

## Applying Positive Behavioral Adjustment Measures for Adolescent Students at School: A study from Students' Perspectives

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigates students' perspectives on the application of positive behavioral adjustment measures and their influence on students' behavior change. A mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, was employed to ensure comprehensive insights. The study involved the participation of 118 students from a high school in Vietnam. Data was collected using structured questionnaires, in-depth written responses, and semi-structured interviews, allowing both statistical analysis and thematic exploration. The findings reveal that students largely support the application of positive behavioral measures, perceiving them as effective in reducing misconduct and fostering more responsible behavior. Moreover, students reported that these strategies enhanced their motivation for learning, strengthened self-regulation, and encouraged positive interactions with peers and teachers. The results suggest that when consistently applied, such measures help address the challenges of adolescent rebellion in a supportive and developmentally appropriate manner. Based on the evidence, the study provides recommendations for students, families, schools, and society to collaboratively promote behavioral improvement and create an environment conducive to academic and personal growth.

**Keywords:** *positive behavioral adjustment measures, adolescent rebellions, secondary school students.*

## 1. Introduction

In secondary education, many adolescent students experience challenges related to rebellious behavior, which manifests in various forms and degrees. This behavior is a common concern among parents and educators, yet comprehensive studies on the issue remain limited. This study aims to provide an overview of rebellious behavior in junior high school students, examining aspects such as its manifestations and causes; the effectiveness of disciplinary approaches and behavioral interventions; the impact of these measures on students' motivation to learn; and teachers' and parents' evaluations of these interventions. By exploring these dimensions, this study offers insights and strategies for fostering healthy student development (Ball, 2012; Chikwature, 2016). In today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, adolescent behavior has diversified in its expressions, severity, and prevalence. This study updates current understandings of student behavior, advocating for positive, educational measures that align with the era of technological advancement and educational globalization, rather than relying solely on traditional moral education methods. To help adolescents navigate this stage, it is crucial for them to have consistent support from those around them. Further research on adolescent rebellious behavior is essential to gain a deeper, evidence-based understanding of the issue, allowing for more effective recommendations and interventions. Although numerous studies have examined deviant behaviors in students, managing these challenges remains one of the most demanding aspects of adolescent education, confronting both experienced and new teachers alike (Barmby, 2006; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). These objectives are framed through the following research question: How do students evaluate the impact of positive behavior adjustment measures on their behavior change?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *Factors Influencing Students' behaviors*

Many studies have identified key factors influencing students' behaviors, including those related to psychological health, self-control, family, friendships, school environment, societal influences, and the rapid advancement of information technology (Asiyai, 2019; Barsade, 2002; Nguyen, 2014).

**Psychological and Physiological Factors.** Adolescents undergo significant psychological and physiological changes, making them particularly susceptible to external influences. The pressures of academic performance, life challenges, and the quest for personal identity can lead to impulsive and uncontrollable behaviors. Adolescents often desire to assert their individuality and resist control, which can result in unusual, impulsive, and sometimes extreme actions. According to Denson et al. (2011) and DeWall et al. (2007), adolescents who feel insulted or humiliated may struggle to control their responses, often reacting in ways that negatively impact themselves and others. This developmental period is marked by heightened sensitivity, and adolescents can be easily stressed by external demands, strict rules, and adult expectations. Tangney et al. (2004) observed a correlation between self-control and rebellious behavior, with higher self-control generally associated with lower levels of rebellion, and vice versa.

**Family Factors.** Family dynamics are crucial in shaping the psychological and physiological development of students. Parental education, relationships, and family discipline play significant roles in forming students' personalities and lifestyle habits. Many families fail to provide the necessary attention, understanding, and support to help children navigate the pressures of adolescence (Good Neighbors International, 2023). Conversely, families with morally exemplary older relatives can provide positive role models, often reflecting effective parenting practices. However, exposure to negative family influences can lead to an increase in rebellious behaviors among students.

**School Factors.** Schools are instrumental in shaping and guiding students' behavior. Through rules, principles, and disciplinary measures, schools establish a structured environment intended to promote both learning and discipline. They also play an essential role in fostering moral and behavioral development, supporting students in positive behavioral growth (Barsade, 2002; Nguyen et al., 2019).

**Social Factors.** Modern society's rapid evolution has contributed to the rise of social issues across all age groups and environments, influencing adolescents' curiosity and impacting their self-control. Additionally, the widespread use of information technology, especially the Internet with the spread of social networks, has greatly

influenced the development of personality and behavior of individuals. Students have easier access to a variety of unhealthy media and even at a serious level such as violating the law. Violent games also greatly affect the spirit and behavior of minors (Kim et al., 2008).

## **2.2 Positive Behavioral Adjustment Measures**

A review of previous studies shows that approaches to managing students' rebellious behavior have evolved over time, with increasing emphasis on positive and preventive measures. Webster-Stratton (2005) focused on interventions targeting both parents and teachers, emphasizing the importance of parental training, classroom management, and the development of students' emotional regulation and life skills. In contrast, Ostrov (2009) highlighted the role of extracurricular and health-related activities in promoting students' mental and physical well-being, suggesting that behavioral adjustment can be effectively achieved through active student participation in healthy and social environments. Similarly, Oberle and Zumbo (2011) underscored the significant influence of school environments on adolescents' emotional and academic development. Their findings suggest that supportive teacher–student relationships are crucial in identifying behavioral problems early and fostering constructive solutions, a point also emphasized by Demirdag (2015), who argued that teacher–student rapport enhances students' adaptability and self-regulation.

Comparatively, Durrant (2010) and Nelsen (2007) shifted the focus from external control to internal motivation, proposing that teachers should adopt positive discipline principles rather than punitive measures. These principles stress respect for students, empathy, and the creation of opportunities for self-directed problem-solving, as reinforced by Burden (2016). Building upon this, Durrant (2013) proposed four core principles for student management—defining long-term goals, showing care and establishing clear rules, understanding students' emotions and cognition, and resolving issues through positive discipline—demonstrating consistent effectiveness in modifying student behavior and improving learning outcomes. Overall, while earlier research (e.g., Webster-Stratton, 2005; Ostrov, 2009) focused primarily on parental involvement and extracurricular factors, more recent studies

(e.g., Durrant, 2010, 2013; Nelsen, 2007) emphasize teacher competencies and the cultivation of a positive, empathetic learning environment. Despite these advances, comparative studies integrating multiple perspectives—students, parents, and teachers—remain limited. Future research should therefore aim to provide multi-dimensional assessments of the effectiveness of positive and disciplinary behavioral adjustment measures in school settings.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study applies a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing data collection and analysis from multiple perspectives to have a comprehensive view of the topic. Quantitative methods help collect general data, while qualitative methods delve into specific details and contexts. Quantitative data are collected through survey forms, while qualitative data are obtained from open-ended questions and in-depth interviews.

Quantitative methods were deployed to collect and analyze data through survey forms. For the qualitative method, in-depth interviews were conducted to address aspects of questions.

#### **Research instruments**

Surveys and in-depth interviews were the two main tools in the data collection process. The survey was designed based on the synthesis of previous studies on rebellious behavior of high school students. The questions were divided into groups including personal information, school context, and assessment from the respondents. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). To collect qualitative data, in-depth interviews were held with 30 students randomly selected from the survey group. These interviews aimed to explore their views and experiences on the positive behavioral adjustment measures in changing students' behaviors

#### **3.2. Participants**

The research participants included 118 students from a high school in Vietnam. The sample was randomly selected from schools through social media channels such as

Facebook of the school group and Zalo of the classes and through contact points such as teachers, parents, and students of the classes.

### **3.3. Data Collection Process**

The questionnaire link was sent to participants to complete the Google form and send feedback through platforms such as Gmail, Google Forms and social networks such as Zalo and Facebook of secondary schools in Hanoi city. Participants evaluated the survey questionnaires and the answers were automatically returned to the researcher. Based on the data sent on Google form, the author collected and analyzed the data using SPSS descriptive statistics software.

### **3.4. Data Analysis Process**

The data collected from Google-form are processed using SPSS statistical software. The question was calculated by the mean and standard deviation. The values are classified as follows: 1.0 - 1.79; very low 1.8 - 2.59; low 2.6 - 3.39 neutral; 3.4 - 4.19 high; 4.2 - 5.0 very high (Fisher & Marshal, 2009; Hair et al., 2017).

The formula of descriptive statistics is used to address the question related to the impact of positive behavioral adjustment measures in changing students' behaviors from students' assessment. The interview tool is utilised to collect recorded responses, then based on keywords to classify according to specific titles.

## **4. Research Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability of Variables**

The observed variables were run through SPSS software to test their reliability before being included in the survey. The test results showed that the variables with Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients reached a high level of reliability ( $\geq 0.8$ ). Variables that did not ensure objectivity for the research data were eliminated. In addition, the group also adjusted and filtered out substandard questions based on the criteria: duplication, errors, and data analysis methods in the next steps.

#### 4.2. Effectiveness of Positive Behavioral Adjustment Measures in Changing Students' Behaviors from students' assessment

Through Table 1, it can be seen that students highly appreciate the effectiveness of the group of positive behavioral adjustment measures, including Preventive & Proactive Strategies, Supportive & Encouraging Approaches, Constructive Reinforcement Techniques, Conflict Management & Redirection, Skill-Building Approaches, Environmental & Institutional Supports. With the mean mostly greater than 3.5 Accordingly, it can be seen that the application of positive measures is more supported by students and tends to change behavior more positively.

**Table 1:** Effectiveness of Positive Behavioral Adjustment Measures in Changing Students' Behaviors

| Measures                            | Details  | Mean | Std. Dev |
|-------------------------------------|--|------|----------|
| Preventive & Proactive Strategies   | Clear Expectations – establish and communicate rules   | 3.75 | .924     |
|                                     | Modeling Positive Behavior: – instructors, peers, or mentors demonstrating expected conduct. | 3.92 | .735     |
|                                     | Positive Reinforcement – praising, rewarding, or recognizing desirable behaviors.            | 3.73 | .823     |
|                                     | Structured Routines – providing predictability to reduce anxiety and misconduct              | 3.75 | .776     |
|                                     | Engaging Instruction – keeping learners actively involved to minimize disruptive behavior.   | 4.20 | .746     |
| Supportive & Encouraging Approaches | Positive Relationships - building trust and respect between teachers and students.           | 3.98 | .857     |
|                                     | Mentorship & Counseling - guiding students through personal or behavioral challenges.        | 3.56 | 1.009    |
|                                     | Restorative Practices - encouraging reflection, accountability, and repairing harm.          | 3.64 | .700     |
|                                     | Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) - teaching   | 3.57 | .800     |

|                                       |   |      |      |
|---------------------------------------|---|------|------|
|                                       | empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation.  |      |      |
|                                       | Encouraging Self-Monitoring - teaching students to recognize and manage their own behavior.         | 3.91 | .728 |
| Constructive Reinforcement Techniques | rewarding positive behavior with points, badges, or privileges.                                     | 3.97 | .750 |
|                                       | Immediate & Specific Feedback – letting students know exactly what they did well.                   | 3.99 | .801 |
|                                       | Incentives & Recognition Programs – certificates, or public acknowledgment.                         | 3.49 | .737 |
|                                       | Celebrating Progress - acknowledging improvement, not just perfection.                              | 3.98 | .584 |
| Conflict Management & Redirection     | De-escalation Techniques - calming strategies during tense situations.                              | 3.84 | .704 |
|                                       | Providing a space for reflection rather than isolation.   | 4.03 | .598 |
|                                       | Redirecting Behavior - guiding energy toward positive tasks (e.g., group activities, volunteering). | 3.84 | .784 |
|                                       | Problem-Solving Sessions - helping students analyze situations and make better choices.             | 4.20 | .635 |
| Skill-Building Approaches             | Communication & Interpersonal Skills Training - teaching respect, listening, and assertiveness.     | 3.85 | .649 |
|                                       | Stress & Anger Management Programs - mindfulness, relaxation, coping strategies.                    | 3.76 | .922 |
|                                       | Conflict Resolution Skills - teaching negotiation, compromise, and empathy.                         | 3.80 | .843 |
|                                       | Goal Setting & Self-Discipline - encouraging responsibility and accountability.                     | 3.92 | .587 |
| Environmental                         | Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment - reducing  | 3.91 | .806 |

|                          |  |      |      |
|--------------------------|--|------|------|
| & Institutional Supports | triggers for negative behavior.  |      |      |
|                          | Student Engagement Programs - clubs, sports, arts, and community service.            | 4.04 | .561 |
|                          | Parental/Family Involvement - consistent reinforcement of positive behavior at home. | 4.23 | .697 |
|                          | Consistent Policies - fair, transparent, and supportive disciplinary procedures.     | 3.76 | .844 |

In the group of positive measures, Engaging Instruction - keeping learners actively involved to minimize disruptive behavior (M= 4.20), Providing a space for reflection rather than isolation (M= 4.03), Problem-Solving Sessions – helping students analyze situations and make better choices (M=4.20), Student Engagement Programs such as clubs, sports, arts, and community service (M=4.04), and Parental/Family Involvement, including consistent reinforcement of positive behavior at home (M=4.23) are the measures that are assessed to be the most effective with the Mean values bigger than 4.0 . The next highest ranked measures are Modeling Positive Behavior: instructors, peers, or mentors demonstrating expected conduct (M=3.92), Positive Relationships - building trust and respect between teachers and students (M=3.98), Encouraging Self-Monitoring - teaching students to recognize and manage their own behavior (M=3.91), Immediate & Specific Feedback - letting students know exactly what they did well (M=3.99), and Goal Setting & Self-Discipline - encouraging responsibility and accountability (M=3.92). Thus, from the assessment and perspective of students, they will only change their rebellious behaviors if positive measures are applied. Using punitive measures will not be effective and may even have the opposite effect. This results are in lignment with the investigation by Webster-Stratton (2005), Ostrov (2009), and Oberle & Zumbo (2011) about the importance of positive education.

In the interviews, students reveals that schools needs to pay more attention to teenage students with appropriate adjustments to their studies and entertainment. There should always be a team to guide, support and resolve personal issues for them flexibly and effectively. An extremely important factor is the role of teachers, with their capacity and skills to effectively apply positive discipline principles, so that

students can participate in analyzing and solving problems. Enhance the role of teachers in identifying and intervening early on signs of "rebellion". Always find ways to create opportunities for students to see the consequences of their behavior and find possible solutions themselves. Teachers need to be role models of mutual respect, with no preaching or criticism in their behavior and teaching. Teachers also need to act as mediators to prevent insults and teasing among students. In addition, they also need to learn to improve their classroom management skills and educate students in a positive way. Teachers should encourage and respect students' creative and critical thinking, and evaluate problems from multiple perspectives, from different roles; praise and emphasize students' positive behavior are what teachers should aim for; regularly organize talks, movements, clubs, and extracurricular activities for students to relieve pressure and develop their talents in a positive way. Furthermore, the family plays a fundamental role in the development of each student, especially personality and behavior. During the development process of students, they can meet many different friends and teachers, but the family is unique. The influence of the family is extremely large and long-lasting. Therefore, to avoid "rebellious" behavior of students, parents should create a positive, loving, exemplary living environment, so that children can follow their example, share difficulties in life and receive support from relatives. Children's personality is the product of the parents' teaching methods, so they must understand their children, to have the most appropriate teaching methods, combining discipline and encouragement. We should not be too protective or prescriptive, but should encourage our independence and creative thinking so that we can develop our abilities and take control of our lives. Parents should also participate in courses that support positive parenting methods to achieve better results.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the assessment results of students' perspectives on the presence of positive discipline in schools, it can be seen that: Students appreciate the effectiveness of the group of measures to adjust behavior in a positive direction more than punitive disciplinary measures. Accordingly, it can be seen that the application of positive measures is more supported by students and tends to change behavior more

positively. Student motivation will vary with different behavioral adjustment measures. The highest level for motivation is to use positive behavioral adjustment measures. However, some teachers still have the view that students must be severely punished to have changes. Regarding positive measures, although there are differences in assessment, in general, students all highly appreciate the effectiveness of this method.

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