Investigating Classroom Management Dynamics: Challenges and Strategies Among Junior High School Teachers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the perspectives and challenges of teachers in managing their classrooms. This study provides a better understanding of teachers’ views and challenges. This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological research design and thematic analysis. The study emphasizes the value of good classroom management for student achievement and engagement, as well as the challenges teachers encounter in dealing with students’ behaviors and crafting effective classroom management strategies. The study recommends that teachers managing their classrooms know what type of rules they will set and observe their students to determine what kind of attitude they have towards them in order to effectively manage a classroom. The right psychosocial components and the teacher’s physical attention to the students help to establish a positive environment.

Keywords

challenges, classroom management, student engagement, teacher strategies
**INTRODUCTION**

**Background of the Study**

Classroom management is one of the critical components of effective teaching, referring to the strategies and techniques teachers use to maintain a positive and productive learning environment for their students. Effective classroom management not only fosters an atmosphere conducive to learning but also helps teachers meet their instructional objectives. However, achieving effective classroom management can be challenging for teachers, particularly given their students’ diverse needs, backgrounds, and personalities.

Teachers face numerous challenges in managing their classrooms, which can vary depending on the specific context in which they work. For example, teachers may encounter challenges related to student behavior, such as disruptive or disrespectful conduct, or they may face difficulties in engaging and motivating students who are disinterested or struggling academically. Teachers’ classroom management, particularly given the pressure to cover curriculum, may also involve balancing the competing demands of instructional time and content within a limited timeframe.

**Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

Classroom management continues to be a growing concern for most teachers and educators. Weinstein (2011) asserted that classroom management remains one of the severe challenges teachers face, especially since it is a significant cause of teacher struggles and job dissatisfaction. It is further stressed that studying classroom management is essential for teachers, administrators, and the public.

Furthermore, classroom management involves the practical application and integration of much of the foundational knowledge outlined in a book by Hammond and Bransford (2017). Effective classroom management should integrate foundational knowledge such as (1) providing an orderly, safe, and positive learning environment and (2) developing students’ self-discipline and responsibility. Effective classroom management enables high caliber or intellectual work.

According to the findings of Sen (2016), dealing with teaching and administrative concerns and classroom management, as previously stated by theories of classroom management. There are more classroom management theories than these six. Classroom management ideas are influenced by psychological theories that have already been created, and they often interact With One Another.

Teachers and administrators continue to face many challenges in achieving effective classroom management. Tahir (n.d.) has enumerated a list of challenges related to classroom management, including (1) teaching skills and (2) workplace professional development. The study further introduced mentoring and cost-effective professional development models to help mitigate these challenges.

Moreover, professional development was further established as a significant challenge in effective classroom management. Marquez, Sprague, Smolkowski, Pennefather, Marquez, & Vincent (2016) showed that the approach and delivery of professional development (PD) in classroom management may determine how well teachers can apply evidence-based strategies. The need for professional development is established as influential in further effective classroom management.

**Statement of the Problem**

This study focused on the perspectives and challenges of teachers in classroom management. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What strategies do junior high school teachers use to manage their classrooms?
2. What challenges do junior high school teachers face in classroom management?
3. How do junior high school teachers deal with behavior-related challenges affecting classroom management?

**METHODS**

**Research Design**

This study is a qualitative study that utilized a phenomenological research design to assess the perspectives and challenges of teachers in classroom management.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

This study utilized an opportunistic sampling method in selecting the respondents for data collection. The population of teachers in PSALMS, Inc. is 16. From this, the researcher selected five (5) teachers as respondents for data gathering.

**Research Instrument**

This paper utilized semi-structured interviews and observation methods to select respondents for data collection. The questions were given to the respondents ahead of time so they could conceptualize substantial answers for the benefit of this study.
Data Gathering Procedure
Before administering the research instrument, the researchers sought approval from the school administrator and the academic coordinator for the formality of the research endeavor. Afterward, the researchers informed respondents about the interview schedule, explained the purpose of the study, and the goals that needed to be achieved.

Data Analysis
The data collected from the respondents was transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis, a qualitative analysis method used to describe, summarize, or explain a dataset.

Ethical Considerations
The researchers assured that the data collected from the respondents would be protected and kept confidential, as would the details of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies of Teachers in Classroom Management Implementation

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<td>Implementing classroom rules</td>
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<td>Identifying students’ interest and characteristics</td>
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Classroom Rules
Teachers establish classroom rules to ensure a productive, orderly, and polite learning environment for all students. These guidelines promote the well-being and academic achievement of all students, while also setting standards for behavior and fostering a sense of order. As one participant stated, "...by implementing rules, we can set the boundaries and tone of the classroom. It will serve as the guide on how students should behave in the learning environment..."

According to Boostrom's study (2014), classroom rules are not merely instrumental management tools; instead, they are structures of meaning used by teachers and students to make sense of the world. The implementation of rules is an effective tool for classroom management, outlining the required conduct for students and specifying which behaviors are inappropriate and which reinforcement should be given. Classroom rules should be written in simple language appropriate for the children’s developmental stage, using positive language to state them. Rules should be tailored to various circumstances or settings and should align with the behavioral standards of the entire institution (Sen, 2016).

Identifying Students’ Interests and Characteristics
Observing students in action and noting or analyzing what they are capable of helps teachers determine students’ competency levels in skills or capacities. According to one of the participants, "...it is one of the things we consider in thinking and implementing our strategies: to know our learners and their interests and skills..."

Bourdeaud'hui, Aesaert, Van Keer, and Van Braak (2018) concluded in their study that knowing your students’ interests and characteristics will guide you in crafting classroom strategies for your classes.

Academic success depends on understanding student interest, a potent motivating factor that drives learning, directs academic and professional paths, and energizes learning. Student interest is a persistent propensity to reengage over time and a psychological condition of attention and affect toward a specific item or topic. The four-phase model of interest development integrates these two definitions to direct interventions that foster interest and profit from existing interests. Attention-grabbing environments, situations that evoke earlier personal interests, problem-based learning, and increasing utility value are four strategies that are effective at increasing interest. Promoting interest can help students learn more actively and with greater motivation (Harackiewicz, Smith, & Priniski, 2016).

Offering Praise
One of the ways of managing students’ attention, interest, and behavior is through the constant attention given by teachers and their implementation of classroom management. It is frequently emphasized that teachers should use praise as a particular technique to reinforce both learning and behavior. Praise is considered an inspiring, motivating, and affirming method of reinforcement since it represents favorable appraisals of pupils’ work or behavior; "...by using praise and words of affirmation, students’ confidence can be increased. They [the students] can feel that they are doing great, and they can interact with you naturally because they feel comfortable in the reassuring environment established."
The perspective that you are either innovative or not intelligent has significant adverse effects on learning, as research shows. Fortunately, the teacher's praise of students is a potent approach for teachers to intervene. This perspective can be changed so that students start to see their intelligence as something that can be developed by praising their work and efforts. When faced with academic losses and other challenges, students will be better able to "bounce back" if they adopt this approach to acquiring intelligence (Dwyer, 2015).

Challenges Influencing Classroom Management

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<td>Understanding different learning styles</td>
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Varying Attitudes of Students

An individual student's attitude is their propensity to react in a particular manner to anything. The student's response can range from positive to negative or from good to awful. When a teacher criticizes a pupil for having a bad attitude, they refer to the student's negative response to a request. On the other hand, a student with a positive attitude probably has a cooperative spirit and complies with what the teacher asks of them; "...because if all the students are nice, implementing classroom management is easy. However, there are students from diverse backgrounds..."

As Aminat (2022) described, the fact that attitude is regarded as a psychological construct will be an excellent factor for a teacher in deciding what methods and strategies will be used. A classroom has varying attitudes that may affect the learning process. Factors such as inquiry satisfaction and enjoyment contribute to the overall attitude of the students towards learning inside the classroom. The students' attitudes will affect their participation and interaction within the learning environment. It is essential that conditioning is done before any learning activity. The learning environment is one of the keys to a student's intellectual, emotional, and attitudinal progress. Promoting the pupils' good attitudes requires creating a productive and comfortable learning environment. Students interacting in an encouraging learning environment will display good behaviors and attitudes (Alarcon, Dumagan, Lumakang, & Nuezca, 2022).

Understanding Different Learning Styles

An element that may affect learning is classroom management. This results from the wide range of elements that educators must consider in the classroom, such as aspects relating to students, techniques, media, experiences, and circumstances of learning facilities. The learning process and the overall educational environment both benefit from different learning styles. As one of the teacher respondents said: "One of the factors that must be considered in designing classroom management is students' learning styles. As a teacher, I must ensure it caters to different learners with different needs. All learners must perceive classroom management.".

Taking into account the different learning styles of students in crafting effective classroom management has been proven to improve the learning process inside the classroom. When teachers know their students' learning styles, they can better design their lessons and classroom environment to support all learners. For example, visual learners may benefit from sitting near the front of the classroom so they can see the teacher and any visual aids being used. Auditory learners may benefit from being placed in a quiet classroom to focus on the teacher's lecture. Kinesthetic learners may benefit from having opportunities to move around and participate in hands-on activities (Liyange, Gunawardena, & Hirakawa, 2014).

Teacher's Action in Resolving Classroom Related Problems

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Managing and Minimizing Disruptions

Despite the challenges teachers face in classroom management, strategies and techniques are actively employed. According to one of our participants, "...There are many strategies a teacher has in managing their classroom. For instance, their teaching styles, such as authoritative, utilitarian, indulgent, and so on...".

According to the Crisis Prevention Institute (2021), students' actions that distract from teaching and divert attention from learning include shouting, failing to pay attention, avoiding work, being disrespectful, refusing, and participating in power conflicts. The following classroom management techniques can be used to assist in maintaining students' attention and establishing uniformity among them regarding class expectations: (1) understand your students, (2) practice patience with rational detachment, (3) set adequate limits, (4) adhere to the schedule you set, and (5) be aware of the causes of behavior.
Intervening in Student Behavior

In addition to the above findings, minimizing student disruption is effective for their learning, allowing them to focus. However, intervening in the student's behavior is more critical for understanding the student's problems. As one of the participants mentioned, "...if we know the problem or how to identify it and approach it. For example, a student's tardiness can disrupt the class, so knowing the cause and effect to address the problem is important...".

With proper support, disciplining students in the classroom is a process that requires a significant amount of time and emotional energy. According to Packard (2011), it is essential to connect with students one-on-one and work through their problems, even with regulations and security measures in place. This reframes behavior management as an opportunity to build deep connections, aligning with her strategy for student assessment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

From the findings above, this study concludes that to manage a classroom effectively, teachers must establish and enforce classroom rules consistently, and through observation, they can assess students’ competency levels in various skills and capacities. The primary challenge for teachers in managing the class was students’ attitudes and providing constructive criticism. The varied perspectives of students make it challenging for teachers to manage the class because while some may behave well, others do not. Additionally, offering constructive criticism to students was also difficult for teachers, as some students were sensitive to criticism, ignored constructive feedback, and did not apply it. Therefore, the most effective way for teachers to manage the class is by setting rules to address issues related to students’ attitudes and providing constructive criticism. Understanding the insights and perspectives of teachers regarding challenges in classroom management can help create more programs and seminars for teachers and students to enhance students’ attitudes and teachers’ strategies in the classroom.

Recommendations

The study recommends that teachers managing their classrooms should determine the type of rules they will establish and observe their students to understand their attitudes, enabling them to manage the classroom effectively. Additionally, the researcher suggests that the school conduct programs and seminars to develop more classroom management strategies and improve students’ attitudes.

In strengthening guidance and classroom management, various factors need to be considered. The appropriate psychosocial components and physical attention from teachers help establish a positive environment. Teachers can foster a desire to learn in their students and design a system for managing appropriate classroom behavior. However, without structure in their daily schedules, children may deviate from productive learning activities. Both students and teachers benefit from structure, a supportive learning atmosphere, and discipline.

REFERENCES


Author(s)’ Statements on Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Ethics Statement
The author/s hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. The author/s take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.

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