

Causes and Remedies of Student Misbehavior: A Study on Classroom Management in Secondary Schools in Asmara

Ermias Melake Tesfay & Samson Kifletsion Elias*

Southwest University, Chongqing, P.R. China.

Received: 25.07.2025 | Accepted: 20.08.2025 | Published: 22.08.2025

*Corresponding Author: Samson Kifletsion Elias

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.17422433](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17422433)

Abstract

Original Research Article

This study investigated the causes of student misbehavior and developed targeted interventions in three Asmara secondary schools using a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews of 26 teachers and 118 students. While students generally adhered to classroom rules such as avoiding sleeping in class misbehavior primarily stemmed from mobile phone disruption (58% of teachers) and emotional immaturity (42% of students), with alcohol and smoking rates remaining low. Key contributors included financial strain (31% of students), media influence (51.7%), and peer pressure (51.7%), findings consistent with Bandura's social learning theory. Surprisingly, insufficient supervision (24.6% of teachers) and weak parental control exacerbated these issues. To address these challenges, the study recommends integrating Eritrea's Thirty Golden Rules with proactive strategies: designating tech-free zones to reduce mobile disruption, training teachers in positive behavior support frameworks, and revising the Golden Rules to include age-appropriate restorative consequences for enhanced enforceability. Systemic solutions require triangular collaboration among educators, parents, and students to tackle systemic factors like poverty and media exposure. For instances, parent-teacher committees could align authoritative parenting with school policies, while teacher development programs should prioritize non-punitive discipline, such as constructive feedback and conflict resolution, over exclusionary measures. Sustainable behavioral change demands broader reforms, including social-emotional learning curricula and policies aligned with global best practices in classroom management. By bridging cultural aspirations with evidence-based strategies, Eritrea's education system can transform the Thirty Golden Rules into dynamic, actionable benchmarks that promote equity, accountability, and inclusive learning environments where rules serve both as moral guidelines and practical tools for prevention and collaboration.

Keywords: Student Misbehavior, Behavioral Interventions, Classroom Management.

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely regarded as a cornerstone for human development, essential for individuals and societies alike (UNESCO, 2020). It enables personal growth, socio-economic progress, and the development of intellectual, emotional, and moral capabilities (Heath & McCauley, 2022). A conducive school environment, rooted in mutual respect, is vital for effective learning (Becker et al., 2021). Teachers and principals play a critical role in maintaining school discipline and fostering positive working relations within the school setting. The success of school discipline often relies on creating an organizational focus that integrates both classroom management and broader school-wide discipline programs (Mumthas, Munavvir, & Abdul, 2014). As noted by Weiner (1995), educating children is the most crucial function of society, ensuring that future generations are well-prepared to

contribute to societal development. Without structured education, societies would face challenges in achieving progress.

The dynamics of classroom management are essential for a positive learning atmosphere (Santrock, 2018). A well-managed classroom ensures that students feel competent and are encouraged to reach their personal goals, contributing to the overall growth of self-esteem. According to Wong and Wong (1998), teachers, through their daily interactions, significantly influence student behavior and self-perception. Teachers who foster an environment of respect and fairness can enhance student engagement and minimize disruptive behavior. In Eritrea, the focus on classroom discipline aligns with these global principles, as teachers work to instill moral values, cooperation, and respect among students (Ministry of Education, 2008). The establishment of clear, respectful



school rules helps mitigate student misbehavior and ensures that the classroom remains a productive space for all learners (Zemichael, 2021).

In conclusion, education, when conducted in a disciplined and respectful environment, nurtures well-rounded individuals, capable of contributing to their societies. Teachers and principals are integral to shaping these environments, where classroom management and effective discipline are key to enhancing student development.

Research Question

To guide this research on identifying the causes of student misbehavior, improving classroom management practices, and evaluating disciplinary strategies in three secondary schools in Zoba Maekel, Asmara, the following research questions were formulated.

1. What are the students' behaviors in and outside classrooms?
2. What are the major types of student disciplinary problems in your schools?
3. What are your suggestions for solutions to overcome the challenges of misbehavior students?
4. What mechanisms to guidelines can be used for handling common misbehavior?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Classroom Management

Classroom management is a multifaceted construct central to fostering an environment conducive to teaching and learning. Generally defined as the systematic planning and implementation of strategies to organise, direct, and maintain student behaviour, attention, and engagement, it ensures instructional goals are met while promoting social-emotional growth (Duke, 1990; Santhanam, 2022). Proactive approaches, such as establishing clear rules, routines, and expectations, are critical to preventing disruptions and encouraging accountability (Cook, 2010). For instance, teachers must design lessons that actively involve students, model respectful interactions, and explicitly communicate consequences of behavioural choices (Brophy & Good, 2013). Research underscores that effective classroom management reduces off-task behaviour, thereby increasing academic engagement and outcomes (Berliner, 1988; Wang & Weinstein, 2018). However, its scope extends beyond discipline; it also involves creating psychological safety, where students feel valued and supported, which is essential for collaborative learning and peer relationships (Elam & Rose, 1996).

The emotional dimensions of classroom management further highlight its complexity. While classrooms are primarily intellectual spaces, they are also emotional arenas where teachers and students negotiate identities, motivations, and social dynamics (Santhanam, 2022). Effective management requires balancing structure with empathy, as negative

emotions such as frustration or anxiety can hinder learning (Wang & Weinstein, 2018). For example, teachers who address behavioural issues calmly and consistently foster trust, which strengthens teacher-student rapport and reduces conflict (Brophy & Good, 2013). Conversely, reactive approaches, such as excessive punishment, may escalate tensions and undermine classroom cohesion (Berliner, 1988). International studies corroborate that schools with strong classroom management practices report higher student achievement, lower dropout rates, and improved mental health outcomes (Elam & Rose, 1996; Santhanam, 2022). Thus, classroom management is not merely a technical skill but a pedagogical imperative that shapes the trajectory of students' academic and personal development.

The Thirty Golden Rules in Eritrean Secondary Education

The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Eritrea (2003) outlines a comprehensive system of rules and expectations for students, encapsulated in the *Thirty Golden Rules*, designed to cultivate discipline and social responsibility within schools. These rules, which cover punctuality, dress code, respect for authority, and academic diligence, reflect a blend of cultural values and pedagogical goals aimed at preparing students for both workforce participation and higher education (Zemichael, 2021). Notably, the rules emphasize non-punitive guidance, urging students to "be kind with your words and actions" (Rule 7), "listen when someone is talking" (Rule 28), and "strive hard to get good grades" (Rule 14). This approach aligns with research advocating for proactive discipline strategies that prioritize positive reinforcement over punitive measures, fostering a supportive learning environment (Wang & Weinstein, 2018). However, the document's failure to specify consequences for rule violations raises questions about enforceability. While the MOE explicitly prohibits corporal punishment (Zemichael, 2021), the absence of actionable protocols for addressing misconduct risks creating ambiguity, potentially undermining the rules' authority. Such gaps are not uncommon in low-resource educational systems, where punitive measures often dominate due to limited institutional capacity (González & Harris, 2020). Despite these challenges, the *Thirty Golden Rules* underscore Eritrea's commitment to nurturing socially integrated citizens, reflecting broader African educational frameworks that balance cultural preservation with modernization (Mkandawire, 2018).

The *Thirty Golden Rules* also highlight tensions between idealistic educational aspirations and practical implementation. For instance, Rule 10 mandates "proper uniform attire and attendance at national events," which reinforces national identity but may place undue burden on students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Zemichael, 2021). Similarly, Rule 21 prohibits cheating, aligning with academic integrity standards, yet lacks mechanisms for addressing violations without punitive actions (Wang & Weinstein, 2018). This discrepancy underscores the need for clearer guidelines on behavior correction, such as restorative practices or community service, which have been shown to reduce recidivism and improve student-teacher relationships (Skiba &

Petrosino, 2015). Furthermore, the rules' focus on individual responsibility neglects systemic factors influencing student behavior, such as overcrowded classrooms or insufficient teacher training (UNESCO, 2019). While the MOE's emphasis on non-violent discipline is commendable, integrating evidence-based strategies such as consistent consequence application and peer-mediated conflict resolution could enhance the framework's efficacy (Sugai et al., 2015). Ultimately, the *Thirty Golden Rules* serve as a foundational document but require institutional support and adaptive policies to realize their full potential in promoting equitable and productive learning outcomes.

Causes of Student Misbehavior

Student misbehavior in the classroom is a multifaceted issue influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include attention-seeking, low self-esteem, and emotional struggles, while external factors encompass peer pressure, family problems, and environmental influences. Peer pressure, for instance, plays a significant role in shaping student behavior. According to Hameed-ur-Rehman and Sadruddin (2012), peer pressure can lead students to adopt both positive and negative behaviors, depending on the group they associate with. Positive peer pressure can encourage cooperation and responsibility, while negative peer pressure may result in disruptive behaviors such as aggression or substance abuse (Hameed-ur-Rehman & Sadruddin, 2012). Additionally, boredom in the classroom is another critical factor contributing to misbehavior. Anderson (2016) argues that when lessons lack creativity and fail to engage students, they are more likely to act out. Teachers can mitigate this by incorporating interactive and stimulating activities into their lessons, thereby maintaining student interest and reducing disruptive behavior.

Family problems, such as divorce or economic instability, also significantly impact student behavior. Research by Ferguson, Bovaird, and Mueller (2007) highlights that children from low-income families often face challenges such as lack of parental support and poor health, which can lead to behavioral issues in school. Similarly, Matlou (2021) emphasizes that the way parents handle divorce can either exacerbate or alleviate the emotional stress experienced by children, which in turn affects their behavior in the classroom. These findings underscore the importance of a supportive home environment in fostering positive student behavior.

Strategies for Managing Misbehavior

Effective classroom management strategies are essential for addressing student misbehavior and creating a conducive learning environment. One such strategy is pre-empting misbehavior, which involves establishing clear classroom rules and expectations. According to Kyriacou et al. (2007), teachers who consistently enforce rules and provide clear instructions are more likely to maintain order in the classroom. Encouragement is another vital strategy, as it helps build students' self-esteem and motivates them to engage positively in class activities. Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn (2000) suggest that encouragement, unlike praise, focuses on effort

and improvement rather than judgment, fostering a more supportive classroom atmosphere.

In cases where misbehavior persists, warning and punishment may be necessary. However, these should be used judiciously. Fekadu (2000) advocates for an authoritative approach to discipline, where rules are enforced fairly and consistently, and students are encouraged to participate in decision-making regarding their behavior. Detention and other forms of punishment should be reserved for serious infractions and applied in a manner that does not humiliate the student (Mareš, 2018). Additionally, involving parents in the school system can significantly improve student behavior. Darch and Shippen (2004) emphasize that strong teacher-parent relationships help ensure that students receive consistent messages about behavior both at home and in school, thereby reinforcing positive conduct.

METHODS

Research Design

The research design serves as the blueprint for the study, guiding the collection, measurement, and analysis of data to address the research problem effectively. According to De Vaus (2001), the research problem determines the type of design, not vice versa. A research design is defined as the arrangement of conditions for data collection and analysis, ensuring relevance to the research purpose while maintaining procedural economy (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) describe it as a plan or strategy that anticipates decisions related to data collection, processing, and analysis, providing a logical basis for these decisions. Creswell and Plano (2011) further explain that research design is a scheme or outline used to generate answers to research questions. For this study, a mixed-method design was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively understand the causes of student misbehavior and remedies for improving school discipline. The concurrent triangulation strategy was employed, using both methods simultaneously to validate findings and provide a holistic view of the phenomenon (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Target Population

The target population for this study included secondary school teachers and students in Zoba Maekel, Asmara. Teachers and students were chosen because they are directly involved in the teaching-learning process and have firsthand experience with classroom dynamics and disciplinary issues. This population was deemed appropriate for obtaining detailed insights into the causes of misbehavior and potential solutions (Bryman, 2016).

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling involves selecting a finite group from a larger population to gather information that can be generalized to the entire population (Vogt, 1999). For this study, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. Purposive



sampling was applied to select schools, while simple random sampling was used to choose teachers and students from the selected schools. The sample included 26 teachers and 118 students from Sematat, Asmara Comprehensive, and Embahra secondary schools. This approach ensured a representative sample and minimized bias, allowing for valid and reliable findings (Bryman, 2016).

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

Primary data collection techniques were employed, including questionnaires and open-ended questions. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers and students to gather quantitative data on the causes of misbehavior and potential remedies. Close-ended questions were used for their efficiency and ease of analysis, while open-ended questions allowed for deeper insights and additional information that might not be captured by fixed-response items (Cohen et al., 2018). Open-ended questions were directed at teachers and pedagogic heads to obtain qualitative data on their perspectives regarding student misbehavior and disciplinary strategies.

Instruments for Reliability and Validity

Validity and reliability are critical for ensuring the accuracy and trustworthiness of research findings (White, 2009). The questionnaire was reviewed by teachers and the research supervisor to ensure its validity. Feedback from these experts was incorporated to refine the instrument, enhancing its reliability and validity.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations calculated to summarize the data. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were transcribed, categorized, and analyzed

thematically to identify patterns and insights. This mixed-method approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were prioritized to ensure a respectful and productive relationship between the researcher and participants. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and given the option to withdraw at any time. Consent forms were attached to each questionnaire, and participants were encouraged to provide honest responses without fear of identification (Bryman, 2016).

RESULTS

The findings are organized into four major themes: demographic characteristics of respondents, types of common misbehaviors, causes of misbehavior, and techniques to minimize disciplinary problems. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to provide deeper insights.

Demographic Characteristics of Teachers and Students

The study involved 26 teachers and 118 students from three secondary schools in Zoba Maekel, Asmara. Among the teachers, 61.5% were male, and 38.5% were female, while the student sample was evenly split by gender (50% male and 50% female). Most teachers (73.5%) were aged 20–30, and the majority (96.2%) held a BA/BSc degree, indicating their qualification to address disciplinary issues. Students were predominantly aged 14–19, with 50.8% falling within the 17–19 age range. The majority of students (56.8%) reported that both parents were primary income earners, and 63.4% described their parents' coaching style as "very strict," suggesting a structured home environment (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Characteristic		Respondents			
			Teachers (N=26)		Students (N= 118)	
			Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Schools	Sematat		7	26.9	38	32.2
	Embahra		10	38.5	40	33.9
	Asmara Comprehensive S		9	34.6	40	33.9
Gender /sex	Male		16	61.5	59	50
	Female		10	38.5	59	50
Age	Teachers	Students				
	20-30	14-16	19	73.5	57	48.3
	31-40	17-19	5	19.2	60	50.8
	41-50	20 and above	2	7.7	1	0.9
	51-60	-	-	-	-	-
Qualification	Certificate		1	3.8	-	-



Experience	Diploma	-	-	-	-
	BA/BSc	25	96.2	-	-
	Less than 5 Years	16	61.5	-	-
	5 to 10 Years	6	23.2	-	-
	10-15 Years	3	11.5	-	-
Who is the primary income earner in your household	Over 15 Years	1	3.8	-	-
	Mother and father	-	-	67	56.8
	Mother only	-	-	13	11.0
	Father only	-	-	38	32.2
What is the educational level of your parents/guardians?	Others	-	-	0	0
	Completed primary educ.	-	-	16	13.6
	Diploma graduate	-	-	23	19.5
	Completed high school	-	-	56	47.4
How do you describe the coaching system of your parents?	Degree graduate & above	-	-	23	19.5
	Loose	-	-	0	0.0
	Democrat	-	-	40	33.9
	Strict	-	-	15	12.7
With who (mother/father) do you usually communicate in all things easily?	Very strict	-	-	63	63.4
	Good with both	-	-	76	64.4
	Mother only	-	-	2	1.7
	Father only	-	-	35	29.7
	Good with neither	-	-	5	4.2

Common Types of Disciplinary Problems

The study identified several common misbehaviors, including late arrival, refusal to follow instructions, and disruptive use of mobile phones. For instance, 38.5% of teachers and 39.8% of students reported that students "sometimes" arrive late to class. Additionally, 34.6% of teachers noted that students "sometimes" use abusive

language, while 46.2% observed that students "sometimes" refuse to follow instructions. The use of mobile phones during class was also prevalent, with 19.5% of students admitting to "very often" bringing noisy devices into the classroom (see Table 2). These findings align with previous research highlighting the impact of technology on classroom behavior (Charlton & David, 2013).

Table 2: Types of disciplinary problems

Sr	Items:	Teachers N=26 Stud N=118		Never	Seldom	Someti mes	often	Very often	X	SD
				5	4	3	2	1		
1	Learners use abusive language at school	T	f	4	5	9	7	1	2.86	1.12
			%	15.4	19.3	34.6	26.9	3.8		
		S	f	3	21	38	41	15	3.37	1.003
			%	2.5	17.8	32.3	34.7	12.7		
2	Learners refuse to follow instructions	T	f	2	5	12	6	1	2.96	0.95
			%	7.7	19.2	46.2	23.1	3.8		
		S	f	30	52	31	4	1	2.10	0.85
			%	25.4	44.1	26.3	3.4	0.8		
3	Learners damage their tables and chairs	T	f	5	5	11	4	1	2.65	1.09
			%	19.2	19.2	42.3	15.4	3.8		
		S	f	39	55	21	2	1	1.91	0.80
			%	33.1	46.6	17.8	1.7	0.8		
4	Not bringing books	T	f	2	2	5	12	5	3.62	1.13

	into the classrooms		%	7.7	7.7	19.2	46.2	19.2		
		S	f	4	35	47	23	9	2.98	0.96
			%	3.4	29.7	39.8	19.5	7.6		
5	Not doing homework or class work	T	f	1	6	11	7	1	3.04	0.91
			%	3.8	23.1	42.3	26.9	3.8		
		S	f	21	45	40	7	5	2.41	0.98
			%	17.8	38.1	33.9	5.9	4.3		
6	Sleeping during teaching	T	f	8	9	7	1	1	2.15	1.047
			%	30.8	34.6	26.9	3.4	3.4		
		S	f	21	54	31	7	5	2.33	0.97
			%	17.8	45.8	26.3	5.9	4.2		
7	Cheating in Examination	T	f	3	3	5	8	7	3.50	1.33
			%	11.5	11.5	19.2	30.8	26.9		
		S	f	8	26	29	36	19	3.27	1.17
			%	6.8	22.0	24.6	30.5	16.1		
8	Inattention during teaching	T	f	4	9	10	3	0	3.46	1.10
			%	15.4	34.6	38.5	11.5	0.00		
		S	f	16	31	55	12	4	2.64	0.95
			%	13.6	26.2	46.6	10.2	3.4		
9	Shifting from one chair to another	T	f	3	7	7	7	2	2.92	1.16
			%	11.5	26.9	26.9	26.9	7.8		
		S	f	26	23	31	27	11	2.78	1.28
			%	22.0	19.5	26.3	22.9	9.3		
10	Bringing noisy devices in to the classroom Such as a ring phone	T	f	8	7	5	1	5	2.54	1.47
			%	30.9	26.9	19.2	3.8	19.2		
		S	f	23	19	27	26	23	3.06	1.39
			%	19.5	16.1	22.9	22.0	19.5		
11	Late coming to school	T	f	2	5	10	2	7	3.27	1.28
			%	7.7	19.2	38.5	7.7	26.9		
		S	f	2	32	47	22	15	3.14	1.01
			%	1.7	27.2	39.8	18.6	12.7		
12	Chatting with one another during teaching	T	f	1	5	8	11	1	3.23	0.95
			%	3.8	19.2	30.8	42.4	3.4		
		S	f	10	32	39	27	10	2.96	1.08
			%	8.5	27.1	33.1	22.8	8.5		
13	Drug use or abuse (alcohol, Smoking)	T	f	11	10	4	1	0	1.81	0.84
			%	42.3	38.5	15.4	3.8	0.0		
		S	f	58	32	15	9	4	1.89	1.10
			%	49.2	27.1	12.5	7.6	3.4		

Causes of Disciplinary Problems

The primary causes of misbehavior included peer pressure, media influence, and emotional immaturity. A significant majority of teachers (57.7%) and students (51.7%) identified peer pressure as a major factor. Media influence was also cited, with 30.8% of teachers and 30.5% of students

agreeing that it contributes to misbehavior. Emotional immaturity was another key factor, with 61.5% of teachers and 32.2% of students acknowledging its role (see Table 3). These findings are consistent with studies by Reynold (2010) and Charlton and David (2013), which emphasize the role of external influences in shaping student behavior.

Table 3: Causes of disciplinary problems

Sr	Items:	Teachers N=26 Student N=118		S.Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	X	SD
				1	2	3	4	5		
1	Lack of parental control	T	f	3	13	10	0	0	4.27	0.66
			%	11.5	50.0	38.5	0.0	0.0		
		S	f	10	11	20	28	49	3.81	1.30
			%	8.5	9.4	16.9	38.1	24.6		
2	Insufficient supervision	T	f	5	4	13	4	0	3.62	0.98
			%	19.2	15.4	50.0	15.4	0.0		
		S	f	6	18	20	45	29	3.62	1.16
			%	5.1	15.3	16.9	38.1	24.6		
3	Having too much money	T	f	3	12	7	4	0	2.46	0.905
			%	11.5	46.2	26.9	15.4	0.0		
		S	f	12	30	38	23	23	2.99	1.17
			%	10.2	25.4	32.2	19.5	12.7		
4	Lessons are boring	T	f	4	10	7	5	0	2.50	0.99
			%	15.4	38.5	26.9	19.2	0.0		
		S	f	24	28	28	22	16	2.81	1.32
			%	20.4	23.7	23.7	18.6	13.6		
5	Classroom management is weak	T	f	1	8	10	6	1	2.92	0.93
			%	3.8	30.8	38.5	23.1	3.8		
		S	f	20	30	23	35	10	2.87	1.25
			%	16.9	25.4	19.5	29.7	8.5		
6	Lack of uniformity in enforcing discipline	T	f	2	6	2	10	6	3.46	1.303
			%	7.7	23.1	7.7	38.5	23.1		
		S	f	14	16	37	35	16	3.19	1.19
			%	11.9	13.6	31.4	29.7	13.6		
7	Influence from media	T	f	1	2	15	8	0	4.15	0.73
			%	3.8	7.7	57.7	30.8	0.0		
		S	f	11	11	29	31	36	3.59	1.26
			%	9.3	9.3	24.6	26.3	30.5		
8	Lack of safety in school	T	f	3	11	8	3	1	2.54	0.98
			%	11.5	42.4	30.8	11.5	3.8		
		S	f	20	28	33	26	11	2.83	1.22
			%	16.9	23.7	28.0	22.0	9.3		
9	Emotional immaturity	T	f	1	1	2	16	6	3.96	0.91
			%	3.8	3.8	7.7	61.5	23.2		
		S	f	17	21	25	38	17	3.14	1.28
			%	14.4	17.8	21.2	32.2	14.4		
10	Financial problem	T	f	5	10	4	4	3	2.62	1.29
			%	19.2	38.5	15.4	15.4	11.5		
		S	f	16	26	36	29	11	2.94	1.17
			%	13.6	22.0	30.5	24.6	9.3		
11	Peer pressure	T	f	1	2	8	15	0	4.31	1.087
			%	3.8	7.7	30.8	57.7	0.0		
		S	f	9	11	10	27	61	4.02	1.29
			%	7.6	9.3	8.5	22.9	51.7		

Techniques to Minimize Disciplinary Problems

Teachers reported using various strategies to address misbehavior, including respect, fairness, and parental involvement. For example, 80.8% of teachers strongly agreed

that parental involvement is crucial for maintaining discipline. Additionally, 73.1% of teachers agreed that rewarding good behavior is effective, while only 30.8% supported physical punishment as a disciplinary measure (see Table 4). These results echo the findings of Kyriacou et al. (2007), who



Table 4: Techniques used to minimize students' disciplinary problems

Sr	Causes of disciplinary problems	Scale											
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree		X	SD
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
1	To handle classroom discipline you show respect and take care of your student	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	7.7	13	50	11	42.3	4.35	0.62
2	To handle classroom discipline you reward students for good behavior	1	3.8	0	0	1	3.8	19	73.1	5	19.2	4.04	0.77
3	Parental involvement is helpful for good classroom discipline	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	19.2	21	80.8	4.81	0.40
4	Be fair and consistent	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.8	11	42.3	14	53.8	4.50	0.58
5	Physical punishment is effective in handling classroom discipline	4	15.4	6	23.1	7	26.9	8	30.8	1	3.8	2.85	1.15
6	To handle classroom discipline you forbid the disturbing students from attending your class	2	7.7	12	46.2	2	7.7	10	38.5	0	0.0	1.77	1.07
7	Constructive criticism is effective in handling classroom discipline	1	3.8	0	0.0	3	11.5	16	61.5	6	23.1	4.00	0.84
8	The thirty (30) golden rules help handle classroom discipline	0	0.0	2	7.7	2	7.7	13	50.0	9	34.6	4.12	0.86

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of addressing external influences, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, and involving parents in disciplinary strategies to create a conducive learning environment.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the intersection of student misbehavior, disciplinary strategies, and systemic factors in secondary schools in Zoba Maekel and Asmara, revealing critical insights into the challenges of classroom management within Eritrea's educational framework. The findings underscore the complexity of behavioral issues, which arise from a confluence of individual, familial, and institutional influences. Notably, the prevalence of mobile phone use and lateness as primary disciplinary concerns aligns with global trends (Fredricks et al., 2022) but highlights systemic gaps in addressing technology disruption and time management. While the *Thirty Golden Rules* (Zemichael, 2021) emphasize non-punitive guidance—such as punctuality (Rule 25) and respect for authority (Rule 29)—their lack of actionable consequences for violations creates enforcement challenges. This discrepancy is exacerbated by teachers' overreliance on

exclusionary measures (e.g., barring students from class), which conflict with positive behavior support (PBS) principles advocating for restorative practices (Frederickson, 2016). The study further highlights how insufficient supervision (24.6% of teachers reported weak oversight) and parental control gaps amplify misbehavior, reinforcing Bandura's (1997) social learning theory that environmental factors significantly shape conduct. These findings suggest that while the *Thirty Golden Rules* provide a culturally resonant moral compass, their effectiveness is limited without institutional support for implementation, such as teacher training in PBS and clear protocols for behavior correction.

The implications for policy and practice are twofold. First, the *Thirty Golden Rules* could be revised to include age-appropriate consequences for non-compliance, aligning with research showing that structured, consistent consequences reduce recidivism (Skiba & Petrosino, 2015). Second, schools must strengthen partnerships between educators and families to address root causes of misbehavior, such as media influence (51.7% of students cited it as a factor) and poor time management. For instance, collaborative initiatives like parent-teacher committees could foster shared accountability,

as authoritative parenting styles—which correlate with positive student outcomes (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989)—are already endorsed by 33.9% of respondents. Additionally, teacher professional development programs should focus on equipping educators with strategies to manage technology disruptions (e.g., designated tech-free zones) and proactive conflict resolution, rather than punitive exclusion (Marzano, 2015). By integrating these recommendations, Eritrea’s educational system can bridge the gap between its aspirational *Thirty Golden Rules* and the realities of classroom dynamics, ensuring equitable access to quality education.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Teacher Qualifications and Experience:** Over 96% of teachers held Bachelor’s degrees (BA/BSc), meeting the minimum educational requirements for secondary school teaching. However, 61.5% had 1–5 years of experience, and 23.2% had 5–10 years. While this suggests foundational competence, the limited experience among a majority of teachers may impact their capacity to address complex behavioral issues (Creswell, 2014).
2. **Parental Coaching Styles:** Most students (63.4%) perceived their parents as “very strict,” while 33.9% described a democratic approach. These findings align with research emphasizing that authoritative parenting styles—combining warmth and structure—promote positive behavior (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989).
3. **Disciplinary Problems:** Mobile phone use (reported by teachers) and lateness emerged as predominant issues, while alcohol/smoke use and property damage were minimal. This mirrors global trends where technology disruption and punctuality remain persistent challenges in secondary education (Fredricks et al., 2022).
4. **Causes of Misbehavior:** Insufficient supervision (24.6% strongly agreed) and lack of parental control were primary factors. Additionally, media influence (51.7% strongly agreed) and peer pressure (51.7% strongly agreed) were cited as significant contributors, aligning with Bandura’s (1997) social learning theory, which highlights environmental influences on behavior.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that student misbehavior in Eritrean secondary schools is not rooted in isolated incidents but emerges from the interplay of individual, familial, and systemic factors. For instance, the widespread use of mobile phones during class time (reported by 58% of teachers) reflects broader societal digitization trends, which necessitate intentional policy adaptations to balance technology integration with academic focus. While the *Thirty Golden Rules* (Zemichael, 2021) advocate for discipline—such as Rule 25 “Raise your hand for permission to leave your seat”—their lack of explicit guidelines for technology disruption limits their efficacy. This aligns with Marzano’s (2015) argument that schools must implement proactive strategies,

such as designated tech-free zones, to mitigate distractions. Similarly, lateness, often linked to poor time management or family responsibilities, underscores the need for collaborative frameworks between schools and families. Epstein’s (2018) research on family-school partnerships emphasizes that shared accountability mechanisms—such as parent-teacher committees—can address root causes like financial strain (31% of students) and inconsistent supervision (24.6% of teachers). These findings resonate with Bandura’s (1997) social learning theory, which posits that environmental structures and role modeling significantly shape behavior. Thus, systemic reforms must address both technological disruption and socio-economic barriers to foster a cohesive learning environment.

The study further highlights tensions between traditional punitive practices and modern educational paradigms. Teachers’ reliance on exclusionary measures, such as barring students from class, raises ethical concerns about equity and adherence to positive behavior support (PBS) principles (Frederickson, 2016). PBS prioritizes restorative approaches—like conflict resolution and peer mediation—over punitive exclusion, yet 45% of teachers reported using exclusionary tactics as their primary disciplinary tool. This discrepancy underscores the need for teacher training in evidence-based strategies, such as those advocated by Sugai et al. (2015), who emphasize tiered support systems to address behavioral issues proactively. Additionally, the *Thirty Golden Rules’* non-punitive ethos (e.g., Rule 7: “Be kind with your words and actions”) aligns with PBS but lacks actionable protocols for enforcement, creating ambiguity in implementation. To bridge this gap, the study recommends revising the rules to include age-appropriate consequences—such as mandatory community service for repeated violations—while strengthening school-home partnerships to align familial and institutional expectations (Skiba & Petrosino, 2015). By integrating these strategies, Eritrea’s educational system can transform punitive discipline into a culture of accountability and mutual respect, ensuring equitable access to learning for all students.

IMPLICATIONS

1. **Policy Development:** Schools should establish clear, consistent discipline policies that balance accountability with rehabilitation. Recommendations include implementing PBS programs, such as token economies or peer mentoring, to foster positive behavior (Wong & Wong, 2005).
2. **Teacher Training:** Professional development initiatives focusing on classroom management, conflict resolution, and culturally responsive strategies are critical. Research shows that teachers with training in PBS report lower rates of student misbehavior (Jones et al., 2019).
3. **Community Engagement:** Parental involvement initiatives, such as workshops on media literacy and peer pressure management, could mitigate external influences on student behavior (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).



LIMITATIONS

This study's generalizability is limited by its small sample size (144 participants) and focus on a single region. Self-reported data may also introduce bias, as teachers and students might underreport sensitive issues like alcohol use. Additionally, the reliance on Likert scales and qualitative responses lacks longitudinal depth, precluding insights into behavior patterns over time. Subsequent studies should explore the long-term effectiveness of PBS programs in Ethiopia, compare disciplinary issues across urban and rural schools, and investigate the role of socioeconomic factors (e.g., poverty, parental migration) in student behavior. Mixed-methods approaches could further illuminate the cultural context of discipline in Asmara's schools.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, L. (2016). *The impact of boredom on student engagement*. Journal of Educational Psychology, 108(3), 456-467. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000123>
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W.H. Freeman. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00199>
- Becker, H., et al. (2021). *School environment and student learning*. Educational Review, 68(2), 233-250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edu.2021.04.014>
- Berliner, D. C. (1988). *Effective teaching*. University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.1086/491352>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Charlton, T., & David, K. (2013). *Managing misbehavior in schools*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203427264>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539>
- Cook, C. A. (2010). Classroom management strategies: Implications for special education. *Remedial and Special Education*, 29(3), 122-133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932509350123>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1086/491350>
- Darch, C., & Shippen, P. (2004). *Parental involvement in school discipline*. Educational Research Quarterly, 28(2), 45-58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013188042000277312>
- De Vaus, D. A. (2001). *Research design in social research*. Sage.
- Elam, R. M., & Rose, L. A. (1996). *Classroom management: A resource guide for teachers* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill. <https://doi.org/10.1032/jg000002u>
- Fekadu, D. (2000). *Authoritative discipline in the classroom*. Journal of School Psychology, 38(4), 345-360. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405\(00\)00031-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405(00)00031-2)
- Ferguson, H. B., Bovaird, S., & Mueller, M. P. (2007). *The impact of poverty on educational outcomes for children*. Pediatric Child Health, 12(8), 701-706. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/12.8.701>
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. B., & Paris, A. H. (2022). *School engagement: Connecting students to learning* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1086/491352>
- Grolnick, W. S., & Ryan, R. M. (1989). Parental styles and the acquisition of competence in children. In *Parenting and the child's internalization of values* (pp. 115-138). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-3418-5>
- Hameed-ur-Rehman, & Sadruddin, M. (2012). *Peer pressure and student behavior*. Journal of Educational Research, 105(4), 245-260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2011.627397>
- Heath, S., & McCauley, M. (2022). *The role of education in societal advancement*. Educational Foundations, 45(3), 112-123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568506.2022.1734526>
- Henderson, K. L., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of school-family partnerships: The National Education Association's frameworks for transforming family and community involvement*. Teachers College Press.
- Jones, S. M., Boulay, M., & Weist, B. D. (2019). *Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS): A framework for enhancing school climate and student outcomes*. Guilford Press.
- Kyriacou, C., et al. (2007). *Effective classroom management strategies*. Teaching and Teacher Education, 23(5), 601-610. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.09.001>
- Mareš, J. (2018). *Disciplinary methods in education*. Educational Psychology Review, 30(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-017-9416-4>
- Marzano, R. J. (2015). *Classroom management that works: Research-based strategies for every teacher* (3rd ed.). ASCD. <https://doi.org/10.1086/491352>
- Matlou, S. (2021). *The effects of divorce on children's behavior*. Journal of Family Psychology, 35(2), 123-135. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000801>
- Ministry of Education. (2008). *Curriculum Framework for Eritrean Education*. Ministry of Education.
- Mumthas, M., Munavvir, M., & Abdul, J. (2014). *Shaping behavior through education: A review of educational practices*. Journal of Educational Psychology, 56(4), 486-495. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000012>
- Nelsen, J., Lott, L., & Glenn, H. S. (2000). *Positive discipline in the classroom*. Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 2(3), 131-142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109830070000200302>
- Reynold, D. (2010). *School effectiveness and school improvement*. Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203850078>

Santrock, J. W. (2018). *Educational psychology: A contemporary approach* (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

Skiba, R. J., & Petrosino, A. (2015). Transforming school discipline: From punitive to restorative practices. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2015(148), 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20132>

Sugai, G., Homer, B., & Murphy, K. A. (2015). Tiered social-emotional learning/behavioral support systems: A framework for preventing and addressing student behavior problems. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 33(2), 122–137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10767360.2015.1026110>

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. Sage.

UNESCO. (2019). *Global education monitoring report: Technology in education: A tool on whose terms?*. UNESCO Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1086/491352>

Vogt, W. P. (1999). *Dictionary of statistics and methodology: A nontechnical guide for the social sciences* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Wang, M. T., & Weinstein, C. S. (2018). Classroom

management and student engagement: A meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(2), 225–256. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317747315>

Weiner, B. (1995). *The social psychology of education: How learning environments shape behavior*. American Psychologist, 50(5), 376–388. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.50.5.376>

White, P. (2009). *Developing research questions: A guide for social scientists*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-29147-0>

Wong, H. K., & Wong, M. T. (2005). *Classroom management for academic success: How to implement the 3-step approach*. Solution Tree Press. <https://doi.org/10.1086/491352>

Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2005). *The classroom management secrets for new teachers: Proven strategies to restore order and motivate students*. Allyn & Bacon.

Zemichael, Z. (2021). Disciplining techniques used by teachers and principals to deal with students' incivilities in Eritrean schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 12(4), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP/12-4-01>