

# Shaping Students 'behaviour: Does Teacher Characteristics (Gender, Teaching Experience and Classroom) Matter?

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**Abstract:** Teacher characteristics play a significant role in interventions strategies to shape learners' behaviours as they are the classroom's direct players. This triggered the researcher to examine whether gender, teaching experience, and teaching influence their intervention. The study population were all the 221 teachers in the three Senior High Schools (S.H.S.) in Komenda Edina Eguafu Abrem (K.E.E.A.) Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. An observable sample of 150 teachers was selected for the study using a quota and random sampling technique. Questionnaires were used to elicit responses from the selected teachers. Inferential statistics (independent t-test and ANOVA) were used to analyse the hypotheses. The study results revealed that the teachers' intervention strategies did not depend on their teaching experience. The results showed that the teachers' intervention strategies did not depend on the students' levels or the class they handle. The independent t-test result showed that gender (male and female teachers) did not differ in using intervention strategies. Therefore, it was recommended that to exhibit excellent and practical shaping skills, emphasis should not be placed on teacher characteristics.

**Keywords:** Teachers', Interventions Strategies, Teacher Characteristics, Gender, Teaching Experience, Class of Teaching, Behaviour modification

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers worldwide have a variety of responsibilities, including gathering students for teaching and learning. Teachers are also responsible for dealing with behavioural issues in their classrooms (students). In a typical school day, students spend approximately eight hours with their teachers. They spend far more time with their parents, but when they exhibit any behaviour that does not conform to what their parents prefer, teachers are blamed for such misbehaviour. Schools are dealing with more complex acts of misconduct than they have in the past. For some students, this may be their first encounter with new friends. According to Onyango, Aloka, and Raburu (2018), citing (Nakpodia 2012), Perhaps the first time one leaves his parent, free themselves from home pressures. Peers can have a negative impact on them by being too excited. Some of these negative influences can lead to poor behaviour.

Schools are crucial formal social control institutions (Maimon, Antonaccio, & French, 2012). Aside from families,

they are the primary social system through which individuals are socialised to adhere to specific codes of conduct. Violations of these codes of conduct may result in disciplinary action. Families and students typically accept school punishment as a result of transgression. In this sense, school is frequently the first place where children are introduced to discipline, justice, or injustice (Whitford & Levine Donnerstein, 2014). Some society members propose that student's misconduct should be solved through corporal punishment, while others suggest that discipline should be instilled using other methods (Mugabe and Maphosa, 2013).

Psychologists strongly object to this aspect of corporal punishment as a violation of human rights laws. Onyango, Aloka, and Raburu (2018) also cited Smith (2006), who found corporal punishment injures and embarrasses children, thus violating international norms and being barbaric, humiliating inhumane. The Ghanaian government has ordered the Ministry of Education (M.O.E.) and the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.) to ensure that corporal punishment is prohibited in Ghanaian schools. Except for the Headmaster, teachers are not permitted to administer any punishment. Even the Headmaster is supposed to keep track of the reasons for the discipline. The type of punishment meted out to the offender. These individuals are accusing one another of the current spate of misbehaviours.

In exploring common causes to particular careers associated with children who exhibit misbehaviours, family psychologists and teachers tended to assign reasons for children's behaviour problems to parents. In contrast, child psychiatrists tended to endorse biological determinants and treatments (Johnson, 2000). There may be environmental factors that may breed misbehaviours. Children raised in homes filled with aggressiveness are likely to become more aggressive and expose these characters when they come to school.

These misbehaviours can become very chronic or become a habit that may be difficult to eliminate. Appropriate strategies are generally employed to assist in the acquisition of proper behaviour, including shaping. Weiten (2007) and Myers (2008) looked at shaping as a process of strengthening an increasingly narrow approximation of desired responses.

Shaping becomes necessary when an organism does not on its own emit the desired responses. Successive approximation may help solve the problem identified better than punishment. Buku, Koi-Okwei & Wilson (2012) commented that shaping is a teaching behaviour method that has never been exhibited. There are sequences of planned behaviours in which the reinforcement of each successive behaviour is retained after it has occurred.

Dampson (2019) noted that school leaders face the challenge of tapping into teachers' expertise and experience to facilitate informed decisions and develop better education programs. They require teachers with extensive knowledge and outstanding characters to help shape erroneous student behaviour. Dampson (2019) noted that primary school heads are challenged to leverage teachers' expertise and experience to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

Maistre & Paré (2008) stated that there is a high expectation from classroom teachers, and such expectations could be effectively addressed through effective behaviour modification strategies and skills. On the other hand, Andreou and Rapti (2010) found that experience did not affect teachers' beliefs. Teaching level has not been studied concerning teacher self-efficacy in misbehaviour; however, teaching level has been determined to impact teachers' choice of intervention, with elementary teachers using more strategies to deal with behaviours (Kulinna, 2008).

Interventions in the classroom may focus on teachers' ability to manage their classrooms (Pane, Rocco, Miller, & Salmon, 2013). Teachers' training includes instructional and non-instructional skills, such as group management techniques, reinforcing positive behaviour, and explaining expected behaviour strategies. Both skill sets aim to improve learning, prevent misbehaviour, and encourage positive student participation. (Averdijk, Eisner, Luciano, Valdebenito, & Obsuth, 2014). Discipline was managed in schools through various procedures, including different punitive responses (e.g., loss of privileges, additional homework or detention). Exclusion was commonly regarded as one of the most severe punishments among these. (Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011),

Discipline issues are common in schools, and they can harm students' learning outcomes. A lack of discipline, as well as the potential increase in school disorder (e.g., bullying, substance abuse), can seriously jeopardise the quality of instruction provided by teachers, impede students' acquisition of academic skills, and, as a result, reduce their attachment to the education system (Gottfredson, Cook, & Na, 2012). The training provides preventive strategies and techniques to help maintain classroom discipline, create a supportive educational environment, and improve students' positive behaviour. These include training in fostering mutual respect between teacher and student (e.g., Okonofua, Pauneskua, & Walton, 2016) and training to establish clear classroom rules. Teachers' skills also involve working in an alliance with parents to promote students' engagement in the school activities.

They involve students, teachers, parents, and, in some cases, the community in which the school is located. These programs seek to foster positive environments with clear rules that encourage good behaviour, learning, and safety. Schoolwide interventions can address both the needs of schools as institutions and the specific needs of individual students. Sprague et al. (2016)

Misbehaviour was a misguided attempt to feel important, and students who disrupt and misbehave in class are generally discouraged (Kohn, 2006). Teachers who are aware of their students' misbehaviour targets are more effective at managing their students' behaviour. Modern approaches to behaviour management focus on prevention rather than cure. The methods followed should match the best professional practices that will maximise student learning and enhance appropriate student behaviour. These behaviour management models provide information and techniques for teachers to develop their behaviour management plans suitable for their classrooms. Secondary school teachers complain that if they ignore the adolescent during an hour-long class, they will never pay positive attention because the student will never exhibit positive behaviour. Waiting, even if it means waiting until the next day, is more effective in the long run than paying attention to off-task behaviour.

Although research into teacher self-efficacy in the domain of student misbehaviour is limited, variables such as teacher education/professional preparation, teaching level, and teacher experience emerge as variables that may be instrumental in developing efficacy beliefs. Although no causal relationship has been established, Somekh and Lewin (2005) demonstrated that teachers who received formal training in behaviour management as part of their preparation improved their ability to manage misbehaviour. In addition to education factors, workplace factors have been shown to influence teacher self-efficacy in the behavioural domain. Because self-efficacy theory holds that experiences have a strong influence on an individual's confidence, the amount and type of experience a teacher accumulates may have implications for self-efficacy beliefs. Somekh and Lewin (2005) demonstrated that teachers who had formal instruction in behaviours management during their preparation stages improved their ability to manage misbehaviours.

This evidence in the literature lacks local content where most of the read studies are only saturated and evidence in different context and environment. This paper sought to gain and provide local empirical evidence to how teacher characteristics, including gender, teaching experience, and a class of teaching, differ in shaping learners' behaviours.

#### *Objectives of the Study*

1. Examine how the genders of the teachers influence their intervention strategies.
2. Please find out how years of teaching of the teachers influence their intervention strategies.

3. Explore how the classes [S.H.S. 1, 2, 3] teachers handle influence their intervention strategies.

*Research Hypotheses*

Three hypotheses directed the study:

- $H_0$  <sub>1</sub> = There is no significant difference in the teachers’ intervention strategies and their gender
- $H_{02}$  = There is no significant difference in the teachers’ intervention strategies and their teaching experience
- $H_{03}$  = There is no significant difference in the teachers’ intervention strategies and the classes they handle

II. METHODOLOGY

An explorative, descriptive survey design was employed for this study. Explorative, descriptive survey seeks to get replies to question by analysing the relationship among variables, so considering it appropriate for investigating teachers’ attribution and intervention strategies to student misbehaviour. A descriptive survey is concerned with exploring the conditions or relationships that exist, plain opinions, or building up movements. The descriptive survey method makes the research understand a representative sample of the target population to infer its perception. Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Jeanne (2011), Creswell and Creswell (2018) posited that descriptive surveys include questionnaire and interview, and these are all essential tools for descriptive research.

Furthermore, descriptive fields are taken to demonstrate associations or relationships between things in the world. The purpose of a descriptive survey allows for a many-sided approach to data collection. As a quantitative study, the descriptive research design stood out and was appealing to this study, hence, the design selection. The accessible population was all the teachers in the three public senior high schools in K.E.E.A. Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana.

The study included three Senior High Schools (SHS) in the Municipality of Komenda Edina Eguafu Abrem of the central Ghana. According to the Senior High School (SHS) profile of the academic year 2017/2018, the total number of teachers in the public high school was 221. A sample size 150, using cluster and random sampling techniques, has been selected from an accessible population of 221. Cluster sampling (also known as one-stage cluster sampling) is a technique used to identify and included participants representing the population in the sample. An example of cluster sampling is area sampling or geographical cluster sampling. Research hypotheses one was analysed using an independent sample t-test. Independent-samples t-test determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means in two unrelated groups. The dependent variable here was intervention strategies, and the independent variable was gender (male and female). Research hypotheses 2 and 3 were analysed using one-way ANOVA. The between groups one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)

was used to determine whether there are any statistical significant differences between the means of the independent (unrelated) groups (years of teaching experience and class of teaching).

*Hypotheses One*

- $H_0$ : There is no significant difference between the gender of teacher and intervention strategies.

To accomplish the study’s purpose, the researcher tested the hypothesis to determine whether there is statistically significant difference between the gender of teacher and intervention strategies. To achieve this purpose, independent sample t-test was deemed appropriate for the analysis—the results in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of independent samples t-test Comparing Gender and Intervention Strategies

Gender	Mean	SD	Cal. t-value	Df	Sig-Value
Male	3.828	.314	-.879	138	.282**(ns)
Female	3.958	.466			

Source: Field Data, (2020)

Table 1 presents the comparison between gender concerning their intervention strategies. From Table 1, the means and standard deviation showed that females (M = 3.958, SD=3.828) more than males. However, when evaluating the t and significant value, the results show no statistically significant difference between males and females on gender concerning their intervention strategies. The independent t-test result of  $t(df=138) = -.879, n=140, p = .282^{**}, 2$ -tailed). This implies that both genders (male and female teachers) use the intervention strategies. The null hypothesis stated as “there is no significant difference between gender of teacher and intervention strategies” was, therefore, failed to reject.

*Hypotheses Two*

- $H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the teachers’ intervention strategies and their teaching experience

To determine whether there is a significant difference between years of teaching and intervention strategies between groups, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was deemed appropriate for the study. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2-Test of Homogeneity of Variances (n=140)

Years of Teaching (YoT)- Intervention Strategies (IS)			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig. value
.408	3	137	.546**( ns)

Source: Field Data (2020)

\* P=0.05 (2-tailed), N=140

From Table 2, the sig value for the Levene test is .546, which is greater than the value of  $p = 0.05$  means that the homogeneity of variance has not been violated for the sample

test. The Levene Statistic results of  $F (df1=3, df2=137) = .408, p = .546$ . Hence, ANOVA was computed.

Table 3- Summary of the ANOVA results

Years of Teaching (YoT) * Intervention Strategies (IS)					
	Sum of Squares (SS)	Df	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	Sig.-value
Between Groups	.088	3	.044	.528	.589** (ns)
Within Groups	1.410	137	.083		
Total	1.498	140			

Source: Field Data (2020) \* P=0.05 (2-tailed), N=140

Table 3 presents the results of the ANOVA test. The overall  $F$  ratio for the One-way ANOVA is not significant at the Significant value of  $p = 0.05$ . It shows from the test that the  $F$ -ratio (.528) is not significant ( $p = .589^{**}$ ) at the 0.05 alpha level. This implies no significant difference among the mean scores of the teachers' years of teaching experience. The ANOVA results of  $F (df1=3, df2=137) = .528, n=140, p = .589$ , 2-tailed confirms that fact. From the analysis, the teachers' intervention strategies do not depend on the teachers' teaching experience.

*Hypotheses Three*

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the teachers' intervention strategies and the classes they handle.

To determine whether there is a significant difference between the students and intervention strategies, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was deemed appropriate for the analysis. The results are presented in Table 4 and 5.

Table 4-Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levels - Intervention Strategies			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.-value
LS value=.478	3	137	.468** (ns)

Source: Field Data, (2020) \* P< 0.05 (2-tailed), n=140

From Table 4, the sig value for the Levene test is .546, which is greater than the value of  $p = 0.05$  means that the homogeneity of variance has not been violated for the sample test. The Levene Statistic results of  $F (3, 137) = .478, p = .468^{**}$ , 2-tailed. Hence, ANOVA was computed.

Table 5- Summary of the ANOVA Results

Levels- Intervention Strategies					
	Sum of Squares (SS)	Df	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	Sig.-value
Between Groups	.071	3	.054	.728	.219** (ns)
Within Groups	1.510	137	.093		
Total	1.598	140			

Source: Field Data, (2020) \* P< 0.05 (2-tailed), n=140

Table 5 shows the results of the ANOVA test. The overall  $F$  ratio for the One-way ANOVA is not significant at the Significant value of  $p = 0.05$ . It evident from the test that the  $F$ -ratio (.728) is not significant ( $p = .219$ ) at the 0.05 alpha level. This implies that there was no significant difference among the mean scores of the grade levels. The ANOVA results of  $F (df1=3, df2=137) = .528, n=140, p = .219^{**}$ , 2-tailed explains that fact. The analysis shows that the teachers' intervention strategies do not depend on the classes they handle.

III. DISCUSSION

*Teacher Characteristics like (gender, years of teaching and class level) and Intervention Strategies*

It is apparent from the study that there was no significant difference among the mean scores of teacher characteristics like (gender, years of teaching and level) and intervention strategies.

The ANOVA results of  $F (df1=3, df2=137) = .528, n=140, p = .589$ , which means that the teachers' intervention strategies did not depend on the teaching experience of the teachers. The ANOVA results of  $F (df1=3, df2=137) = .528, n=140, p = .219^{**}$ . From the analysis, it can be concluded that the teachers' intervention strategies did not depend on the students' levels. The independent  $t$ -test result of  $t (df=138) = -.879, n=140, p = .282^{**}$ , 2-tailed). This implies that both genders (male and female teachers) used the intervention strategies. This agrees with Andreou and Rapti (2010), who stated that experience did not affect teachers' beliefs. Teaching level has not been studied concerning teacher self-efficacy in misbehaviour; however, teaching level has been determined to impact teachers' choice of intervention, with elementary teachers using more strategies to deal with behaviours (Kulinna, 2008).

Again, the results conform with the work of Chouinard (1999); Fortier and Desrosiers (1991); these researchers noted that teacher characteristics like (gender, years of teaching and level) of teachers made them very often much more concerned with their survival about the class as a group. They paid attention to things that mattered to them individually, such as classroom observation by authorised teacher trainers and supervisors, the fear of failure, the feeling of professional lack of concern and motivation, and class control. These concerns have inevitably caused teachers to forget about one of the essential sides in teaching, which is the notion of keeping order in class.

IV. KEY FINDINGS

The study revealed no significant difference between males and females for their intervention strategies. The independent  $t$ -test result of  $t (df=138) = -.879, n=140, p = .282^{**}$ , 2-tailed this is to support the finding. There was no significant difference among the mean scores of the teachers' years of teaching experience from the study. The ANOVA results of  $F (df1=3, df2=137) = .528, n=140, p = .589^{**}$ , 2-tailed

confirmed that fact. This means that the teachers' intervention strategies did not depend on the teachers' teaching experience.

#### V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to see if there is a statistically significant difference between teacher gender and intervention strategies, as well as if there is a statistically significant difference between years of teaching and intervention strategies. Finally, the study sought to ascertain whether there is a statistically significant difference between student levels and intervention strategies.

Based on the findings, we concluded that teacher characteristics, particularly gender, teaching experience, and Class of Teaching or student levels, do not shape students' behaviours. Inferring from the results, the researchers recommended that in-service training for teachers on behaviour modification, emphasis should not be placed on teacher characteristics such as gender, teaching experience, and teaching class or the class they handle.

#### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

VAM, NAAY and GY carried out data analyses and wrote the manuscript. All the authors contributed to data collection, the discussion of the results, and the planning and discussion of the draft

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