

Disruptive Behaviors: The Conception and Reaction of Instructors in Higher Education

Nesrin Oruc*

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Effective classroom management skills are crucial as teacher characteristics, not only in primary education but also in higher education. Instructors in higher education can face disruptive behaviors that jeopardize the flow of their teaching. Since a student's good behavior is a necessary condition for efficient and effective teaching and learning to take place in the classroom environment, attention must be paid to this issue in order to understand the nature of misbehavior and what determines the misbehavior. Therefore, teachers need to be trained on how to react to and how to deal with these behaviors.

Purpose of the Study: The main goal of the present research is to identify and compare which behaviors are labeled by experienced and inexperienced instructors as disruptive in higher education, the frequency of these behaviors and the teachers' reactions.

Methods: This is a survey study, and a 20-item Likert-type questionnaire was developed for the study, which all participants were given equal time to complete. The sample consisted of 60 foreign language teachers working at the School of Foreign Languages, with teaching experience ranging from 1 to 28 years. Since experience was a determining factor, the participants were divided into four groups in terms of years of experience in three year intervals. Cross tabulation was applied, and the analyses were completed with SPSS.

Findings and Results: The analyses showed that experience was not a determining factor for most of the behaviors in terms of frequency, whether they were perceived as disruptive, or the reactions to them.

* Asst. Prof. Dr., İzmir University of Economics, School of Foreign Languages, TURKEY, nesrin.oruc@ieu.edu.tr

Conclusions and Recommendations: The idea that disruptive behaviors are also an inevitable part of higher education classrooms has been demonstrated in this study. In the light of the conclusions gathered, teacher trainings may be able to increase the level of prospective teachers' awareness on the issue by including seminars on disruptive behaviors and possible alternative solutions to this problem. In this way, future teachers will be prepared for such classroom situations.

Keywords: Disruptive behavior, classroom management, experienced teacher, inexperienced teacher.

Teaching is widely accepted to be a complex process due to many the intervening variables involved. A classroom is a place where a group of learners with different socio-ethnic and economic backgrounds and with different characteristics come together. In line with these differences, learners may be characterized by different levels of motivation, aptitude, learning styles and interests. All of these contradictory factors, occurring simultaneously in the same classroom, may hinder effective learning.

According to Henson, Cansino, Herron, Robb and Rugg (1997), the teachers' role is to take this mixture of individuals and provide them with appropriate materials, capture their interest, organize the space, and use the time so that learning occurs in ways that leave class members feeling positive about the instructional experience. It is, therefore, important for a teacher to have effective classroom management skills; in fact, a well-managed classroom is a prerequisite for learning. It is every teacher's responsibility to provide an environment where learning can take place, and for this to happen, a teacher must have a management plan that allows him/her to take charge. Once his or her position is established, the rest of the classroom activities can be put in place. However, effective and comprehensive classroom management requires considerable effort.

According to Mendler and Curwin, (2000, p.75) "Taking charge means facing up to the problems related to discipline. Effective classroom and school management occurs in a systematic, yet flexible, manner that allows and encourages both student and teacher growth through communication and understanding." Thus, classroom management refers to a broad range of teacher behaviors, and one of the most critical is managing student behavior. However, successful classroom management requires an understanding of the unique nature of the classroom and the role of the teacher (Kulinna, Cothran & Regualos, 2003).

Among the issues included in classroom management, discipline is considered to be one of the most important as it affects both teachers and students to some extent (Wright, 2005). Harder (1998) defines discipline as "the preservation of order and the maintenance of control". For this to happen, teachers must make on-the-spot decisions and react spontaneously when using classroom management techniques to solve problems that arise in the classroom. According to Edwards (1997, preface), discipline remains the single most common problem teachers face in day-to-day teaching because they find it difficult to handle. According to Harmer (2001), most teachers have moments when their students fail to cooperate in some way, thus disrupting the learning process. Students may become uncontrollable to the point of

disruption, which can be *unsettling* (italics added) not just for teachers but also for other students. Similarly, Smith and Laslett (1993, p. 126) suggest that teachers who have difficulties controlling students' behaviors are anxious about losing their self confidence. Such prolonged difficulty will affect the self-esteem of teachers, who will therefore need reassurance to avoid potential failure.

It is a widely known fact that discipline and misbehavior, or disruptive behavior, in the classrooms is closely related with the effectiveness of teaching. The meaning and nature of misbehavior change, depending on the teacher's perception and interpretation. However, any behavior that threatens the flow of academic performance in a particular context can be defined as misbehavior (Verkuyten, 2002; Burden & Byrd 1999). These problem behaviors can take many forms, including disruptive talking, sleeping in class, tardiness and poor attendance, failure to do homework, and/or cheating on tests. According to Harmer (2001), in some contexts, these misbehaviors can develop into more extreme situations, such as insolence, insulting or bullying other students, damaging school property and refusing to accept sanctions or punishment. However, it is certain that whatever form such disruptive behavior takes and whatever the reason is, teachers should take some precautions to prevent these misbehaviors before they arise. For example, Harmer (2001) points out that such behavior should not be ignored and suggests some general guidelines that can be used in case of such behaviors, including taking immediate action, remaining calm, and working with colleagues and the institution when needed.

In the light of the information presented so far, it is apparent that disruptive behaviors in the classroom are one of the main problems faced by educational institutions. For example, an article published in *Innovator* (Vol. 4 No: 1) (a news bulletin published by the University of Florida) states that university faculties are reporting an increased incidence of disruptive student behavior in their classrooms. Many professors are complaining that their courses are being "hijacked by classroom terrorists." Lewis and Burman (2008) suggest that adults are perceived as individuals who know how to behave themselves, and a good number of instructors make the erroneous assumption that adult education is relatively free of disruptive or behavioral problems. Teachers have assumed for many years that these young adults are participating voluntarily and, therefore, behavior should not be a source of difficulty. However, educators are finding that disruptive student behavior is a growing problem in all facets of adult education.

These examples have prompted the researcher to recognize that misbehavior can also be a part of adult education. In other words, even though misbehavior is mostly associated with children's education, the nature and the frequency of those behaviors may be similar in many aspects with those observed in adult education. This assumption was the motivation for this research.

Another important issue regarding misbehavior is the perception of the instructor. How the teacher interprets misbehavior is important. To a certain extent, disruption may be in the eye of the beholder. Some instructors are likely to be more tolerant of extraneous noise and movement in their classrooms. In fact, in "interactive" classrooms, student interaction/communication is encouraged. How

can the teacher differentiate between overly enthusiastic involvement in classroom activities and disruptive behavior? Similarly, teachers, pupils, parents and others often have different views about behavior problems, depending upon their own interests, experience, knowledge base and theoretical inclination (Jones & Charlton, 1996, p. 9, cited in Jones, Ling & Charlton, 1999). This study aims to assess the importance of experience as a variable in the perception and reaction of teachers to disruptive behaviors in adult classrooms. A secondary focus of the study is to examine the frequency of disruptive behaviors that are encountered in university classrooms.

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Which classroom behaviors are considered to be “disruptive” by instructors working in higher education?
2. Do the perceptions of the teachers differ according to number of years of experience?
3. How often do the teachers encounter misbehavior in their classrooms?
4. Does the frequency of these behaviors differ according to number of years of experience?
5. What are the reactions of the teachers toward these disruptive behaviors?
6. Do the reactions of the teachers differ according to number of years of experience?

Method

Participants

The research population was drawn from instructors of Dokuz Eylül University, School of Foreign Languages, where the study was conducted. The sample was a convenience sample, as the participants were chosen on the basis of accessibility, expediency, cost, efficiency, or other reasons not directly concerned with sampling parameters. Of the 102 instructors working at the institution, 60 agreed to participate. Therefore, the subpopulation consisted of more than half of the total the population. The data was collected in the 2005-2006 Fall semester.

These instructors, 42 female and 18 male, had with a wide variety of teaching experience, ranging from one to twenty-eight years. For the purpose of this study, the participants were divided into four different groups, depending on experience. In order to measure the effect of experience on teachers’ opinions, teachers were grouped according to years of experience in three-year intervals: 1-3 years (18 teachers), 4-6 years (20), 7-9 years (10), and more than 10 years (12). Each participant was informed of the aim of the research.

Instruments/Materials

The instrument used in the study was a 20-item questionnaire designed for this study by the researcher. As for validity, some of the items of the questionnaire were selected from studies found in the literature (Romi & Freund, 1999; Kullina et al., 2003; Lewis & Burman 2008). As a result of informal talks with the instructors, the

researcher was able to add additional items. In addition, a provisional survey was given to 15 other instructors who did not participate in the study. This list included a range of possible negative classroom behaviors, from which teachers could indicate those they actually encountered. Moreover, these instructors were asked to add any other disruptive behaviors they encountered that were absent from the list. The results of this survey helped the researcher to compile a complete list of disruptive behaviors to be used in the data collection instrument. Finally, some changes were made following suggestions given by an expert in the field.

The questionnaire, which was designed in English, was divided into three parts. In Part A, the subjects were asked to state the frequency of the listed behavior by choosing one of the three options; *very often*, *sometimes* and *never*. For example, the participants were asked to state how often they observed behaviors such as sleeping, chatting with friends, and asking irrelevant questions in their classes. In Part B, teachers were asked whether they considered the listed behaviors to be disruptive. In the final part, the subjects were asked about their reactions to each of the disruptive behaviors and were given options such as ignoring the behavior, dismissing the student(s) from the class, talking to the student(s) later individually, etc.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested on SPSS for each section of the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient for Part A was found to be .90, Part B .81 and Part C .72. The alpha for the total reliability of the questionnaire was .71. George and Mallery (2003, p. 231) provide the following rules of thumb for the reliability of Likert Type scales: “.9 and above Excellent, .8 and above Good, .7 Acceptable, .6 Questionable, .5 Poor, and lower than .5 Unacceptable.” Since the questionnaire used for the study had a reliability coefficient of .72, it was considered to be acceptable.

Data Analyses

Cross-tabulation, used to show the relationship between the responses to two survey questions, was applied to the responses given. On the basis of these calculations, the answers given to the items in all three parts of the questionnaire were presented as percentages for each behavior, in terms of frequency, perception and reaction given. The percentages were categorized for all four experience levels of the teachers, and the results were compared and interpreted to determine the effects of experience on the three variables.

Findings and Results

The results showed that all of the behaviors included in the questionnaire occurred in the classrooms “very often” or “sometimes”, with “sometimes” being the most frequently chosen response. In order to find the most frequently observed behaviors, the results for “very often” and “sometimes” were added and tabulated as follows. As the table below shows, the most frequently observed of the five behaviors were “chatting with friends”, “asking for permission to go out of the classroom”, “sleeping”, “talking out of turn”, and “not doing homework given”.

Table 1*The Overall Results for the Frequency of Behaviors*

Behaviors	Very Often		Sometimes		Very often + Sometimes	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	Chatting with friends	34	56,7%	26	43,3%	60
Asking for permission to go out of classroom (toilet etc.)	13	21,7%	47	78,3%	60	100 %
Sleeping	11	18,3%	48	80,0%	59	98,3%
Talking out of turn	18	30,0%	41	68,3%	59	98,3%
Not doing homework given	14	23,7%	44	74,6%	58	98,3%
Not being punctual	3	5,1%	54	91,5%	57	96,6%
Doing work for another course	7	11,9%	49	83,1%	56	95%
Not bringing course materials to the classroom	7	11,7%	50	83,3%	57	95 %
Drawing pictures on the desks or on paper	16	27,6%	39	67,2%	55	94,8%
Refusing to participate in classroom activities	5	8,5%	50	84,7%	55	93,2%
Packing up books and papers before the class officially ends	7	11,7%	48	80,0%	55	91,7%
Asking irrelevant questions	6	10,2%	48	81,4%	54	91,6%
Reading any other irrelevant reading materials after the lesson starts	6	10,0%	48	80,0%	54	90%
Gum chewing	7	11,7%	46	76,7%	53	88,4%
Using mobile phones	14	23,7%	35	59,3%	49	83%
Eating and drinking after the lesson starts	2	3,3%	46	76,7%	48	80%
Listening to CD Player/ MP3 Player	0	0 %	46	76,7%	46	76,7%
Getting out of seats without permission	6	10,0%	38	63,3%	44	73,3%
Insulting another student	2	3,3%	39	65,0%	41	68,3%
Insulting the teacher	0	0 %	15	25,0%	15	25,0%

In the second part of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked whether they considered a given behavior as disruptive or not. The results showed that the behavior most perceived as disruptive was "insulting another student", followed by "chatting with friends", "insulting the teacher", "reading any other irrelevant materials" and "using mobile phones during the lesson". On the other hand, the behavior perceived as the least disruptive was "asking for permission to go out of the classroom". "Drawing pictures on the desk or on paper" was another behavior that was perceived as less disruptive. The other behaviors in this category are "eating and drinking after the lesson starts", "gum chewing", and "talking out of turn".

As for the reactions, the teachers were given five choices; "ignoring the behavior", "dismissing the student from the class", "talking to the student later individually", "informing the administration about the problem", and "using general words of caution". The teachers were also given the opportunity to add options other than those stated in the list. Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show the percentages for each reaction ranked as the top five by the subjects.

Table 2

Percentages for "Ignoring the Behavior"

Behavior	Percentages
Eating and drinking after the lesson starts	49.1%
Asking irrelevant questions	48.2%
Gum chewing	43.4%
Asking for permission to go out of the classroom	38.8%
Sleeping	33.3%

Table 3

Percentages for "Dismissing the Student from the Class"

Behavior	Percentages
Not bringing course materials	55.2%
Not being punctual	46.6%
Insulting the teacher	19.2%
Using mobile phones	15.3%
Insulting another student	10.7%

Table 4*Percentages for "Talking to the Student Later Individually"*

Behavior	Percentages
Refusing to participate in classroom activities	62.5%
Insulting another student	48.2%
Insulting the teacher	30.8%
Listening to CD Player/ MP3 Player	21.1%
Not doing homework given	19.3%

Of the "other" options, "warning the student individually during the lesson", was the most frequently chosen, with "giving permission", "sending the students to toilet to wash their faces" and "answering the question later" being chosen more infrequently. Among the situations where the "other" option was stated, "warning the student individually during the lesson" was the most frequently chosen, with a percentage of over 90. Few of the teachers stated the other three options.

Table 5*Percentages for "Other" Option*

Behavior	Percentages
Listening to CD Player/ MP3 Player	29.8%
Chatting with friends	28.3%
Doing work for another course	27.6%
Reading any other irrelevant materials	24.1%
Gum chewing	20.8%

Since one of the aims of the study was to investigate the similarities and/or differences among the participants on the basis of their experience, a comparative analysis was carried out among the four categories of experience: 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, and more than 10 years. The analysis showed that experience was not a determinant factor for most of the behaviors in terms of the frequency, the extent to which they were perceived to be disruptive, and reactions to them. However, some interesting results were obtained regarding certain behaviors.

For example, "sleeping" was stated as being observed "very often" by 27.8% of participants who had 1-3 years of experience, whereas the same behavior was observed "very often" by only 8.3% of subjects having more than 10 years of experience. When comparing reactions to the same behavior, it was found that 50% of teachers with 1-3 years of experience ignore this behavior, whereas the figure for teachers with more than ten years of experience is 33.3%. Moreover, it is interesting to note the reaction of teachers with 7-9 years experience: only 10% ignore this

behavior. None of the subjects chose “informing the administration” and “dismissing the student(s) from the class” as a reaction.

Table 6

The Classification of the Results for Sleeping

Years of Experience	Frequency			Perception		Reaction					
	VO	S	N	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-3	27.8%	72.2%	0%	62%	38	50%	0%	11.1%	0%	27.8%	11%
4-6	20%	75%	5%	90%	10%	30%	0%	15%	0%	40%	15%
7-9	10%	90%	0%	73%	27%	10%	0%	40%	0%	30%	20%
10 +	8.3%	91.7%	0%	67%	33%	33.3%	0%	8.3%	0%	41.7%	16.7%

VO: Very Often, S: Sometimes, N: Never

It was found that only 27.8% of instructors with 1-3 years experience consider “asking irrelevant questions” disruptive, while the percentage is 65 and 60, respectively, for those from the 4-6 year and 7-9 year groups. It was found that the group who mostly ignore this behavior were the 4-6 year group, at 55%. Another behavior in which the subjects showed differences is “eating and drinking after the lesson starts”. Only 22.2% of the teachers with 1-3 years of experience and 33.3% with more than 10 years consider this behavior to be disruptive, compared to 70% of those with 7-9 years of experience.

Another difference among different levels of experience was observed for the reactions given to “gum chewing”. This behavior was reported to be ignored by more than half of teachers having 1-3 years of experience (55.6% of all subjects), but only 16.7% of teachers having more than 10 years of experience ignore this behavior. “Not doing homework” presents another variation across different levels of experience. In terms of perception, the percentages decrease in accordance with level of experience. More subjects with less experience considered the behavior to be disruptive, as compared to subjects with more experience.

Table 7

The Classification of the Results for “Not Doing Homework”

Years of Experience	Perception	
	Yes	No
1-3	66.7%	27.8%
4-6	60%	25%
7-9	50%	50%
10 +	33.3%	58.3%

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results indicate no difference among the participant teachers' perception of disruptive behaviors, the frequency of occurrence, and their reactions, regarding length of experience. Thus, length of experience was not found to be a variable according to the results. As for the frequency of the disruptive behaviors, it is clear that all teachers experience these kinds of behaviors in their classrooms, regardless of length of experience. The occurrence of disruptive behaviors may be due to a variety of reasons. As mentioned in the introduction, classrooms generally consist of students coming from different socio-economic backgrounds, with various beliefs, motivation, and experiences. Therefore, it is a natural consequence that all teachers will experience disruptive behaviors in their classrooms, regardless of experience. Student age could also be a factor in this situation. Even though the nature of the disruptive behaviors may change depending on the age of the students, this does not mean that this kind of behavior will not be observed in the classroom, even at the university level.

In the second section of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to state whether they consider the behaviors to be disruptive. According to the results, the behavior that was perceived to be the most disruptive was "insulting another student". In other words, the teachers think that a tense atmosphere in the classroom influences the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The behavior considered to be the second most disruptive was "chatting with friends", which could be considered to be a threat to the teacher's authority in the classroom. The reason that this behavior is so important could be its negative effect on a teacher's motivation. Most teachers prefer a silent atmosphere in their classrooms and consider noise to be a threat to their performance. "Insulting another student" in this study can be compared to the category "verbally abusing other students" in Lewis and Burman (2008), who ranked this as the third most challenging classroom management problem.

In the third section, the teachers were asked to state their most common reactions to disruptive behaviors. The teachers were given different reactions and were asked to choose one. According to the results, "Sleeping during the lesson" was one of the most ignored disruptive behaviors, which suggests that teachers do not generally attend to this so long as it does not affect the flow of the lesson.

The behavior for which the subjects predominantly chose "dismissing the student(s) from the classroom" was "not bringing course materials to the classroom", followed by "not being punctual". These results can be interpreted as being in keeping with the school regulations, which state that a student must be dismissed from the classroom when these behaviors occur. However, it is interesting to note that only about half the teachers chose the "dismissing" option (55.2% for not bringing class materials and 46.6% for not being punctual). The other three behaviors to which the teachers mostly reacted by dismissing the students from the classroom were "insulting the teacher", "using mobile phones", and "insulting another student" respectively, suggesting that teachers are unable to tolerate disrespectful behavior, regardless of its target.

The next most popular reaction was “talking to the student(s) later individually”. This reaction is a somewhat humanistic approach. The reason for this could be because of teachers’ reluctance to humiliate students in front of their peers. Considering the students to be adults, most of the teachers prefer to talk to the students in private. This reaction was the most favored for “refusing to participate in classroom activities”.

The least popular reaction was “informing the administration about the problem”, which was chosen for only two behaviors, “insulting the teacher” and “insulting another student”. However, even for these behaviors, percentages are both rather low, 21.2% and 5.4%, respectively. The reason for not informing the administration about these problems could be the teachers’ tendency to deal with problems directly related to the teaching and learning process themselves, unless it involves a personal insult, which is when they prefer to involve the administration.

The results gathered from this study are supported by the literature. Meyers (2003) suggests some prevention strategies, i.e. solving problems before they emerge in college classrooms. Communicating warmth and interpersonal sensitivity, establishing a shared course framework and establishing learning communities in classes are also listed, but despite these attempts at prevention, disruption, negative attitudes, and conflict can still emerge in university classrooms. How should teachers respond in these cases? Meyers proposes three strategies: explicitly acknowledging students’ feelings and communicating empathy, helping students evaluate their alternatives, and using comprehensive problem-solving methods.

The results show no consistent pattern regarding the teachers’ perception, reaction and the frequency of encountering these behaviors on the basis of experience. Therefore, it may be concluded that experience is not a variable in this situation. One reason might be that length of experience is not a significant factor in the determination of whether a behavior is considered disruptive. Rather, it is the characteristics, beliefs and attitudes of teachers that play significant roles in this determination. This may also be true for the reactions that the teachers display for any given disruptive behavior. In this sense, length of service is again not a significant factor in the reactions of teachers.

This study set out to identify three separate issues. The first aim of the study was to find out whether teachers encounter certain behaviors in their classrooms. The second aim was to explore which behaviors were considered to be disruptive. The final goal of the study was to understand the reactions of the teachers encountering such behaviors in their classrooms. Finally, the investigation of all three aspects took into account the degree of experience of teachers.

The study showed that instructors encountered behaviors listed in the questionnaire and perceived such behaviors as disruptive to the ongoing teaching and learning processes in their classrooms. However, this perception did not necessarily depend on the number of years of experience of the teachers, with individual characteristics playing a greater role in their different perceptions. As for the reactions to such behaviors in the classrooms, teachers mentioned various ways

of dealing with problem behavior. According to the results of this study, these variations were not necessarily correlated with the amount of experience, since the observation of certain behaviors increased with increasing number of years of experience, while for other behaviors, the observation decreased.

The results of this study show the validity of the assumption that disruptive behaviors are observable not only in primary and second education but also in higher education, and this was supported with empirical data. In other words, disruptive behaviors are encountered in higher education more than expected, and further research would enrich the literature. Additionally, most research has concentrated on the level of primary education, and there is less research at the secondary and higher education levels (Senturk & Oral, 2008). It would, therefore, be helpful to concentrate on secondary and higher education levels in future studies. The conclusion obtained from this study could be used by teacher trainings to raise prospective teachers' awareness, particularly at the university level, of the fact that disruptive behaviors are also frequently observed in higher education. In light of this reality, trainings could include seminars on disruptive behaviors and possible alternative solutions to this problem. In this way, future teachers would be more prepared to deal with such situations in their classrooms.

Another result obtained from this study is the finding that there are no significant differences among teachers with different levels of experience regarding the frequency of occurrence, perception of and reaction to disruptive behaviors. This conclusion may be used to reduce the anxiety level of recently employed teachers, because the awareness that even experienced teachers face similar problems could reduce feelings of isolation and increase solidarity. Furthermore, should there be a common institutional policy for disruptive behaviors, experience may not necessarily be considered a factor in this policy. Since the beliefs of teachers determine their reactions to disruptive behaviors, it is desirable that institutions provide alternative reaction models towards misbehavior, allowing the teachers to choose among alternatives. This seems more effective than focusing on or mandating only one alternative as an institutional policy.

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Öğretim Elemanlarının Yüksek Öğretimde Düzen Bozucu Davranışları Algılamaları ve Bunlara Tepkileri

(Özet)

Problem Durumu: Öğrencilere göre iyi bir öğretmen; alanına hakim, sınıf ortamında tartışmalara daha fazla yer veren, klasik ders sunumunun dışına çıkabilen, öğrencilere kendi düzeylerinde hitap edebilen, tehdide ve cezaya başvurmeyen, öğrencileri takdir eden, onları aynı zamanda eğlendiren kişi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Ayrıca bu değerlendirmede etkin sınıf yönetimi de önemli bir madde olarak yerini alır. Etkin sınıf yönetimi kavramı elbette genel anlamda disiplin kavramını da içerir ki disiplin bir amaçla bir araya gelmiş insan grubunun düzen içinde yaşamasını sağlamak için seçilip konulmuş kurallar ve bunlara uyulması için alınan önlemleri ifade eder. Disiplin denilince akla daha çok katı kurallara dayalı düzen anlayışı ve bu durumun tekrarını engellemek amacıyla kullanılan ceza ve yöntemleri gelmektedir. Oysa ki disiplin, sadece ceza vermek değil olumsuz davranışların ortaya çıkmasını önlemek için tutarlı ve kararlı davranışlarda bulunmaktır. Kısacası, iyi bir öğrenme ortamının oluşturulması ve başarılı sınıf yönetiminin gerçekleşmesi için üst düzey bir çaba gösterilmelidir. Elbette, sınıfta – ilköğretim, orta öğretim ya da yüksek öğretim- bu çabayı gösterecek kişi öğretmendir. İşte tam da bu yüzden, disiplinin önemli bir bölümünü oluşturduğu etkin sınıf yönetimi her başarılı öğretmenin sahip olması gereken bir beceri olarak nitelendirilir. Etkin sınıf yönetimi becerileri sadece ilköğretimde değil aynı zamanda yüksek öğretimde de oldukça önemli bir öğretmen yetisidir. Zannedilenin aksine, yüksek öğretimde ders veren öğretim elemanları da ders akışını bozabilecek birtakım düzen bozucu hareketlerle karşılaşabilirler. İyi davranış, sınıfta etkin ve etkili bir öğretimin gerçekleşmesi için önkoşul olduğundan, düzen bozucu davranışların doğasının anlaşılması; ne oldukları ve bunları neyin başlattığının öğretmen ve öğretim elemanları tarafından bilinmesi, ve bu tip davranışlarla karşılaşıldığı zaman verilen tepkilerin anlaşılması hem halen görev yapmakta olan öğretim elemanları hem de mesleğe hazırlanan geleceğin öğretmenleri tarafından hassasiyetle incelenmelidir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Öğretmenler okul ve sınıf ortamında birçok farklı role sahiptir. Bu rollerin içinde belki de en önemlisi, etkin sınıf yönetimi ya da diğer bir deyişle sınıf yöneticiliği becerileridir. Bu becerinin eksik ya da zayıf olduğu bir sınıf ortamında etkili öğrenme ve öğretimin olması beklenemez. Eğitim-öğretimin hangi düzeyinde olursa olsun, davranışları kontrol altına alınamayan öğrenciler, sınıf ortamında düzen bozucu davranışlarıyla kargaşa yaratabilirler ve bu durum hem öğrencilere hem de öğretmene zarar verir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı yüksek öğretimde deneyimli ve deneyimsiz öğretim elemanlarının hangi davranışları düzen bozucu olarak adlandırdıklarını tespit etmek, ardından bu öğretim elemanlarının bu tip davranışlarla karşılaşma sıklıklarını ve karşılaştıklarında verdikleri tepkileri belirlemektir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Veriler araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan ve kapsam geçerliliği uzman danışman tarafından onaylanan anket formları ile elde edilmiştir. 20

maddelik, üç bölümden oluşan ankette Likert tipi sorular kullanılmış ve tüm katılımcılara anketi cevaplamaları için eşit süre tanınmıştır. Tüm analizler SPSS 13 sürümünü kullanılarak bilgisayarda yapılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Katılımcıları: Yukarıda bahsedilen amaca ulaşmak için, düzenlenen çalışmaya toplam 60 öğretim elemanı dahil olmuştur. Bu öğretim elemanlarının deneyimleri 1 ila 28 yıl arasında çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Yine amaca hizmet etmesi doğrultusunda, çalışmaya katılan öğretim elemanları deneyimlerine göre 4 ayrı gruba bölünmüşlerdir. İlk grupta 1-3 (18 kişi), ikinci grupta 4-6 (20 kişi), üçüncü grupta 7-9 (10 kişi) ve son grupta on yıldan fazla (12 kişi) sınıf içi öğretmenlik deneyime sahip öğretim elemanları bulunmaktadır. Yapılan bütün analizler deneyim çalışmanın önemli bir değişkeni olduğu için tüm bu gruplar için ayrı ayrı incelenmiş ve sunulmuştur.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, öncelikle sınıf içi deneyimi, yüksek öğretim sınıflarında ortaya çıkan düzen bozucu davranışların algılanmasında bir faktör değildir. Öğretmenlik deneyimi kaç yıl olursa olsun, öğretmenler aynı birtakım davranışları düzen bozucu olarak adlandırmaktadırlar. Bunların başında "Başka bir öğrenciyi hakaret etmek, arkadaşlarıyla sohbet etmek ve öğretmene hakaret etmek" yer almaktadır. Aynı şekilde bu davranışların sınıflarda ortaya çıkma sıklığı da deneyimle açıklanamamaktadır. Bu tip davranışlara verilen tepkilerde ise her ne kadar deneyime göre bazı farklılıklar ortaya çıkmışsa da bunlar istatistiksel olarak belirgin değildir. Tüm katılımcılar "sınıfa yönelik genel uyarı ifadeleri kullanmak, davranışı göz ardı etmek ve öğrenciyle dersten sonra yalnız konuşmak" maddelerini en sık kullandıkları eylemler olarak sıralamışlardır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Bu çalışmayla, disiplin ve düzen bozucu davranışların yüksek öğretimde de karşılaşılabilen durumlar olduğu ortaya çıkmış ve ispatlanmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar ışığında, öğretmen yetiştiren kurum ve bireyler, aday öğretmenlerin bu konudaki algı düzeylerini arttırmalı ve hatta belki de aday öğretmenlere bu konuda alternatif olabilecek davranışlar sunmayı ya da bu konuda seminerler vermeyi dikkate alabilir. Disiplini bozan davranışlar, bunların nasıl algılandığı ve bunlara verilen tepkiler kadar, bu tip davranışların sınıf içinde meydana gelmemesi için öğretmenin sahip olması gereken birtakım beceriler hem öğretmenin eğitiminde hem de hizmet içi eğitim seminerlerinde çalışılmalıdır. Bu tip davranışlara yol açmamak için öğretmenin planlı çalışması, tutarlı davranması ve sınıf içi birtakım kurallar koyarak bunlara uyması önerilebilir. Hatta bu uygulama bir adım öteye götürülerek, her iki taraf -eğitim kadrosu ve öğrenciler- birlikte tüm kuralları saptayabilir ve kabul ettiklerini imzalarıyla belirtirler.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Düzen bozucu davranışlar, sınıf yönetimi, deneyimli öğretmen, deneyimsiz öğretmen