

Classroom Management Practices in the Secondary Schools – Teachers’ Perspectives from Kalutara Educational Zone in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Classroom management has been considered as one of the important areas in teaching - learning process. It is associated with managing students’ behaviors in the classroom, which is one of the most contributing and challenging issues in teaching career. This study aimed to investigate the classroom management practices of secondary teachers in the Kalutara educational zone. A survey research design was employed to determine teachers’ perspectives towards classroom management practices of secondary schools. A total of 40 teachers selected from three schools which were consisted of 1AB boys, 1AB girls and C mixed schools. Data collected by using a questionnaire and collected data mostly analyzed using frequency and the percentage methods. The findings indicated that, the teachers, agreed that the classroom management was an essential part of teaching. Many of them agreed that it was an essential part of teaching while some teachers considered it to be even more important than teaching. They were of the opinion that the lesson would not be successful if there is no planned classroom management. But it is noteworthy that most of the teachers were unaware of the term "classroom management". Therefore, it is recommended that classroom management training should be given more prominence in the training programmes at school level.

Keywords: Classroom management, Perception, Secondary school

I. INTRODUCTION

The teachers are the key diverse who play crucial roles in classrooms. They are assigned with the responsibility of fulfilling the educational needs of students in an era where knowledge is rapidly expanding. Thus, the role and responsibility of the teacher keeps changing as they are expected to facilitate teaching & learning process in classrooms. Classroom is the midpoint of the school where teachers utilize their professionalism and subject knowledge for the teaching-learning process. It is essential and important to maintain a higher degree of classroom management in every aspect. Classroom management has been considered as one of the important areas in teaching - learning process. It is associated with managing students’ behaviors in the classroom, which is one of the most contributing and challenging issues in teaching career. Classroom management considered as maintaining learners’ discipline and controlling their misbehavior at the classroom (Little & Akin-Little 2008; Vasa 1984). But Wong (Cited in Hardin

2014) linked the classroom management with the creating conducive environment for learning. Similarly, Kellough & Kellough (1996) have parallel view that the effective classroom management is to increase students’ learning at the classroom.

In contrast, Frelberg and Lapointe (2006) think that it is an agreement between teachers and students to continue their interaction at the classroom to establish s self-discipline among the students. While, Burden (2020) believes that the classroom management is that the teacher activities to create positive and active learning environment with students. Further, Burden (2020), states that classroom management build up with five major components, they are: creating & teaching expectations and rules; establishing procedures and structure; reinforcing expectations; active engaging students and managing students’ behaviors.

In the meantime, Allen (2010) has defined that “Classroom management may be a complex set of skills that has far more than having the ability to influence and control student behavior, there remains an overall impression that classroom management is primarily regarding discipline.” Aliakbari and Bozorgmanesh, (2015) defined classroom management as an umbrella term for teachers' actions to manage class, students' behavior and their learning. From the above definitions Classroom management is also a term employed by teachers to explicate the plan of action of guaranteeing that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behavior by students. The term classroom management refers to all those decisions that teachers take to facilitate the learning process and provide the students maximum opportunity for learning (Krause, Bochnerand, Duchesne, 2003).

Hence, classroom management is an ongoing interaction between teachers and their students. According to Brophy (1996), classroom management refers to actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction, arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students' attention to lessons and engaging in activities. Above the definitions of classroom management prove the crucial role

of an efficient classroom management for successful learning. In addition, classroom management is organizational function that requires teachers to perform various tasks such as planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling, house-keeping and nurturing by involving the manipulation of certain variable elements (time, spaces, personal, material, authority and responsibility, reward and punishment) in a variety of setting (out of school, in school outside the classroom, in classroom without students, with student regulation but no instruction, with student fostering development or self-control without instruction and instructional classes) in the furtherance of certain values (effective goal attainment, efficiency, human respects, personal integrity, self-direction and group cohesion) through resolution of number of tensions (between school and culture, between roles and personalities, between group and individuals, among roles, among personalities and between immediate situation and long term goals) that differ in nature and seriousness according to situational factors (group size, age and background of pupils, solidarity of group, organizational contexts, goals and adequacy of space and resources) in ways influenced by the schools and the teachers ideological stances (task oriented, individual oriented, and group oriented) (Badiei 2008; Brown and Edmondson, 1985; Johnson and Brooks 1979).

In addition, proper functioning of the classroom has a direct impact on the educational process of the country. It is important the teachers should have competence in the skills and strategies related to classroom management. Teachers are empowered with these skills and strategies through their pre-service teacher training programmes. However, it is a questionable when the teachers are directly getting their appointment without any pre-training related to their profession. In the context of Sri Lanka, nearly 44% of graduate teachers who are appointed directly with their first degrees at the universities (Ministry of Education, 2018). Majority of them do not have any pre-training related with teaching profession, but they should get professional training after they appointed by learning through various teaching professional programs. Therefore, it is significant to investigate about the classroom management practices of these teachers. One expectation of this study was to identify the perception of teachers regarding classroom management. For this purpose, the following research questions were formulated as what is the understating of teachers about the term of classroom management? How is their response for importance of classroom management? And what they state regarding classroom management?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many theories and models related with the classroom management. Skinner (1938) theory is based on the idea that learning is a function of apparent behavioral change. As per Skinner (1938), responses to individuals-events or stimuli in their environment could result in changes in behavior. Skinner's (1938) work on functional alignment is

united into both classroom management and instructional development. The training should take place in a question-and-answer format, which gradually reveals information to students step by step when applied to planned instruction. The learner must respond each time and receive immediate feedback. Such good performance should be rewarded with fame, prizes and good grades. In order to create a positive impact, the instructors should try to organize the questions into difficulty, so that the answer is always correct. Skinner's (1938) work is directly linked to modern school systems in several ways.

Many of the behavioral management systems in present classrooms are affected by Skinner's principles even though rewards have long been used for good behavior by him. Teachers use methods like immediate praise, feedback or rewards in order to change complex student behavior. Skinner's research into strengthening stimuli also led him to growth behavior-changing techniques in the classroom. Behavior change would also engage in training teachers to wait for their students to publish appropriate answers and strengthen those answers quickly and smoothly. Apart from that, Glaser (1998) created the term "choice theory" in which it was stated that all we do is behave. Glaser claims that almost all behaviors are selective, and that we are genetically driven to meet the five basic needs of survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. In the theory of choice, love and belonging can be identified as the most important needs because in meeting all other needs there is a basis for being connected with others. Accordingly, the classroom should be a place that meets the needs of the students. Meanwhile, Kohn's theory (1996) criticizes several aspects of traditional education, such as the utilization of competition or external factors as motivation. Kohn supports the idea that societies based on extrinsic motivation always become inefficient over time.

The hierarchical structures at work in mainstream education are questioned by him. Positions of authority are "unnaturally scarce", and such systems assume that every individual have a competitive nature. Kohn argues that rather than truly learning, the positive enforcement only encourages students to seek out more positive enforcement. Kohn (1996) believes that what to be taught should be determined by the curiosity of students and therefore, the ideal classroom emphasizes curiosity and cooperation above all. Therefore, it was argued that standards should be kept very minimal and is critical of standardized testing. Further, Kohn argues that a strict curriculum and homework are counterintuitive to student's needs. Kohn (1996) believes that most teachers rely too heavily on extrinsic motivation rather than intrinsic factors when it comes to classroom management. Accordingly, he suggests that teachers should keep cooperation in mind because when curiosity is nurtured, rewards and punishments are not necessary.

In addition, Hardin (2014) pointed out three different views on classroom management. They are i). Classroom

management as discipline, ii). Classroom management as a system and iii). Classroom management as an instruction. Teachers' roles in these different views also change in terms of managing classroom with the students. In the view of classroom management as discipline, Teachers take responsible for maintaining control of classroom for establishing discipline among students. Priority given for discipline than instruction in this concept. Skinner's Behavioral Management, Canter's Assertive Discipline, Jones's Positive Classroom Discipline, and Albert's Logical Consequences are four models developed based on this viewpoint. Likewise, in the other view point that classroom management as system, teaching and classroom management have looked like interdependent functions of the teachers. This concept reflected in the models Curwin and Mendler's Discipline with Dignity, Evertson's Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP), Kohn's Building Community, and Marshall's Discipline without Stress Punishments or Rewards. In the third view, classroom as instruction where teaching is become a prosocial skill. In this context, teacher is expected to establish peace making among students via teaching conflict resolution and peer meditation. It is reflected in the models such as Coloroso's Inner Discipline, Positive Behavior Support, Bodine and Crawford's Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation, and Gathercoal's Judicious Discipline (Hardin 2015).

Apart from that, there are many studies related classroom management practices in the literature. For example, Fowler and Şaraplı (2010) examined curriculum management practices among students in a language teaching programme. They have evaluated students' expectations towards classroom management practices using questionnaire. They found student had more concern about their teachers' effective classroom management techniques. In another study, Britac et al., (2006) examined about teachers' conflict management styles. In this study, authors attempted to evaluate teachers' efficacy for classroom management which was not explored much in the field of education. They found that there was a strong relationship between classroom management efficacy and managing conflict with students and it associated positively with the teachers' obliging style of conflict management. Similarly, Badiei et al., (2008) aimed to examine relationship between sense of efficacy and management styles of teachers. Using a sample of 670 teachers from India and Iran, Badiei (2008) concluded that there was significant relationship between management styles and teacher's sense of efficacy. Further, Badiei (2008) found that teachers' had a high sense of efficacy on classroom management. Silva et al., (2017), investigated child disciplinary methods practiced in the Sri Lankan school. They found that there was a high rate of corporal punishments used by teachers and principals to maintain discipline at the schools. It is because of lack of professional teacher trainings in this regard.

. III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey research design to achieve the purpose of this study which was to determine and describe the classroom management practices of senior secondary teachers. The target population of this study comprised all the teachers who teach in grade 10, 11 classes of 1AB and 1C schools the Beruwala division of Kalutara education zone in Sri Lanka. Using a simple random sampling technique, a total of 40 teachers selected from three schools which were consisted of 1AB boys, 1AB girls and 1C mixed schools. The sample consisted of 14 from 1AB boys' school, 10 from 1AB girls school and 16 from 1C mixed school were selected. There was 65% female and 35% male teachers represented in the selected sample. Data collected using a questionnaire and it is validated through getting experts opinion on the items of the instrument. Collected data mainly analyzed using frequency and the percentage methods.

IV. FINDINGS

Part of the questionnaire aimed to investigate the perception of the teachers of classroom management. It consisted of four (4) questions about the understanding of classroom management, another five (5) statements to know about the importance of the classroom management. In addition, five statements with four-point rating scale for assessing teachers' view about the classroom management practices. Table 1 shows the teacher's responses to the question on what teachers understand by the term 'classroom management'. They have given different answers which categorized according to their type of schools.

Table 1 Teachers' understanding about the term classroom management.

Definition	1 AB Boys School (%)	1 AB Girls School (%)	1 C Mixed School (%)	Total (%)
Maintenance of discipline and making an attractive teaching environment	72	20	63	55
Making maximum use of physical resources available for teaching learning	07	10	09	12.5
It is important to maintain the classroom management for successful learning	07	60	06	20
Classroom management is an organizational factor which includes various tasks, aspects	14	10	12	12.5
Total	100	100	100	100

According to the Table number 1, the results showed that 55% of the teachers described the classroom management as the maintenance of discipline and order in the classroom. In 1 AB boys' school 72% of the teachers described the classroom management as maintenance of discipline and order in the classroom that will keep the students disciplined and

attentive. Further 12.5% of the sample has described classroom management as the maximum use of available resources in the classroom. The highest response 19% of the teachers in 1 C Mixed school defined the classroom management as the maximum use of available resource in the classroom. They further described the available resources as human resources and physical resources. In addition, 20% of the sample described the classroom management as an important factor for successful teaching-learning situation. In 1 AB girls' school, about 60% of the teachers described classroom management as an important factor for ideal teaching-learning situation where teacher should receive active participation from the students. The rest of 12.5% of the responses were seemed to embody the definition of term classroom management. In 1C mixed school too, the responses were slightly similar. One such response seemed to define definition of the term classroom management and clearly showed its importance in an ideal teaching & learning situation. Question number 09 asked whether the teachers think that classroom management as an essential part of teaching. Question number 10 asked if there is no planned classroom management would the lesson be still successful.

Table 2: Teachers' responses for importance of classroom management

Question	Teachers' responses for importance of classroom management in teaching and success of the lesson with it.							
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes			No		
			1AB Boys (%)	1AB Girls (%)	1C Mixed (%)	1AB Boys (%)	1AB Girls (%)	1C Mixed (%)
Whether classroom management is an essential part of teaching	75	25	100	50	69	0	50	31
If there is no planned classroom management would the lesson be still successful	100	-	100	100	100	-	-	-

Table 2 Shows that only a minority of the teacher sample (25%) disagreed with the idea that classroom management is an essential part of teaching. According to the school type, 100% of the teacher sample of 1 AB Boys school agreed with the above idea. It shows that 100% of the teacher sample of 1 AB (Boys) school felt the importance of classroom management in teaching-learning process. It also shows that all the teachers of the sample responded 'No' as the answer. It indicates that there was 100% agreement from all three schools that planned classroom management is important for the success of the lesson. It is essential for every teacher to plan the classroom management in order to achieve a successful lesson.

In addition, there was another item asked whether Classroom management is important / more important / or less important than teaching. As seen on table 3, 80% of the teachers responded that classroom management is important as teaching and the remaining 20% responded that it was even more important than teaching. According to the school type, 90% of the teachers in 1AB Girls "school described it as important as teaching. As teachers with experience, none of them considered it to be any less important than teaching. It is not surprising that they had realized the importance of establishing and maintaining classroom management.

Table 3: Teachers' responses to whether classroom management is important / more important / less important than teaching

Responses	1 AB Boys School (%)	1 AB Girls School (%)	1C Mixed School (%)	Total (%)
Important as teaching	64	90	87.5	80
More important than teaching	36	10	12.5	20
Less important than teaching	-	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100

Furthermore, teachers were asked to rate their opinion about the classroom management from their point of view. According to the Table 4, "It is the responsibility of the teacher to teach according to the term plan and lesson plan", a minority of the teachers (10% strongly disagreed and 12.5% disagreed) for the idea that it is the responsibility of the teachers to teach according to the term plan and lesson plan. According to the school type the negative responses were between 6% - 14%. In 1AB Girls School (10% strongly disagreed and 10% disagreed) to the above idea.

This indicates that a majority of the teachers in all three schools felt about the importance of planning the lesson before teaching learning process. When considering statement "Arrangement of the classroom should not be changed according to the teaching methodology", a majority of the teachers (42.5% strongly agreed and 45% agreed) stated that arrangement of the classroom should not be changed according to the teaching methodology. This indicates that a minority of the teachers (7.5% strongly disagreed and 05% disagreed) felt that arrangement of the classroom should be changed according to the teaching methodology. According to the school type, 100% of the teachers of 1 AB boy's school (36% strongly agreed and 64% agreed) agreed to this statement. Although 100% from 1AB Boys schools agreed, during the writers' observation it was noticeable that the classrooms were not changed according to the teaching methodology. Similarly, in another statement inquired whether the self-direction and self-control of students are essential for better classroom management. Majority (35% strongly agreed and 47.5% agreed) stated that self-direction and self-control of students are essential for

better classroom management. It shows that a majority of the teachers agreed upon the idea that self-direction and self-control of the students will help to minimize the disciplinary problems in the classroom.

According to the school type in 1AB (Girls) School (20% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed) for the above idea that self-direction and self-control of the students are essential for better classroom management. Further, regarding the importance of motivating the child and give awards for successful day to day activities, a majority (30% strongly agreed and 45% agreed) on the idea that it is important to motivate the child and give awards when they successfully

complete day to day activities. This indicates that a majority of the teachers in all three type of school felt the importance of motivating the students. According to the school type, the highest percentage (60%) of the positive response came from 1AB Girls school. On the other hand, when considering about the statement on “It is easy to manage the misbehavior of students by blaming /scolding the students”, average teachers (30% strongly agreed and 30% agreed) stated that it is easy to manage misbehavior of students by blaming/scolding the students. These findings reveal that majority of the teachers needed more knowledge and practice in the process of better classroom management.

Table 4: Teachers’ responses for the statements regarding classroom management

Statement	Strongly Agreed			Agreed			Strongly disagreed			Disagreed		
	1AB Boys (%)	1AB Girls (%)	1C Mixed (%)	1AB Boys (%)	1AB Girls (%)	1C Mixed (%)	1AB Boys (%)	1AB Girls (%)	1C Mixed (%)	1AB Boys (%)	1AB Girls (%)	1C Mixed (%)
It is the responsibility of the teacher to teach according to the term plan and lesson plan	29	20	37.5	43	60	44	14	10	06	14	10	12.5
Arrangement of the classroom should not be change according to the teaching methodology.	36	20	62.5	64	50	25	-	20	6.25	-	10	6
Self-direction and self-control of students are essential for better classroom management.	50	20	31.25	50	40	50	-	20	12.5	-	20	6.25
It is important to motivate the child and give awards for successful day to day activities	43	20	25	29	60	50	14	10	12.5	14	10	12.5
It is easy to manage misbehavior of students by blaming the students/scolding g the students	50	20	19	29	20	37.5	14	30	31	7	10	12.5

V. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to identify the perception of teachers with regard to the classroom management. The teachers, who responded, fully agreed that the classroom management is an essential part of teaching. They emphasized the importance of this concept. They all maintained that it was an essential part of teaching while some teachers considered it to be even more important than teaching. They were of the opinion that the lesson would not be successful if there is no planned classroom management. But it is noteworthy that most of the teachers were unaware of the term "classroom management". The teachers gave a different definition than the actual theoretical definition of the classroom management.

The teachers in the Sri Lankan education system are diverse. This diversity starts from the point of recruitment to the profession. Targeted recruitment of teachers happens only through the colleges of Educations where selection is based on potential AL results of the teacher. The teacher education colleges are solely dedicated to train teachers for the Ministry of Education. They undergo a focused programme on the subject matter as well as on the teaching methods. However, there are other recruitment methods as well, where teachers are recruited directly to schools without a prior training. For instance, university graduates are selected based on their

subject knowledge and appointed to schools being trained on teaching methods and classroom management. Although, they are at a higher level of qualification than the, trained teachers’, they lack the overall knowledge and skills of a teaching professional. However, they could undergo such training in a Postgraduate diploma in Education conducted by the Universities or the National Institute of Education if they desire. In addition to these methods of recruitment, a substantial number of teachers are recruited directly to schools, based on their G.C.E A/L qualifications. Also, teachers’ recruitment schemes are initiated for the Northern and Eastern provinces and the estate sector to remedy the shortage of teachers in those areas. They have minimal qualifications such as G.C.E. O/Ls. Most schools in the estate sector are manned by these teachers. At present, they are provided with a limited training following several years of employment. Officials of the Ministry of Education and principals were of the view that appointing a teacher without proper training creates an unhealthy environment in the school, for both teaching as well as disciplinary matters. According to them, even graduates find it difficult to adjust to the teaching profession. It is difficult to continue the academic activities when the teachers are not adjusted to their occupation. According to Silva et al., (2017) most graduate teachers, acquired knowledge on classroom management through observing senior teachers. Therefore, it is

recommended to make aware teachers about classroom management practices through their in-service trainings and the professional teacher education programmes. Moreover, classroom management trainings should be given more prominence in the School-Based Teacher Professional Development (SBTPD) programs which are being implemented at school level nowadays.

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