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## Teachers' Characteristics as Predictors of Classroom Rudeness: Implications For School Counseling Practice in Ogun State, Nigeria

Rasheed Keshinro<sup>1\*</sup>, Adedotun Adererele Araromi<sup>1</sup>, Solaja Adebimpe Aderonke<sup>2</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Classroom rudeness, characterized by disruptive and disrespectful student behaviours, poses a significant challenge to effective teaching, learning, and students' psychosocial development in secondary schools. While prior studies have focused largely on prevalence and consequences, limited attention has been given to how teachers' psycho-demographic characteristics influence classroom incivility from a counseling and preventive perspective. This study examined teachers' gender, work experience, academic qualification, and credibility as predictors of classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. Anchored in Social Exchange Theory, a correlational survey design was adopted. A total of 450 teachers were selected from 27 public secondary schools using multistage sampling techniques. Data were collected using the Classroom Incivility Scale and the Measure of Source Credibility. Findings revealed that teachers' work experience, academic qualification, and credibility significantly and negatively predicted classroom rudeness, with teacher credibility emerging as the strongest predictor, while gender was not significant. The study highlights the critical role of teacher credibility and professional development in reducing student incivility. Implications for school counselors include the need for teacher-focused counseling interventions, preventive behavior management training, and policy-driven support systems aimed at fostering respectful classroom environments.

### INTRODUCTION

Classroom rudeness is a serious issue because it disrupts the learning environment, affects student engagement, and can even affect educators' well-being. When students behave disrespectfully, whether through talking over the teacher, coming late, or inappropriate use of phones, it creates distractions that make it harder for both teacher and learners to focus and absorb information. Since education is supposed to help people become more civilised, schools are set up and instructors are hired to make sure this noble goal is met. As a result, the degree of indiscipline among the pupils is shocking and very depressing. These behaviours compromise learning outcomes, reduce student engagement, and negatively affect teacher well-being. In Nigeria, classroom rudeness has been reported widely across secondary schools, raising concerns among stakeholders about the effectiveness of the educational system.

Classroom rudeness, sometimes described as classroom incivility, refers to a pattern of student behaviours that disrupt instructional activities and violate norms of mutual respect within the learning environment. These behaviours may be verbal or non-verbal in nature and often interfere with effective teaching, student engagement, and classroom harmony (Ogunwole, 2020). Common manifestations include excessive noise, disrespectful communication, late arrival to lessons, inappropriate use of mobile devices, and overt challenges to teacher authority.

In educational settings, such behaviours are increasingly recognised as psychosocial concerns rather than

merely disciplinary problems, given their implications for students' emotional regulation, peer relationships, academic self-concept and engagement. Research suggests that classroom rudeness may range from low-intensity, unintentional actions such as packing up materials before the end of a lesson to deliberate behaviours intended to undermine others, including ridicule or mockery (Cahyadi, Hendryadi and Suryani, 2020; Qiyu, Yuhan, Qi & Tomoko 2024). However, many classroom behaviours fall within an ambiguous zone where intent is unclear, yet their cumulative impact significantly disrupts interpersonal relationships and learning processes.

Existing studies on classroom rudeness have largely concentrated on its prevalence, typologies, and consequences, often emphasising students' perspectives or institutional disciplinary responses (Cahyadi *et al.*, 2020; Ogunwole, 2020). While these contributions are valuable, comparatively little attention has been given to teacher-related factors that may shape classroom behaviour through everyday interactions. Teachers occupy a central role in the classroom ecology, and their professional and relational characteristics may function either as protective factors or as conditions that inadvertently permit incivility to persist.

From counseling and preventive standpoint, examining teachers' psycho-demographic attributes such as gender, work experience, academic qualification, and credibility, provides an important lens for understanding how classroom environments are co-constructed. Identifying these relationships is essential for informing teacher-focused counseling interventions and whole-school

<sup>1</sup> Department of Counseling and Human Development Studies, Faculty of Education University of Ibadan, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Department of Business Management and Marketing, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences Baze University, Abuja, Nigeria

\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [keshinrorasheed123@gmail.com](mailto:keshinrorasheed123@gmail.com)

behaviour management strategies.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to examine teachers' characteristics as predictors of classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### **Specifically, the study sought to**

1. Examine the relationship between teachers' gender and classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State.
2. Determine the relationship between teachers' work experience and classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State.
3. Investigate the relationship between teachers' academic qualification and classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State.
4. Assess the relationship between teachers' credibility and classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State.
5. Determine the joint and relative predictive effects of teachers' gender, work experience, academic qualification, and credibility on classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State.
6. To provide evidence-based insights for counseling and behavioural intervention in secondary schools.

### **Hypotheses**

**The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance**

1. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' gender and classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.
2. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' work experience and classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.
3. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.
4. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' credibility and classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.
5. Teachers' gender, work experience, academic qualification, and credibility do not jointly and independently predict classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Research examining the influence of teacher gender on classroom behaviour has produced mixed and inconclusive findings. While some studies suggest that perceptions of classroom rudeness may differ by gender (Alberts *et al.*, 2010), others report no significant differences in how male and female teachers experience or manage disruptive behaviours (Rowland & Srisukho, 2009). These inconsistencies suggest that gender alone may not be a decisive factor in shaping classroom civility. Contemporary perspectives argue that classroom

behaviour is more strongly influenced by teachers' professional competence, interpersonal skills, and consistency in classroom management than by biological sex (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). Consequently, it remains important to empirically examine whether gender contributes meaningfully to classroom rudeness within specific cultural and educational contexts such as Nigerian secondary schools.

Teacher credibility has emerged as a critical relational factor influencing students' classroom behaviour and learning outcomes. Credibility encompasses perceptions of teacher competence, trustworthiness, and caring, all of which shape students' willingness to engage and comply with classroom norms (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). When teachers are perceived as credible, students are more likely to demonstrate respect, cooperation, and positive engagement. Empirical evidence consistently supports the importance of teacher credibility in educational settings. Studies indicate that credible teachers foster higher levels of student motivation, affective learning, and classroom cooperation (Frymier & Thompson, 2012; Finn *et al.*, 2009). From a counseling perspective, credibility may serve as a protective factor, reducing classroom rudeness by strengthening positive reciprocal interactions between teachers and students.

Work experience generally refers to the length and depth of professional engagement within a particular occupation. In teaching, accumulated experience is often associated with improved classroom management skills, greater confidence, and increased ability to anticipate and address behavioural challenges. It is therefore reasonable to expect that teachers with longer teaching experience may be better positioned to minimise classroom rudeness. Empirical evidence, however, presents a nuanced picture. While some studies have found that years of teaching experience enhance classroom control and effectiveness (Amadi & Allagoa, 2017), others suggest that experience does not uniformly translate into positive outcomes, particularly where job dissatisfaction or burnout is present (Michael-Olomu & Boroh, 2018). This inconsistency highlights the need to further examine how work experience relates specifically to classroom incivility from a counseling and behavioural management perspective.

Teachers' academic qualification represents another important professional characteristic that may influence classroom behaviour. Higher qualifications are often associated with deeper subject knowledge, improved pedagogical strategies, and enhanced professional confidence (Darling-Hammond, 2007). These attributes may contribute to greater classroom authority and more effective behaviour management, thereby reducing the likelihood of student rudeness. Although some studies have linked higher educational attainment to improved professional effectiveness (Ofeimu & Kolawole, 2017; Adeoye, Akoma and Binuyo, 2014), findings regarding its influence on student behaviour remain inconsistent. This variability underscores the importance of

examining academic qualification alongside other teacher characteristics, particularly within specific educational and cultural settings.

### Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory (SET) Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958; Cook & Rice, 2001) posits that social behaviour results from reciprocal exchanges, where actions produce rewards or penalties. In educational settings, positive teacher behaviours such as competence and fairness—are reciprocated by student compliance and engagement. Conversely, negative teacher behaviour may trigger reciprocal disrespect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Taylor *et al.*, 2012). SET provides a lens to understand how teacher characteristics may influence classroom civility. Within school counseling practice, Social Exchange Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how consistent teacher support, fairness, and credibility may foster reciprocal respectful behaviours among students.

### Empirical Review

Rowland and Srisukho (2009) reported that faculty members' responses to classroom rudeness showed no statistically significant differences according to gender or job status. These findings indicate that factors like age, gender, and job status may not strongly influence how faculty members perceive or react to rudeness in academic environments.

Alberts (2010) added another layer to this discussion by noting that women were more likely than men to report incidents of rudeness as being "more serious." This observation suggests that gender may influence how individuals interpret and respond to incidents of incivility, with women potentially perceiving and reacting to rudeness in a more intense or impactful manner.

Furthermore, according to Alexander-Snow (2004), minority instructors, especially male Caucasian professors, may not feel the same pressure to be aware of their cultural identities in the classroom, which could lead to different experiences of incivility compared to their minority counterparts. Nelson (2003) further elaborates on this notion by noting that the stereotypical image of a college professor often features a white, mature man with a commanding presence. Consequently, minority instructors, particularly those from non-Caucasian backgrounds, may face additional challenges in navigating classroom dynamics, including issues related to incivility.

Nasir, Nordin, Seman, and Rahmat (2014) conducted more recent research examining the possible influence of personality and the relationship between prior job experience and classroom rudeness. The researchers examined data from 688 sales representatives of a private life insurance company based in New Delhi, India, in order to evaluate their theories. Prior industrial experience (PIE) and prior occupational experience (POE) were the two categories into which past relevant job experience was divided. Participants in a survey self-reported each

attribute, which was assessed in months. The researchers simply deducted relevant prior work experience from the total experience reported by individuals to account for company experience and quantify unrelated job experience. The total number of months of work experience that the participants indicated used as a proxy for overall job experience. Using the organisation's personnel data and the workers' yearly performance assessments, classroom rudeness was quantified. The findings showed a strong correlation between classroom rudeness and work experience. Bose, Quiñones, Moreno, Raub, Huh and Heymann (2020) explored this dynamic of educational attainment within the banking sector in Lagos State. Using a descriptive survey design, the researchers surveyed 2,704 senior and intermediate-level management personnel from five selected banks. The study sample of 450 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table, with proportional random sampling used for participant selection. The data were collected through a questionnaire and analysed using multiple regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings indicated that higher educational attainment positively influenced employee productivity ( $\beta = 1.976$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 3.235$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and staff engagement alongside education played a crucial role in reducing workplace incivility. The study recommended that organisations focus on training and development programmes to enhance staff competencies and productivity.

Adeoye, Akoma, and Binuyo (2014) investigated the same issue among Namibian instructors. Using a simple random sampling method and a survey design, they found that a higher level of education—such as a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate was linked to an increase in innovative contributions to the workplace, which in turn led to better productivity. The authors argued that education fosters a more professional attitude, which may also help mitigate rudeness in educational settings. This is further supported by a common thread across these studies, which suggests that employees with advanced educational qualifications are more likely to contribute positively to the workplace, thereby reducing incidents of rudeness.

A meta-analysis of the extensive body of research on teacher credibility was carried out by Finn, Schrodtt, Witt, Elledge, Jernberg and Larson (2009)

in order to investigate the connection between teacher behaviours and student results, these researchers analysed and combined data from 51 teacher credibility studies. They used a variance-centred statistical approach to look at the overall impact size of teacher credibility in the classroom. The findings showed that several teacher behaviours and student outcomes were somewhat and significantly correlated with teacher credibility on average. Given the many measures, actions, and results used to examine teacher credibility over the last four decades, this was a noteworthy discovery. This meta-analysis examined three theoretical implications. First, on average, 20% of the variation across the various instructional outcomes

was explained by the overall impact for teacher credibility.

**MATERIALS AND METHOD**

**Design**

This study adopted a survey design of correlational type. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to examine the magnitude and direction of relationships among teachers’ characteristics (gender, work experience, academic qualification, and credibility) and classroom rudeness without manipulating any of the variables. The design also allowed for the determination of the predictive strength of the independent variables on classroom rudeness using inferential statistics.

**Population**

The population for this study consisted of all the teachers in public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The state has three senatorial districts with twenty local governments. The teachers in secondary school are under the teaching service commission and are located in different parts of the state. Ogun state has a total population of 12,962 teachers across the local governments.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

The multistage sampling procedure was employed. The three Senatorial Districts (SDs) in Ogun State were enumerated, while nine Local Government Areas (3 per SD) were randomly selected. Twenty-seven secondary schools were randomly selected (3 schools per LGA) while 450 teachers (179 males and 271 females) were randomly selected.

**Instrumentation**

**Three instruments were used for data collection**

**Classroom Incivility Scale (CIS)**

An adapted version of McKinne’s (2008) Classroom Incivility Scale was used to measure the level of classroom rudeness exhibited by students, as perceived by teachers. The instrument originally consisted of 22 items rated on a six-point likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 6 (Five or more times). Following pilot testing and item analysis, 17 items were retained. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.74$ .

**Teacher Credibility Scale (TCS):**

A modified version of McCroskey and Teven’s (1999) Measure of Source Credibility Scale was used to assess teachers’ credibility. The scale measures three dimensions of credibility: competence, character, and caring. It consists of 18 items rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The overall reliability coefficient obtained for this study was  $\alpha = 0.80$ .

**Demographic Information Questionnaire**

This section elicited information on teachers’ gender, years of work experience, and academic qualification.

**Validity and Reliability**

The instruments were subjected to face and content validity through expert review by specialists in educational psychology and measurement and evaluation. Pilot testing was conducted among 20 secondary school teachers outside the study sample. The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach’s alpha method, which yielded acceptable coefficients.

**Procedure for Data Administration and Collation**

Necessary approval was taken from the Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science and technology (OGMOEST). After the approval has been granted, the researcher took the approval letter to the Principals of the selected schools (27schools for data collection). Once the Principals have consented to carrying out the study and the necessary arrangements have been made, the researcher then went to train the research assistants. Three research assistants were employed and trained as necessary. Following the training, the data collection started in earnest. The researcher and the assistants visited each of the school; and used simple random sampling to select the teachers on the school payroll. A total of 450 teachers were sampled. The selected teachers were given a copy of the research instrument, while necessary objective assistance was provided by the researcher and the assistants. The distributed instruments were collected same day from the respondents. The collected instruments were taken for necessary coding and analysis in order to test the hypotheses. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality were strictly observed.

**Procedure for Data Analysis**

Data collected were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to examine the relationships among teachers’ characteristics and classroom rudeness. Multiple regression analysis was further employed to determine the relative and joint predictive effects of teachers’ gender, work experience, academic qualification, and credibility on classroom rudeness at the 0.05 level of significance. Prior to regression analysis, assumptions, including multicollinearity, were checked and found to be within acceptable limits.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables (Central Tendencies)

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Classroom Rudeness	450	42.02	10.33
Teachers Credibility	450	56.41	8.27
Work Experience	450	11.84	6.92
Academic Qualification	450	2.31	0.74

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the major variables examined in the study. Classroom rudeness

recorded a mean score of 42.02 (SD = 10.33). Teachers' credibility had a relatively high mean score (M = 56.41, SD = 8.27), reflecting generally positive perceptions of teachers' competence, trustworthiness, and care.

The average teaching experience of respondents was approximately 12 years (M = 11.84, SD = 6.92) while academic qualification recorded a mean score of 2.31 (SD = 0.74)  $p < 0.01$

**Table 2:** Correlation Matrix Showing Relationships among Teachers' Characteristics and Classroom Rudeness

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Classroom Rudeness	1				
Gender	0.035	1			
Work Experience	-0.725**	-0.021	1		
Academic Qualification	-0.162**	0.019	0.142**	1	
Teachers' Credibility	-0.872**	-0.005	0.679**	0.124**	1

Table 2 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation matrix showing relationships among teachers' characteristics and classroom rudeness. Teachers' work experience ( $r = -0.725$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), academic qualification

( $r = -0.162$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and credibility ( $r = -0.872$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were significantly and negatively related to classroom rudeness. Teachers' gender was not significantly related to classroom rudeness ( $r = 0.035$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3:** Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Teachers' Characteristics as Predictors of Classroom Rudeness

Predictor Variable	B	t	Sig.
Gender	0.05	1.50	0.135
Work Experience	-0.28	-3.57	0.001**
Academic Qualificatio	-0.19	-3.00	0.003**
Teachers Credibility	-0.42	-5.63	0.000**

R=0.72

R<sup>2</sup>=0.52

Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.50

$p < 0.01$

Table 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the joint and relative contributions of teachers' characteristics to classroom rudeness. The regression model was significant (R = 0.72, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.52, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.50,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that teachers' characteristics jointly accounted for 52% of the variance in classroom rudeness.

Individually, teachers' work experience ( $\beta = -0.28$ ,  $t = -3.57$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), academic qualification ( $\beta = -0.19$ ,  $t = -3.00$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and credibility ( $\beta = -0.42$ ,  $t = -5.63$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly predicted classroom rudeness. Teachers' gender did not significantly predict classroom rudeness ( $\beta = 0.05$ ,  $t = 1.50$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Teacher credibility emerged as the strongest predictor.

### Summary of Findings

Teachers' gender does not have a significant relationship with classroom rudeness. Teachers' work experience, academic qualification, and credibility are significantly associated with lower levels of classroom rudeness. Teachers' characteristics jointly predict classroom rudeness, with teacher credibility serving as the strongest predictor. These findings collectively suggest that classroom rudeness is influenced more by teachers' professional and relational attributes than by demographic characteristics such as gender.

### Discussion of Findings

The study found that teachers' gender had no significant relationship with classroom rudeness. This implies that being a male or female teacher does not significantly influence the level of rudeness exhibited by students in the classroom. This finding supports earlier studies by Rowland and Srisukho (2009), who reported no statistically significant differences in classroom rudeness based on instructors' gender. It also aligns with the position that classroom management and student behaviour are more influenced by professional competence and interpersonal skills than by biological sex. From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, students' behavioural responses appear to be shaped more by perceived rewards, sanctions, and relational dynamics than by the gender of the teacher. This suggests that students are unlikely to reciprocate respect or disrespect simply based on whether a teacher is male or female, but rather on how the teacher conducts classroom interactions. Similarly Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2013) argued that classroom behavior is more influenced by teachers professional competence and interpersonal skills than biological sex. Alberts *et al.* (2010) did note some perception differences between genders, but overall, gender alone is not a decisive factor. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between teachers' work experience and classroom rudeness, indicating that teachers with more years of teaching experience tend to experience lower levels of student incivility. This result suggests that experienced teachers are better equipped to manage classroom

behaviour effectively, likely due to accumulated pedagogical skills, confidence, and familiarity with diverse classroom situations. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Nasir *et al.*, 2014; Dalluay & Jalagat, 2016), which reported that work experience enhances classroom control and reduces disruptive behaviours. Experienced teachers may be more adept at anticipating behavioural challenges and responding in ways that discourage rudeness. Within the framework of Social Exchange Theory, students may reciprocate the consistent, fair, and confident classroom management exhibited by experienced teachers with more respectful behaviour.

The study also established a significant negative relationship between teachers' academic qualification and classroom rudeness. This finding indicates that higher academic qualifications are associated with lower levels of student incivility. Teachers with advanced qualifications may possess deeper subject knowledge, improved instructional strategies, and stronger professional authority, all of which can contribute to improved classroom order. This finding corroborates earlier research by Bose *et al.* (2020) and Adeoye *et al.* (2014), who found that higher educational attainment enhances professional effectiveness and reduces workplace incivility. In educational settings, well-qualified teachers may be perceived as more competent and authoritative, thereby discouraging disrespectful behaviour. According to Social Exchange Theory, students are likely to reciprocate perceived competence and professionalism with compliance and civility.

Teachers' credibility emerged as the strongest predictor of classroom rudeness in this study. The strong negative relationship found indicates that teachers who are perceived as credible competent, caring, and trustworthy experience significantly lower levels of classroom rudeness. This underscores the importance of relational and interpersonal qualities in classroom management. This finding aligns strongly with prior research (McCroskey & Teven, 1999; Finn *et al.*, 2009; Frymier & Thompson, 2012), which consistently shows that teacher credibility enhances student motivation, respect, and engagement while reducing disruptive behaviours. Within Social Exchange Theory, credibility fosters positive reciprocal exchanges: when students perceive teachers as fair and caring, they are more likely to respond with respectful and cooperative behaviour.

The regression analysis further revealed that teachers' characteristics jointly accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in classroom rudeness. This indicates that classroom behaviour is not shaped by a single teacher attribute but by a combination of professional experience, academic competence, and relational credibility. Among these, credibility exerted the strongest influence, emphasizing that how teachers are perceived by students plays a crucial role in determining classroom conduct. This finding corroborates the findings of Finn *et al.* 2009 and Frymier & Thompson

(2012) who emphasized that teacher relational qualities and competence collectively influence student behavior.

### Summary of the Study

This study investigates the influence of some teachers' psycho-demographic variables on classroom rudeness among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. Through this approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which teachers' characteristics influence student misbehaviour in the classroom, highlighting the complex interplay between teacher attributes and student conduct.

### Implications for School Counseling Practice

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of school counselors in addressing classroom rudeness through preventive and intervention-focused strategies. Counselors can collaborate with teachers to enhance credibility through communication skills training, classroom relationship building, and behavior management workshops. Counseling programmes that focus on emotional intelligence, mutual respect, and positive teacher-student interactions may significantly reduce classroom incivility. Furthermore, experienced and well-qualified teachers may be leveraged as mentors in school-wide behavioral support initiatives coordinated by counselors.

### CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that classroom rudeness is significantly influenced by teachers' professional and relational characteristics, particularly credibility, work experience, and academic qualification. The findings highlight the importance of teachers' credibility as a means of promoting respectful classroom climate. The findings of this study has great implication to all education stakeholders

### Recommendation

1. Teachers' credibility and classroom communication skills should be strengthened through counseling and professional programmes.
2. Education agencies should incorporate behavioural management and interpersonal competence training for teachers.
3. A whole-school counseling approaches should be adopted in place of punitive disciplinary measures.

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