

## The impact of disciplinary problems on academic achievements

**Ensaf Abu-Ahmed**

[ensaf@walla.co.il](mailto:ensaf@walla.co.il)

### **Introduction**

An inviting school climate affects the academic achievement positively. However, disciplinary problems affect academic achievement in several aspects. They affect teacher-pupil's relations and mutual trust. They also affect the pupil's status among his peers and faculty. Some of the disciplinary problems factors are internal and other causal factors are external to the school which are derived from the pupil's domestic situation and embedded in the surrounding community. There are also personal causal factors affecting pupils' behavior. The relationship that develops between the home teacher and his pupils is the natural basis for pupils' behavior and motivation. The home teacher, as a class manager, can follow SWOT model that focuses on inner and external factors affecting the functioning of the class including learning atmosphere and academic achievements. Education is the preliminary step in the shaping of individual personality; therefore, it is only natural to treat it with utmost seriousness. As children behavior is molded since infancy, education and some various aspects of discipline should begin as soon as possible.

Discipline has two major components: self discipline and adherence to social rules and regulations. When we refer to discipline in school, we refer to certain aspects of both components: The in-school behavior is a self-control and adherence to inner rules and regulations. While, the general civilized behavior, refers to the good behavior in school, good manners, good citizenship, and willingness to cooperate with others so as to contribute to the surrounding community and the society at large.

One of the major challenges in education is imparting desired behavioral modes and discipline. Not all methods are permitted; social laws provide guidelines of legal and illegal treatment modes. Since ancient times, people recognized the fact that the human being was born free, and tends to rebel if told by others what to do, think, eat,

etc. The people were also aware of the fact that there is an ingrained evil which has to be suppressed and controlled. "Not again shall I curse the earth for Man, since Man's heart desire is bad from youth" [Genesis, chapter 8 s.21].

The writer is in favor of the opinion that a person can gain self control and change his world view, improve his daily conduct and adapt to social and environmental changes. Man is adaptable by nature. We make many choices in life including our behavior and treatment with others and our unceasing thrive to improve and advance. So, our life style, accomplishment and social status depend very much on the way we behave and the choices we make. We all reflect cultural ingrained values and traditions, but we all also absorb and assimilate other values and behavioral modes; some of which we are taught, and some we acquire from exposure. The aim of the school, which is part of a nation-wide educational system, is to prepare the new generation to integrate as contributive members in the society. The school attempts to impart knowledge, skills, manners and basic social rules. Its main purpose is to expose our ability to change and fulfill the expectations of our immediate society and the society at large.

This article is based on a study of in-school violence and disciplinary problems conducted in junior high schools of the Arabic sector in Israel. It is a comparative study that aimed at examining the similarities and differences between schools located in urban areas versus schools located in rural area. Findings were obtained by combined qualitative and quantitative research methods.

### **Abstract**

This article describes aspects affecting pupils' behavior in class and the impact of pupil's behavior upon his academic achievement. The writer displays factors affecting pupil's in-class behavior and the ramification of his behavior upon his relations with peers and faculty, and the impact of these relations or the lack of them upon his academic achievements, and vice versa. The article also depicts the cycle of interrelated impacts upon school climate and learning atmosphere.

In the last decade, there is an obvious deterioration in discipline breaches in school. Educators and other school employees complain about the worsening daily atmosphere they have to cope with respect to the pupils' inappropriate behavior and

about the frequency of disciplinary problems. Several teachers reported that during the period, instead of teaching, they are constantly required to deal with disciplinary problems.

Many teachers attribute the growing number of discipline breaches and violent behavior in school to the changes occurring in modern society\_ the sense of blurring boundaries between generations, the lack of behavioral norms, the increase usage of psychological justifications to various offensive unacceptable behaviors, the growing sense of permissiveness, and the wild uncontrolled competitiveness. In this regard, disciplinary breaches erode the teacher's status and authority and make it difficult for him to define behavioral rules, maintain order and keep discipline in the class. "Discipline deterioration in educational system in general and in junior high level in particular, is a major cause for teachers' burnout" [Lavi & Hen, 1983; Almog, 1996; Sela, 2005].

The writer is in favor of the opinion that if relations between teacher and pupils are negative, the class is doomed to failure, regardless of its location, while good teacher-pupils relations positively affect all the characteristics of the school climate. Indeed, good relations lead to behavioral and academic improvement, raise scientific curiosity, contribute to improve relations among pupils, improve emotional experience, and contribute to learning motivation.

**Key words:** relationship, Disciplinary problems class manager, achievements, external/internal

### **Discussion**

The term "Class climate" used in pedagogic literature, refers to the special atmosphere created in the class, the mode learning and social life are being conducted, the class composition, the inner relations among the pupils and between pupils and teacher. [Shtiman, 1992]

The appropriate behavior is an imperative component in positive class climate. It significantly affects mutual relations among pupils and between pupils and teachers, and in so doing, it reduces disciplinary problems. According to Sela [2005], in order

to recreate an adequate atmosphere in the class, we have to use a systemic approach and reeducate the teachers how to navigate the class and manage it properly

The results of the writer’s study [2012] are shown in table 1 .

**Table 1**

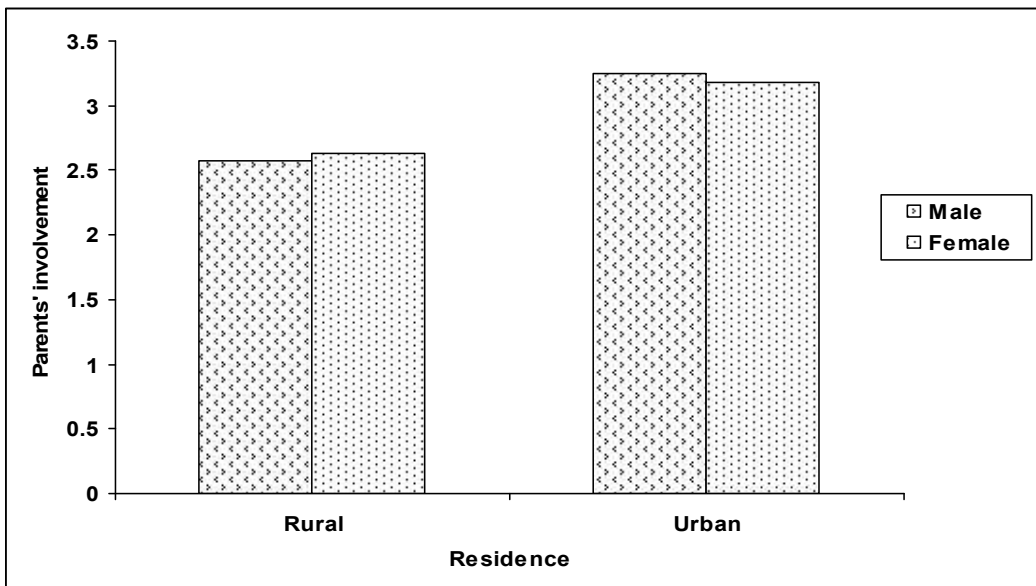
Average, standard deviation test F statistics and significance level of parents' involvement according to gender and school type:

	School	Gender				Test F statistics significance level Of freedom grade
		Male		Female		
		Average	S Deviation	Average	S Deviation	
Parents' involvement	Rural	2.57	0.76	2.63	0.82	(F(1,156)=22.599;P=0)
	Urban	3.25	0.72	3.18	0.89	
(F(1,156)=0.001;P=0.974)						(F(1,156)=0.28;P=0.597)

The data in table 1 indicate significant statistical difference in subject-teacher-pupil relations between urban school and rural school.

**Graph 1:**

Parents' involvement according to gender and school type

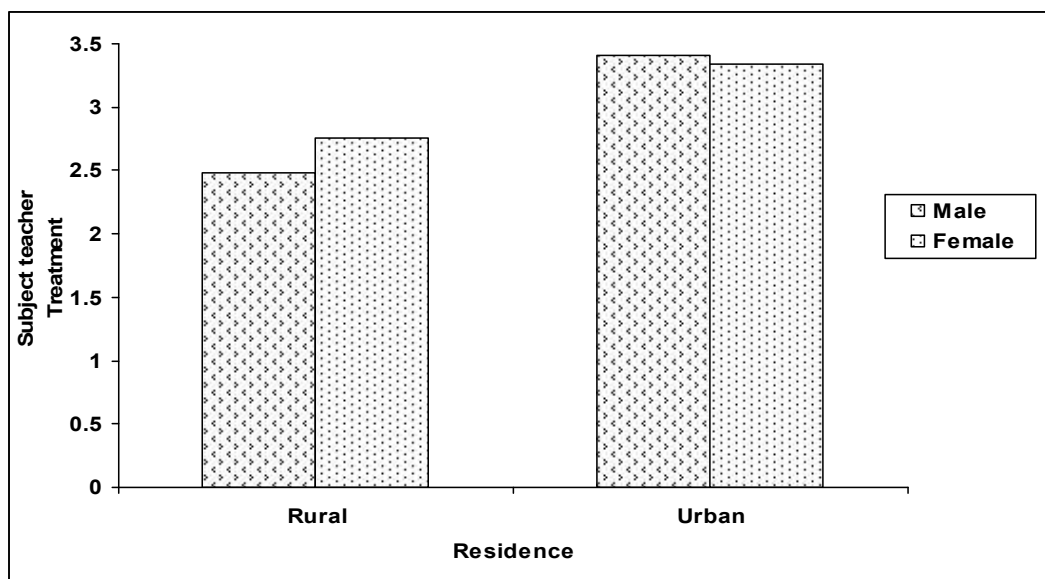


The data in table 1 and graph 1 showed that trust leads pupils to seek teacher's help and advice. This relationship was found only in the sample urban school, where the

teacher is a detached neutral person who is often a stranger and has no obligations to the pupil's family. However, in rural area, pupils are reluctant to trust the teacher especially the subject teacher; the pupils confide in him. The reason for this phenomenon is the familiarity and the social closeness. The teacher who is often a relative or a neighbor cannot and will not get involved in family disputes and cannot afford to mediate between two rival families [see graph No 2].

**Graph 2:**

Subject teacher treatment of pupil according to gender and school type



It appears that rural teacher's attitude towards given pupils is affected by pre-conceptions; they find it hard to overcome their ingrained bias and sometimes, [when the pupil comes from a traditionally privileged family], they have to cope with status difference, especially in stratified society.

This problem does not exist in urban school where pupils come from different families, different residential areas, different social class, and sometimes even different ethnic and religious affiliation. In addition, in urban school both pupils and parents are aware of children rights on one hand, and opportunities available on the other hand. Thus, the more successful pupil becomes a model for others to follow and motivate them to excel in order to compete with the best.

The results shown in table 2, also indicated a significant difference of attitude toward pupils among teachers in rural school compared to teachers in urban school, for the reasons listed above.

**Table 2**

Average, standard deviation test F statistics and significance

Level of home teacher treatment according to gender and school type:

	School	Gender				Test F statistics significance level of freedom grade
		Male		Female		
		Average	S Deviation	Average	S Deviation	
<b>Home teacher Treatment</b>	Rural	2.50	0.68	2.94	0.75	) F(1,156)=69.768;P (=0
	Urban	3.88	0.66	3.52	0.82	
(F(1,156)=0.11;P=0.741)					) F(1,156)=11.744;P (=0.001	

The results shown in table [ 3]

**Table 3**

Average, standard deviation test F statistics and significance level of teaching method according to gender and school type:

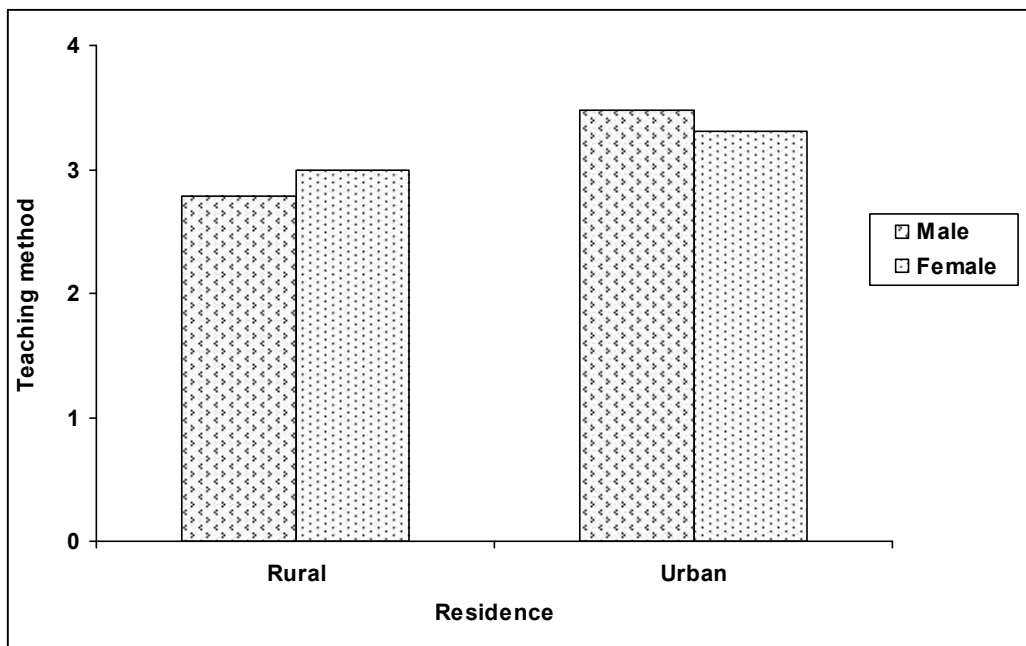
	School	Gender				Test F statistics significance level of freedom grade
		Male		Female		
		Average	S Deviation	Average	S Deviation	
<b>Teaching method</b>	Rural	2.78	0.76	3.00	0.79	) F(1,156)=13.362;P (=0
	Urban	3.48	0.89	3.31	0.94	
(F(1,156)=0.03;P=0.862)					) F(1,156)=2.028;P= (0.157	

The data in table 3 indicate statistic significant difference in teaching methods between urban school and rural school as well. Teachers in rural school showed

higher tendency to "stick to their guns" and use the same teaching methods, while teachers in urban school tended to diversify their teaching methods and challenge their pupils. This finding surprised the writer and will be discussed in another paper. The study also revealed that teachers in the urban school enter the classroom much more prepared compared to teachers in rural school, suggesting the possibility of experience differences among the two group of teachers. (See graph 3).

**Graph 3**

Teaching method according to gender and school type



The writer’s findings are identical to the findings of other studies [Shermer, 2004, inside Bar-Lev, 2007], suggest that the basic difference in teacher-pupil relations between the two school types, derives from the difference in the perception of the two populations served by the schools: the teachers still cling to the "culture of obligations" while the pupils act within an "experience culture" framework.

According to Bar-Lev Elhanan, [2007] in the last 5 decade there is a vast agreement among education scholars that teacher’s ability to communicate with his pupils, demonstration of professionalism and extensive knowledge of the material are among the central traits of a good teacher, while a teacher whose pupils do not respect/see him as a model, will find it difficult to function properly.

### **Supporting studies and comments**

The writer is in favor of the opinion that bad relations and the lack of cooperation between teacher and pupils will not yield educational goals or academic achievements regardless of its location. However, good teacher-pupils relations positively affect all the characteristics of the school climate:

The findings of a study by Bar-Lev [2007] support several findings of the writer's study especially regarding the field situation.

It was confirmed that when teachers share impressions and pupils receives negative stigmas that tends to stick to the pupils. The same goes for pupils who do not fit the accepted category which can also develop disciplinary problems and disrupt the entire class.

According to Laufer & Harel, [2003 inside Bar-lev 2007] summation of a study which encompassed Jewish and Arabic pupils, lack of teacher support triggered more violence among Arabic pupils compared to Jewish pupils.

The writer found that other additional factors determinate the teacher-pupil relation namely. These factors include the cultural heritage of the educating society and the place of tradition in its daily life. The more traditional the given society, the stricter and less flexible are these relations.

Traditional approach is more characteristic in rural society where the teacher is authorized by the parents and is trusted by them to make the right decisions compared to the urban teacher who is much more exposed to criticism and is obliged to adapt to the fact that the parents can always come to school to supervise its operation. Naturally, the situation affects the pupil and his academic achievements.

The system employs teachers of various views, skills, attitude and experience, and they all affect the educational climate. The writer own experience suggests that the faculty, as a team, determines the way it markets itself to the surrounding society and the authorities. The principal is the head of the managerial organizational pyramid; his charisma and leadership style determine the cohesion of the team and the measure of



cooperation, sharing and inner support. It also determines the backing every teacher can relay upon as an individual.

Many teachers complain that the educational system pays no attention to teacher-pupil relations as it attributes no value to something it cannot quantify. All the feedback and comments received refer slowly to academic achievements presented by the school, and these achievements determine its position on the evaluation scale. The situation affects the in-school atmosphere and the ability of the over-stressed teachers to function as class managers. This unhealthy situation weakens the system as a whole and yields negative results. In this regard, pupils who are dissatisfied with their marks let their feeling disrupt the teaching and learning flow, and consequently, make a bad situation worse. Much often, many teachers get overstressed by the managerial and administrative demands. Many teachers are required to follow procedures, fill up reports, submit test scores and spend precious teaching time on disciplinary matters or play mediator between pupils, between pupils and school management, between pupils and parents, school and parents etc. Since the teachers are overburdened with all the above, they have no time to pay attention, listen to and/or educate.

The writer is in favor of the opinion that the educational administration should rearrange supervision, management and support system of educational institutes, set up measures and organize activities in order to reestablish positive pupil-teacher relations that will affect the learning process and consequently improve academic achievements.

### **Summary**

Schools are defined as educational institutions and not as facilitators of knowledge imparting. The system should motivate the schools to emphasize the educational component and expect its pupils to become contributive members to society. These expectations include learning and mastering social and behavioral rules alongside skills and knowledge. The teachers are the social agents expected to impart all these values and not only some of them.

This goal cannot be achieved without a serious change in the current perception of the role of the schools in our society and the mode of schools' evaluation by the system.

The magic word is communication\_ every manager in every level must have the skills to integrate the use of communication and encourage usage of communication during a change process. Communication between parties improves the bilateral relations. Good communication within faculty, between faculty and management and between each individual teachers and his/her pupils will improve school climate and learning atmosphere and eventually will positively affect academic achievements as well.

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