STUDENT LEADERSHIP AS A BEHAVIORAL MODIFICATION IN CONTROLLING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS OF CLASSMATES: A STUDY OF MATHAYOM 3
STUDENTS AT SIRISUKSA SCHOOL

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Abstract. Disruptive behaviors cause student inattention in learning, annoying friends and teachers as well as these behaviors leading to student academic failure and antisocial behaviors. This study aims to create a behavioral modification module to control and decrease the disruptive behaviors by practicing leadership; and a modification module for selected student leaders to be role models, giving modification treatments with positive reinforcements. Token economies will be provided to change the disruptive behavior in classmates. Bandura (1989) Miltenberger (2008)'s and Parnchit Rochanawanichakorn (2005)'s concepts are combined and used for the study's theoretical framework in order to create a behavior modification module. The subjects are students in Mathayom Suksa 3 (Grade 9) at Sirisuksa School in Samutprakarn Province in Thailand -from two classrooms. Students from a highly disruptive behavior class are identified by teachers, behavioral checklists used, and three observers assigned to provide the experimental group. The other classroom is a control group without any treatments. The behavioral checklists, multiple baseline design, and quasi-experimental design employing a time-series are instruments that are used to find out the baseline of frequencies for the disruptive behaviors before and after giving treatment. The sociometry method is used for selecting student leaders who are given a training program dealing with disruptive peer groups in order to control and decrease those undesirable behaviors. The training program consists of: how to identify the character of disruptive behaviors; how to give positive reinforcements and token economies; as well as how to be role models referring to Bandura's theory. The findings can help teachers know how to implement a new strategy in teaching and learning processes, including using students as partners in developing behavioral modification procedures.

Keywords. Behavioral modification, disruptive behaviors, model, positive reinforcements, self-efficacy, self-management, self-regulation student leadership, token economy

Introduction

Disruptive behaviors are a kind of disturbing problem in classrooms. Students' disruptive behaviors include inattention, inappropriate talking to teachers and peers, looking around, moving around, noncompliance and aggression, and many more in which those behaviors take place during teaching and learning periods. According to Boonreungrat (1972), Inpirom (1962), Juthangkha (1974), Lebkrut (1974), Thanyawong (1974), Unprasert (1976), as cited in Pumwaree (1986), the disruptive or undesirable behaviors of students in classrooms can be categorized as: inattention; talking to friends in loud noises and interrupting classmates and teachers; making inappropriate verbal conversation and lying; and other misbehaviors. Eaton et al (1956) as cited in Phumpatrakom (1986), state that disruptive behaviors that teachers experience in classrooms are inattention, lack of discipline, and non-interest in teachers' assigned work.

Disruptive behaviors start while students are in lower grades in which those behaviors will intensely become more aggressive in further grades. Especially, students in Mathayom 3 who are at critical ages, according to Pitaksirikul (1989), who stated that Mathayom 3 level is an important study level in which students have to choose whether to go to an academic mainstream or a vocational mainstream. They may be uncertain in making decisions about how to conduct their own lives or face many obstacles in their lives. In addition, from a study of Goebal and Brown (1981) as cited in

Pitaksirikul (1989), it was found that adolescents at this stage have more focus on their self-esteem than at other stages. Hence, if teachers demonstrate more valuable patterns of behavior for students at this stage and train them in controlling disruptive behavior amongst peers in the classroom, not only will students improve individually, but also class control is enhanced.

However, the reaction methods that many teachers have used for decades when confronting disruptive behavior in students are verbal punishments or physical punishments such as scolding, reprimand, flogging, and pinching; as well as giving negative feedback. As an example, kicking disruptive students out of the class (Impeumpoon, 1979, Juthangkha, 1974, Lebkrut, 1974, Poonpatarachewin et. al., 1978, Thanyawong, 1974, Unprasert, 1976 as cited in Pumwaree, 1986). Regarding strategies that teachers have implemented, they usually focus on correcting misbehaviors only at this particular time: they do not have a long-term procedure for behavioral modification. Punishments are a kind of aversive control in which controversial decisions cause some punishments, which can lead to physically painful consequences, which may also violate the human rights of the child. According to Martin and Pear (2003), punishments are able to create other repulsive emotional side effects, in which an obstruction of desirable behavior occurs. Consequently, punishments stop negative behaviors for a while; however, those who misbehave still stick with disruptive students. The students just stop acting out those behaviors until they forget the consequences of the punishments, then they perform their misbehavior again. The best way to control undesirable behavior in a sustainable manner is to use behavioral modification procedures.

Miltenberger (2008) suggested that the procedures of behavioral modification are designed to change problem behaviors in order to solve disruptive behaviors beforehand. Behavioral excesses and deficits are changing targets with behavioral modification procedures. In this sense, behavioral excess is an undesirable target behavior that a person wants to decrease in frequency, duration, and intensity: For example, annoying a teacher and friends with loud noises or throwing squeezed papers to friends while teacher is teaching. Behavioral deficits are a desirable target behavior set that a person wants to increase in frequency, duration, and intensity, for instance, doing exercises and studying are kinds (of behavioral deficit examples) that need to increase. Also, the behavioral modification procedures implicate imposing and modifying the current environment incidents that are related to the undesirable behaviors. In this sense Miltenberger suggested that human behaviors are controlled by the current environment; behavioral modification aims to identify those incidents. Then, after the controlling variables are verified, they are transformed to modify the behaviors. In detail, successful behavioral modification procedures transform the relationships between the controlling variables in the environment and the behavior to create a desired change in the behavior.

The development of behavior modification techniques was important in influencing the social cognitive theory of Albert Bandura (Iemsupasith, 2000). According to Bandura (1986), social cognitive theory or social learning theory focuses on learning through observing the behaviors of others. That is, the behavior of observers changed because of the consequences they learned both in positive and negative ways, from a model. If the results are positive, the observers are more likely to copy or follow those behaviors. On the other hands, if the results or consequences are negative, the observers are more likely to avoid repeating the behaviors of the model. As a result, the model actions are promoted as a kind of guidance for the observer's actions. Bandura (1986), said there are two main kinds of the observational learning; first of all, observational learning or social learning can happen through vicarious reinforcement. That is, it happens when people see others get rewards or punishments for specific actions and then they adjust their behavior in order to get rewards or avoid punishments accordingly. Second, the observers may copy a model's behavior although the model either gets nothing as reinforcements, or even gets punishment, while the observers are watching. This is because they admire the model as their idol, no matter whether the model performed a good or bad behavior. Generally, children prefer to imitate a powerful model or a competent one regardless of if the model is of a good or bad type of behavior. Chuchom, Sukharom, and Srichindarat (2006) proposed that a whole perspective in which the observers watch from the model reveal that, not only they can observe the model' s cognition, but they can observe emotion, social, and behavioral aspects of the model also.

However, Chuchom, Sukharom, and Srichindarat (2006) hypothesized that the use of modeling is in line with Bandura's social learning theory: That is, the observers who watch good behavior will show good behavioral manners more than non-observers. In light of Bandura's work, the closer the distance from observer to action, the more convincing the impact on the observer. It did not matter if they learned for performing immediately; or kept the learning as a cognitive residual in their minds. This is

because, eventually, student-learning processes occur whether students perform acquired knowledge or not. In order to encourage students to perform new learning behaviors, they will have to be suitably reinforced. Therefore, if teachers use positive reinforcements with a token economy as reinforcers in decreasing undesirable behaviors, they can be effective tools in promoting students to show more desirable behavior than undesirable ones. Moreover, Kalish (1981) as cited in Iemsupasith (2000) posited that behavioral modification adopts behavior principles and applies them for systematically changing undesirable behaviors. By doing so, behavior modification emphasizes positive reinforcements with token economies, rather than punishments as to the objectives of behavior modification, are stressed in increasing desirable behaviors. For this reason, using positive methods is more effective than using negative methods.

For decades, it has been believed that teachers are the main role models in classrooms; friends are small influences, which make little difference to student behavior. Nevertheless, in the present day it is realized that we cannot deny peer influence. Peers are a real change agent for teaching and learning processes in the classroom. Yet, teachers are still significant persons in classrooms, in that; teachers are both leaders and managers in behavioral modification procedures. But teachers are not able to do it alone; they have to find ways to create a group of followers; then they change things together. Leadership in classrooms means teachers share their leadership with students, by counting on students as team members: Then teachers motivate team members to help them understand group's objectives or goals and achieve the goals together. According to Daft (1999), leadership relates to influence between leaders and followers who demand a real change, which reflects the goals and objectives, shared by both of them. Thus, through behavioral modification procedures, teachers can train student leaders to be role models in order to control classrooms and/or decrease negative choices by their misbehaving students.

The Objectives of the Study and Related Instruments
The objectives of this study are: (1) to create a behavioral modification module to control and decrease student disruptive behaviors by choosing student leaders to be behavioral modification models in controlling their 'disruptive behavior' classmates; (2) to study the outcomes of using trained student leaders to control their peers' behaviors accordingly; (3) to evaluate the success of using the behavioral module with positive reinforcements and a token economy.

Bandura's social Learning Theory, Miltenberger's Behavior Modification: Principles and Procedures, and Parnchit Rochanawanichakorn's Development of Training Curriculum are used as the study's theoretical framework: in order to create a behavior modification module; to consider the appropriate match between using the trained student leaders and the behavior modification module; as well as to ascertain the success of the derived behavioral modification procedures.

The samples in this study are students in Mathayom Suksa 3 (Grade 9) at Sirisuksa School, Amphur Muang, Samutprakarn Province of 2551 (2008) school year. The populations is 90 students of both genders in which there are 45 students in Mathayom Suksa 3/1 class and 45 students in Mathayom Suksa 3/2. The behavioral checklists, multiple baseline design, and quasi-experimental design employing time-series design are instruments used to find the baseline of frequencies and characteristics of disruptive behaviors before and after giving treatments. However, before giving treatments, the researcher identifies the frequencies and characteristics of disruptive behaviors from observation inside both classrooms using behavioral checklists and time-series design, including the teachers' reports in accordance with disruptive behaviors. After collecting data from both rooms, the researcher chooses highly disruptive behaviors in class for an experimental group and the other is a control group without any behavioral modification treatments. Secondly, the researcher adapts the training curriculum module of Parnchit Rochanawanichakorn (2005) to create a model of treatment program.

Sociometry methods are used to choose student leaders in the experimental group. The objective of using the method is to measure the relationship among friends in this group. By doing so, the researcher can understand the way students in this group formed; who are the stars in groups; by asking students to choose whoever they most want to work with. The chosen popular students are the stars of the group; in which they are naturally the student leaders. In other words, the stars are inferred as a leader of students who possesses characteristics of charismatic leadership (in which people like and want to be like him or her). In this sense, other students form a group of followers who respect and admire the leaders because of their personal characters.

This leadership style can refer to:

1. Articulating visions by embodying values and creating the environment for accomplishment (Richards & Engle, 1986).

2. Those individuals that perform one or more acts of leading.

3. The ability to affect human behavior towards accomplishing a mission.

4. Influencing a group of people to move toward the goals set out (Stogdill 1950)

Selected student leaders are trained in behavioral modification treatment modules by learning knowledge and skills to become models for peer groups. In doing so, the well-trained leaders can identify the disruptive behaviors in their classroom and control those peers' behaviors. However, the trained leaders need to pass the evaluation in order to test what they have learned and how they comprehend the treatment module; as well as to check that they certainly know how to perform as role models effectively. Bloom's taxonomy is adopted to be the rubric, which indicates the ability levels of trained student leaders.

Trained student leaders are not only able to identify the disruptive behaviors; they can also comprehend how to give positive reinforcements with token economies. Therefore, leaders have to understand processes that can strengthen desirable behaviors; in terms of giving positive reinforcements; leaders should know what and how to give any kind of reinforcers. This would include consumable reinforcers or social reinforcers. Also, in terms of token economies, leaders should understand when is an appropriate time to give the tokens effectively. Moreover, being models of the leaders, they can receive material and token reinforcers as well, if they motivate disruptive peers to engage in desirable behaviors and avoid undesirable behaviors. Eventually, after giving treatments, the same behavioral checklists, multiple baseline design, and time-series design are employed to recheck frequencies of disruptive behaviors. Formative assessment is used to make sure that student leaders really comprehend the treatment process: The success of the behavioral modification module is ascertained by controlling and decreasing disruptive behaviors in peer groups.

Expected Outcomes

This study intends to

(1) create an effective behavioral modification module by involving positive reinforcements and token economies for student leaders in order to control and decrease their peers' disruptive behaviors. Once the undesirable behaviors have been controlled and decreased, the learning and teaching processes of the whole classroom will be improved as well as students should have new opportunities for academic achievement and consequently build their future lives (Walker et. al., 2004);

(2) This study is a good systematic way for teachers to adapt and adopt the module with efficacious reinforcements to modify disruptive behaviors in every level in classrooms; (3) Teachers can observe the frequency of disruptive behaviors after the treatment program stopped. In this sense, teachers can determine what, when, and how to remove the reinforcers -while keeping the behavior improvements; (4) Finally, training students to become effective leaders -by instilling leadership skills that they can apply- facilitates student self-efficacy, self-management, and self-regulation.

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