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# Factors Causing Students' Disruptive Behavior in Learning English: A Case Study

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### Abstract

One of the most serious problems in effective teaching and learning processes at the secondary level is students' disruptive behavior. All stakeholders should have been giving more attention to students' disruptive behavior especially during learning processes. This study aimed to give a descriptive account of the factors causing students' disruptive behavior in learning English based on the case study of a student who is categorized as the most disruptive student in learning English. This study applied descriptive qualitative research by using a purposive sampling technique. Two of the EFL teachers, a counselor, two of his classmates, and one of his family were interviewed for the data collection. The observation checklist and field notes were also used to show the student's disruptive behavior when learning English. The data analysis consisted of the data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion: drawing/verification. The findings showed that the factors causing the student's disruptive behavior in learning English were (a) seeking attention, (b) classmate, (c) close friend, (d) learning environment, (e) family, and (f) social environment. It can be inferred that the most dominant cause of student's disruptive behavior came from external factors.

**Keywords:** Disruptive Behavior, factors, case study, causes, English learning, classroom

## Introduction

Deriving from student differences in learning English, every teacher expected the students can show adequate behavior to help the learning process run well; however, in real condition, it might be so dramatic with students' various characters and behavior. Some of them frequently disturb and impede the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. It is called disruptive behavior. According to Ardin (2016) "disruptive behavior is students' behavior retarding the smoothness and effectiveness of teaching and impeding the English learning process." In addition, Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000) stated that "disruptive behavior is related to school disciplinary problems that influence the fundamental rights of the student to feel safe and treated with respect in the learning environment." The purpose of investigating students' disruptive behavior is to provide a comprehensive point of view toward the occurrence of the behavior, so all stakeholders especially the teacher can decide a wise and adequate treatment for the student. It cannot be denied that the teacher still expects that students' behavior can be changed to be better and better. For the sake of a bright future, there is no teacher expecting failure for students.

Based on a previous study, Ardin (2016) reported one student in SMP Negeri 18 Makassar was categorized as the most disruptive students in learning English based on a semi-structured interview with his EFL teachers, counselor, and classmates. The types of the student's disruptive behavior were coming late, ignoring the teacher explanation, being silent when the teacher asking, chatting with his friend when learning process, sometimes leaving his seat and room while his teacher is still in the classroom, using a mobile phone, playing with stuff like hat and pen, sometimes sleeping in the learning process, distracting his friend's attention from the teacher explanation, cheating and copying his friend's assignment, not accomplishing his assignment and sometimes rough language was uttered when interacting with his classmates.

Some researchers also have conducted research related to this issue generally. Ghazi, et al. (2013) found that there are 13 causes of students disruptive behavior, they are inconsistent parenting, uncaring parents, over-protective parents, bad influences on a student's local community, poverty, poor quality teaching, teachers negative attitude towards a student, repeating change in subject teacher, repeating the same class, lack of motivation from the teacher, load shedding and lack of alternative, classrooms poor conditions, and some psychological problems of a student. Besides, Belle (2017) stated that the school, the family, the peer pressure, the community, and the new media negatively impact on student behavior. It is in line with the statement from Ali et al. (2014) that several factors like the schools, students, and the society at large contributed greatly to the acts of indiscipline among the students. It was also found that reduction strategies employed by various schools are not effective and as a result, the study recommended among other things that a wholesome approach to manage students' discipline should be adopted by the administrators and other stakeholders of the schools.

Hence, it is urgent to conduct this research because the result of this study will contribute to EFL teachers and stakeholder to find some new treatment or method to deal with the students' disruptive behavior and also some strategies to manage the disruptive behavior based on the factors causing it.

## Methodology

As a case study to find out the factors causing students' disruptive behavior in learning English, six participants were purposively selected. These six students were engaged closely with the student who was categorized as the most disruptive one at SMP Negeri 18 Makassar. The 6 participants were 2 EFL teachers, a counselor, 2 classmates, and his family. A semi-structured

interview was addressed to the participants by using an audio recorder, observation checklist, and field notes were also used to justify the subject's behavior in the English learning process.

In analyzing the data, the study used descriptive analysis by adapting Miles and Huberman's theory. After interviewing the participants, the data was transcribed, selected, analyzed, and interpreted, focusing on the important points then arranged them systematically in order to provide an overview of the research result related to the research question required qualitatively. Gay (2016) stated that qualitative research is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual (i.e., non-numerical) data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest.

In addition, to show the subject's disruptive behavior, the student was observed three times by the researcher when learning English by using an observation checklist and field notes.

Table 1

*Observation Checklist and Field Notes*

Typical Phase of Classroom Activities	Behavior Observed	(√)	Notes
Beginning the Class	Ignoring the teacher Chatting with another Silent when the teacher asking Sleeping during learning		
Running the Class	Distracting his friends' attention from the teacher explanation Ignoring the teacher explanation Using rough language		
Closing the class	Leaving his seat and/or the classroom		

### Findings and Discussion

Based on the data analysis it was found that there are two main causes of student's disruptive behavior were obtained from a set of a semi-structure interview, they are an internal factor which included seeking attention; and external factors which included classmate, close friend, learning environment, family and social environment. The points below discuss the causes of student's disruptive behavior in learning English.

#### *Internal Factor*

##### **a. Seeking Attention**

Based on the previous research, the subject disrupted the process of learning English by making noise to attract his friends and teacher's attention. He screamed at his friend, laughed loudly even shown off by increasing his voice tone to break the attention of the teacher. Two EFL teachers teaching in the subject's class reported that he made disruptive behavior because he sought attention in the class, he wanted to show his self-up in the process of learning.

#### *Extract 1*

T : The subject you want to research on is Imam, he seems to like to exist, he needs to be admitted by his friends that he is competent.

I : is he ma'am?

T : Yes, he is. It is like he is smart although the fact is not. **In other words, he needs others' attention**

*Extract 2*

I : Talking about Imam, does he always disturb his friends when he studies English? I mean his attitude similar to the previous meeting?  
 T : He mostly in that behavior in each meeting, **he wants to attract his friends' attention.**

*External Factors***b. Classmate**

It was found that a group of male students within the classroom influenced each other to commit violations such as skipping the school time and truanting, they persuade each other to skip or truant during school time. It had been complained by the English teacher who was teaching at the time. Since she found only 4 male students of 15 staying at the class. It indicates that the subject was affected by his classmates. It found that the subject disobeyed the school rule for pride. Also, his classmates would not be admitting him if he did not follow them as the subject expressed in the extract below.

*Extract 3*

I : If *your friends do the truant, do you want to do the same?*  
 S : **hehe, yes, I will do the same, if my friends do truant, then I will not stay alone, I will follow them**

Therefore, peer's association, in this case, the classmates influenced the subject's behavior in a negative effect. Wahyurini (2003) stated the negative influence refers to the actions like the violation of the school environment in the form of a violation of school rules.

**c. Close Friend**

Another factor influenced the subject's disruptive behavior is his close friend. In this study, a close friend refers to someone who most influences the subject, his close friend is also his classmates. It was found the subject's close friend as his classmate mentioned brought a negative influence on the subject.

*Extract 4*

I : Why do you always listen to Imran's words?  
 S : **he will not give me a lift if I did not follow him**  
 I : Did he threaten you?  
 S : **Yes** he did. He told me that if I did not do what he asked, he would hit me

The friendship between Imran and Imam was involved in ignoring the teacher and playing games on the phone alternately in the process of teaching and learning English. He was also getting threatening from his close friend and left alone for going home after school. It reveals that close friendship did not give a positive influence on teaching and learning. His close friend tended to plunge into disobedience.

**d. Learning Environment**

The learning environment refers to the physical, psychological, and instructional atmosphere in the classroom. The physical environment includes how the furniture is arranged and organized, how the material is stored and maintained, how clean the classroom is, and the overall color, brightness, and temperature. The psychological environment in the classroom is how students feel about their learning. While the instructional environment is the setting for all

teaching. In line with the statement, one factor that caused the subject disrupts the process of teaching and learning in the classroom was the school's physical environment. The temperature in VIII.4 class was warm and it was also felt by the students, the temperature affected the students' mood to learn, as the counselor stated.

#### *Extract 5*

C : hm.. about annoying, it is not a big problem actually. **The problem is the class is warm**, most of the students have a complaint about it.

I : hm..it's true, the class of VIII.4 is warm, and it feels warmer at the end of the class

C : **yes, it is, the class is terribly warm, all the classes here are warm. The students have a complaint about it since long time ago but what should we do, it is the fact, the rooms are very warm at noon.**

#### **e. Family**

Families especially parents play a fundamental role in forming the values of the children. The ability to cope with and adjust to life problems and demands is based upon the psychological foundation of early family experiences. The more positive the family's experiences, the more likely the students are to have a positive attitude and believed that they can control their lives. In addition, Harmer (1991) states "students' attitudes toward learning is influenced by the students' experiences in their families" In line with the statement and the interview with the subject's parents, it was found that the parents were not consistent in educating their children. They tended to discriminate between the subject and his sister. His parents were more caring for his sister, especially about school. So it triggered the jealousy of the subject.

#### *Extract 6*

M : Yes, I usually read her books, therefore my daughter always gets the first rank even until she studies in a learning center. However, **I do not do the same things to Imam** now because I feel tired and I cannot read well because of my headache. I used to ask my children to keep reading when they wanted to have an examination followed by giving questions, but now I do not do it anymore.

I : it means you don't do the same with Imam?

M : **I do not check Imam very often.** It is not because I do not want to but I feel tired. I used to check his sister's books when she returned from school.

Based on the extract 6 above, it showed that his parents treated him differently and he was jealous of his sister since their parents always fulfilled her needs while he did not get the same thing. The inconsistent parenting triggered him to offense and created the jealousy. Therefore, the subject tended to attract other's attention like his school mate by being a disruptive student.

#### **f. Social Environment**

Social environment was also a factor causing the students' disruptive behavior. It refers to his friends and the off-school environment. Yuan (2012) said "**the students** might also make problems because of the factors outside of the class." Since his elementary school time, he consorted and hang out with the older people (university students), then they introduced Imam to the internet café. Started at that time, he was being lazy to study because he preferred to go to the cafe than spend the time learning at home.

*Extract 7*

I : Is that your friend who introduced you to an internet cafe?

S : **No he wasn't, the internet cafe is in front of my house, it is introduced by my neighbor**

However, the observation checklist and field notes proved that the student tended to disrupt English learning process. It can be seen this table below:

Table 2  
*Observation Checklist and Field Notes*

Typical Phase of Classroom Activities	Behavior Observed	(V)	First Observation	(V)	Second Observation
Beginning the Class	Coming late	V	he entered to the classroom without greeting after the teacher began the classroom	-	-
	Ignoring the teacher	V	the teacher asked the students to pay attention but he ignored the teacher by talking with his friend	V	the teacher asked the students to pay attention but he ignored the teacher by talking to his friend
	Chatting with another	V	the teacher called the students' name one by one while he was talking with his friends	V	the teacher called the students' name one by one while he was talking to his friends
	Using mobile phone	-	-	-	-
Running the Class	Silent when the teacher asking	V	the teacher asked about his task in the previous meeting but he is silent (he might not understand what the teacher meant)	-	He was not silent when the teacher asked but he answered incorrectly. He was ridiculous.
	Sleeping during learning	V	When the teacher invited the students' one by one to read their task, he seems sleepy and sometimes put his head on his bag on the table.	-	He was very active in the classroom so made the teacher exasperated.

Closing the class	Distracting his friends' attention from the teacher explanation	V	he distracted his friend by taking his friend's pen and laughing in his friend's mispronunciation	V	he attracted his friends' attention by laughing
	Ignoring the teacher explanation	V	The teacher asked to repeat what the teacher has pronounced but sometimes he ignored by talking with his friend. And also, when the teacher explained about "present, past and future" he was laugh even it was not funny.	V	He was talking with his friend while the teacher explained about the conversation
	Cheating and copying his friend's assignment	-	-	-	-
	Playing with hat, pen, and etc	V	In the process of learning, he sometimes played with his friend's hat, and his bag.	-	-
	Using rough language	-	-	V	Sometimes he shouted at his friend by using impolite words
	Not accomplishing his assignment	-	-	V	He didn't finish his assignmet
	Leaving his seat and/or the classroom	V	In the last 10 minutes, he permitted to go to the toilet with his friend but until the class was closed he didnt appear.	V	During the process of learning, he sometimes moved to his friend's seat

During the observation, it was found that the student only wanted to seek the attention of the people around him, when his friends focused and paid attention to the teacher he made a noise so his other friends would pay attention to what he was doing. It might be happened due to a lack of attention from his parents. It is generally concluded that there is no one single root cause for students' disruptive behavior, it thought to be the result of genetic, physical, and environmental risk factors that work concurrently.

### **Conclusion**

The factors that cause the student's disruptive behavior in learning English were divided into internal and external factors. Internal: seeking attention and External factors: classmate, close friend, learning environment, family, and social environment. This leads to the conclusion that the most dominant cause of the student's disruptive behavior was the student's external factors. The further researcher is recommended to conduct research related to decreasing or dealing with the student's disruptive behavior in the teaching and learning process.



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