An Examination of New Zealand Teachers' Attributions and Perceptions of Behaviour, Classroom Management, and the Level of Formal Teacher Training Received in Behaviour Management

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ABSTRACT

The way in which behaviour is perceived and managed by teachers can influence the classroom environment. The current study examined teachers' perceptions of the cause of school behavioural problems and the effectiveness of positive behavioural interventions. It also examined the level of formal training participants have received in behaviour management. Results indicated that a number of participants perceived school behavioural problems to be caused by external factors such as parenting and that these behaviours are controllable by the students. Results also indicated that a number of teachers believe positive behavioural interventions do not work despite the research that indicates that they do. Teachers also report receiving minimal formal training in behaviour management or ongoing professional development in the area which is likely to influence their perceptions and classroom management practice. Results are discussed in terms of teacher training and professional development and the current work of the Ministry of Education's Positive Behaviour 4 Learning (PB4L) initiative.

Research paper

Keywords: *Behaviour, professional development, teacher learning, teachers' perceptions*

INTRODUCTION

Behavioural problems in the classroom can have a negative effect on teachers and students. Students with behavioural problems are likely to perform poorer on a variety of variables measuring school adjustment (e.g., academic, social) than their peers without behavioural problems (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008). Despite the media attention regarding the most severe incidents of behaviour, research indicates less disruptive behaviours can also have a serious impact on the school system (Little & Akin-Little, 2009). In addition, one of the main contributors to teachers' psychological distress is the behavioural management of students (Everaert & van der Wolf, 2007; Lambert, McCarthy, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2007).

There are a number of variables within the classroom environment, which have the potential to influence the likelihood of behaviour occurring or not occurring or increasing or decreasing (Alberto & Troutman, 2009; Emmer & Stough, 2001; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008). Teachers cannot ensure students behave appropriately. However, effective classroom management can increase the likelihood of students engaging and learning in the classroom (Akin-Little, Little, & Laniti, 2007; Little & Akin-Little, 2008). In addition, teachers' training in classroom management as well as their beliefs about classroom management and the cause of student behaviour may have influence on classroom management practices (Little, Sterling, & Farrell, 1997). Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to explore teachers' perceptions and attributions of school behaviour problems and classroom management. As beliefs and attributions are influenced by knowledge, teachers' levels of formal training were examined as well as their perceptions of whether their training prepared them for the realities of managing a classroom.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993/1994) conducted an analysis of 50 years of research on factors that influence student learning and identified classroom management as the most important factor. They stated that "effective classroom management increases student engagement, decreases disruptive behaviours, and makes good use of instructional time" (Wang et al., p. 76). Conversely, ineffective classroom management has been shown to have a negative effect on students academically, behaviourally, and socially (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008).

There is no one definition of classroom management. Rather, there are a number of techniques and procedures that can be followed to help teachers better manage the classroom (Little & Akin-Little, 2009). However, given that students need to be engaged in order to learn and that disruptive behaviour can interfere with learning, effective strategies for promoting positive behaviour must be considered an important part of classroom management (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). Academic failure and problem behaviour have been found to be closely related (Sutherland et al., 2008) and academic and behavioural performances cannot be considered mutually exclusive entities (Wehby & Lane, 2009). Therefore, a positive learning environment should not only focus on developing learning but also on social, emotional, and behavioural competencies (Hester, 2002).

Gable, Hester, Rock and Hughes (2009) conducted a review of empirical studies, literature reviews, and textbooks from the last 50 years regarding effective classroom management practices. Findings suggested a small number of age-appropriate rules defining behavioural expectations can be very effective in influencing classroom behaviour. Student awareness of the positive and negative consequences for rules following violation was also found to be an important variable. They also showed strong empirical evidence for the use of contingent praise, especially when used with other strategies (Gable et al., 2009). Despite this, research indicates that teachers are more likely to interact negatively with students with behavioural problems (Nelson & Roberts, 2000). Behaviour-specific praise has been shown to be the most effective procedure, yet its use by teachers is very low with research suggesting teachers use behaviour specific praise less than five percent of the time (Gable et al., 2009; Sutherland et al., 2008).

Reinforcement within a positive classroom environment helps to shape and influence students' behaviour in positive ways (Akin-Little, Little, & Delligatti, 2004). Cameron and Pierce (1994), Eisenberger and Cameron (1996), Cameron, Banko, and Pierce (2001), Akin-Little, Eckert, Lovett, and Little (2004), and Little and Akin-Little (2009) all conducted meta-analyses and/or extensive reviews, and concluded there are no easily unavoidable detrimental effects of extrinsic reward on student behaviour or performance. In spite of this evidence, some educators believe extrinsic reinforcers have a negative effect on students' intrinsic motivation to perform a reinforced task once the reinforcer for that task has been withdrawn (e.g., Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). One author has even gone so far as to state that the use of external rewards, even verbal praise, can be considered bribery to invoke temporary obedience and make children dependent on adult approval (Kohn, 1993). Best practice would suggest that students function optimally and therefore deserve a positive classroom environment based on sound empirical findings. There is a strong body of evidence to suggest the effective implementation of classroom management procedures based on positive reinforcement is efficacious and easily implemented by classroom teachers (Little & Akin-Little, 2009). The question, then, is what factors are interfering with the implementation of these techniques in schools?

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS

Miller (2003) writes "attributions of cause are not objective truths" (p. 145). In agreement with Miller, they are instead an attempt to interpret or explain the cause of their own or someone else's behaviour. However, casual statements about the origins of behaviour are often created on the basis of one's perceptions. This is especially so when circumstances are distressing or stressful. Rather than factual evidence, people tend to act on the basis of their beliefs and attributions (Miller, 2003). One way that we attempt to make sense of our social world is through the attribution of another's behaviour to either internal (i.e., dispositional) or external (i.e., situational) causes. Internal attributions include causes such as mood, attitude, personality, ability, etc. External attributions, on the other hand, include causes such as the situational characteristics, luck, etc. Thus, if a teacher is to effectively address the problem of a student, he or she must determine whether the trouble is due to internal determinants (such as a lack of ability to control behaviour), or to situational determinants (such as a poor home environment) (Little et al., 1997).

Teachers' belief systems, perspectives, attitudes, as well as their training and knowledge, influences what occurs in the classroom environment including the way they manage behaviour (Bester, 2007; Shindler, 2010). Vitaro, Tremblay, and Gagnon (1995) rated children in kindergarten and then again in first grade for aggression and hyperactivity. They found that teachers' management style influenced the ratings they gave. These results suggest that teacher perceptions may moderate student behaviour.

Attribution theory provides a framework with which to understand how people interpret causes to behaviour and events (Little et al., 1997). According to Weiner (2005), attributions can be classified into three dimensions: locus (internal or external), stability (duration and likelihood of

remaining), and controllability (under individual's control). How a person perceives behaviour determines how they will respond or react to it (Weiner, 2005). Therefore, teachers need to be aware and consider the role they play in maintaining inappropriate behaviour. Behaviours perceived as being less controllable are likely to elicit more pro-social behaviours from the teacher. However, if a student is perceived as intentionally behaving in a certain way then the response is likely to evoke negative reactions. For example, a teacher may perceive that a student's behaviour is caused by parenting and that the parenting style is not likely to change, therefore the child has no control. This would be an external attribution which implies that the behaviour is stable and uncontrolled. The teacher, therefore, may view that anything that they do in the classroom would be futile, as it is not going to change the cause of the behaviour.

Teachers who tend to blame school behaviour problems on home factors such as parenting or internal characteristics of the student are more likely to seek services from outside the school to help 'solve the problem' (Athanasiou, Geil, Hazel, & Copeland, 2002; Miller, 2003). It allows them to shift responsibility away from themselves and the school and they escape having to manage the behaviour (Glynn & Berryman, 2005). In order to create an environment that is supportive, positive, collaborative, where everyone is valued (i.e., systems utilising the principals of positive behavioural support), teachers need to address their views, perceptions, and prejudices of students who display inappropriate behaviour (Grieve, 2009).

FORMAL TEACHER TRAINING

Given the evidence on the importance of classroom management, an important question must therefore be, "Are teachers adequately trained in effective classroom management practices?" A survey of elementary school teachers in the United States indicated that, more than 90% reported that they needed more training in classroom management (Jones & Jones, 2004). However, studies in New Zealand regarding teachers' perceptions of whether their formal training prepared them for managing classrooms are sparse. In a study that surveyed 855 graduating secondary New Zealand teachers and 50 mentors, the new teachers repeatedly reported on their lack of training and need for more assistance in managing their classrooms. Some teachers' responses specifically expressed dissatisfaction with their teacher preparatory programmes in providing training in classroom management (Anthony & Kane, 2008).

Additionally, for the purposes of this study, a brief review of the websites of teacher training in five major universities in New Zealand (Massey, Victoria, Canterbury, Otago, and Auckland) was undertaken that revealed substantial variability across programmes. A review of the courses offered for 2011 for each university using key words/terms such as *behaviour management, behavioural difficulties, classroom management, management practices, effective pedagogical practices, positive environments, and/or climate, positive relationships* indicated that teachers are not being offered courses which specifically examine classroom or behaviour management in detail, according to the course descriptions (Massey University, 2010; University of Auckland, 2010; University of Canterbury, 2010; University of Otago, 2010; Victoria University, 2010). Interestingly, one university offered courses in challenging behaviour, classroom management, and behaviour management; however these were designed for teacher-aides, not teachers (Massey University, 2011). Thus, the survey of the present study was supported by the current paucity of data in this area.

In addition, however, it should be noted that the Ministry of Education has recently implemented a new approach to the response to both severe behaviour disorders and low-level incidences of disruptive behaviour in the classroom. This approach, *Positive Behaviour 4 Learning (PB4L)* was agreed upon by 150 attendees at a summit convened in 2009 to discuss implementation of evidence-based intervention in the schools. The PB4L implementation began in 2010 over a five-year period. According to the Ministry of Education's website, anticipated outcome data include a positive "school culture," more positive interactions with whānau (family), less office referrals, and, important to this study, educators feeling more "confident and supported" in their ability to intervene successfully with problem behaviours. A search of the Ministry of Education's website reveals little evidence at present of the success of this programme. Thus, this study is important as it provides an initial exploration of how some New Zealand teachers report their acceptability of this type of intervention -i.e., PB4L.; (see http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/PositiveBehaviourForLearning/ThePlan/Overview.aspx).

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 42 teachers from five primary schools in the Hawke's Bay area of New Zealand. The sample consisted of 81% women and 19 % men while 16.7% identified themselves as Māori

and 83.3% as European. Thirty-one percent of the participants taught years one and two students, 42.9% taught years three and four students, and 26.2% of the participants taught year five and six students. The qualifications of the participants included a diploma (14.3%), a Bachelors degree (69%), teaching training certificate (7.1%), Masters degree (4.8%), and postgraduate qualification (2.4%). Thirty-six participants completed their qualification in New Zealand, one in Australia, one in Australia and New Zealand, and four participants chose not to answer. Teaching experience of participants ranged from 6 months to 42 years with a mean teaching experience of 14.7 years. Note, curriculum of Australia teaching programmes were not examined.

Procedure and Materials

Seventy-two questionnaires were distributed across five schools with an overall response rate of 58%. The criterion for selection was that participants were currently teaching students on a regular basis. This included teachers who were in a job share position. Principals, Reading Recovery teachers, relief teachers, and management who did not teach were excluded from the study (*n*=7).

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions; 11 using a 5-point Likert scale, six requiring a 'Yes' or 'No' answer, and three multiple choice questions. Each question also had space provided for the participants to make comments. The majority of the participants were personally approached and requested to participate in the study by the first author. However, a small number of questionnaires were left at each school for teachers who were not available during distribution. Each participant was verbally informed of the purpose of the study, the consent procedure, and issues around the use of the data and confidentiality. Participants were asked to return completed questionnaires to the researcher personally or to an envelope which had been left at the office of each school. Participants were informed that they could detach the consent form from the questionnaire prior to putting it in the envelope if they wished to remain anonymous.

RESULTS

Teachers' perceptions of the cause of school problems (parenting, communication, mismanagement in the classroom, problem with the student, problem student cannot control, problem unlikely to change) were rated on a 5- point Likert scale from 'Never' to 'Always'. Results indicated the majority of participants tended to respond conservatively by answering 'sometimes' except for "problem that is unlikely to change" in which the majority responded 'rarely'. A large number of participants (76.2%) responded 'sometimes' to parenting with 19% answering "very often." Interestingly, participants appeared to believe that problem behaviour was not something that students could not control with 40.5% answering 'rarely' and 45.2% answering 'sometimes'. This also seemed to be similar with teacher perceptions of whether the problem is likely to change with 61.9% answering 'rarely'. One comment was made for this question – *"Depends on the child i.e. whether they have a label of ADHD."* Finally, 88.1% of teachers rated mismanagement in the classroom as "sometimes" or "very often" the cause of problem behaviour in the classroom (See Table 1).

Responses indicated that participants believed that behaviour serves a purpose for students. All participants who responded reported behaviour 'sometimes' (36%), 'very often' (36%), and 'always' (21%) has a function or serves a purpose. Teachers also appeared to believe that teacher behaviour

Table 1

Teachers' Perceptions of Pupils' School Behaviour

Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always
Q1a Parenting	0	2 (4.8%)	32 (76.2%)	8 (19%)	0
Q1b Form of communication	0	4 (9.5%)	23 (54.8%)	14 (33.3%)	1 (2.4%)
Q1c Mismanagement in the classroom	0	5 (11.9%)	26 (61.9%)	11 (26.2%)	0
Q1d Problem within the student	0	5 (11.9%)	27 (64.3%)	9 (21.4%)	1 (2.4%)
Q1e Problem student cannot control	0	17 (40.5%)	19 (45.2%)	5 (11.9%)	1 (2.4%)
Q1f Problem that is unlikely to change	3 (7.1%)	26 (61.9%)	10 (23.8%)	3 (7.1%)	0

can be very influential in the classroom with 59% of participants stating that their teaching practices can influence student behaviour to a considerable degree. In addition, 34% responded 'almost always' with only 7% 'responding occasionally'.

Positive Behavioural Interventions

Teachers' perceptions of positive behavioural interventions (PBI) were also explored. Participants were asked whether they felt that PBIs worked with all children in their class or if there were circumstances where they felt PBIs did not work for students. The majority of teachers (61%) reported that positive behavioural interventions do not work with 39% reporting they did work. Comments that were made by participants who responded that PBIs do not work included: "only sometimes" and "some children just do not value positive interventions". Comments from participants who felt that PBIs did work included: "along with consistency", "finding the right thing for the child", "to certain degrees as everyone responds differently to intrinsic/extrinsic rewards", "maybe a few exceptions", "if used effectively and is purposeful for them," "not all the time nor always by themselves".

When asked how often circumstances arose where positive behavioural interventions DO NOT work, the majority of participants reported that these circumstances rarely (45%) or sometimes (41%) present themselves. Twelve percent indicated that there were no circumstances that prevented PBIs from being effective. Only 2% (one participant) indicated these circumstances were present 'very often'. Despite only one participant responding that there are 'very often' circumstances which prevent positive behavioural interventions from working, the anecdotal comments appeared to contradict the empirical results. Many of these comments indicated doubt around the success of PBIs. Of those who responded 'no' or 'rarely' only one comment fit with the participant's response to the question. The other comments indicated that the child is a reason why positive behavioural interventions would not work. Statements included: "the child is not willing to change", or "the child does not find the reward or praise reinforcing". There was no mention of the influence of the teacher's behaviour as a factor in PBIs not working. Of those who responded PBIs sometimes work, a number of the comments reflected the teacher's perception that home factors influence whether positive behavioural interventions work or not. A number of other comments indicated that some children "do not or cannot accept praise", or that praise "has no perceived value", or students "don't care about positive behavioural interventions". The one participant who indicated that PBIs very often do not work made the following comment: [Some students have] "no concept of what right/wrong is. They are unaware that their behaviour is a problem i.e. they keep re-offending".

Formal Teacher Training in Behaviour

When asked about formal teaching training they may have had that was specific to behaviour management or classroom management, 21.4% of the teachers responded that they had taken such a course and 73.8% responded that they had not. An additional, 71.4% of participants indicated that behaviour management was a component of a course they took during their training. Of these, however, 42.9% indicated behaviour management constituted less than 10% of the content of the course and another 32.1% indicated it comprised 10% to 25% of the content. Only 3.6% indicated that it comprised more than half the content in the course. Only 16.2% of participants responded that they believed their formal teacher training had prepared them for managing behaviour in a classroom with 83.8% indicating their formal training was inadequate.

Professional Development

Eight-one percent of participants responded that they have received professional development specific to behaviour management since completing their teacher training. However, some participants questioned the utility of this training. For example, one participant stated professional development was "often too PC and stepped around real classroom issues". With regard to the frequency of professional development opportunities, 47.6% responded that they were 'rarely' offered professional development in behaviour management.

Despite a large number of participants indicating that they did not feel their formal teacher training adequately prepared them, and the reported lack of professional development, a large percentage (77.5%) still felt confident or very confident in managing classroom behaviour problems. However, 23.5% answered they were only 'very little' or 'somewhat confident'.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine teachers' perceptions of the cause of school behavioural problems, and the effectiveness of positive behavioural interventions. It also examined the level of training participants have received in behaviour management. Results suggest that New Zealand teachers tend to attribute the cause of school behaviour problems primarily to external factors such as home circumstances

and parenting. More specifically, data suggest that teachers' perception of the problem behaviour was within the child, able to be controlled by students, and able to be changed over time. These results are generally in agreement with previous research (see Little et al., 1997).

The way in which the cause of behaviour is perceived influences problem solution. If we perceive that the cause is beyond our influence then we are not likely to look for ways in which we can positively change the behaviour (Weiner, 2004). If we perceive that a child is able to control his/her behaviour and when behavioural problems occur, we are likely to presume that the child has the capacity to change his/her behaviour in some way. Unfortunately, when these perceptions exist adults may take a negative approach (i.e., punishment) to dealing with the behaviour (Weiner, 2004).

Effective classroom management benefits not only students with behavioural and academic problems but all students in the classroom. Targeting classroom management as an intervention as opposed to individual reductive approaches (Little, Akin-Little, & Cook, 2009) has the advantage of reducing current problems as well as helping to prevent future problems (Reinke et al., 2008). The majority of the teachers in the current study felt that mismanagement contributes only sometimes to the problem behaviours that present themselves in their classrooms. This is a concern as data indicates mismanagement in the classroom is a major factor contributing to behavioural problems. Couple that with results indicating that the majority of teachers do not have extensive training in classroom behaviour management and one may surmise this is a reason why children, particularly minority children, are not provided with appropriate intervention that ameliorates emotional, behavioural and/or academic difficulties. The data from this survey indicates that the teachers responding to this study do not believe their behaviour is a factor in whether or not a child behaves appropriately and that they are competent in classroom management techniques even with little training. However, since reportedly they have very little training in classroom management, their beliefs appear to be suspect. Exploring these issues was beyond the scope of the current study, but is one that is recommended as a focus for future researchers.

Research indicates that positive behavioural interventions (PBI) and positive classroom environments can positively influence behaviour (Jones & Jones, 2004). In spite of an extensive body or research supporting the efficacy of PBI and the behavioural theory that underlies this approach (Simonson & Sugai, 2009), the results of the current study indicate that a large number of teachers do not believe they work. Comments made by participants illustrate the perception that factors associated with the student as the main reason why positive behavioural interventions do not work with all children. Notable, however, many of the responses indicated that teachers perhaps do not understand the term 'positive behavioural interventions' or how to implement them effectively. According to Akin-Little and colleagues (2004), "… it is the practice and not the principles that are suspect, and open to misapplication and abuse …" (p. 359). The authors suggest that what is needed is more training in the implementation and delivery of behavioural approaches in the classroom. Despite the lack of confidence in positive behavioural interventions, teachers again stated that they were confident overall in managing classroom behaviour problems. Further examination would be needed to explore what strategies they use as alternatives to positive behavioural interventions however.

Formal Teacher Training and Professional Development

According to Jones and Jones (2004) one of the reasons that classroom management continues to be a problem is that teachers to do not appear to receive training or information regarding the research on effective classroom management practices. The results of the current study highlighted the lack of training the teachers receive in behaviour management. Only a small number of teachers indicated that they have completed university papers (i.e., courses) in their formal training that were specific to behaviour or classroom management. A larger portion of the participants stated that behaviour/classroom management was a component of papers, however most indicated that it was a small component. On reviewing the university papers (courses) available at present, there are very few, if any, papers (courses) that are specific to behaviour. Among those specific to behaviour, most appeared to be at a graduate level, and optional.

A common theme which emerged from the comments in the current study was that much of the learning regarding behaviour/classroom management comes from on-the-job experience and observation of experienced teachers. The difficulty with this is that few beginning teachers may be fortunate enough to have the opportunity to observe teachers who have good management practices as there are no procedures in place to guarantee such an experience. Unfortunately, good intentions, common sense, and experience do not necessarily lead to good practice. Experience can also have the disadvantage of perpetuating the use of ineffective strategies and practice (Shindler, 2010).

Most teachers in this study had received professional development since completing their formal training; however, some teachers had not received any. This is concerning, as acquired knowledge needs to be built and expanded upon. Unfortunately, results indicated that the professional development priority for schools and teachers is aligned more toward curriculum development than behaviour and effective classroom management strategies. Specifically, participants stated that of all the professional development they had received, topics related to curriculum consisted of 40-100% of their experiences, as opposed to behaviour management which ranged from zero to 15% of their professional development training, although teachers appear to experience work-related stress at higher levels than many other professions (Lambert et al., 2007), with one of the main contributors being behaviour management.

Often classroom management is viewed as ways of disciplining inappropriate behaviour rather than ways of supporting positive behaviour (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2001). Teachers may need to re-think their beliefs and perceptions of what classroom management is. If they continue to look for times students are engaging in inappropriate behaviour the behaviour is more likely to increase and/or escalate. By shifting the focus to consequences for positive behaviour, it creates a positive environment and role-models positive ways of interacting (Drasgow, 1997).

As noted in the introduction, however, the Ministry of Education has begun a focus on a more primary prevention model by the implementation of PB4L. There is a definite focus by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand to train and support educators to adopt a more positive, data-based approach to the amelioration of behavioral difficulties in the classroom. These survey results appear to indicate that for these respondents at least, there is more work to be done at both the school level and, most importantly, the level of teacher training in New Zealand for teachers to be both knowledgeable and confident in an more positive approach to the management of classroom behaviour see http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/PositiveBehaviourForLearning/ThePlan/Overview.aspx). It should be noted though that it does not appear clear that the Ministry of Education, in implementing this programme, has made adequate efforts to ensure intervention integrity and meaningful outcome data collection.

Limitations

While the results of the current study offer some valuable perspectives on teachers' perceptions of student misbehaviour as well as their training and practice in classroom/behaviour management, there are limitations in the current research which need to be considered for future studies. First, the sample used in the current study was relatively small (n=42) and from one region of the North Island of New Zealand. A larger, more diverse sample is recommended in future research. The structure of the materials used also presented some challenges. The current study used a mixture of question types, for example, a 5-point Likert scale for a number of questions, questions requiring YES or NO answers, and multiple choice questions. This made some comparisons difficult because of the different scaling. In addition, using a 5-point Likert scale allowed participants to answer conservatively (i.e., 'sometimes') which limited the need to take a definitive position. It was also noted that in many cases the responses given on the Likert scale contradicted comments that were made to the free-response portion of the questionnaire. It is likely that there is variability regarding people's perceptions of the definition of school behaviour problems. Therefore, individual differences in the perceptions of the definition may have influenced the way participants responded. Finally, it is very important to note that many teachers do not have training in specific classroom management techniques at the undergraduate level in either a didactic or practical application. Many teachers may not be fully aware of the extent of positive behavioural interventions, assuming that this merely includes praise and reward. Thus, teachers could have been responding to the survey without fully comprehending what exactly was being asked of them.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Teachers play a crucial role in the development of children. Research indicates that burnout, emotional and mental exhaustion, and low efficacy of teachers impacts on the relationship of teachers with their students and the quality of their teaching (Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, & Leaf, 2010). The results of the current study highlight inadequacies in formal teacher training and ongoing professional development in the area of classroom management in New Zealand. Given that research indicates that teachers find managing behaviour one of the more challenging parts of their role, a review of formal teacher training and adequate ongoing support and training must be considered essential for teachers. Though not specifically addressed, these results also have implications for behavioural consultation as consultants need to be acutely aware of the limitations in terms of teacher knowledge, training and support for these types of interventions.

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