



# Prevalence of Disrespectful Behaviors in Classrooms and Effective Management Strategies for Teachers: A Review

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## Abstract

**Background:** Disrespectful behavior in classrooms poses a significant barrier to effective teaching and student engagement. This review aims to synthesize recent research on the prevalence and impact of these behaviors within classroom settings and to identify evidence-based strategies that educators can use to manage and reduce them.

**Materials and Methods:** This narrative review synthesizes findings from peer-reviewed studies, meta-analyses, and educational reports published up to March 2025. Two reviewers independently searched databases—including ERIC, PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar—using keywords related to disrespectful classroom behaviors and management strategies. Studies were selected based on relevance and quality, with disagreements resolved through discussion.

**Results:** Disrespectful behaviors are common in classrooms, with 10% to 30% of students regularly displaying actions such as talking out of turn, inattentiveness, side conversations, rudeness, aggression, and unauthorized use of mobile phones. These behaviors significantly disrupt the teaching and learning process, undermine teacher authority, and damage classroom relationships, often resulting in a stressful and negative atmosphere. The findings indicate that proactive and supportive strategies—such as setting clear behavioral expectations, positive reinforcement, empathetic teacher-student relationships, and social-emotional learning—are most effective in managing these challenges. In contrast, punitive approaches are generally less successful and may even intensify the problem. Overall, effective management of disrespectful behaviors requires a comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to create a respectful, engaging, and productive learning environment.

**Conclusion:** Disrespectful behaviors in classrooms present a significant challenge to effective teaching and learning by disrupting order and undermining teacher authority. Supportive and preventive strategies—such as clear expectations and positive teacher-student relationships—are more effective than punitive measures, making a respectful classroom environment essential for improved educational outcomes.

**Key Words:** Classroom management, Disrespectful behaviors, Student, Strategies, Teachers.

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## 1- INTRODUCTION

A respectful and supportive classroom environment is fundamental to effective teaching and learning across all educational levels, from primary schools to universities. However, the persistence of disrespectful behaviors in classrooms presents a significant challenge for educators worldwide. These behaviors—ranging from talking out of turn and inattentiveness to overt rudeness, inappropriate use of technology, and disregard for classroom norms—not only disrupt the instructional process but also undermine teacher authority and degrade the overall learning climate (1–3).

The roots and expressions of disrespectful behaviors are complex, shaped by individual, social, and cultural factors. Changes in societal expectations, increased access to digital devices, and evolving student-teacher dynamics have contributed to new forms of classroom incivility in both school and higher education settings (4, 5). Such behaviors can erode mutual trust, diminish student engagement, and increase stress and job dissatisfaction among educators (6, 7). Furthermore, the prevalence of these behaviors raises concerns about their long-term impact on academic achievement, classroom relationships, and the broader educational mission (8, 9).

Given these challenges, there is a growing need for educators to identify and implement effective management strategies that proactively and constructively address disrespectful behaviors. Approaches such as establishing clear expectations, fostering positive relationships, and utilizing evidence-based interventions are increasingly recognized as essential components of successful classroom management (10, 11). By systematically reviewing the prevalence of disrespectful behaviors and the effectiveness of various management strategies, educators and

policymakers can better support teachers and faculty in creating respectful, inclusive, and productive learning environments (2, 3, 7).

This review aims to synthesize current research on the prevalence of disrespectful behaviors in classrooms and critically evaluate strategies proven effective for teachers in managing these challenges.

## 2- MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this narrative review, a comprehensive literature search was conducted to identify studies addressing the prevalence of disrespectful behaviors in classrooms and effective management strategies for teachers and educators. The search included articles published up to April 2025 and was performed independently by two reviewers with no institutional or personal relationship to each other, in accordance with established guidelines for narrative reviews (12, 13).

### 2-1. Literature Search

Relevant studies were identified by searching electronic databases including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The search strategy combined keywords such as “disrespectful behavior,” “classroom management,” “student misbehavior,” “teacher strategies,” “school,” “university,” and “educational environment.” Additionally, the reference lists of included articles and relevant review papers were screened to identify further studies.

### 2-2. Study Selection

Two independent reviewers screened the titles and abstracts of all retrieved articles. Full texts of potentially eligible studies were reviewed to determine their suitability for inclusion. Any disagreements regarding study eligibility were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached.

### 2-3. Inclusion Criteria

- Studies published in English or Persian up to March 2025.
- Original research articles, review papers, and qualitative or quantitative studies focusing on disrespectful behaviors in classroom settings (schools or universities).
- Studies examining management strategies or interventions implemented by teachers or educators.

#### **2-4. Exclusion Criteria**

- Studies unrelated to classroom settings or not addressing disrespectful behaviors.
- Conference abstracts, editorials, commentaries, and non-peer-reviewed sources.
- Studies focused exclusively on non-educational environments.

#### **2-5. Data Extraction and Synthesis**

Data extraction was performed independently by both reviewers and included study characteristics, types and prevalence of disrespectful behaviors, and details of management strategies. Findings were synthesized narratively, emphasizing common themes and effective approaches, as recommended for narrative reviews (13).

#### **2-6. Ethical Considerations**

This review was based solely on published literature and did not involve human participants or confidential data. All efforts were made to accurately represent the findings of the included studies. The review process adhered to ethical standards for academic research and reporting.

### **3- RESULTS**

Disrespectful behaviors in the classroom are a widespread concern that significantly disrupt the teaching and learning process. These behaviors, which

range from talking out of turn and inattentiveness to more overt acts of rudeness or aggression, undermine the authority of educators and negatively affect the classroom climate (1, 9, 14). Understanding the prevalence, types, and consequences of such behaviors—as well as the strategies used to manage them—is essential for fostering a productive and respectful educational environment. The following sections present a synthesis of research findings on the nature, impact, and management of disrespectful behaviors in both school and university classrooms.

#### **3-1. Prevalence and Types of Disrespectful Behaviors**

Disrespectful behaviors remain a persistent concern in both school and university classrooms, consistently undermining teaching effectiveness and student learning (1, 9, 14, 15). Commonly reported behaviors include talking out of turn, side conversations, disrespect toward teachers (such as rudeness and disobedience), inattentiveness, verbal aggression, physical aggression, and various forms of incivility like arriving late or unauthorized use of mobile phones (1–3, 14–17).

Studies indicate that between 10% and 30% of students regularly exhibit such behaviors, although prevalence varies depending on the educational context and classroom management style (6, 9, 14). For a detailed overview of the types, descriptions, and classroom impacts of disrespectful behaviors, please refer to **Table 1**.

#### **3-2. Impact on the Classroom Environment**

Disrespectful behaviors significantly undermine the classroom environment in several ways:

- **Disruption of Learning:** Such behaviors interrupt the flow of lessons, fracturing students' focus and reducing

overall learning effectiveness (1, 9). Frequent interruptions distract both teachers and peers, making it difficult to maintain a productive instructional pace.

- **Damaged Teacher-Student Relationships:** Persistent disrespect erodes the foundation of trust and mutual respect essential for effective classroom management. This deterioration complicates teachers' ability to maintain authority and fosters a negative classroom climate (8, 18).
- **Increased Teacher Stress:** Chronic misbehavior contributes to elevated stress levels among educators, leading to burnout and diminished teaching effectiveness. Teachers facing ongoing disrespect often report frustration,

decreased job satisfaction, and higher attrition rates (7).

- **Emotional Harm and Unsafe Atmosphere:** Disrespectful behavior creates a hostile or unsafe classroom environment, adversely affecting students' social-emotional development and well-being. Such an atmosphere can lead to social isolation, decreased motivation, and emotional distress for both students and teachers (8, 19).

Overall, disrespectful behaviors not only disrupt individual learning but also degrade the collective classroom atmosphere, necessitating proactive and effective management strategies to restore a positive educational environment (1, 7-9, 18, 19).

**Table-1:** Prevalence and Types of Disrespectful Behaviors in Classrooms.

Behavior Type	Description	Impact on Classroom	References
Disobedience & Rudeness	Defiance, arguing, rude verbal or nonverbal responses toward teachers.	Undermines teacher authority; creates negative attitudes	1-3, 6, 9, 14-17
Talking Out of Turn & Interrupting	Speaking without permission, side conversations, disrupting lesson flow.	Distracts peers and teachers; interrupts learning	
Aggressive Gestures & Verbal Hostility	Hostile body language or verbal aggression toward teachers or peers.	Creates a hostile, unsafe environment	
Ignoring Rules & Lack of Cooperation	Tardiness, unauthorized device use, incomplete assignments, refusal to collaborate.	Disrupts group learning; reduces class cohesion	
Physical Misconduct	Hitting, pushing, or other forms of physical aggression.	Requires immediate intervention; threatens safety	

### 3-3. Effective Management Strategies

Research indicates that combining proactive and responsive strategies is essential for managing disrespectful behaviors in classrooms. Key proactive measures include setting clear behavioral expectations and fostering positive teacher-student relationships, which help

prevent disruptions and promote engagement. Responsive strategies, such as restorative approaches and calm, consistent responses, address misbehavior constructively and support students' social-emotional growth (20–27). The **Table 2** summarizes these strategies, their descriptions, and their benefits.

**Table 2.** Effective Management Strategies for Disrespectful Classroom Behaviors

Strategy	Description	Benefits	References
Clear Rules & Expectations	Establish explicit behavioral standards at the start of the course.	Increases accountability and reduces disruptions	20-27
Positive Reinforcement	Provide specific praise and feedback focused on behavior.	Encourages repetition of positive behaviors	
Therapeutic & Restorative Approaches	Address misbehavior calmly with reminders and restorative dialogue.	Builds empathy and reduces punitive responses	
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	Teach skills such as self-regulation, empathy, and conflict resolution.	Promotes respectful interactions	
Empathetic Teacher-Student Relationships	Develop supportive and caring connections with students.	Enhances engagement and reduces misbehavior	
Active Engagement & Structured Environment	Use interactive lessons and predictable routines.	Minimizes boredom and off-task behavior	

### 3-4. Challenges and Practical Solutions

#### 3-4-1. Challenges:

- Cultural and individual diversity among students, which requires tailored approaches to behavior management.
- Lack of specialized teacher training in behavior management, limiting educators' preparedness to handle disruptive behaviors effectively.
- External factors such as family issues, large class sizes, and limited resources that complicate classroom management (5, 7, 9).

#### 3-4-2. Practical Solutions:

- Providing specialized workshops and professional development courses for teachers focused on behavior management and social-emotional learning (SEL) to equip them with evidence-based strategies.
- Implementing counseling and psychological support programs for both students and educators to address underlying emotional and behavioral issues.
- Dividing large classes into smaller groups to facilitate better interaction, supervision, and individualized support.

- Utilizing interactive technologies and digital tools to increase student engagement and reduce off-task behaviors.

- Encouraging active parental involvement in behavioral management to create a consistent support system between home and school (11, 18, 24, 27–29).

### 3-5. The Importance of Positive Relationships and Inclusive Environments

Positive teacher-student relationships and inclusive classroom environments are fundamental to reducing disrespectful behaviors and promoting student engagement (8, 25). Respect for diversity and empathy, combined with supportive and responsive communication, foster a sense of belonging and safety, which are essential for both academic achievement and behavioral success (3, 6, 30).

### 3-6. Legal and Ethical Considerations

Educators must carefully balance disciplinary actions with respect for students' rights and cultural diversity. Key legal and ethical challenges include:

- Avoiding violations of students' rights while maintaining classroom order.

- Ensuring equity by preventing disproportionate disciplinary measures against minority or low-income students.
- Navigating cultural sensitivity without undermining teacher authority or classroom management (31–33).

Adhering to these principles is essential for creating fair, respectful, and legally compliant learning environments that support all students.

#### 4- DISCUSSION

The findings of this narrative review highlight that disrespectful behaviors in classrooms—ranging from talking out of turn and inattentiveness to overt rudeness and aggression—are a persistent and multifaceted challenge in both school and university settings (1, 9, 14). These behaviors not only disrupt the flow of teaching and learning but also undermine the authority of educators, strain teacher-student relationships, and negatively affect the overall classroom climate (2, 3, 15).

The prevalence of disrespectful behaviors is considerable, with studies reporting that 10% to 30% of students regularly exhibit such actions (6, 9, 14). The high frequency of these behaviors signals a need for educational systems to prioritize classroom management and behavioral interventions. The consequences are not limited to immediate classroom disruptions; persistent disrespect can lead to increased teacher stress and burnout (7), decreased student engagement, and a decline in academic achievement (18, 19). Furthermore, disrespectful behaviors may create a negative feedback loop, where ineffective management or an overreliance on punitive measures exacerbate the problem, leading to further resistance and disengagement among students (10, 26).

The literature underscores that disrespectful behaviors are shaped by a complex interplay of individual, social,

and institutional factors. Lack of clear classroom rules, insufficient teacher training in behavior management, cultural and demographic mismatches, and external stressors such as family or social issues all contribute to the manifestation and persistence of these behaviors (5, 7, 9). The increasing use of technology and mobile devices in classrooms has introduced new forms of incivility, further complicating classroom management (2).

Cultural context plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of disrespect. Behaviors deemed disrespectful in one culture may be interpreted as normal or even indicative of active engagement in another. Therefore, educators must adopt culturally sensitive and adaptable approaches to classroom management to prevent misunderstandings and avoid unnecessary conflicts (2, 5, 7, 9, 33, 34).

The evidence supports the effectiveness of proactive, supportive, and multi-layered approaches to managing disrespectful behaviors. Establishing clear behavioral expectations at the outset, providing positive reinforcement, implementing restorative and therapeutic practices, and teaching social-emotional skills are among the most successful strategies (6, 7, 20, 22, 25). These approaches not only reduce the incidence of misbehavior but also foster a positive classroom climate, enhance student motivation, and build a sense of belonging (6, 11, 23).

Importantly, the teacher-student relationship plays a central role. Supportive, empathetic, and communicative relationships are associated with lower rates of disrespectful behaviors and higher levels of student engagement. Conversely, authoritarian or punitive approaches may worsen classroom dynamics and erode trust (8, 22, 25).

Despite the availability of evidence-based strategies, several challenges hinder their

implementation. These include large class sizes, lack of resources, insufficient teacher training, and systemic barriers within schools and universities (7, 24, 26). Addressing these challenges requires a systemic approach: providing ongoing professional development for teachers, integrating social-emotional learning into curricula, offering counseling and psychological support, and encouraging parental involvement (11, 23, 35).

Teachers must also navigate legal and ethical complexities in managing classroom behavior. Maintaining a balance between authority and respect for students' rights is essential (27, 28). Disciplinary measures should be equitable, culturally sensitive, and avoid discrimination or stigmatization (33). Creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment, where diversity is respected and positive interactions are encouraged, is key to reducing disrespectful behaviors and enhancing educational outcomes (1, 8, 25).

In summary, managing disrespectful behaviors in classrooms demands a comprehensive, evidence-based, and culturally responsive approach. Success depends on the integration of clear expectations, positive relationships, supportive interventions, and systemic support for educators (7, 9, 24, 25, 28, 33). Future research should further explore the contextual factors influencing disrespectful behaviors and the long-term effectiveness of various management strategies in diverse educational settings (24).

## 5- CONCLUSION

This review highlights that disrespectful behaviors in classrooms—such as talking out of turn, side conversations, inattentiveness, rudeness, verbal and physical aggression, arriving late, leaving early, and unauthorized use of mobile phones—are both common and disruptive, with 10% to 30% of students regularly exhibiting such actions. These

behaviors undermine teacher authority, damage classroom relationships, and create a negative climate that hinders both teaching and learning. Their prevalence and impact highlight the need to understand and address these challenges in educational settings.

The findings indicate that effective management depends on a combination of proactive and supportive strategies. Teachers who set clear rules and expectations, use positive reinforcement, build empathetic relationships, and incorporate social-emotional learning are more successful in reducing disrespectful behaviors and fostering a respectful, engaging classroom environment. In contrast, punitive or authoritarian methods tend to be less effective and may even exacerbate the problem. Ultimately, a comprehensive and context-sensitive approach is essential for promoting respect, improving classroom climate, and supporting the well-being of both students and teachers.

## 6- AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Study conception or design: AD, and RB; Data analyzing and draft manuscript preparation: AD and SA; Critical revision of the paper: AD; Supervision of the research: RB; Final approval of the version to be published: AD, SA, and RB.

**7- CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** None.

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