

Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Management, Problems and its Solutions: Case of Government Secondary Schools in Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract

Classroom is a community of learners where formal interaction takes place between the teacher and the taught. Better management of classroom ensures quality of teaching and learning. Problem of classroom management is a common phenomenon in Pakistani schools. The purpose of this study was to investigate secondary school teachers' perception of classroom management its problem and solutions in government secondary schools in District Chitral. The study investigated into the problem through a descriptive research using a survey method. For this purpose, out of 40 boy's secondary schools, data were collected from 100 randomly sampled teachers in six Tehsils of the district through a close-ended questionnaire. For validity test the questionnaire was piloted in five schools before formally administering to the sample respondents. Data were collected, organized and interpreted by subjecting it to simple percentage statistics. Findings of the study showed that one of the biggest problems regarding classroom management is deviant behavior of students. Teachers do not plan for their classroom which decreases their abilities of classroom management. Teachers do not involve students in activities which provide the students room for creating disruptions during teaching and learning. Students do not obey school rules and regulations. On the basis of this study it is recommended that teachers should plan for their lessons before going to classrooms. They should design such classroom activities where students are involved and their deviant behavior is reduced. Teachers should also display classroom rules inside classrooms so that the students may see them and follow them.

Key Words: Classroom management, classroom management, teachers' perception, deviant behavior

Introduction

Classroom management is a cardinal feature of the total education process.

It contains all the steps through which interaction between the educator and the educant take place. Classroom management is the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite of disruptive behavior by students. The term also refers to the prevention of disruptive behavior of students (Berliner, 1988). Classroom management refers to all those essential activities which are highly necessary not only to create but also to maintain a supportive and orderly atmosphere. It includes planning and preparation of teaching and learning materials, organization of the materials, decoration of the classroom, creation of expectation and establishment and enforcement of rules and routines in the classroom (Tan, Parsons, Hinson and Sardo-Brown, 2003)

The way teachers conduct the classroom matters has a deep influence upon their own teaching and learning of the students, because classroom is a place where the closest interaction between the students and the teachers takes place (Muhammad and Ismail, 2001). Effective classroom management decides the effectiveness of teachers teaching quality and students learning. Effective teachers create a sound, supportive and friendly environment in classrooms where students feel safe, respected, cared and secured. For this purpose effective teachers create conditions of cooperation, discipline and responsibility both for themselves and for their students (Riaz, 2009). Teachers are the ultimate decider of the classroom atmosphere. Their role is crucial in influencing the behaviors of students. Teachers who plan practically are able to overcome many classroom problems such as disruptions, deviant behavior or misbehaviors of students. In this regard the nature of teacher plays a vital role, for example, different teachers have different ways of instinctively managing the classroom environment and patterns of setting up classroom that best fits their purpose (Aly, 2007). Managing a classroom is the ultimate responsibility of a teacher. The way a teacher manages the classroom will change the thinking of the students towards learning.

It also defines the role of the students, their behaviors, choices, and the overall targets and tone of the school. Strong and consistent management and organizational skills have been identified as leading to fewer classroom discipline problems (Froyen and Iverson (1999). It has been observed that teachers in Pakistani schools face problems of classroom management. A study by Ali (2000) revealed that today many urban and rural schools in Pakistan comprise of such children who are disenchanted, disturbed and disruptive. Many of such children live in rural areas with parents who are either not educated or have a disturbed family relationships. Many more such children live in community conditions that have badly affected their readiness for school as well. In view of Omar (2000) children who live in a subjected environment both at home and school have greater propensity towards inappropriate behavior in the classroom. According to Ishtiaq (2009) disruptive behavior disrupts the teaching and learning process. Even, extreme negative behaviors are dangerous for the students and teachers both. In such conditions of anti social behavior, the teaching process is adversely affected. Saad (1999) evaluates that prolongation of problems of classroom management potentially leads to perpetual anti-social behaviors among children. Thus failure to solve classroom management problems by the teachers may encourage children who suffer from anti-social behaviors. There are many rural schools in Pakistan where children have low self-esteem, deviant attitude, and use abusive language both at home and school, truancy and delinquency.

The rationale of this study was to explore the classroom management problems faced by teachers in government secondary schools in district Chitral, Pakistan. Although it was a small study, yet results of this study would help teachers improve their classroom management skills. This will lead to effective teaching and learning process in the Pakistani schools.

Statement of the problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding classroom management, problems and its solutions in government secondary schools at District Chitral. The researcher as a teacher trainer for pre-service teachers in various government schools observed the ineffective management skills of teachers in government secondary schools in different three Tehsils of the district. During classroom observations of teachers during teaching practice and after training for follow up, the researcher personally observed that there was unnecessary noise and disturbance in the classrooms. Even some of the parents complain that teachers punish students physically. On the other hand, interactions with teachers showed that according to them the students create mischief, disturbance in the class and even do not listen to the teachers some times. The parents of the area think that due to weak management skills of the teachers the children do not work, and there are examples of indiscipline among the secondary schools students in the government schools. Lewis (2000) discovered that the students of the private schools are humble, cooperative and produce better results in the examination.

In public schools, in some cases, pupils have been found placing complaints against their teachers. These complaints are related to teachers' indifference towards students, corporal punishment and disgracing them in front of their class fellows. This situation has culminated in low academic achievements of students among the government schools as compared to the private schools. As a result of this situation, this study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of teachers about classroom management, problems and its solutions in government secondary schools in district Chitral.

Research Objectives

Following were the main objectives of this research study.

1. To explore the perceptions of teachers of government secondary school in district Chitral about the concept of classroom management.
2. To find out the perceptions of teachers about classroom management problems in government secondary schools district Chitral.
3. To ask from teachers in government secondary schools in district Chitral about the effects of classroom management on the quality of teaching and learning.
4. To investigate from teachers about the solutions of the classroom management problems in government secondary schools in Chitral.
5. To provide solutions on the basis of this study for the classroom management problems in government secondary schools in District Chitral

Research questions

To investigate the above stated problem, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do government secondary school teachers conceive classroom management in District Chitral?
2. What is the perception of teachers about classroom management problems in government secondary schools in District Chitral?
3. What are the current classroom management problems faced by the teachers in government secondary schools in District Chitral?
4. What solutions do the teachers present for classroom management problems in government secondary schools in District Chitral?
5. What solutions could be provided on the basis of this study for the classroom management problems in government secondary schools in District Chitral?

Hypothesis

This study is directed by the following research hypothesis that "There will be no significant difference between government secondary school teachers' perceptions in district Chitral towards the concept of classroom management, problems and solutions".

Literature review

Classroom management is a complex exercise in the process of education. It demands talent, skills, energy and ability from teachers to manage classrooms because it directly deals with the behaviors of learners. Human behavior is the most complex phenomenon. Teachers with highly practical vision, strategies, skills and knowledge can manage classroom effectively (Tan, Parsons, Hinson, and Sardo-Brown, 2003). The term classroom management refers to all those decisions that teachers take to facilitate the learning process and to provide the students maximum opportunity for learning (Krause, Bochner, and Duchesne, 2003). In words of Berliner (1988) classroom management includes all those essential activities which are important to maintain an environment which generates necessary and positive conditions for learning. To achieve this purpose, teachers may plan rationally for their lessons, prepare teaching and learning materials more judiciously, organize the content, decorate classroom and establish daily routines. The basic purpose of classroom management according to Froyen and Iverson (1999) aims to encourage students towards learning and to promote their positive behaviors. These writers further argue that positive classroom management contributes to enhanced academic achievements of students, increased teacher efficacy, improved students behavior and teachers teaching. Feldman (1997) considers classroom management not only related to management of students' behavior but also to lesson planning of teacher, organizing of the materials, controlling of behaviors, goal based learning process, supportive atmosphere and maintaining a highly effective teaching and learning experiences within classrooms.

Saad (1999) informs that classroom environment is not a place where only transfer of information takes place rather it encompasses other essential aspects of learning such as physical space, materials, attitudes of teacher and the taught, feelings and emotions, and other social dynamics of life. All these form important characteristics of the teaching and learning experiences. Hence, in the words of Krause, Bochner and Duchesne (2003) a classroom where a teacher creates an environment which enables the students to know the effective use of the available time and its resources and also cooperate with their class fellows is called real community of learners.

According to Ostrosky, Jung, Hemmeter and Thomas (2008) in the development of a positive classroom environment a teacher plays a highly important role. Teachers can create such conditions inside the classrooms where students feel safe and learn how to work together effectively as individuals. Here, the role of the teachers is to maximize learning and minimize disruptions by fostering among students attitudes of trust, tolerance, acceptance and cooperation. In this regard Canter and Canter. (2001) argue that there are two goals of classroom management, first, to create and maintain a highly supportive learning environment and second, to promote a safe classroom community so that students' interest, motivation and involvement in the learning process is maintained. And third, is to students are allowed to establish relationships openly and to set targets for themselves. This situation will enable to discuss their needs with teachers without and also feel comfortable to intellectual risks. For this purpose teachers can establish rules and routines. Additionally, Edwards (2004) has found that rules and routines provide students with structure to work in organization and interact with each other fairly. The class rules and routines must be mentioned both verbally and in written form. Examples should be shared wherever necessary by the teachers through modeling during teaching and learning.

The basic purpose of classroom management is socialization of students. It depends on the environment prevailing in the school. Positive environment directs students' behavior in a positive manner. Teachers should direct students' behavior in a desirable way. Whenever there is any disturbance in the classroom, teachers may take help from experts and develop better strategies to cope with particular students with inappropriate behaviors. For successful teaching and learning teachers need to plan effectively. Successful classroom teaching plan supports teachers in successful classroom management. For this purpose, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) suggest six strategies such as reflecting on student development needs, creating a supportive physical environment, creating a cooperative learning environment, teaching and maintaining rules and procedures, managing classroom activities effectively, promoting sense of cooperation among students, using appropriate classroom management style. According to Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper (1998) the goal of classroom management is considering and satisfying students' developmental needs. This purpose can be achieved by creating conducive learning environment, stimulating sights, relax sounds and good ventilation. In view of Feldman (1998) classroom is a place where students should feel comfortable and at ease.

The surrounding of the classroom should be neat and clean. There should be respect for each other and a non-threatening atmosphere. Effective teachers create a classroom management which is based on engaging practices. Such teachers set expectations for their students such as respect for rules and procedures and a motivating learning climate where every student takes part with interest. Management of physical environment is a major task for teacher. It includes arrangement of desks, resources and teaching equipments. Physical management of classroom is closely related to students' behavior. Hence, teachers should think about the preparation of physical resources when they plan. They can change it according to their needs goals and choose whatever works best for them (Eggen and Kauchak, 2004). Teachers usually encounter disciplinary problems during classroom teaching process. One of the best ways to deal with behavior problems is establishment of classroom rules and procedures.

Procedures help teachers in establishing routines for students for example turning papers, asking for questions, sharpening pencils, doing group or pair activities. Rules provide sense of regularity and organization for students and teachers. According to Gallagher (1998) classroom rules contribute towards the creation of productive learning environment. Hence, rules should be clear, reasonable and consistent. Rules should be such that students must feel pride and responsibility to follow them. Effective teachers engage students in a variety of challenging and useful activities. This develops sense of cooperation among the students. This can be done by enabling them to share responsibility among themselves. Thus sharing of responsibility among students will increase their commitment to decisions (Good and Prophy, 2002). Classroom management is organizing space, time and materials to facilitate effective instruction. It is a highly difficult task, because a teacher has to cope with many students with individual differences. They have different interest and choices (Wong and Rosemary, 2001).

Classroom could pose much problem for teachers if the teacher lacks the basic competency to create the setting, decorate the room appropriately, arrange chairs reasonably, speaking to the students clearly and respond to their questions, establishing rules and procedures and communicating them to the students repeatedly. The way teachers prepare the classroom physically determines the degree of the participation levels of students in the activities. Better physical makes the classroom arm and inviting. This in turn decides the level of students' interest and motivation in the teaching and learning process. It is recommended by Jones (2000) that the physical arrangement of the classroom must match the teachers teaching plan and learning goals. Students must have not only easy access to the materials but also be able to use them. According to Santrock (2006) teacher must be ready to attend to students' individual learning needs. For this the teacher can actively monitor the teaching learning process by creating an engaging environment. Hence, teachers can actively monitor students by watching them closely, giving feedback to correct undesirable behaviors and to praise for good behaviors. Jones (2000) elaborates that the use of communication pattern is an important variable in classroom management.

The communication which takes place between students and teacher determines the degree of achievements of the students. Teachers who give clear instructions for assignments and responds to students' questions actually understand the needs of students. Thus communication in a clear language enhances students understating of the concepts. Gieger (2000) argues that clear communication between teachers and students minimizes the chances of misunderstanding. This will lead to less discipline problems in the classroom. For maintaining good discipline behavior management is a necessary. Hence, teachers must show firmness, tenderness and gentleness to deal with students' misbehavior. Nayak and Rao (2008) suggest that teachers must make the students realize their own behaviors for wrong doings or right. This will develop in students the habit of self-discipline. In summary it can be said in the words of Tan (2001) that for maintaining a good classroom environment and for solutions of classroom problems, teachers must create conducive learning environment where students find respect, care, meaning and opportunity for personal and social growth. For this purpose, both teachers and students should be able to interact with each other easily under the established rules, procedures and regulations.

Research methodology

This survey study was delimited to 40 boys' secondary schools from six Tehsils of the District Chitral. For this purpose 100 teachers were randomly selected as respondents. The population of the study comprised of all the secondary schools in the district. Data were collected using a questionnaire as a tool of research. The 20 items questionnaire was devised to address the issues of classroom management problem and solutions facing by teachers working in the government secondary schools. The questionnaire was designed based on Five Point Likert scale. According to Muspafi et al (2004) scale is a useful tool to ascertain the degree of agreement and disagreement with each item. The value of an item may differ from one researcher to another. It helps in better measurement of perceptions. To ensure validity and reliability of the data collecting tool, a pilot study was conducted in 6 schools. In this regard, one school each was selected from each Tehsil of the District. The questionnaire was reviewed and revised in the light of the results gained from the pilot study. Furthermore, three PhD professors in education were also engaged to cross check the items and finally the questionnaires were administered to the selected sample by the researchers in person. The collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics in percentage.

Population and sampling

The population of this study consisted of all the government secondary school teachers in district Chitral. Out of the total population 40 schools and 100 teachers were randomly selected as respondents. To ensure equality of representation, five schools were selected from each Tehsil.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire on Five Point Likert Scale was developed ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagreed (DA) and Strongly Disagreed (SDA). The questionnaire comprised of different items which cover eight variables such as;

1. Classroom management
2. Communication pattern
3. Classroom rules and procedures
4. Discipline

5. Lesson planning
6. Materials and space
7. Classroom environment
8. Teacher attitude

The validity and reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study. Cronbach Alpha was calculated to ensure reliability of the instrument. The reliability was ensured at Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.902 which was acceptable to administer an instrument for the purpose of data collection.

Analysis of the data

Data was collected from 100 government secondary school teachers using a structured survey questionnaire. Out of the 100 questionnaires that were personally administered to each respondent, all of them were collected back by the researchers personally and the response rate was 100%. The collected data were analyzed using simple statistics. The results are tabulated and reported in parentages.

Findings and discussion

Findings and results of this study are presented in the following tables along with analysis of the views of the respondents.

Table 1. Views of respondents regarding concept of classroom management

Sr.#	Statements	Frequency of Total Responses N = 100					
		SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total
	Classroom management is:						
1	managing only the teaching resources in classroom	40	20	10	15	05	(100%)
2	facilitating the learning process in classroom	25	25	13	17	20	(100%)
3	managing the teaching and learning process in classroom	55	25	05	10	05	(100%)

Table 1 shows that a majority, that is 40% of the respondents strongly agree that classroom management is managing only the teaching resources in classroom. Only 25% of the respondents agree that classroom management is facilitating the learning process in classroom. Whereas, a great majority, that is 55% strongly agree that classroom management is managing the teaching and learning process in classroom

Table 2. Views of respondents regarding communication pattern

Sr.#	Statements	Frequency of Total Responses N = 100					
		SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total
	Teachers in government secondary schools Chitral:						
1	use simple language to explain concepts in classroom	23	20	07	40	10	(100%)
2	use his/her body language effectively in classroom	19	21	10	35	15	(100%)
3	does not use gestures and postures effectively in classroom	45	15	05	15	20	(100%)

Table 2 shows that interestingly majority, that is 40% of the respondents disagrees that the teachers use simple language to explain concepts in classroom. Similarly, 35% of the respondents disagree that the teachers use their languages effectively in classroom. On the other hand 45% of the respondents strongly agree that the teachers do not use gestures and postures effectively in classroom.

Table 3. Views of respondents regarding classroom rules and procedures

Sr.#	Statements	Frequency of Total Responses N = 20					
		SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total
	Teachers in government secondary schools Chitral:						
1	come to classroom in time	21	19	07	23	30	(100%)
2	do not share the classroom rules with students	45	15	10	20	10	(100%)
3	only the teachers make the classroom rules	60	20	05	05	10	(100%)

Table 3 shows that 30% of the respondents strongly disagree that the teachers come to school in time. Whereas, 45% strongly agree that the teachers do not share the classroom rules with the students. Similarly, 60% strongly agree that only the teachers make the classroom rules.

Table 4. Views of respondents regarding classroom discipline

Sr.#	Statements	Frequency of Total Responses N = 200					
		SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total
	Teachers in government secondary schools Chitral:						
1	keep positive expectations of their students	15	10	10	30	35	(100%)
2	provide clear instructions to the students in classroom	20	19	10	36	14	(100%)
3	create a supportive teaching and learning environment	14	16	00	40	30	(100%)

Table 4 shows that 35% of the strongly disagree that the teachers keep positive expectations of their students. In the same way, 36% of the respondents disagree that the teachers provide clear instructions to the students in classroom. On the other hand, 40% disagree that the teachers create s supportive teaching and learning environment in classroom.

Table 5. Views of respondents regarding lesson planning

Sr.#	Statements	Frequency of Total Responses N = 200					
		SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total
	Teachers in government secondary schools Chitral:						
1	know how to make lesson plans for classroom teaching	45	20	05	20	10	(100%)
2	use the lesson plans effectively for teaching and learning	20	10	00	40	30	(100%)
3	make lesson plans regularly for classroom teaching	10	05	00	60	25	(100%)

Table 5 shows that 45% of the respondents strongly agree that the teachers know how to make lesson plans. In the same way, 40% of the respondents disagree that the teachers use the lesson plans effectively for teaching and learning in classrooms. And thus 60% of the respondents disagree that the teachers make lesson plans regularly for classroom teaching in classrooms.

Table 6. Views of respondents regarding materials and space

Sr.#	Statements	Frequency of Total Responses N = 200					
		SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total
	Teachers in government secondary schools Chitral:						
1	use the available resources effectively in classroom	12	18	05	30	35	(100%)
2	use the available space effectively for students' learning	12	18	13	27	30	(100%)
3	use different resources to make class activities interesting	20	15	00	30	35	(100%)

Table 6 shows that 35% of the respondents strongly disagree that the teachers use the available resources effectively in classroom. Whereas, 30% of the respondents strongly disagree that the teachers use the available space effectively for students' learning. Majority of the respondents, that is 35% strongly disagree that the teachers use different resources to make the classroom activities interesting.

Table 7. Views of respondents regarding classroom environment

Sr.#	Statements	Frequency of Total Responses N = 200					
		SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total
	Teachers in government secondary schools Chitral:						
1	create friendly environment in classroom	40	20	05	15	20	(100%)
2	encourage students to take part in class activities actively	13	20	00	17	50	(100%)
3	design different learning activities in classroom	17	13	10	20	40	(100%)

Table 7 shows that majority, that is, 40% of the respondents strongly agree that the teachers create friendly environment in classroom.

On the other hand, 50% strongly disagree that the teachers encourage students to take part in class activities actively. Similarly, 40% strongly disagree that the teachers design different learning activities in classroom.

Table 8. Views of respondents regarding teachers’ attitude

Sr.#	Statements	Frequency of Total Responses N = 200					
		SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total
	Teachers in government secondary schools Chitral:						
1	respect students’ views during classroom discussion	30	25	10	15	20	(100%)
2	praise students for their contributions in classroom	26	20	04	30	20	(100%)
3	do not like students to ask questions during class time	40	20	00	20	20	(100%)

Table 8 shows that 30% respondents strongly agree that the teachers respect students’ views during classroom discussion. Conversely, 30% of the respondents disagree that the teachers praise students for their contributions in classroom. On the other hand, 40% of the respondents strongly agree that the teachers do not like students to ask questions during class time.

Conclusions

On the basis of the results and findings this study concludes that that according to majority of the teachers classroom management is classroom management is managing the total teaching and learning process in classroom. The teachers use simple language to explain concepts in classroom. The teachers use their languages effectively in classroom. However, interestingly the study found that the teachers do not use gestures and postures effectively in classroom.

The study further discovered that the teachers do not come to school in time. The teachers also do not share the classroom rules with the students. It was also found that only the teachers make the classroom rules

The study found that the teachers know how to make lesson plans and the teachers also use the lesson plans effectively for teaching and learning in classrooms. It was found that the teachers do make lesson plans regularly for classroom teaching in classrooms

The study also found that the teachers do not use the available resources effectively in classroom. The study found that the teachers do not use the available space effectively for students’ learning. Furthermore, the study found that the teachers do not use different resources to make the classroom activities interesting.

The study further found that the teachers create friendly environment in classroom. Conversely, the study found that the teachers do not encourage students to take part in class activities actively and the teachers also do not design different learning activities in classroom.

The study discovered that the teachers respect students’ views during classroom discussion. Conversely, it was found that the teachers do not praise students for their contributions in classroom. On the other hand, the study found that the teachers do not like students to ask questions during class time.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above study the following recommendations are made.

1. Teachers may be provided relevant training to the teachers in classroom management and to deal with the issues and problems of classroom management.
2. Teachers may be able to overcome the problems of classrooms on the basis of effective lesson planning on regular basis.
3. Teachers can make their classroom management better by using the available resources in classroom effectively such as teaching and reading materials, technologies and even students as resources. In this regard the school principal may also advise the teachers to do that.

4. By encouraging the students to ask questions and to participate in the process of education can improve deviant behaviors of students. In this way some of the discipline problems on the part of students could be controlled.
5. The students may be advised to follow the classroom rules. In this regard the teachers may involve students in the process of making the rules and procedures for classroom. in this way the students will own the rules.
6. The students may be considered as participant in the process of education rather than a recipient. For this purpose, the teachers may give some responsibilities to the students to engage them in the process of teaching and learning. This act will develop among the students a strong sense of accountability and sense of purpose.
7. The teachers may control the rude or deviant attitudes of the students by praising their contributions. In this way the students' self-esteem will increase. This will help them to be happy learners. They will take interest in the process of teaching and learning.
8. Teachers may design different learning activities in the classroom so that the students are engaged and do not find extra time for making mischief and disturbances. They will be busy.
9. School principals may allow the teachers to make decisions independently. This will help the teachers to directly talk to the parents of the students and get them involved in the process of education of their children directly. This help in decreasing the negative behaviors of some of the students.

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