

Behavioral Modification Strategies of the Kindergarten Teachers

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Abstract - This study aimed to identify the Behavioral Modification Strategies employed by Kindergarten Teachers for the mistaken behaviors of their learners in the District of General Tinio, Nueva Ecija, Philippines. With the use of descriptive research design, this paper described the mistaken behaviors categorized as Disruptive, Withdrawn, Inappropriate Social, and Violent/Unsafe.

Results of the study display that the disruptive behaviors of the Kindergarten learners as observed by the teacher respondents are "frequently asking unrelated questions to the discussion" and "always bothering their seatmate". As to the withdrawn behaviors of the learners, they "silently doing different work" and are "aloof or preferred of being alone". In terms of inappropriate social behavior, the kindergartens are "impolite" and for their violent/unsafe behaviors, they are "shouting regardless of time and place" and "demonstrate threatening body language".

As strategies to modify these behaviors, the teachers post photos of the most behave, learners, organize games and fun activities such as using letter and number tracing, clay molding, and other fine motor skills development like coloring printed materials gives thumbs-up or star for polite kids, and have a heart to heart talk to children who committed nasty acts.

Keywords — Behavior modification strategies, discipline, kindergarten teachers and learners, mistaken behaviors, violent behaviors

I. INTRODUCTION

The 21st-century Kindergarten teachers face different challenges about the learners' disturbing behaviors in the classroom as a product of different culture, environment, and family rearing up which is supported by the study of Garcia (2018) that stated that learners have different personalities, ideas, preferences, family backgrounds among others. An article indicated that one drawback to teaching preschool is that children at such a young age are not yet behaviorally developed. Preschool may be the first time where some children have a significant body of rules to follow (Mark, 2019). According to the Victoria State Government (2020), schools can define their own set of behavioral expectations in their student engagement policy, there is no common set of behaviors that can be universally regarded as challenging.

Challenging behaviors include Withdrawn Behaviors, Disruptive Behaviors, Violent and/or Unsafe Behaviors, and Inappropriate Social Behaviors.

Teachers play a significant role in managing discipline in the classroom. Teachers are capable of handling pupils' behavior to ensure that they could participate in the teaching-learning process actively and achieve the daily objectives of teaching. The presence of misdemeanors in a classroom causes disturbances making it difficult for the learners to focus on the learning process. It was stated that modeling behavior could be a positive and effective modality in teaching (Kaufmann 2013). A study concluded that "effective classroom management incorporates environment modification for behavior modification to transpire" (Patac, 2015) while the other study stated that "education is a catalyst for positive change and behavior modification and using positive reinforcement is an effective means to achieve good behavior in children. The use of creative activities reinforces and affirms a child's achievement of developmental skills (De Vera, 2017)". It was explained that Behavior Modification is defined as "the alteration of behavioral patterns through the use of such learning techniques as biofeedback and positive or negative reinforcement" (Scott and Cogburn, 2019).

Understanding behavior modification could help the Kindergarten teachers in managing their class effectively since the young learners are just starting to be part of the school organization where rules and policies are implemented to maintain peace and order. Effective classroom management is required to attain an effective teaching-learning process. Without it, learners will have minimal achievements in academic learning and performance. Since the teachers are the key persons in shaping quality education, they hold the greater task of teaching good values and knowledge in transforming every Filipino learner to become successful. Behavior modification must not violate the Child Protection program of the Department of Education but will support in achieving the goals for the Filipino youth to be globally competitive. (Guerra, Edgar & Sánchez, Ariadna & Domingo, Pilar, 2019). The researchers presented an in-depth study on this phenomenon and identified the management and strategies of



the Kindergarten teachers that lessened the mistaken behaviors of their learners. The development of the learners' knowledge and skill while improving their good behavior would contribute to their high academic performance as incoming Grade 1.

II. METHODOLOGY

The researchers utilized the descriptive research design using the questionnaire technique to gather the necessary information. According to Dr. Y.P. Aggarwal (2008) as cited by Garcia & Subia (2019), "descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for description and interpretation". In this study, descriptive research was used to present and describe the behavior modification strategies implemented by the Kindergarten Teachers to the mistaken behaviors of their learners. The researchers developed a validated and reliable (alpha = 0.789) survey Likert scale questionnaire with the following range of values and verbal description (see Table 1).

Table 1. Range of Values

| Rating | Scale | Verbal Description |
|--------|-------------|----------------------|
| 4 | 3.25 - 4.00 | Highly Observed (HO) |
| 3 | 2.50 - 3.24 | Observed (O) |
| 2 | 1.75 - 2.49 | Rarely Observed (RO) |
| 1 | 1.00 - 1.74 | Not Observed (NO) |

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Observed Mistaken Behaviors of the Kindergarten Learners

The observed mistaken behaviors of the learners in their Kindergarten classes were shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Observed Mistaken Behaviors of the Kindergarten Learners

| Descriptions | WM | VI | RANK |
|--|-------------|----------|------|
| Observed Disruptive Behaviors | | | |
| 1. Frequently asking unrelated questions to the discussion | 3.45 | HO | 1 |
| 2. Always bothered their seatmate | 2.76 | O | 2 |
| 3. Doing other things such as playing pencil | 2.53 | O | 3 |
| 4. Making a scene | 1.84 | RO | 4 |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 2.65 | O | |

Observed Withdrawn Behaviors

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| 1. Aloof, preferred being alone | 1.84 | RO | 2 |
| 2. Not speaking to anyone | 1.38 | NO | 4 |
| 3. Nervous when called | 1.61 | NO | 3 |
| 4. Silently working on different work | 2.07 | RO | 1 |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 1.73 | NO | |

Observed Inappropriate Social Behaviors

| | | | |
|---|-------------|----------|---|
| 1. Cursing or using bad words | 1.84 | RO | 3 |
| 2. Telling lies or unbelievable stories | 2.3 | RO | 2 |
| 3. Impoliteness or being rude | 3.68 | HO | 1 |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 2.61 | O | |

Observed Violent/Unsafe Behaviors

| | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|---|
| 1. Demonstrate threatening body language | 1.84 | RO | 1 |
| 2. Hitting/kicking classmates | 0.46 | NO | 5 |
| 3. Kicking things | 0.92 | NO | 3 |
| 4. Rolling or rocking on the floor | 0.46 | NO | 5 |
| 5. Destroying other's things | 0.46 | NO | 5 |
| 6. Throwing other's things | 0.69 | NO | 4 |
| 7. Shouting regardless of time and place | 2.3 | O | 2 |
| Overall Weighted Mean | 1.02 | NO | |

The disruptive behaviors of the Kindergarten learners observed by the respondents obtained an overall weighted mean of 2.65, verbally interpreted as Observed. This indicator shows that the respondents have agreed on the disruptive behavior, "Frequently asking unrelated questions to the discussion" which gained the highest weighted mean of 3.45, verbally interpreted as Highly Observed. It was followed by "Always bothering their seatmate" and "Doing other things such as playing pencil" with the weighted mean of 2.76 and 2.53 respectively, both verbally interpreted as Observed.

As to the withdrawn behaviors, it obtained an overall weighted mean of 2.53, verbally interpreted as Observed. This indicator shows that the respondents agreed on withdrawn behavior "Silently working on different work" which gained the highest weighted mean of 2.07, verbally interpreted as Rarely Observed. It was followed by "Aloof, preferred being alone" with a weighted mean of 1.84, verbally interpreted as Rarely Observed, while " Not speaking to anyone" gained the lowest frequency of 1.38, verbally interpreted as Not Observed.

In terms of the inappropriate social behaviors of the kindergarten learners, the obtained overall weighted mean of 2.61, verbally interpreted as Observed. This indicator shows

that the respondents have agreed on inappropriate social behavior "*Impoliteness or being rude*" which gained the highest weighted mean of 3.68, verbally interpreted as Highly Observed while "*Cursing or using bad words*" gained the lowest weighted mean of 1.84, verbally interpreted as Rarely Observed.

The violent/unsafe behaviors of the Kindergarten learners observed by the respondents obtained an overall weighted mean of 1.02, verbally interpreted as Not Observed. This shows that the respondents agreed that on violent/unsafe behavior "*Shouting regardless of time and place*" gained the highest weighted mean of 2.3, verbally interpreted as Observed followed by "*Demonstrate threatening body language*" with a weighted mean of 1.84, verbally interpreted as Rarely Observed. "*Hitting/kicking classmates,*" "*Rolling or rocking on the floor,*" and "*Destroying other's things,*" gained the lowest weighted mean of 0.46, verbally interpreted as Not Observed.

B. Behavioral Modification Strategies Used by the Respondents

The effective use of Behavioral Modification Strategies in the classroom may appear overwhelming even to experienced teachers. However, changing into better behavior is often the most efficient and effective means of improving the teaching-learning process. Understanding these problems and then developing and using a set of intervention strategies regularly, problems of behavior could be effectively managed and change in the classroom. The table shows Behavioral Modification Strategies used by the respondents on their Kindergarten learners.

- The Disruptive Behaviors modified by the respondents using strategies to achieve the high performance of the Kindergarten learners obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.08, which was verbally interpreted as Observed. This indicator showed that the majority of the respondents modified their learners by "*Posting photos and/or names of the most behave learners*" which gained the highest weighted mean of 3.91, verbally interpreted as Highly Observed, followed by "Use praises and nice words to encourage them to behave well" and "*Using differentiated instructions*" with a weighted mean of 3.68 and 3.45 respectively, both verbally interpreted as Highly Observed. "*Giving dry clothes, food, and time to rest*" gained the lowest weighted mean of 2.25, was verbally interpreted as Rarely Observed.
- The respondents modified the Withdrawn Behaviors by using strategies to achieve the high performance of the Kindergarten learners obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.08, which was verbally interpreted as Observed. This indicator shows that majority of the respondents modified their learners' behavior by "*Preparing different printed materials, fun activities, and games*" which gained the highest

weighted mean of 3.22, which was verbally interpreted as Observed, followed by "*Informing the parents about the withdrawn behavior/s of their child*" and "*Using gentle words to let them feel comfortable*" with a weighted mean of 2.76 and 2.53 respectively, both verbally interpreted as Observed. "Encourage participating more in group activities" gained the lowest weighted mean of 1.84, which verbally interpreted as Rarely Observed.

- The Inappropriate Social Behaviors modified by the respondents using strategies to achieve the high performance of the Kindergarten learners obtained an overall weighted mean of 2.61, which was verbally interpreted as Observed. This indicator showed that the majority of the respondents modified their learners' behavior by "*Giving thumbs-ups, an okay sign, or star for behaving well like saying "PO and opo*" which gained the highest weighted mean of 3.68, which verbally interpreted as Highly Observed, followed by "*Informing the parents about the inappropriate social behavior/s of their child*" with a weighted mean of 3.45, which was verbally interpreted as Highly Observed and "*By showing examples of appropriate social behaviors like proper greetings to everyone*" with a weighted mean of 3.22, verbally interpreted as Observed. "*Telling stories about behaving well with other people*" gained the lowest percentage of 2.53, which verbally interpreted as Observed.
- The respondents modified the Violent/Unsafe Behaviors their learners by "*Sitting down and discussing this matter or have the learner go to time-out chair*" which gained the highest weighted mean of 1.84, verbally interpreted as Rarely Observed, followed by "*Give task like saying "I will not do it again" for initiated fight*" with a weighted mean of 1.61, verbally interpreted as Not Observed and "*Informing the parents about the withdrawn behavior/s of their child,* with a weighted mean of 1.38, verbally interpreted as Not Observed. "*Role-playing as part of behavior practice*" gained the lowest weighted mean of 0.69, verbally interpreted as Not Observed.

C. Proposed Activities of the Respondents

The respondents proposed activities to lessen the identified and observed mistaken behaviors of Kindergarten learners. The respondents of this study suggested using letter and number tracing, clay molding, and other fine motor skills development like coloring printed materials in lessening the disruptive behaviors of the learners. These strategies as classical conditioning will encourage the learners to do different fine motor developments as they realize that the negative reinforcement would modify them to behave well and not cause interruptions in the class. The respondents of

this study suggested activities to lessen the withdrawn behaviors of the learners by encouraging them to sing or dance with the group, letting them choose a partner to work with, and invite a family inside the room if needed during activities. Keeping young learners comfortable and behaved will help achieve the goal of the activities of teachers. The respondents of this study suggested activities to lessen the inappropriate social behaviors of the learners by letting them recite phrases about being a good kid like thank you, I'm sorry, writing repeated words like sorry and thanks, and proper polite words to use in the given situation. Let the learners exposed to a good attitude through examples and videos that could help them realize that being a good person is better for everyone around them and themselves. The respondents suggested activities to lessen the violent/unsafe behaviors of their learners by engaging them in physical activities within a group like dancing, complete puzzle games with a partner or a group. Trace hands to create original artwork showing hands being useful and kind and not to harm to instill in the minds of the learners that the hands are important in helping others and not to be used to harm oneself, others, and nature.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the following conclusions and recommendations were drawn. The Disruptive Behaviors and Inappropriate Social Behaviors were Highly Observed as identified by the Kindergarten teachers. It was verbally interpreted as Observed when the list of Disruptive Behaviors and Inappropriate Social Behaviors were personally experienced and enumerated by the Kindergarten teachers. The Kindergarten teachers managed and modified the Disruptive Behaviors and Inappropriate Social Behaviors in the entire school year, but the frequency and severity were lessened. The Withdrawn Behaviors and Violent/Unsafe Behaviors were Observed as the Kindergarten teachers identified the mistaken behaviors provided on the list from the researchers. It was verbally interpreted as Not Observed when the list of Withdrawn Behaviors and Violent/Unsafe Behaviors were personally experienced and enumerated by the Kindergarten teachers. The majority of the respondents managed and modified the Withdrawn Behaviors in the early quarters of the school year. The majority of the respondents who managed and modified the Violent/Unsafe Behaviors were reminding the learners to be careful and never hurt anyone and to sit down and discuss the matter, or have the learner go to a time-out chair due to some mishaps but not exist seriously. The proposed activities of the Kindergarten teachers on the categorized mistaken behaviors used Classical Conditioning and Punishment. Based on the summary of findings and conclusions, the following were the recommendations of the researchers: a) Identify the mistaken behaviors of the Kindergarten learners through observation on the first few weeks that the class start to enculturate preschool children to give full play to their educational value (Quan & Xin,2020). b) Manage immediately the

Kindergarten learners that commit mistaken behavior and modify their behavior by using different strategies that will help improve their behavior. c) Provide more activities that will help them develop their knowledge and skill while improving their good behaviors. d) Kindergarten teachers should explore more ways to construct other behavior modification strategies to be used to their learners' identified and observed mistaken behaviors. e) Kindergarten teachers should diversify their management and strategies to address the mistaken behaviors as these would affect the academic performance of the Kindergarten learners and as an incoming Grade, 1. f) Further studies on effective behavior modification strategies must be conducted on the early part of the school year to fully observe and address the mistaken behaviors of the Kindergarten learners.

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