (1) the use of a weekly syllabus and academic assessments for individual students, (2) self-monitoring, and (3) actively teaching five classroom rules. All three interventions were linked to an increase in appropriate behaviour and a decrease in inappropriate and disruptive behaviour. However, actively teaching classroom rules was the most effective antecedent method that benefited teaching. One benefit is that the use of these methods decreases the likelihood that the inappropriate behaviours will occur by eliminating or changing the events that precede these behaviours. Decreasing the likelihood of these behaviours is essential for creating an environment that facilitates learning. Another benefit is that eliminating or changing the events that precede inappropriate behaviours typically leads to an immediate decrease in the number of

inappropriate behaviours. Improving the instructional environment is another benefit of antecedent method; because the events that precede appropriate behaviours are increased, the likelihood of appropriate behaviours occurring increases which, in turn, leads to increased levels of work completion and student achievement [31]. At the class wide level, antecedent methods establish positive, organised, predictable, and motivating classroom environments [32].

2.5. Challenges That Confront Teachers in the Process of Implementing Classroom Rules

Ideally, schools set rules and regulations for the proper governing of the various lifestyles of students containing the 'dos and don'ts' [33]. Effective schools demonstrate sound inclusive practices, which include emphasising school rules because they prescribe the standard of behaviour expected of the teachers and the students. However, in many instances teachers are faced with several challenges in implementing rules in the classroom [33]. A study about the "*modes of students control in public schools in the United States of America*", recommended an open minded approach to effective school rules and regulations as a way of minimizing unwanted student behaviour in schools. He indicated that since most school rules and regulations are set without student's participation, they tend to resist them and at times break them leading to indisciplinary acts that could result into suspension and dismissal of students [34]. Another opined that, threats from some influential parents prevent principals from implementing rules by taking disciplinary measures like suspensions for the fear that the influential parents may have it terminated altogether and the student readmitted unconditionally [33].

After reviewing dozens of studies on student behaviour, a researcher agreed that orderly schools, usually balance clearly established and communicated rules with a climate of concern for students as individuals, and small alternative schools often maintain order successfully with fewer formal rules and a more flexible approach to infractions than large schools typically have [35]. A data analyzed from over 600 secondary schools and found several challenges with enforcing rules which includes lack of clarity of rules, unfairly or inconsistent enforcement of rules; students not believing in rules; teachers and administrators not knowing what the rules were or disagreed on the proper responses to student misconduct and poor co-operation between teachers and administration with regards to enforcement of rules [36]. A study on challenges principals faced in enhancing student discipline in secondary schools in Tigania District, Kenya revealed that, the challenges secondary schools face when enforcing rules and regulations include political interference, parental interference, restriction by law, lack of support by

superiors, teachers being poor role models and inappropriate knowledge on disciplinary actions [37].

3. Methodology

This study adopted a case study research design. It was carried out in five (5) basic schools in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The data were used together to form one case. A case study method is an attempt to scientifically explore an event or a set of related events with the specific objective of describing and explaining this occurrence [38]. A case study research design is suitable for studies that require detailed information about occurrence with a restricted period where a large scale survey may not produce the true results [39]. The population in this study consisted of twenty (20) teachers selected from five (5) basic schools: Gethsemane (4), Holy Child Practice (4), Centre of Excellence (4), Salvation Army (4) and Air Force (4) in the Sekondi-Takoradi. The schools and teachers were conveniently and randomly selected for the study. The five (5) basic schools were conveniently sampled because they were the available or nearest units within the reach of the researchers. This implies that researchers are supposed to obtain a convenient sample by selecting whatever sampling units are conveniently available [40]. Twenty (20) teachers (four from each school) were also randomly selected to provide the needed data for the study. The use of the simple random sampling technique was to provide the participants with equal opportunity to be selected [41]. The participants selected were a mix of teachers with varying levels of teaching experience. Along with varying levels of teaching experience, these teachers were diverse in the grade levels they teach or have taught. A researcher asserted that the number of years that one has worked as a teacher is relevant in as far as understanding of students misbehaviour and their response to certain rules and regulations [42]. The data collection tool that was used for this study was individual interviews guide, specifically in-person interviews. The section A, B, C and D were structured along the following headings: categories of unruly behaviour that exist in basic school classrooms; causes of unruly behaviour; relevance of rules in managing unruly behaviour and challenges that confront teachers in the process of implementing classroom rules. The qualitative data entry and analyses was done by the use of both descriptive and interpretative techniques based on the themes arrived at in the data collection.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Categories of Unruly Behaviour That Exist in Basic School Classrooms in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis

This section of the study sought to determine the categories

of unruly behaviour that exist in basic school classrooms in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. Respondents were therefore asked to indicate if unruly behaviours existed in their classrooms and the forms they take. Respondents responded in the affirmative and indicated several forms that such behaviours take. A summary of all the narratives of respondents included:

“Fighting, drumming, noise making, teasing, bullying, stealing, going out of class without permission, chorus response to questions, refusal to submit work for marking, intentionally refuse to obey the rules, refuse to work alone or with others, intentionally bother other pupils, roam in class during lessons, refuse to talk, sleeping in class, talking out of turn, running in the classroom and reporting late to class after break”.

These categories of unruly behaviours narrated by the respondents are not different from what a researcher revealed that, out of seat; ignore class rules; refusal to work; not paying attention to the task at hand; refusal to talk to others; needlessly wandering in the classroom and talking out of turn [43]. These unruly behaviours when occur in isolation, may not present a severe disruption to the teaching and learning process [15].

However, in a classroom setting when these behaviours occur often and simultaneously, the class environment may suffer; pupils' learning process and the teachers' educational task might be made more difficult by disrupting academic work resulting in poor academic performance. In support of this study, a previous research indicated that, given the seriousness of these behaviours, teachers are spending disproportionately more time on behaviour problems that take away much from instructions time, compromising learning for both the pupil with behaviour difficulties and the rest of the class. It is therefore not surprising that unruly behaviours in schools have been a source of concern for school administrators for several years [2].

4.2. Causes of Unruly Behaviours in Classrooms of Selected Basic Schools

This section gathered information on the causes of unruly behaviours in selected basic schools in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis. Respondents were asked to indicate the causes of unruly behaviours in their classrooms. Respondents' responses provided insightful information about causes of unruly behaviour in basic school classrooms and indicated several reasons for pupils' unruly behaviours. Respondents were of the view that pupils behave inappropriately in the classroom as a result of poor classroom environment which includes poor ventilation, poor seating arrangement, type of furniture and absence of adequate working space for children to be actively and adequately engaged in meaningful

activities. A classroom with the above issues can provide a fertile ground for indiscipline issues. As one of the respondents indicated:

“The furniture used by pupils in my class is made of metal as such it makes a lot of noise when pupils have to get up and sit down for one reason or the other. These noises generated by the pulling and pushing of tables tend to generate indiscipline issues during the teaching learning process”. (Respondent 3)

Another respondent indicated that, “When pupils are not actively engaged in the teaching learning process it gives room for pupils to disrupt the learning process”. (Respondent 7). “Similarly, poor seating arrangement and poor ventilation makes pupils very uncomfortable, they fidget a lot making them inattentive in class”. (Respondent 5). Their views support a study that indicated poor seating arrangement, high temperature in the classroom, size of the classroom and nature of the furniture provided for the children may contribute to discipline issues in the classroom [4]. Another Respondent (9) had this to say about the causes of unruly behaviour:

“Sometimes activities given to pupils are not age appropriate; either too difficult or too easy. Under such situations the teaching learning process becomes either too challenging or boring for different groups of pupils. They tend to find other things that interest them such as talking with friends, looking out of the window, playing with their pens, pencils and books on their table. At worst they get up and roam in the classroom moving from table to table”.

When the child is not provided with age appropriate curriculum that will be challenging to the child, it may make the learner to be mentally withdrawn out of frustration and boredom may set in resulting to manifestations of such unruly behaviours [3].

Also, respondents believed that teachers grasp of subject and pedagogical knowledge as well as mastery of subject matter has a tremendous impact on discipline issues in the classroom. This is because teachers who have a good grasp of subject matter are able to design relevant strategies and activities that can arouse and sustain pupils’ interest in the teaching learning process. This is little or no room for pupils to disrupt. A previous study supported the current findings that, when a teacher fails to evaluate himself as it concerns the teaching methods used, the mastering of subject matter and the personality of a teacher, these things might not be acceptable to the pupils and such unruly behaviours might start [21]. This also confirms an earlier finding that teachers may be the source of pupils misbehaviour when their knowledge about subject matter is inadequate because pupils

become bored with teachers’ incompetency and engage themselves in activities that might interest them which might disrupt the class [22].

Respondent 1 shared similar sentiments:

“As a teacher I understand that my pupils will misbehave in class when my knowledge about the subject matter is poor and my methods and strategies of teaching are also inappropriate. It is therefore of utmost important that teachers engage in reflective section for self-evaluation to help them articulate their teaching strategies and approaches to teaching and learning for better delivery of lessons”.

In recognition of this finding, a study suggested that, all teachers need to be aware of how their behaviour can hinder rather than facilitate good behaviour in the classroom. This is because teachers who exhibit command of subject matter and gives precise information are able to design and implement learning activities and use varied pedagogical skills to actively engage pupils in the teaching learning process [44]. Respondent 15 also shared this sentiment as to the cause of unruly behaviours, “Pupils may exhibit unruly behaviour as a result of learning difficulties which prevent them from actively getting involved in class work. Such children lack concentration and attention span”.

The respondent’s sentiment is supported in a previous study that, there is a strong connection between learning difficulties and behaviour problems. He further indicated that such behaviour problems prevent children from being involved with school work which limit their progress [20]. In line with this, a study suggested that, pupils’ unruly behaviour is a reaction to demands being placed on the student that exceed his or her capacity to respond adequately to the situation [45]. He sees the displayed behaviour as a reaction to the skill students may be lacking.

Respondent 10 indicates:

“The teacher herself can be the source of pupils’ unruly behaviour. Some teachers are too over bearing; they are also inconsistent in dealing with pupils all which create a poor teacher pupil relationship. In such instance pupils especially the grownups will rebel and create discipline issues in the class room”.

A study confirmed that a teachers’ personality also plays an important role in the classroom. A teacher who is kind, warm and judges the pupils’ behaviour fairly can easily earn the respect from the pupils and build a positive relationship with the them, however an unfair or inappropriate action can result in unruly behaviour among pupils’ [46]. A similar study supported the findings that, the teacher’s behaviour may be unclear or unfair and this may create negative reactions from

pupils [47]. Finally, some respondents were of the view that some pupils engage in unruly behaviour just because they are attention seekers. *“Some pupils intentionally put up an act of deviance just to receive attention from the teacher and class mates. To such children this is the only means they know to noticed or recognized”*. (Respondent 8). This view supports the current study and maintained that, a student may disrupt a class because he/she want attention from the teacher [47].

4.3. Relevance of Rules in Managing Unruly Behaviours

The focus of this section of the study was to examine the relevance of rules in managing unruly behaviours in selected basic schools in the Sekondi Takoradi Metropolis. Generally, respondents were of the view that classroom rules help pupils to be aware of what is expected of them. That is the rules direct pupils as to what to do and what not and this helps in controlling unruly behaviour. This provides a safe and comfortable place for effective teaching and learning. These findings confirm a similar study with assertion that, developing and implementing classroom rules are necessary as they are significant for the efficient and effective running of a classroom [48]. Again in support of this current study, another research finding indicated that, the relevance of rules in the classroom maximize desired behaviour while minimizing undesired ones and provide a safe learning environment [49]. Another scientific study also supported these assertions that, there are many good reasons to establish rules in the classroom such as it illustrates the significance of good behaviour by generating a balance regarding permissiveness and punishment [50]. The following narratives were some of the specifics indicated by respondents as relevance of rules.

Respondent 13 indicated that:

“Classroom rules enable children to understand what is expected of them. This is really important when pupils have to work in groups. This is because it sets limits and boundaries within which pupils are expected to operate. This in turn minimizes the incidence of unwanted behaviour”.

A study on “Teachers’ perceptions of the abolition of caning in Ghanaian schools” published in Issues in Educational Research asserted that, classroom rules set limits and define the boundaries of a particular classroom. Students can understand what they are expected to do and what they are not through rules [6]. Respondent 16 also had this to say:

“It provides pupils with a common ground on which all the children are to operate. This makes issues of fairness, justice and equity easier for me to administer in the classroom. This is because the rules have their

consequences attached and it will be administered as and when applicable. All I need to do is to be consistent in its application. This goes a long way for me to maximize desired behaviour and reduce undesired behaviour to its barest minimum”.

This is not different from a previous study on relevance of classroom rules asserting that, young children begin to develop an understanding of fairness, justice and equity and they are ready to be informed about rules which provide fair and equitable environments both in classrooms and in larger settings [51]. Respondent 2 narrated:

“The rule urging pupils to be gentle and kind to each other is very helpful in creating a safe and comfortable classroom for pupils to play and interact with each other. Pupils know what is expected of them when dealing with each other”.

Researchers affirmed this by stating that classroom rules are necessary for young children to create a safe and comfortable place for them. When classrooms are safe pupils become happy, they become interested in attending school which reduces the tendency for truancy and absenteeism and the desire to learn is high [52]. Another respondent was of the view that:

“The use of classroom rules prevents the occurrence of undesired behaviour. When this happens, pupils are able to complete task in good time and this increases pupils’ academic achievement levels. In short classroom rules promote an environment that facilitates learning” (Respondent 18)

It is in line with this that, a similar study advocated for the use of classroom rules. To them it is essential for creating an environment that facilitates learning which invariably leads to increased levels of work completion and student achievement [31]. Respondent 5 also had this to say:

“The use of rules in the classroom has reduced some unruly behaviour among pupils and others are changing gradually because of this, records of unruly behaviours in my class keeps reducing as the day goes by, pupils are more attentive in class and am less stressed”.

Similarly, a study supported the current findings postulate that, the use of classroom rules reduces the incidence of inappropriate behaviour and decreases teacher stress and burn out. This enhances class control and class management leading to effective use of instructional time [28].

4.4. Challenges That Confront Teachers in the Process of Implementing Classroom Rules

Despite the relevance of rules in managing unruly behaviours

in classrooms the researcher deemed it necessary to examine the challenges that confront teachers in its implementation. Respondents were therefore asked to indicate if there were any of such challenges. It is important to note that most respondents indicated fewer challenges with regards to implementing classroom rules. They mentioned that, they formulate the rules with their pupils, teach the rules by role playing it and constantly remind pupils of the rules. Others indicated that, the rules are written on a cardboard and pasted at vantage places in the classroom, pupils are reminded of it every morning before classes begins.

However other respondents, who indicated that they were constantly faced with the challenge of implementing classroom rules, had this to say *“Initially I did not involve the pupils in the formulation of the rules. They did not understand the need to accept the rules and observe them so they were not willing to accept them”* (Respondent 13). This is in support of earlier study asserted that, since most school rules and regulations are formulated without student’s participation, they tend to resist them and at times break them leading to indiscipline acts that could result into suspension and dismissal of students [34]. Other respondents indicated that *“It is hard to maintain the rules in the classroom. Students constantly break the rules because they forget them”*. (Respondents11). Respondent 20 had this to say *“When teachers are not consistent with the implementation of the rules pupils play tricks”*. Respondent 12 was of the view that *“Students in my class did not seem to believe in the rules as a means of controlling behaviour. They were more accustomed to corporal punishment as a means of controlling unwanted behaviour”*. Respondent 15 was also of the view that *“When rules are not explicitly stated, pupils lack clarity of it. In such situations pupils give their own meaning to the rule which gives room to several interpretations of it”*. Respondent 17 stated, *“In certain instances, some teachers make it difficult to implement the rules. They don’t support its implementation, the pull him down attitude”*. Respondent 6 narrated:

“Some students are rebellious in nature and will intentionally break the rules. Some form clicks in class and exhibit rebellious tendencies. They have no reason to break the rules except that it is a decision taken by members of the click. Sometimes I see it as pupils lack a sense of direction as to where they should channel their energies”.

From these narratives it can be seen that the challenges teachers face in implementing classroom rules as a means of managing unruly behaviour include; non-involvement of pupils in the formulation of rules, forgetfulness, inconsistency of the implementation, pupils not believing in the rules, rules are not explicitly stated, non-support from

teachers and rebellious nature of pupils. A study revealed that, several challenges with enforcing rules includes lack of clarity of rules, unfairly or inconsistent enforcement of rules, students not believing in rules, teachers and administrators not knowing what the rules were or disagreed on the proper responses to student misconduct and poor co-operation between teachers and administration with regards to enforcement of rules. If these challenges exist in some classrooms, it is likely that rules are not working hence unruly behaviours may be rife in these classrooms which has the tendency to affect academic work [36].

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed that the various forms of unruly behaviours that exist in the classrooms are all disruptive in nature. It therefore has the tendency to affect the progress of teaching and learning by stressing out teachers and making pupils inattentive in class. This has the tendency to affect pupils work completion hence academic performance. The study also found out that the various reasons for the manifestation of the unruly behaviours in classrooms were the result of poor classroom environment. The study also revealed that rules maximise desired behaviour while minimising undesired ones, the study once again revealed that, teachers who formulate rules with their pupils, teach pupils the rules and constantly remind pupils of the rules had fewer challenges in its implementation,

It can be concluded that unruly behaviours have the tendency to stress out teachers and affect pupils work completion hence academic performance. It can be concluded that if the obstacles facing the implementation of rules are not dealt with, unruly behaviours may continue to persist in the classrooms creating disciplinary issues for teachers and school authorities. It can be concluded that, involvement of pupils in the formulation of rules and teachers’ conscious effort to teach it, will reduce the tendency for pupils to rebel against the rules. It can be concluded that rules are significant for managing unruly behaviour because it ensures the efficient and effective running of a classroom.

It is recommended that, the Ghana Education Service in collaboration with heads of schools should organize seminars and forums for pupils on the importance of obeying rules. In such workshops teachers and other resource persons can share with students’ real life experiences on the importance of obedience of rules and regulations.

Heads of educational institutions should perceive rules as means of controlling and ordering behaviour rather than using it as a mere restricting tool. It is also recommended that, teachers should be sensitized on the need to formulate classroom rules with pupils and make conscious effort to teach pupils the meaning of the rules as well as the consequences associated with the rules to ensure the observance of the rules by pupils to the latter. It is recommended that, Government through its numerous stakeholders of education such as Ghana Education Service, head teachers, teachers and parents should ensure that affirmative policies that will encourage the use of student friendly disciplinary measures in classrooms across all levels of education are implemented to promote a friendly classroom environment that promotes learning.

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