Exploring Teachers' Concerns about Student Behaviour
in Thailand Primary Schools

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Abstract

This study employed surveys to collect data from 50 teachers in 10 primary schools in Thailand about their concerns regarding challenging behaviour in the classroom and whether teachers' background variables such as gender, teacher's level of training and experience influenced their concerns about challenging behaviours. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA were used to analyse the data. The results showed that particular behaviours such as Inattention, Physical Aggression and Self-injury were of concern to teachers and suggest that cultural factors play some role in teachers' perceptions of student behaviour. Since such behaviours sometimes lead to exclusion from school, the implications of the findings for Thailand's education system are discussed.

Key Words: Student behaviour, Challenging classroom behaviours, Thailand, Teacher Concerns

Challenging behaviour in schools is a worldwide phenomenon and, in all countries, school authorities, teachers and parents are often concerned about the adverse effects of challenging behaviours (Beaman, Wheldall & Kemp 2007; Stephenson, Martin & Linfoot, 2000). The classroom is expected to be a safe place for children (Nickerson & Spears, 2007), where teaching and learning can take place and the presence of challenging behaviours can constitute a threat to the safety of some children and impede effective teaching and learning. In Thailand, there has been a growing concern about the prevalence of challenging behaviours in schools/classrooms (Assanangkornchai, Rerngpongpar & Samangsri, 2010) and this study intends to investigate behaviours that are of concern to teachers and how they manage those behaviours.

According to Klass, Guskin and Thomas (1995), "challenging behaviour is any behaviour that interferes with children's learning, development, success at play; is harmful to the child, other children, or adults; and puts them at high risk for later social problems or school failure" (p. 5). Smith and Fox (2003) define challenging behaviour in young children as any behaviour that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults. Such behaviours tend to inhibit pro-social behaviour and are likely to harm the child or his/her peers (Dunlap, Blair, Umbreit, & Jung, 2007). They include aggression (both physical and verbal), tantrums, self-injury, non-compliance, and withdrawal, excessive talking and off task behavior, hitting, spitting, biting, bullying and destruction of property. Others include, attention seeking, oppositional, impulsive, anti-social, out of control, temper tantrums, attention-deficit, aggressive posture and self-withdrawal (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007).

Whatever the form of behaviour labeled "challenging" it is a type of behaviour most unlikely to respond to a variety of routine intervention strategies available for use by schools (Porter, 2007). These challenging behaviours create difficulties with getting along with peers, interfere with pupils' learning, challenge day-to-day functioning of the school, and deny the right of staff and pupils to a safe or orderly environment (Horner, Sugai & Horner, 2000; Porter, 2007).

The Study Context and Issue

The Thai education system is divided into four levels, namely, Pre-primary (Anuban), Primary (Prathom), Secondary (Mathayom), Upper Secondary and Higher Education, which includes universities, colleges or other institutions of higher learning (Kannikar, Prapin, & Usa, 2007). According to the Office of the National Education Council (ONEC, 2004, now called "Office of Basic Education Commission" (OBEC), there are about 44,903 preprimary schools of which 6,619 are private preprimary schools, 31,129 public primary and lower secondary schools, 2,660 public lower and upper secondary schools, and 409 public vocational schools. Public schools in Thailand are controlled by Thai Ministry of Education while the Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC) within the Ministry of Education oversees the supervision of private schools. In addition, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment is charged with the responsibility for evaluation of educational achievement of schools in Thailand (OPEC, 2005).

The aim of Thai education is to develop students' morality, ethics and social skills necessary for leading peaceful social lives (ONEC, 1998). This means that schooling is supposed to train students to behave well. In order to achieve this goal, the Thailand government enacted The National Education Act (NEA) in 1999 to facilitate educational reform as a step to bring about the full development of people in all respects (ONEC, 1999b). One objective of the reform was to bring about changes to the professional actions and

behaviours of school authorities, and the culture of schools (Hallinger, Chantarapanya, Sriboonma, & Kantamara, 1999). The existing situation restricted teachers from acting freely in handling students' misbehaviour without any consultation with the head teacher or school authority regardless of the gravity of the students' challenging behaviour. Despite the reform, challenging behaviours remain and some students continue to demonstrate unacceptable or sometimes, challenging behaviour in school, which gets worse as they move into high school.

In Thailand, challenging behaviours in classrooms is a major concern for educational authorities (Thai Department of Education, 2008). Students demonstrate many varied challenging and antisocial behaviours in classrooms, and the situation according to a media report in 2003 was attributed to family separation, the distant relationship between teachers and students, as well as, by little attention being given by adults to the young people's emotional development (The Nation, 2003). While these reasons given by The Nation are not grounded in empirical research, the presence of challenging behaviour among students remains a concern for classroom teachers. Yet little research has been done in this area and nothing is known about the behaviours that are most concerning to teachers and/or the level of teachers' knowledge and skills for managing such behaviours in their classrooms. Internationally, a few studies have addressed teachers' perceptions of problem behavior (e.g., Erden & Wolfgang, 2004; Johnson & Fullwood, 2006; Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2005; Little, 2005; Lopes, Monteiro, Sil, Rutherford, & Quinn, 2004).

No such studies have been undertaken in Thailand. Only one recent study has focused on problem behaviours in Thailand (Samangsri, Assanangkornchai, Pattanasattayawong & Mukthong, 2010) and suggests that teachers seem to be using mainly punishment in line with the Ministry of Education's policy recommendation of the return to caning. This conclusion appears to suggest that many teachers in Thailand are lacking knowledge of evidence based proactive behaviour management practices, which can be used to reduce challenging behaviour. If teachers in Thailand are to be supported to develop better behaviour management approaches, then understanding the kinds of behaviours that are of concern to teachers is useful. Therefore, there is a need to investigate what kinds of behaviours are of concern to teachers in Thailand as a way to provide more targeted training for teachers on ways to manage problem behaviours in the classroom. This study aimed to find out what problem behaviours of students are of most concern to teachers in Thailand schools and whether teachers' background had any influence on their perceptions of behaviours.

Literature Review

Challenging Behaviours as a School-wide Problem

Challenging behaviour in the classroom is a concern for teachers in all schools across the globe.   The reason for such concern, among others, is that schools are expected to be safe places for children (Nickerson & Spears, 2007) and these behaviours make it difficult for teaching and learning to occur. In countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, challenging behaviours are known to be increasing not only in the classroom, but also in the society at large (Kowalski, 2003). The emerging problems that are associated with the occurrence of challenging behaviour in schools are undisputedly known to threaten the security and attainment of other students and also constitute a source of stress or even depression for teachers (Porter, 2007). Geving (2007), Yoon (2002) and Wald and Losen (2003) corroborate the idea that students' challenging behaviours are linked to teachers' reports of stress. While challenging behaviour may also occur in developing countries such as Thailand, these behaviours might not be adequately reported or researched. Thus reviewing

the prevalence and effects of challenging behaviours in other countries, more broadly, will provide some insights into these issues in the study context - Thailand.

In a review research literature on the topic of troublesome classroom behaviour, which included 16 studies from Australian, the USA, Hong Kong, Jordan, Greece and Malta, Beaman, Wheldall and Kemp (2007) concluded "…recent research confirms earlier findings that classroom misbehaviour is of widespread concern to teachers (p. 1).

Several other studies have explored teachers' perceptions of troubling behaviours. For example, a study by Ding, Li, Li and Kulm (2008) explored teachers' perceptions of students' classroom misbehavior in China using a questionnaire designed to assess teachers' general concerns about classroom management, teachers' perceptions of the most frequent and troublesome types of misbehaviour, among others. Responses from 244 teachers indicated that 'daydreaming' to be the most frequent and troublesome misbehaviour. The authors concluded that the finding "...contrasts with many prior studies in Western settings where 'talking out of turn' has been reported as the biggest concern" (p. 1). A much wider study involving 527 teachers by Shen, Zhang, Zhang, Caldarella, Richardson and Shatzer (2009) found that inattention, off task and Over-active behaviours as most frequently occurring and behaviours of high concern. Laughing at others was rated the least.

A study by Johnson and Fullwood (2006) found among secondary teachers that behaviours related to social defiance were most disturbing than behaviours related to socialized delinquency. Axup and Gersch, (2008) also found in a UK study that the most frequently selected behaviours seen as challenging were found to 'work avoidance' and 'out of seat behaviour'. In the United States, researchers such as Wald and Losen (2003) reported that challenging behaviours are of concern to teachers and, in a bid to stem the problem, many US schools put in place zero tolerance policies in the 1990s which resulted in a sharp rise in out-of-school suspensions and expulsions (Advancement and Civil Rights Project, 2000; Skiba, Reynolds, Graham, Sheras, Close Conoley, & Garcia-Vazquez, 2006).

In Australia, Arbuckle and Little (2004) surveyed of Teachers' perceptions and management of disruptive classroom behavior. The results from the 96 Australian primary and secondary school teachers showed that teachers' main concerns were related to distractibility, student on-task behaviour, and adherence to classroom rules. These behaviours have led to the use of suspension as a key disciplinary measure, but parents have questioned departmental guidelines on suspension and the way schools implement them (Uniting Care Burnside, 2009). These studies collectively indicate teachers in different contexts express different levels of concerns about different behaviours and teachers in Thailand ma have different concerns.

Effects of Problem Behaviour on Students and Teachers

The main reasons for concern about challenging behaviours are that these behaviours can impact upon student learning and take up a considerable amount of teacher-time (Carter, Stephenson & Clayton, 2008; Little, 2005; Sela-Shavovitz, 2009). Challenging behaviours are also known to interference with children's education, opportunities for participation in mainstream schools, community environment and family adjustment and satisfaction (Axup & Gersch, 2008; Walker, Ramsey & Gresham, 2004). There is also evidence to suggest that behavioural problems are linked to a number of academic and social problems (Conway, 2005) and child misbehaviour in the classroom results in decreased opportunities to learn for the individual child and their peers (Elkins & Izard, 1992).

The other effects of problem behaviour relate to teachers' ability to teach, the threat to personal safety and the safety of peers (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp, 2007). Mooney et al. (2008) stated that the impact of student behaviour on teaching

and learning is becoming a major concern for teachers, parents and policy makers in Australia. On their part, Masteropieri (2001) and Perkins and Leadbetter (2002) have pointed out that teachers pay particular attention to issues concerning students' aggressive behaviours and the study by Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch & Barber (2010), confirmed the association between teachers' perceived student misbehaviour and emotional exhaustion.

In general, challenging behaviours lead to negative teacher attitudes and concerns about teaching and also about particular groups of students. For example, teachers' attitudes toward integration, mainstreaming and inclusion of students with special needs and challenging behaviours in mainstream classrooms have been found to be less positive (Aniftos & McCluskie, 2002; Bhatnagar, & Das; 2013a; Gilmore, Campbell, & Cuskelly, 2003; Konza, 2008; Kuyini & Desai, 2007). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001), Kuyini, Yeboah, Das, Alhassan and Mangope, (2016), make the case that aggressive student behaviour, in particular, impedes learning outcomes for students and impacts negatively on teacher efficacy and wellbeing. In line with this, Works (2015) found, in a USA study about the aggressive student behaviour, that teachers felt overwhelmed and the majority described feeling alone with evidence of low efficacy. It has also been found that this kind of behaviour is linked to teachers' stress (Tsouloupas, et al., 2010).

Teachers who experience frequent student challenging behaviour consequently suffer diminishing satisfaction and likely to give up their position that may exacerbate the poor learning outcomes and challenging behaviours (Howard & Johnson, 2002). In these stressful situations, teachers are forced to apply approaches that are ineffective and coercive (Lewis, 1997). Thus, challenging behaviour influences classroom life by interrupting the learning environment and thus reducing students' potential academic achievement and also teachers' performance (Axup & Gersch, 2008 ; De Witt & Lessing, 2012). & Lessing, 2012; Tsouloupas, et al., 2010; Walker, Ramsey & Gresham, 2004) and constitutes a significant reason why teachers leave the profession (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003). Thai teachers might have similar or different concerns about student behaviours and this research aims to explore teachers concerns.

Research Questions

1. What problem behaviours of students are of most concern to teachers in Thailand schools?
2. Are there any significant relationships between teachers' background variables and their concerns about challenging behaviours?

Methodology

Design of Study

The design of this study was a survey design involving the use of questionnaires. This fits within the positivists or quantitative research paradigm. Quantitative research, as opposed to Qualitative methodology, involves research where data gathering, analysis and interpretation focus on the use of numerical information. It is characterized by the use of large samples, standardized measures and a deductive approach (Babbie, 2007). Survey was chosen for this study because the researchers wanted to gather data from many teachers in a short time.

Participants

A total of 50 teachers from 10 primary schools in Bangkok and Samutprakarn districts participated in the study. The participating schools were represented urban and rural schools in two districts. Several primary schools in Bangkok and Sanytprakarn Districts were contacted and asked to participate in the study. The first five primary schools in the two districts whose principals agreed to participate were selected for participation. Thus, sampling was designed to ensure equal geographic (urban-rural) representation. As an exploratory study of behaviors of concern among teachers, the key inclusion criteria for the teacher participants were professional teacher qualification and teaching in the selected schools. The teachers were given the information about the study and asked to complete the questionnaire if they were interested. Information about the study indicating that participation was voluntary (as part of the invitation letters), was sent by post to the principals of all selected schools along with the questionnaires. (This means that teachers received the invitation letters / information along with the questionnaires). In some schools (n=6), there was opportunity to meet with staff in the staff room to further explain the nature of the study. In the rest of the schools, the principals explained the nature of the study and distributed the questionnaires.

The number of teachers varied considerably from school to school. Whereas some schools had 10-12 teachers, others had more than12 teachers. In this small-scale study, it was projected that between 10 and 12 teachers were likely to complete the questionnaires. Due to limited resources, 12 questionnaires were sent to each of the 10 schools (N=120). There was reluctance on the part of teachers to complete the questionnaires, which manifested in the fact that out of the 120 questionnaires sent to the selected schools, 58 were eventually returned, which is a response rate of 48.3%. Some of the returned questionnaires were incomplete and therefore excluded from the analysis. Teachers who wanted to participate were required to fill out and return the questionnaires to a deposit box in the administration building. The teacher participants made up of 18 males (36%) and 32 females (64%) were between the ages of 26 and 57 years. The majority had completed a Bachelor Degree qualification (n-31=62%). The others had secondary qualifications (n-5=10%) teachers college (n-3 =6%) and postgraduate qualification (n-11=22%).

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a 2-part questionnaire that consisted of:

1. Teacher background questionnaire (Section A).
2. Teacher Concerns about Behaviour Scale (Section B).

Section A required participants' background information such as gender, age, educational qualification, school location (Urban/ Rural), number of students in class, and years of teaching experience. Section B consisted of 19 items of the different behaviours displayed by students in classrooms, framed as behaviours of concern. First, respondents were required indicate "Yes" or "No" as to whether they considered each behaviour a concern. Then they were asked to rate each behaviour as follows: Not Concerned (1), Little Concerned (2), Moderately Concerned (3), Highly Concerned (4).

The instrument was developed by the researchers based on a literature review of behaviours considered unacceptable in general education classrooms across a range of country and/or cultural contexts. The work of Porter (2007) and Maag (2004) and which are used in teacher education classrooms were reviewed. We then examined the work of Beaman,

Wheldall and Kemp (2007), which included 16 studies on the topic of troublesome classroom behaviour, from Australian, the USA, Hong Kong, Jordan, Greece and Malta. Then the work of Algozzine (2000) was reviewed and this provided another insight into how an exploratory Behaviours of Concerns Scale could be developed. As this is an exploratory study, we chose to include a range behaviours considered unacceptable in the regular classroom in the questionnaire.

A pilot study was conducted and involved the distribution of the questionnaires to teachers in two Bangkok schools. A meeting was held with one principal and 4 teachers to gauge their views about content and wording, in line with the fact that   content validity and clarity of the wording of the items were the key aims of the pilot study. In this case we wanted to know whether chosen behaviours in the questionnaire were relevant and whether the wording of the items was clear to teachers. The pilot and opinions of the teachers provided sound basis for making changes to the wording of the questionnaire. Following the pilot, some changes were made to the wording of some items. Items found to be confusing were re-worded and those found to be duplications, (for example Yelling and Verbal Aggression) were merged.

Data Collection Process

The data collection process commenced shortly after ethics approval by the home University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Approval number: HE12-232). A letter was also sent to the Thai Ministry of Education seeking permission to collect research data from schools in Bangkok and Samutprakarn. Subsequently, the questionnaires were handed to teachers who had expressed interest in participating the study and a date was chosen for return of the completed questionnaires. Since the questionnaires were to be completed anonymously, consent was implied in the completion of the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software was used to analyse the data. At the initial stage the researchers carried out a reliability analysis for the Behaviour of Concern measure and the results showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of .88, which according to Cooksey (2007) is acceptable for research. The data analysis for each of the research questions was carried out using a number of statistical procedures. For research question 1, Descriptive statistics were used to describe behaviours of concern to teachers. For research question 2, t-tests and One-way between Groups ANOVA were calculated for each background variable (as independent variables) and the measure of concerns about behaviour.

Results

What problem behaviours of students are of most concern to teachers in Thailand schools?

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each of the behaviour items (See Table 1). A high percentage of positive responses indicates that a particular behaviour was of concern and a low percentage indicates low concern to teachers. The table indicates that student behaviours with high percentage of "Yes" responses are Inattention (52%), Physical aggression (40%), Non-compliance (38%), and Off-task (36%). On the other hand, behaviours of moderate "Yes" are Hyperactivity (32%), Out of seat (28%), and Disruptive (24%). According to the analysis, the behaviours with low percentage of "Yes" responses are Disrespect teachers (16%) and Self-injury (18%).

Table 1: Proportion of teachers indicating concern over particular behaviours

Behaviour Concern Type	Frequency/Percentage	
Inattention	Yes (n = 26, 52%)	No (n = 24, 48%)
Physical Aggression	Yes (n = 20, 40%)	No (n = 30, 60%)
Non compliance	Yes (n = 19, 38%)	No (n = 31, 62%)
Off-task	Yes (n = 18, 36%)	No (n = 32, 64%)
Hyperactivity	Yes (n = 16, 32%)	No (n = 34, 68%)
Out of seat	Yes (n = 14, 28%)	No (n = 36, 72%)
Talking out	Yes (n = 12, 24%)	No (n = 38, 76%)
Verbal aggression	Yes (n =12, 24%)	No (n = 38, 76%)
Disruptive	Yes (n = 12, 24%)	No (n = 38, 76%)
Argues	Yes (n = 12, 24%)	No (n = 38, 76%)
Defies Teacher	Yes (n = 12, 24%)	No (n = 38, 76%)
Extreme shyness	Yes (n = 11, 22%)	No (n = 39, 78%)
Attention seeking	Yes (n = 10, 20%)	No (n = 40, 80%)
Withdrawal	Yes (n = 10, 20%)	No (n = 40, 80%)
Forces submission of others	Yes (n = 10, 20%)	No (n = 40, 80%)
Self-injury	Yes (n = 9, 18%)	No (n = 41, 82%)
Disrespect Teachers	Yes (n = 8, 16%)	No (n = 42, 84%)

Level of Concern about Behaviour

Teachers were asked to rate the level of concern they have for specific behaviours, from Not concerned (1), Little concerned (2), Moderately concerned (3), Highly concerned (4). The analysis in Table 2 shows that the behaviours with the highest mean scores are Self-injury (M = 2.8), Physical Aggression (M = 2.6), Disruption and Intrusion (M = 2.5). These mean scores are within moderate level of concern on a 4-point Scale. The rest of the items in the table have mean scores ranging from 2.4 to 1.8, indicating that they are of little concern. Since all of the behaviours have mean scores above 1.5, it implies that each of the behaviours is considered by teachers to be of some concern. Table 3 on the other hand shows the percentage of responses for each item.

Relationships Between Teachers' Background Variables and Their Concerns about Challenging Behaviours

To answer the research question about the influence of background variables on teacher concerns, t-Tests and One-way between Groups ANOVA were calculated for each background variable and scores on the measure of concerns about behaviour.

Table 2: Mean level of concern about behaviours.

Level of Concern	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-injury	2.8	1.2
Physical aggression	2.6	1.2
Disruption & Intrusion	2.5	1.1
Off-task	2.4	1
Antisocial	2.3	1.2
Inattention	2.3	1
Task non-completion	2.3	1
Non Compliance	2.3	0.9
Forced Submission	2.2	1
Oppositional behavior	2.2	1
Argues	2.2	1
Hyperactivity	2.2	1
Withdrawn	2	0.9
Out of Seat	2	0.9
Verbal aggression	2	1.1
Extreme Shyness	1.9	0.9
Disrespect	1.9	1.1
Talking out	1.8	0.9
Attention Seeking	1.8	0.9

The t-test analysis for the variables of Gender and Training in Special Education showed no significant differences between groups. However, it was significant between teachers in urban and rural schools (p=. 00) (Table 4).
The ANOVA analysis also showed no significant differences for the variables of Age, Number of children with disabilities in class and Teacher Qualification, but was significant for Class-Size (p = .00).

Number of Students in Class and Level of Concern for Challenging Behaviour

Table 5 shows the means scores and standard deviations on the measure of Level of concern for challenging behaviours of teachers teaching different class sizes. Teachers with classrooms of more than 40 students as well as classrooms with between 31 and 40 students had 'high' mean scores (M = 49.0) and (M = 47.2) respectively. On the other hand, those classrooms with 21 to 30 students and 11 to 20 students had 'moderate' mean scores. The mean scores were M = 38.5 and M = 40.1 respectively. Table 5 also shows that classrooms with fewer than 10 students had a low mean score of M=33.2.
The one-way between-groups ANOVA analysis revealed that Number of students in class divided into fewer than 10 students (Group 1), 10–20 students (group 2), 21–30 students (Group 3), 31–40 students (group 4), and above 41 students (Group 5) showed statistically significant difference at p < .05 level on Level of Concern scores among the 5 groups [F (3, 572.9) = 5.311, p= .00] as indicated in Table 6.

Table 3: Teachers' level of concerns about behaviour: Descriptive statistics

Level of concern	Not Concerned (N, %)	Little Concerned (N, %)	Moderately Concerned (N, %)	Highly Concerned (N, %)
Verbal Aggression	11 (22%)	16, (32%)	20, (40%)	4, (8%)
Physical aggression	6, (13%)	8, (17%)	19, (41%)	13, (28%)
Non Compliance	5, (11%)	20, (43%)	19, (40%)	3, (6%)
Oppositional Behav	11, (23%)	16, (33%)	18, (38%)	3, (6%)
Task non-completion	5, (11%)	17, (37%)	20, (43%)	4, (9%)
Inattention	9, (18%)	19, (39%)	16, (33%)	5, (10%)
Disrespect &Amp Intr	5, (11%)	13, (28%)	20, (43%)	9, (19%)
Out of Seat	15, (31%)	20, (41%)	12, (24%)	2, (4%)
Talk out	15, (31%)	25, (52%)	6, (13%)	2, (4%)
Off task	4, (9%)	18, (38%)	20, (43%)	5, (11%)
Self-injury	6, (13%)	9, (19%)	15, (31%)	18, (38%)
Disrespect Teacher	15, (33%)	16, (35%)	12, (26%)	3, (7%)
Antisocial Behaviour	9, (19%)	10, (22%)	20, (43%)	7, (15%)
Hyperactivity	15, (30%)	17, (34%)	13, (26%)	5, (10%)
Attention seeking	17, (35%)	21, (44%)	9, (19%)	1, (2%)
Withdrawal	13, (27%)	22, (45%)	11, (22%)	3, (6%)
Forced submission	7, (15%)	17, (36%)	21, (45%)	2, (4%)
Extreme shyness	15, (31%)	18, (38%)	14, (29%)	1, (2%)
Argues	9, (19.5%)	13, (28%)	22, (47.8%)	2, (4.3%)

Table 4: T-Test: Teacher concerns and school

Schools	Urban Rural	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig (p)
Level of Concern Total Scores	Public	46.4	7.182	0.004
	Rural	37.24	13.532	

Table 5: Class size and level of concern scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Less than 10 students	12	33.17	13.6
11-20 students	7	40.14	7.1
21-30 students	6	38.5	13.6
31 or more students	25	47.24	8.4
Total	50	41.82	11.7

Table 6: ANOVA: Level of concern and class size

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1718.79	3	572.93	5.311	0
Within Groups	4962.58	46	107.88		
Total	6681.38	49			

The Turkey HSD posthoc test in Table 7 showed that the mean difference is significant at p. >.05 level between classes with less than 10 students and those with 31 or more students (p=. 002). This indicates teachers in large classes had higher levels of concerns about challenging behaviours.

Table 7: Multiple comparisons class-size and level of concern

(I) Class- Size	(J) Class-Size	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Less than 10 students	11-20 students	-6.976	4.94	0.498
	21-30 students	-5.333	5.193	0.735
	31 or more students	-14.073*	3.648	**0.002**
11-20 students	Less than 10 students	6.976	4.94	0.498
	21-30 students	1.643	5.779	0.992
	31 or more students	-7.097	4.442	0.39
21-30 students	Less than 10 students	5.333	5.193	0.735
	11-20 students	-1.643	5.779	0.992
	31 or more students	-8.74	4.722	0.263
31 or more students	Less than 10 students	14.073*	3.648	**0.002**
	11-20 students	7.097	4.442	0.39
	21-30 students	8.74	4.722	0.263

Discussion

Challenging Behaviors of Most Concern to Teachers

The results of the study in relation to behaviours of concern to teachers (Table 1) indicate that the behaviours mentioned by the majority of teachers as of concern were Inattention and Physical Aggression. On the other hand, the behaviour of least concern to teachers was Disrespect towards teachers. In terms of the level of concern the results of the study Table 2, showed that Self-injury had the highest mean score (M=2.8). On the other hand, Attention Seeking and Talking Out had the lowest mean scores or the behaviours of low level of concern to teachers.

The finding with respect to Self-injury reflects the fact that injuries inflicted by students on themselves are strongly disapproved of by Thai teachers. This is because the scale of such injuries might be life threatening; and the teacher might be called to question by the school administration for negligence or lack of duty of care on the part of the teacher who is assigned the duties to look after students. These findings here are consistent with an earlier finding by Weisz, et al. (1988) where Thai teachers' behaviour management strategies were compared to their American counterparts, which showed that Thai teachers were less tolerant of students challenging behaviour such as self-injury, fighting, impoliteness and so on and were more tolerant of over-controlled (internalizing behaviour problems) behavior such as shyness, somaticizing and depression as they were taught to inhibit an open expression of anger and emotions (Gardiner, 1968; National Identity Office of the Kingdom of Thailand, 1984; Suwanlert, 1974). On the other hand, the finding with respect to Attention Seeking and Talking Out behaviours being of low level of concern to teachers could probably be due to Thai teachers' diligent application of democratic principles in dealing with students issues and consequently giving them freedom to some extent to speak out or ask for help.

In looking at the list of behaviours of concern and level of concern, it is clear that the current finding departs from that of Johnson and Fullwood (2006) who found, among secondary teachers, that behaviours related to social defiance were most disturbing as compared with behaviours related to socialized delinquency. The results also concur and depart from other Chinese studies (Ding, Li, Li, and Kulm, 2008; and Shen, et al. 2009) that compared students challenging behaviours in Western and Eastern cultures. These studies found inattention, off task and over-active behaviours as most frequently occurring as well as of high concern to teachers. This finding in this study with regard to inattention could be attributed to particular importance attached to children paying attention to classroom proceedings, and teachers might regard such behaviours as demonstrating complete disregard for societal norms and values. This is because Thai society encourages children to exercise self-control, emotional restraints as opposed to behavioural display such as aggression or inattention which are strongly disapproved within the practices of Thai Buddhism (Weisz, et al., 1987). Also, physical aggression is something that is abhorred in Thai society. This link with cultural factors is in line with Evans, Harder, Thomas, and Benefield. (2003) who concluded that social-cultural factors have a profound influence on behaviours.

It is also interesting to note that the behaviour of least concern to teachers was Disrespect Towards Teachers but might be due to teachers not considering it as a serious infraction. It might also perhaps be due to teachers' understanding that Thai students rarely disrespect adults or authority figures. Indeed, earlier Thai studies (Phillips, 1965; Suvannathat, 1979), reported that Thai children were believed to be peaceful, polite, and show deference (Kren chai) and are also taught to refrain from behaviours that would disturb others.

Relationship Between Teachers' Background Variables and Concerns for Behaviours

The t-test analysis showed no significant difference between the variables of training in special education and gender and the teacher's level of concerns for behaviours. The finding in relation to training is interesting given that training is often associated with teachers having a better understanding of behaviour and it (the finding) suggests that training in special education perhaps does not cover the issues of problem behaviour adequately. The finding could also perhaps be explained by Thai teachers' allegiance to society norms and values when dealing with students' issues (Achencbach, et al., 1988) regardless of teachers' education background, special training and gender. Achencbach, et al. (1988) found that Thai adult judgments about children's problem behaviour is being influenced by cultural factors which impact judgment as to whether or not a child's behaviour is abnormal or unacceptable for a certain age.

The ANOVA for Age, Qualification and Number of students with disabilities in class showed no significant differences. This corresponds to, but also contrasts with, Johnson and Fullwood's (2006) study, where no differences were found between the mean scores in relation to age, but rather, teachers' subject area and qualifications correlated with perceptions of disturbing behaviours. In this study, only Class-Size showed a significant difference between the groups. The Tukey HSD posthoc test in Table 8 showed that the mean difference was between classes with less than 10 students and those with 31 or more students. Thus, teachers in large classes reported higher levels of concerns about challenging behaviours. In other words, the numbers of students in a class might make the students' behaviour more difficult to control. This could be as a result of individual personality, teacher preferences, or teachers' differential ability to cope with stress, which is associated with a large class-size and managing students with disabilities. Large class-size has also been found to be associated with teachers concerns and stress about catering for individual student characteristics such as disabilities or pervasive display of challenging behaviour (Author 2007, 2008). Further, studies in India on concerns about inclusive education (Bhatnagar & Das, 2013b; Sharma & Desai, 2002) also found that teachers in large classes had concerns about inclusive education. This finding is similar to the findings of Lazear (2001), who reported that large class-size was likely to trigger students' disruptive behaviour such as 'off-task' behavior. It is also similar to the findings of Mayberry (1992) and Gregory (1992) who concluded that increase in behaviour problems is associated with large class-size as compared to small class-size.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study relates to the reluctance of potential participants to complete the questions, which resulted in low return rate of 48.3%. The small number of participants implies that generalizability of the findings is further curtailed. In other words, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the entire Thai population of primary school teachers. The use of questionnaires alone is another limitation. Perhaps the use of interviews could have been used to explore other aspects of the teachers' work environments that contributed to their concerns about student behaviours.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore behaviours of concern to teachers in Thailand schools and the possible influence of background variables. As an explorative study, it is somewhat novel for Thailand because, while similar studies have been carried out in other countries including USA, Australia and China, none has been undertaken in Thailand. It is also novel because the findings provide some insight (in a limited way) into teachers' thinking about

classroom behavior. Such thinking ought to motivate teachers to look at ways by which school communities can establish rule expectations in a democratic manner, in order to ensure that learning occurs for all students in supportive environments.

The main findings were that behaviours such as Inattention, Physical aggression and Self-injury were considered those of most concern. The findings showed that background variables such as of lack of training in special education, low qualifications, age, did not influence teachers' responses, only class-size did.

Future studies should consider using a much larger sample and also explore the behaviour management strategies that teachers use as way to develop more targeted training for managing behaviours. The study findings also imply that the Ministry of Education needs to provide better training to up-skill teachers in order to improve their practices around managing problem behaviours. This will raise the quality of teaching and learning, ensure safety of students and staff, and bring about a great reduction in time wasted in addressing behaviour issues across Thailand schools.

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