



Please cite this article as: Ghani, M. Z. (2024). Challenging behavior: A literature review. Jurnal Evolusi, University Poly-Tech Malaysia, Malaysia. Paper ID JE5-3-343

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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DOI:

Received 23 September 2024, Accepted 25 November 2024, Available online 29 November 2024

ABSTRACT

Challenging behavior in educational settings presents significant concerns for teachers and students alike, impacting the learning environment and overall educational experience. This literature review examines the definitions and contexts of challenging behavior, identifying it as any conduct that disrupts learning or poses risks to students and their peers. The review highlights the multifaceted nature of challenging behaviors, often associated with conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), and various psychological and environmental factors. Effective management strategies are crucial for educators to foster a safe and productive classroom atmosphere. The review discusses the importance of early identification and intervention, emphasizing the role of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) and token economy systems in promoting prosocial behaviors. It concludes that while challenging behaviors can be altered through targeted approaches, collaboration among educators, students, and families is essential to mitigate these issues and enhance student well-being and academic success

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Challenging behavior
Attention Deficit
Hyperactivity
Disorder (ADHD),
Autism Spectrum
Disorders (ASD),
Positive Behavior
Support (PBS)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Challenging behavior is a frequent issue raised by teachers in schools. Although it may sometimes seem insignificant, it actually has a significant impact on students exhibiting such behavior. If not addressed early, challenging behavior can escalate into aggressive outbursts, causing disruptions in learning and creating various problems when it occurs frequently.

Handling challenging behavior is crucial for teachers and educators because all students have the right to education. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that students can learn in a safe and peaceful environment. Barbara et al. (2012) stated that challenging behavior can cause stress for students, peers, teachers, staff, and families.

Teachers' competency in managing challenging behavior positively affects the effectiveness of school activities, especially during classroom teaching and learning sessions. Behavior management strategies are a core part of the teaching process, helping build positive behaviors among students to ensure smoother teaching and learning outcomes.]

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Challenging Behavior

The term "challenging behavior" has been defined by various researchers to help educators identify unacceptable behaviors among students (Emerson, 2001). Emerson emphasized that challenging behavior is a label for unacceptable behavior, not a diagnosis or a special education condition, though it may accompany conditions like Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Challenging behavior refers to any behavior that disrupts a child's learning or normal development, poses a danger to the child, others, or surrounding adults, puts the child at risk of social problems or academic failure (MacFarlane, 2007). The definition of challenging behavior also depends on the context and how teachers perceive it (Hill & Hawk, 2000).

Walker, Ramsey, and Gresham (2004) described challenging behavior as 'antisocial behavior' that ranges from hostility to minor irritations. This emphasizes the opposite of prosocial behavior, which involves cooperation, positivity, and socially acceptable actions.

Sugai & Horner (2002a) define challenging behavior as any systematic action that disrupts education and a school's safe environment. Galloway et al. (1982) describe it as a combination of behaviors that cause disturbances.

2.2 Who Are the Students with Challenging Behavior?

Challenging behavior is often linked to students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), ADD, Autism, or brain injuries that make it difficult to function in the classroom. Students outside these categories are fewer in number. Managing such students poses challenges to teachers, impacting learning sessions (Chaplain, 2003).

Baker (2011) noted that students with challenging behavior often involve psychological, biological, social, and environmental factors. It can be linked to autism spectrum disorders (ASD), ADHD, mental health issues, genetic, or organic disorders. Physical disorders, especially those causing pain, may also result in challenging behavior (Mencap, 2012).

In Church's (2003) study, the term "antisocial" was used to describe students exhibiting challenging behavior. Many of these students also struggle with learning difficulties (Balson, 1992; Rogers, 1998; Chaplain, 2003).

2.3 Understanding Challenging Behavior

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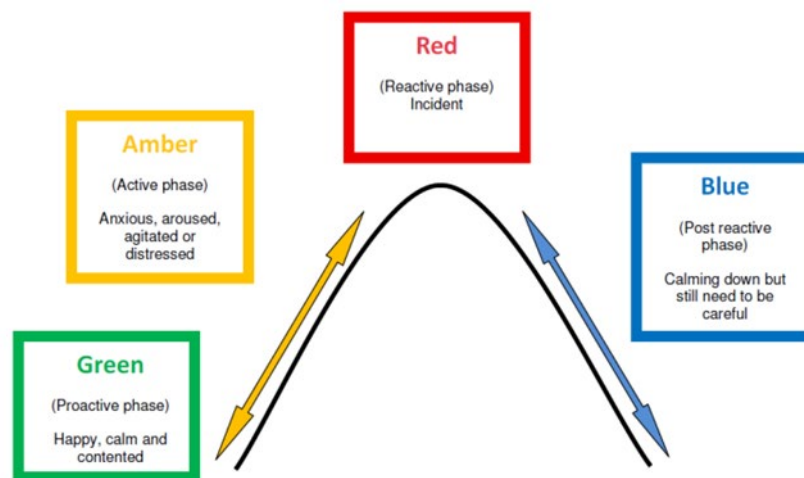
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Generally, challenging behavior refers to difficulties or behavioral issues shown by children or adults with disabilities. These behaviors include hitting, kicking, biting, destroying property (e.g., tearing clothes, breaking windows, throwing objects), and self-harm, such as head-banging or eating inedible objects. Such behaviors also endanger others or significantly affect the quality of life of those around them.

Managing challenging behavior in the classroom is a problem faced by many teachers (Emerson, 2001). Teachers need to understand the context of such behaviors to manage them effectively. According to Weinstein (2002), students respond positively to well-organized classrooms led by enthusiastic teachers who understand their students and use flexible teaching methods. Teachers who are deeply interested in their students' well-being are more likely to manage challenging behaviors effectively.

2.4 Stages of Behavior

Challenging behavior often does not occur suddenly but progresses through stages, as shown in the ‘stimulation curve’ diagram below.



(sumber: www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk)

Diagram 1: Behavioral stages curve

Red - Active Phase

At this stage, the individual begins to feel anxious and may challenge you in several ways. Immediate action is required to support the individual in returning to the green phase to prevent further escalation.

Yellow – Active Amber Phase

The individual shows sign of anxiety or frustration. Early intervention is needed to prevent the behavior from worsening.

Blue – Post-reactive Phase

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The incident is over, and the individual begins to calm down. However, there's still a risk of another escalation, so caution is necessary.

Green – Proactive Phase

The individual is calm and relaxed. Efforts should focus on keeping the individual in this state. Identifying these stages helps ensure that individuals with challenging behaviors have their daily needs met.

2.5 Reducing Challenging Behavior

Weinstein (2002) argued that there is no specific formula for managing challenging behavior. Positive relationships between teachers and students are key to creating a safe classroom environment. Teachers who foster mutual respect and trust with their students tend to manage challenging behaviors more effectively.

Teachers are responsible for creating a conducive physical classroom environment (Syed Ismail & Ahmad Subki, 2010). An overcrowded classroom can lead to discomfort and disciplinary problems (Mok Soon Sang, 2011). By organizing appropriate activities and consistently monitoring students, teachers can minimize unexpected events and reduce challenging behavior (Choong Lean Keow, 2009).

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is an effective approach for addressing challenging behaviors, developed in the 1980s from Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) (Dunlap et al., 2008). PBS emphasizes the individual's rights and the factors contributing to challenging behavior, ultimately improving quality of life for affected individuals.

Token economy reward systems can also reduce challenging behaviors by reinforcing positive actions. Such systems provide students with clear goals and rewards, motivating them to focus on appropriate behavior.

Conclusion

Challenging behavior can be changed as it is learned, not inherited. However, changing ingrained behavior is not easy for teachers. It is crucial to address challenging behavior early. Collaboration among all parties is necessary to manage and mitigate challenging behavior at an early stage. In conclusion, managing challenging behavior in students is a critical aspect of teaching, as such behaviors can disrupt learning environments and negatively impact both students and educators. The article emphasizes the importance of early identification and intervention to prevent challenging behavior from escalating. Teachers play a vital role in creating a safe and supportive learning environment by building positive relationships with students and using effective behavior management strategies, such as Positive Behavior Support (PBS) and token economy systems. These strategies help maintain discipline while promoting prosocial behavior, ultimately ensuring a more conducive and productive classroom atmosphere. Effective behavior management not only enhances the learning experience but also supports the overall well-being of students, allowing them to succeed academically and socially..

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