

Personality and Academic Maladjustment Behaviors Among Learners

SITTIE ZHAYNAB H. Z. ALI

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0853-435X>

zhaynabzuhayer@gmail.com

Mindanao State University – Main Campus

Marawi City, Mindanao, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Maladjusted behavior refers to a habitual pattern of behaviors which is detrimental to the individual. It is frequent and ultimately harmful to the individual, environment, or other persons, and impedes adaptation and healthy development. The study identified the maladjusted behaviors among pre-adolescent learners as perceived by their advisers. It made use of the descriptive survey method of research. Ninety-eight respondents participated in this study. The data were collected through the aid of researcher-made questionnaire, which was in a checklist type. The maladjusted behaviors in terms of personality and academic aspects were all encountered by the adviser. It is recommended that teachers find ways and means to solve the distinguishable disciplinary problems to mold the pre-adolescents into better human beings. They must also do their share by being kind, friendly, patient, compassionate, and understanding the pre-adolescents because they are practical tools in the success of the teaching and learning process. It is the teacher's task to maintain adequate and orderly condition within the classroom to provide a wholesome atmosphere and a most effective environment for learning.

KEYWORDS

Education, maladjustment, behavior, personality, academic, descriptive, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

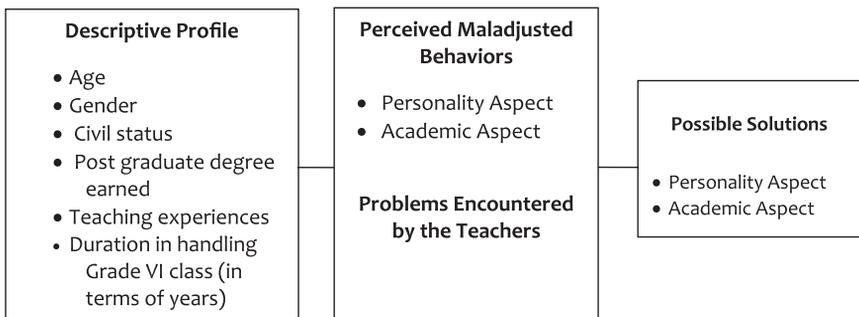
Most pupil maladjustment can be detected early when children first enter school. Home and social situations clearly put children's mental health at risk and one needs to identify circumstances in early school life. Everyone knows too that disturbances become more difficult to contain or to cure as maladjusted behavior progresses (Lovitt, 1978). From long practical experience and researchers over the past years, the general lines and principles of what should we do and might be successful have been made clear (Lovitt, 1978).

Individual behaviors are maladaptive only if they occur as part of a consistent pattern. All children break the rules from time to time. It is a common characteristic of maladjusted children that disciplinary actions are usually not effective at curtailing their negative behaviors. They continue to misbehave despite of the threat of punishment. It seems they are unable, or unwilling, to consider the consequences of their behavior. They require extra attention, either in the form of counseling or behavior modification (Slavin, 1997). Slavin (1997) said that parents should utilize the behavior modification to not spoil the child, for instance, if the parents will provide their child all her wishes. On the other hand, disciplining the child must also be limited to his capability. Imposing too heavy punishment might lead the child into a more complex situation psychologically.

After the family, the school environment is the most important influence in a child's life in promoting social, emotional, and academic development. As children start and progress through school, they are continually called upon to adapt to new expectations, and therefore a certain amount of anxiety is to be expected. However, when a particular behavior results in undue stress for the child and elicits adverse reactions from others, the behavior represents a distress signal. When this occurs, a thorough analysis of what the problem behavior means to the individual child can lead to interventions that can change the behavior and result in a more productive adaptation for the child (Bootzin, 1991).

Pupils aging from 11 to 14 years old have almost reached the adolescent stage. It is a critical stage where developmental tasks will come out, physically, socially, and emotionally. Since pupils spend most of their time in school, teachers are the significant people who could determine and assess the maladjusted behaviors that they observed in their pupils. They can also cite reasons behind the behavior of their pupils as they allocate collaborative efforts with the parents and the community for the growth of the children.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study was to identify and analyze the maladjusted behaviors among Grade VI pupils. Furthermore, this study explored the problems encountered and the solutions employed by the classroom advisers in handling the maladjusted pupils. Specifically, it required answers to the following questions: 1. What is the descriptive profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, post graduate degree earned, teaching experiences, and duration in handling Grade VI class (in terms of years)?; 2. What are the maladjustment behaviors of the Grade VI pupils as perceived by the teachers along with the following aspects? 2.1 personality and 2.2 academic?; 3. What are the problems encountered by the teachers regarding the pupils maladjustments?; and 4. What possible solutions of the teachers can on the maladjustment behaviors along with the following aspects? 4.1 personality and 4.2 academic?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used the descriptive survey method of research (AECT, 2001).

Respondents

The respondents of the study were ninety-eight (98) advisers, fifty-eight (58) from the public schools, and forty (40) from private schools. Classroom advisers are the direct persons who can immediately observe and state the maladjusted behaviors demonstrated by the Grade VI pupils observable in the classroom setting.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a checklist-type questionnaire. It has four parts. The first part was the personal and professional data of the respondents. The second part was the observed maladjusted behaviors of the pupils consisting of two aspects: personality and academic. The third part is the problems encountered by the teachers, and the last part consists of the possible solutions they implement in the classroom setting. In measuring the data, the researcher used a Likert-like scaling.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before distributing the questionnaire to the respondents, the researcher sought the permission from the school principals for their cooperation, assistance, and guidance to the researcher. Upon granted, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to gather the necessary data.

Statistical Tools Used

The responses to each item in the questionnaire checklist were tallied and tabulated. The data gathered were treated by using the following statistical tools: frequency counts and percentage, and weighted mean.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Many teachers nowadays are young and new in the teaching profession. They are competent to teach the young ones since they are responsive to innovations and various current teaching trends which are valuable in providing world-class quality education.

This study notably identified the perceived maladjusted behavior of Grade VI pupils who were pre-adolescent, and some were already adolescents. Many respondents were 20-25 years old. Hence, they are skillfully matured enough to deal with pre-adolescents and had experienced handling those with maladjusted behavior.

The majority (90 or 91.84 percent) of the respondents were female, while only a few (8 or 8.16 percent) were male. This finding infers that females dominate public and private schools. The dominance of women in the Philippine Education is an accomplished phenomenon. It also reveals that at present, 95% of our personnel in elementary schools and 86% in both public and private high schools are females.

Based on the module of Behaviour Modification in Regional Training Seminar on Guidance and Counseling in Uganda (2000), most women are compassionate and affectionately dedicated in their careers. They exert selfless effort to achieve the goals of an institution where they are connected. One of the respectable characteristics of women is their ability to sympathize with others and the potential to establish a harmonious relationship with people. Thus, female educators are effective and proficient in interacting with learners, especially those with maladjustment problems. They can, in some ways, contribute to assess and resolve the maladjusted behavior of pupils.

In different gender theories, women are more relational, expressive, and communal, whereas men are more autonomous and instrumental in their priorities (Knafo & Spinath, 2011). There is a big difference in how men and women handle things through their principles and attitudes.

The majority (59 or 60.20 percent) of the respondents were married, while some (33 or 33.67 percent) were single. Few (4 or 4.08 percent) were widowed, and few (2 or 2.05 percent) were separated. This finding shows that majority of the respondents were married. This finding suggests that the respondents have a dual role to perform as mothers and as teachers. As examined by Lovitt (1978), the dual responsibilities would even inspire them to work harder for promotion and an increase of income for the comfort and benefit of their families.

That married people are committed to creating and maintaining a family to possess a well-organized relationship. They play various roles that are essential in keeping the family with a more robust connection among members. The study concludes that married teachers have more experience in guiding pupils with maladjusted behavior and can easily relate to the situation, particularly those who have children of their own. Married people

are “warm,” a plus character of a teacher, being friendly but not too friendly because there are boundaries set. Nevertheless, this is manifested by many married teachers; they are exposed to cases and situations brought about by married people’s experiences.

The majority (51 or 52.04 percent) of the respondents were Baccalaureate Degrees holders with Master’s units. Only some (15 or 15.31 percent) of the respondents had a Master’s Degree. This datum indicates that the majority of the respondents were Baccalaureate Degrees holders with Master’s units. They chose to focus on their jobs and do better with their careers rather than pursuing a higher degree due to various reasons, such as the need to earn enough financial support and early marriage for some. It discloses that the respondents were fresh graduates; therefore, they were still in the process of their study in higher degrees.

Newly graduated teachers are well-informed regarding the current educational trends in the school system. They can exhibit modern teaching strategies and techniques. They can also create innovative disciplinary programs which are highly applicable to pupils possessing maladjusted behaviors. In line with this idea, school heads must ensure thorough supervision for the effective implementation of the programs.

The length of years the teachers spends in a school institution indicates that they are well satisfied with the privileges they receive. They may have more opportunities to accumulate rich and varied experiences to handle the teaching-learning process.

The majority (54 or 55.10 percent) of the respondents have 1-3 years in handling Grade VI class. Few (nineteen or 19.39 percent) respondents revealed that they handled Grade VI class for 4-6 years. This datum signifies that most of the respondents had a short duration of experience in handling Grade VI class. It implies that they were still in a process of accommodating the various means of dealing with pupils who were in their pre-adolescent stage (James Scarr, 1987).

The length of service is a significant factor of a teacher concerning classroom management with maladjusted pupils since they are directly interacting with the youth who need excellent hands for their better future. Beltran (2016) emphasized that the longer the number of years one has spent in the service, the better becomes one’s efficiency in his work. The longer the teachers are in the service, the better his/her performance in terms of teaching ability and effectiveness in doing their job and productivity in producing quality graduates.

Table 1. Mean Ratings of the Perceived Personality Aspect of Maladjusted Behavior of Pupils

Rank	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
1	He/she creates distracting noise during class hours.	3.15	1.2044	Moderately True
2	He/she lacks self-confidence during class recitation.	3.05	1.2953	Moderately True
3	He/she moves nervously by transferring to different seats.	2.96	1.2262	Moderately True
4	He/she cannot concentrate on a particular situation.	2.81	1.0420	Moderately True
5.5	He/she screams a lot inside the classroom.	2.76	1.2104	Moderately True
5.5	He/she is shy to react while class in session.	2.76	1.1846	Moderately True
7	He/she pinches his/her classmates for no reason at all.	2.59	1.2085	Sometimes True
8	He/she mimics or repeats the teacher's words.	2.56	1.2274	Sometimes True
9	He/she shows irritability for no reason at all.	2.54	1.2532	Sometimes True
10	He/she poorly coordinated or clumsy in physical activities.	2.51	1.2620	Sometimes True
11	He/she stares into space or seems preoccupied inside the classroom.	2.50	1.1949	Sometimes True
12	He/she repeatedly rocks head or body during discussion.	2.40	1.1991	Sometimes True
13	He/she destroys his/her things.	2.21	1.2539	Sometimes True
14	He/she bites fingernails while the teacher is discussing.	2.16	1.2819	Sometimes True
15	He/she cries a lot even if he/she is not hurt.	2.09	1.1584	Sometimes True
	AVERAGE	2.60	1.1468	Sometimes True

Most of the respondents ranked number 1 the personality aspect of maladjusted behavior of pupils, particularly in “creating distracting noise

during class hours.” It has a mean rating of 3.15 with a descriptive rating of “moderately true.” The respondents ranked last the behavior of “crying a lot even if he/she is not hurt,” with a mean rating of 2.09, described as “sometimes true.” The personality aspect of maladjusted behavior has an average mean rating of 2.60 with a quality description of “sometimes true.”

The findings indicate that the personality aspect of maladjusted behaviors of pupils is observable in the classroom setting. An individual’s personality is what everything a person does. It is the individual’s distinctive way of conducting himself. It includes the person’s physique, appearance, aptitudes, and character traits. It is the holistic picture of an individual. It is, in short, the total of an individual’s behavior that helps us understand why pupils do the things they do.

In Carl Roger’s view, as cited by Dagmar (1996), personality change is indeed possible and a necessary part of growing up. However, he notes that self-acceptance is a prerequisite.

Table 2. Mean Ratings of the Perceived Academic Aspect of Maladjusted Behavior of Pupils

Rank	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
1	He/she fails to submit the requirements given by the teacher.	3.37	1.2713	Moderately True
2	He/she submits assignment late.	3.18	1.1608	Moderately True
3-5	He/she cheats answers from others in exams and other class requirements.	3.16	1.3215	Moderately True
3-5	He/she does not want to lead in group activities.	3.16	1.3292	Moderately True
5	He/she comes to class unprepared.	3.15	1.3031	Moderately True
6.5	He/she speaks in a faint voice when answering.	2.92	1.2491	Moderately True
6.5	He/she has poor school work.	2.92	1.1899	Moderately True
8	He/she interrupts questions not related to the lesson.	2.89	1.2004	Moderately True

9	He/she gets easily frustrated if he got low scores or wrong answers.	2.88	1.2784	Moderately True
10	He/she does not follow the instructions in the exams and class projects.	2.87	1.2974	Moderately True
11	He/she skips classes to do other things.	2.84	1.3899	Moderately True
12	He/she consistently ask for help from others, even for easy tasks.	2.83	1.1309	Moderately True
13	He/she refuses to answer in the class recitations.	2.76	1.2405	Moderately True
14	He/she refuses to join classroom activities.	2.74	1.2707	Moderately True
15	He/she lacks energy during physical activities.	2.45	1.3012	Sometimes True
	AVERAGE	2.94	1.2623	Moderately True

Among the fifteen indicators with the descriptive ratings of “moderately true” that have a mean rating between 2.61-3.40, only one of these was described as “sometimes true” with a mean rating of 2.45, as perceived by the respondents. The indicator is specifically the behavior of the pupils of “lacking energy during physical activities.” This finding denotes that maladjusted behavior does not mean being physically incompetent in the daily activities of the pupils. The findings suggest that the physical activities in the classroom setting are highly applicable in all areas of discipline. It has also been considered as a new teaching strategy that motivates the learners to participate and help them develop themselves. The academic aspect of maladjusted behavior has a descriptive rating of “moderately true,” with an average mean rating of 2.84. It points out that most of the maladjustment behaviors of the pupils were primarily manifested in the teaching-learning process and eventually reflecting their academic performance.

Table 3. Mean Ratings of the Problems Encountered Regarding Pupils' Maladjustment

Rank	Problems Encountered	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
1	The pupil keeps on talking with others even the teacher is discussing.	3.42	1.1695	Often True
2	The pupil lacks participation or interest in classroom activities.	3.23	1.2584	Moderately True
3	The pupil has poor academic performance.	3.20	1.3235	Moderately True
4	The pupil does not concentrate on the lesson properly.	3.17	1.1490	Moderately True
5	The pupil interrupts the class while in session.	3.05	1.1610	Moderately True
6	The pupil is impatient and gets into fights quickly.	2.67	1.3529	Moderately True
7	The pupil bullies his classmates through physical harm such as hair-pulling, pushing, or pinching someone's body parts.	2.65	1.3246	Moderately True
8	The pupil argues or disagrees with what the teacher has said.	2.61	1.2068	Moderately True
9	The pupil is constantly complaining about the classroom rules and regulations.	2.48	1.3546	Sometimes True
10	The pupil keeps silent or wants to be alone always.	2.26	1.3106	Sometimes True
	AVERAGE	2.87	1.2609	Moderately True

As revealed, only one problem encountered has a qualitative description of “often true,” with a mean rating of 3.42 and ranked number one on the table. The problem encountered is particularly the pupil's behavior who keeps on talking with others even when the teacher is discussing. Kaplan (2010) explains that every class has one; some even have two or even three pupils who act like a clown. They ignore the discussion of the teacher and would rather have a side conversation with their seatmates. The pupil craves attention and will go to almost any means to get it.

Seven indicators have been described as “moderately true,” which has a mean rating within 2.61-3.40. Two indicators are described as “sometimes true,” with a mean rating within 1.81-2.60. The problems encountered by the teachers have an average mean rating of 2.87 and a standard deviation

of 1.2609, and are labeled as “moderately true.” These findings point out that maladjusted behaviors demand an immediate proper action. It would not result in a significant difficulty that would involve the school institution, according to Kaplan (2010).

The behaviors involved not only the personality of a specific individual but also the attitudes of the people that surround him. Kaplan says that educational settings deal with different individuals who are all part of gaining knowledge to be productive members of society. If these problems continue, then effective learning would take place. Therefore, teachers must be trained and competent in facilitating appropriate classroom management to minimize and maintain a harmonious relationship with the learners.

Table 4. Mean Ratings of the Solutions to the Personality Aspect of Maladjustment

Rank	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
1.5	Praising the good behaviors of the pupils.	4.66	0.7857	Always True
1.5	We are establishing a clear set of classroom rules and regulations.	4.66	0.7988	Always True
3	Speaking to the pupils calmly and model positive behaviors.	4.59	0.7156	Always True
4	We are offering the child an incentive for behaving correctly.	4.32	0.9696	Always True
5	Collaborating with the guidance counselor.	4.05	1.1064	Often True

Table 4 indicates the solutions of the respondents on the personality aspect of maladjustment. Praising good behavior, we are establishing a clear set of rules, both indicators with a mean rating of 4.66; speaking to the pupils calmly with a mean rating of 4.59, and; we are offering incentives with a mean rating of 4.32 are the solutions considered “always true” by the respondents. Collaborating with the guidance counselor is on the fifth rank with a mean rating of 4.05, a standard deviation of 1.1064, and described as “often true.”

These solutions regarding the personality aspect of maladjusted behavior are effective in the classroom. Advisers have open communication with the pupils, then, she also has the potential to be the class’ guidance counselor.

Therefore, the adviser can use the different techniques of counseling, which are very helpful in resolving the maladjusted pupils.

Kelly (1960), as cited by Connexions (2003), considers that personality problems arise when an individual's constructs are inadequate to help them predict what is going to happen next. Hence, he believes that it is essential to be consistent with young people. If they cannot predict the consequences of their actions, then they should learn what behavior is acceptable and what is not. He suggests that one of the advantages of understanding the notion of constructs is that it allows us to see young people holistically. By getting to know the whole young person and trying to learn as much as possible about his constructs, how he sees the world and interprets the actions of others, we can gain a better understanding of his behavior.

Table 5. Mean Ratings of the Solutions to the Academic Aspect of Maladjustment

Rank	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
1	You are being a good role model by starting the class on time and finish on time.	4.70	0.7351	Always True
2	You are clearly stating policy at the beginning of the school year about excuses about absences and missed exams.	4.69	0.7517	Always True
3	Keeping class discussion focused on issues related content and to all members of the class.	4.57	0.8123	Always True
4	They are making direct instructions for the pupils to understand the rules.	4.45	0.8388	Always True
5	We are using teaching strategies based on the interest of the pupils through questionnaires, games, and other motivational activities.	4.44	0.8742	Always True

Among the five, ranked number one is the good role model by starting the class on time and finishing it on time, with a mean of 4.70 and a standard deviation of 0.7351. It is followed by clearly stating the policies at the beginning of the school year, with a mean rating of 4.69. Next is keeping the class discussion focused with a mean rating of 4.57. It is followed by making direct instructions with a mean rating of 4.45, and lastly, using teaching

strategies based on the interest of the pupils with a mean rating of 4.44.

Bootzin (1991) emphasizes that teaching children with learning or behavioral problems challenges even the best educators. Students with learning disabilities may be unable to process information the same way as others are used to, meaning they can have difficulty with memory, organizing information received, and essential functions such as reading, writing, math, and comprehension. Students with maladjusted problems tend to be constantly disruptive in the classroom, causing a persistent disruption to the teaching-learning process. He also supplemented that the atmosphere of the classroom has much to do with student behavior. The setting should be appealing physical features to prevent boredom in both the teacher and the student. Teachers should let students know specific do's and don'ts, where undesirable behaviors are not tolerated. Then teachers must consistently reinforce the desired behaviors while ignoring or in some other way extinguishing the undesirable ones.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the respondents were between 20 to 25 years, female, married, mostly Baccalaureate Degree holders with Master's units, had 1-5 years of teaching experience, and had 1-3 years experience in handling Grade VI class. The maladjusted behaviors in terms of personality and academic aspects were all encountered by the classroom advisers. The two behaviors on top rank based on the aspects are: creating distracting noise during class hours for the personality aspect and fails to submit the requirements given by the teacher as indicated in the academic aspect. Between the two aspects, the academic aspect ranked first since classroom advisers can directly observe the pupils in the class and, therefore, can sincerely identify the behaviors in the academic aspect. The possible solution that the respondents are implementing in terms of the personality aspect is praising the good behaviors of the pupils. The respondents act as good role models by starting the class on time and finishing on time, which ranked first in solutions to the academic aspect of maladjustment behavior.

Elementary classroom advisers should help the pupils to develop and internalize values and assist them to learn to appraise themselves. Advisers can support the learners to improve self-concept and self-reliance and develop his to the fullest potentials. The teacher should use an effective

approach in eliminating the inappropriate behavior promptly with the least negative impact. He has to be sensitive to the needs of the pupil and the possibility that the source of the problem lies in the pupil's frustration with contents that the pupil does not grasp or with a task that the pupil lacks skills to perform.

The teachers and the parents need to organize a consultation assembly or regular meetings. Through that, there is open communication concerning the negative attitude, and immediate solutions, together with the parents' collaboration, will be established and implemented. The guidance counselor must also join the meeting to explain how counseling can help "good" pupils do even better.

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