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AUTHOR Lunenburg, Fred C.  
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## ABSTRACT

Given the importance of pupil control in the school's social system, it would seem reasonable to predict a significant relationship between educators' pupil control ideology and their reactions to disruptive behavior incidents. This study examines whether humanistically oriented educators would prefer to levy less punitive measures on disruptive students than their custodially oriented, authoritarian counterparts. Also the study examined whether those directly responsible for student control (teachers) would be more custodial in their pupil control ideology than those less directly responsible (principals or counselors). To test these hypotheses, operational definitions were required for two variables: pupil control ideology and incidents of disruptive behavior. The Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) was used to assess the first variable, and the Pupil Disruptive Behavior (PDB) Scale was used to assess the second variable. The subjects were full-time educators from three states (Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin). Stepwise multiple regression techniques were used to test the first hypothesis, and analysis of variance was used to test the second. Study results supported both hypotheses. The more custodial the educator's control ideology, the more severe the reported reactions to pupil's disruptive behavior incidents. Those directly responsible for pupil control were more custodial-minded and preferred levying more severe penalties for pupil misbehavior. Included are 6 tables and 24 references. (MLH)

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EDUCATORS' PUPIL-CONTROL IDEOLOGY AS A PREDICTOR OF  
EDUCATORS' REACTIONS TO PUPIL DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Fred C. Lunenburg  
University of Louisville

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## EDUCATORS' PUPIL-CONTROL IDEOLOGY AS A PREDICTOR OF EDUCATORS' REACTIONS TO PUPIL DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

A major conclusion of nearly two decades of annual Gallup Polls is that pupil control (discipline) has been and continues to be a persistent problem confronting schools. Investigators, such as Waller (1932), Gordon (1959), Jackson (1968), Silberman (1970), and Cusick (1973, 1983) who have studied the structural aspects of the school have confirmed that preoccupation with pupil control permeated the life of the organization.

The importance of pupil control (discipline) in schools is not surprising. Schools are people-developing or people-changing institutions (Street, Vinter, Perrow, 1970). Moreover, schools accept as conscripted clients all those who legally must attend. The mandatory nature of the pupil's participation suggests that schools are of necessity dealing with clients whose motivations and desires for its services cannot be assumed (Carlson, 1964). It seems reasonable that control of pupils would be a major concern.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the pupil control ideology of educators and educators' reactions to pupil disruptive behavior. A secondary purpose of the investigation was to explore the influence of role on both pupil control ideology and reactions to pupil disruptive behavior. The study is part of a line of inquiry on schools as social organizations and the part played by pupil control in such organizations (Packard, 1988).

Following the lead of earlier research on pupil control in schools, the pupil control ideology of educators was conceptualized along a continuum from custodial to humanistic (Willower, Eidell, & Hoy, 1973). Educators with a custodial ideology stress the maintenance of order, impersonality, one-way downward communication, distrust of students, and a punitive, moralistic attitude toward pupil control. Educators with a humanistic orientation emphasize the psychological and sociological bases of learning and behavior, an accepting trustful view of students, and confidence in students' ability to be self-disciplining and responsible. An individual educator's pupil control ideology may fall anywhere between these two extremes.

A number of findings have emerged from previous research. An examination of the relationship between teacher personality and pupil control ideology revealed that open-minded educators were more humanistic than close-minded educators (Lunenburg & O'Reilly, 1974), and that teacher socialization is accompanied by increased custodialism in control ideology (Hoy, 1967, 1968, 1969; Lunenburg, 1986). Other investigations have disclosed relationships between the openness of school organizational climate and teacher humanism (Appleberry & Hoy, 1969), the value orientations of teachers measured in terms of a traditional-emergent framework and their custodialism-humanism (Helsel, 1971), teacher pupil-control ideology in predicting teacher discipline referrals (Foley & Brooks, 1978), and teacher custodialism and student alienation from school (Hoy, 1972), student unrest (Duggal, 1969), and high absenteeism and

suspension rates (McBride, 1972). In addition, teacher humanism and student self-concept as a learner has been shown to be significantly related (Lunenburg, 1983), and a direct relationship between teacher custodialism and pupils' projections of rejection and hostility toward teachers has been confirmed (Lunenburg & Stouten, 1983).

### HYPOTHESES

Given the importance of pupil control in the social system of the school, it seemed reasonable to predict a significant relationship between the pupil control ideology of educators and educators' reactions to incidents of pupil disruptive behavior. The question addressed in this study was whether educators having a custodial pupil control ideology will report that they would levy more severe penalties on students who exhibit disruptive behavior; while those educators having a humanistic ideology will report that they would administer less punitive measures on students who manifest disruptive behavior in school. Stated in the form of a hypothesis to be tested, the proposition was: There will be a direct relationship between custodialism in pupil control ideology and educators' reports of severe reactions to incidents of pupil disruptive behavior.

This hypothesis appeared to make sense theoretically; it was based on the following ideas. Educators having a relatively custodial pupil control ideology can be expected to be distrustful of students and hold views that favor rigid controls including

authoritarian rule administration, coercive sanctions based on external control of students, and teacher domination of the classroom. Such educators are likely to desire the imposition of severe action for pupil disruptive behavior. Humanistically oriented teachers, on the other hand, hold more permissive, student-centered attitudes and flexible application of rules. These educators are inclined to opt for less severe action when students misbehave, which is more consistent with encouraging self-discipline.

Based on earlier work on pupil control (Willower et al., 1973), we also tested the hypothesis that those directly responsible for the control of students would be more custodial in their pupil control ideology than those less directly responsible for student control. Likewise, we predicted that those directly responsible for client control would levy more severe penalties on students who exhibit disruptive behavior than those less directly responsible for client control. This hypothesis led to the prediction that teachers would be more custodial and report levying more severe penalties on students who misbehave than principals or school specialists such as special education teachers or counselors.

## **METHOD**

### **Instruments**

In order to test these hypotheses, operational definitions were required for two variables: the pupil control ideology of educators and incidents of pupil disruptive behavior. In each case,

paper-and-pencil instruments were used as measures. The Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) Form served as the operational definition of the first variable, while the Pupil Descriptive Behavior (PDB) Scale was used to assess the latter variable.

### *Pupil Control Ideology*

The Pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI) measures the pupil control ideology of educators on a humanistic-custodial continuum, as noted previously. It consists of 20 Likert-type items. Responses are scored from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree); the higher the overall score, the more custodial the ideology of the respondent.

Examples of items used include the following: "A few pupils are just young hoodlums and should be treated accordingly," "It is often necessary to remind pupils that their status in schools differs from that of teachers," and "Pupils can be trusted to work together without supervision" (score reversed).

Prior studies by Willower et al (1973) using the PCI Form determined split-half reliability coefficients in two samples of .95 (N = 170) and .91 (N = 55) with the application of the Spearman-Brown formula. Validity of the instrument was supported by principals' judgments of some of their teachers. Further evidence of validity was established by a comparison of PCI scores of personnel from schools known by reputation to be humanistic, with scores of personnel from other schools that were not humanistic at the same grade levels.

### *Pupil Disruptive Behavior*

The Pupil Disruptive Behavior Scale (PDB) is a 29-item Likert-type, multidimensional measure of three basic aspects of pupil disruptive behavior. The initial validation study (Lunenburg and Schmidt, 1987) indicated the existence of three factors: Factor A, Factor B, and Factor C relating to three levels of severity of pupil disruptive behavior labeled severe, moderate, and minimal. The first factor consists of 11 items, and the other two factors consist of ten and eight items respectively. Examples of items include the following: "A boy is observed selling drugs to another student" (Factor A); "A girl is observed smoking in the girls' lavatory" (Factor B); and "A boy interrupts a classroom activity by shouting at a friend in the corridor" (Factor C). Responses to the questionnaire are scored so as to yield measures of each of the three pupil disruptive behavior factors, and the sum of the factor scores represents a global measure of pupil disruptive behavior. The global measure was used in this study.

Each incident of pupil disruptive behavior contained in the instrument calls for a judgment by the respondent as to the appropriate course of action to be followed by school personnel in response to the incident. Eight choices are provided for each incident, ranging on a progressive scale from "no action" at one extreme to "expulsion" at the other extreme. The eight choices are assigned numerical designations of zero to seven, beginning with zero for the first choice "no action," one for the second choice, and so on. The choices are arranged in order with respect to the degree of severity. Thus, a response with a high numerical



designation is interpreted as being more severe than a response with a low designation. The reported reliability of the PDB Scale was .93 for the total scale and .91, .79, and .73 for the respective factors as estimated by Cronbach's alpha. Item-scale correlations for the instrument averaged .74, and a one-way analysis of variance indicated that the measure differentiated among subjects while clustering within subjects (Lunenburg & Schmidt, 1987).

### Subjects

The subjects for the study were full-time educators from three states: Illinois (N = 106), Iowa (N = 83), and Wisconsin (N = 38). Included were administrators (16%), teachers (51%), special education teachers (21%), and school counselors (12%). Educators ranged in age from 24 to 62 years (M = 43.4). Their years of experience ranged from 2 to 23 years (M = 15.2). 141 were male and 86 were female. Further, subjects were selected from various types of communities: rural, town or small city, suburban, and urban.

The PCI Form and PDB Scale were personally administered by a researcher to the professional personnel during regularly scheduled meetings. Demographic characteristics of the sample were also collected and included educator gender, age, education, experience, position (teacher, special education teacher, principal, counselor), level (elementary or secondary), school (six schools), and state (Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin).

## RESULTS

In order to test the major hypothesis of the study, Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation and stepwise multiple regression analysis were employed. The general hypothesis guiding the study predicted a direct relationship between custodialism in pupil control ideology and severe reactions of educators to incidents of pupil disruptive behavior. Table 1 presents intercorrelations among all variables in the study: the two major variables (pupil control ideology and pupil disruptive behavior) and the eight aforementioned demographic variables.

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As shown in Table 1, significant correlations were found between pupil control ideology and pupil disruptive behavior ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ). That is, the more custodial the pupil control ideology of the educator, the more the educator reported levying more severe penalties on students who manifested disruptive behavior. Other significant correlations were found between pupil control ideology and the following demographic variables: position ( $r = .49, p < .001$ ), level ( $r = -.27, p < .001$ ), education ( $r = -.28, p < .001$ ), school ( $r = -.27, p < .001$ ), and state ( $r = -.19, p < .01$ ). Similarly,

significant Pearson correlations were found between educators' pupil disruptive behavior scores and position ( $r = -.34, p < .001$ ), level ( $r = -.26, p < .001$ ), education ( $r = -.25, p < .001$ ), school ( $r = -.32, p < .001$ ), and state ( $r = -.24, p < .001$ ).

In addition, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed in order to predict pupil disruptive behavior from pupil control ideology as well as from demographic characteristics such as teacher sex, age, education, level, experience, position, school, and state. Standard use of stepwise regression was employed. That is, the first predictor variable added was the one that correlated highest with the criterion; the next variable added was the one that, in concert with the first, best predicted the criterion, and so on. The final regression equation contained the variables that, in combination, represented the best predictive value while holding the other variables constant.

Table 2 presents summaries of multiple correlations ( $R$ ), squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ),  $F$  values ( $F$ ), and significance levels ( $p$ ) for each step of the regressions of the nine predictor variables against pupil disruptive behavior.

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TABLE 2 HERE  
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Results in Table 2 indicate that educators' reactions to pupil disruptive behavior significantly correlated with pupil control ideology at step one in the analysis ( $R = .403$ ), and accounted for approximately 16 percent of PDB variance. At step two, the next variable to enter the regression equation was school, which when combined with the pupil control ideology variable, increased the multiple correlation to .480, and the amount of variance in PDB only slightly. The inclusion of all nine predictor variables in the regression equation for this analysis increased the multiple correlation to only .509, and the amount of explained PDB predictor variable variance to 26 percent.

With respect to the second hypothesis of the study that those directly responsible for the control of clients would be more custodial in their pupil control ideology and report more severe penalties levied on students who misbehave, analysis of variance was employed. Significant differences were found among position. A comparison of the mean scores shows that teachers reported the most severe reactions to pupil disruptive behavior followed by administrators, special education teachers, and counselors. Mean PDB scores were 133.68, 119.87, 103.69, and 82.25 respectively. Analysis of variance yielded an  $F$  - ratio of 8.72 which was significant beyond the .001 level. The data are reported in Table 3.

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TABLE 3 HERE  
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Significant differences were found among position on pupil control ideology as well. Mean PCI scores were 53.92, 50.52, 43.67, and 46.75 respectively for teachers, special education teachers, administrators, and counselors. Analysis of variance yielded an F-ratio of 6.41 which was significant at the .01 level. The data are summarized in Table 4.

#### DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the rationale that undergirded the investigation. It was theorized that custodial educators would report more severe penalties for pupils who manifest disruptive behavior. Educators embracing custodialism in pupil control ideology can be expected to be distrustful of pupils, favor rigid controls, and consequently desire more severe action when pupils misbehave. Humanistic teachers hold more permissive views toward misbehavior and are more likely to encourage self-discipline and less severe penalties when students are disruptive.

The results of the research support the theory. The more custodial the control ideology of the educator, the more severe were

his or her reported reactions to specific incidents of pupil disruptive behavior. And the more humanistic (less custodial) the control ideology of the educator, the less severe were his or her reactions to pupil misbehavior. And the finding that those directly responsible for the control of pupils would be more custodial in their pupil control ideology and tend to want to levy more severe penalties on pupils when they misbehave makes intuitive sense and supports the rationale of the study.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of the Variables  
Included in the Multiple Regression Equation

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. PCI	1.00	.59**	-.07	-.14	-.49**	-.27**	-.07	-.28**	-.27**	-.19*
2. PDB		1.00	-.08	-.14	-.34**	-.26**	-.10	-.25**	-.32**	-.24**
3. Sex			1.00	.01	.04	.04	-.01	-.05	.14	.08
4. Age				1.00	.28**	.06	.81	.47**	.04	.02
5. Position					1.00	.07	.27**	.40**	.04	.08
6. Level						1.00	.20**	.18*	.03	.08
7. Experience							1.00	.47**	-.00	-.00
8. Education								1.00	.03	.05
9. School									1.00	.01
10. State										1.00
Mean	50.93	116.41	1.59	2.49	1.79	2.15	3.28	4.12	3.16	1.90
S.D.	8.15	26.01	.89	1.07	.99	.61	1.39	1.05	1.50	.91

N = 227; Lf = 225; \*p < .01; \*\*p < .001

Table 2

**Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of  
Educator's Reactions to Pupil Disruptive Behavior**

Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
Pupil Control Ideology	.4036	.1629	15.76	.001
School	.4800	.2304	7.02	.01
Position	.4830	.2333	4.61	.05
Education	.4839	.2341	2.98	.
State	.4848	.2349	2.09	.
Sex	.5039	.2539	1.81	.
Level	.5079	.2580	.76	.
Experience	.5091	.2592	.31	.
Age	.5096	.2597	.24	.

Table 3

**Analysis of Variance Data for Comparisons Among  
Position on Pupil Disruptive Behavior**

Position Mean DSB	Teacher 133.68	Spec. Ed Teacher 103.69	Administrator 119.87	Counselor 82.25
Source	SS	df	MS	F
Main Effects	20179.91	3	6726.64	8.72*
Position	20179.91	3	6726.64	8.72
Explained	20179.91	3	6726.64	8.72
Residual	62498.80	81	771.59	
Total	82678.71	84	984.27	

\*p < .001

Table 4

Analysis of Variance Data for Comparisons Among  
Position on Pupil Control Ideology

Position Mean PCI	Teacher 53.92	Spec. Ed. Teacher 50.25	Administrator 43.67	Counselor 46.75
Source	SS	df	MS	F
Main Effects	1201.79	3	400.93	6.41*
Position	1202.79	3	400.93	6.41
Explained	1201.79	3	400.93	6.41
Residual	5066.09	81	12.54	
Total	6268.89	84	74.63	

\*p &lt; .01