PERCEPTIONS OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS ABOUT FACTORS INFLUENCING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Every teacher has to use different management techniques in classroom to maintain discipline and create a cordial environment for effective teaching. Professional development in classroom management is equally important for senior and new teachers. This study was designed to get an insight about the perceptions of prospective teachers about influential factors of classroom management. Participants of the study were graduates of three teacher training institutions with Master degrees in Education. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that classroom environment and student teacher interaction are the important factors influencing classroom management. Female prospective teacher differ in intensity with male counterparts in their perceptions. This study leads to the fact that there should be more focus on developing classroom management skills among the prospective teachers through supervised practice.

Key Words: Classroom management, prospective teachers, professional uplift, future teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a key agent for change and prosperity of a nation. It is considered as a basic human right in the civilized world. All states are struggling for the teaching and training of their kids. In this teaching learning process teachers are enjoying a pivotal position. Their expertise and knowledge of latest techniques to train children matter a lot in their job performance. In formal educational settings classroom is the place where teachers have to exhibit their talent for the training of their students. It is such a place that contributes significantly but silently in student's achievement. An effective classroom plan usually has 90% classroom management and 10% teaching new material (Sasson, 2007). In

classroom the characteristics like; size, color, furniture, light and air arrangements are also important contributors (Achilles, Finn, Prout & Bobbett, 2001). There are a lot of things and indicators inside and outside the classroom which influence directly or indirectly on the teaching learning process. Teacher has the autonomy to arrange and manage all the things in the classroom and provide opportunities for learning. "The ability of teachers to organize classroom and manage the behaviour of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes" (Oliver, Reschly, 2007, p.1). Every teacher wishes that his students should be engaged in constructive activities during class hours to give good results. This purposeful engagement not only enables them for their proper class work but also shapes their personalities. Classroom management is an important key for success of a teacher in the classroom. Teacher has to create a culture for an effective learning and training for students by implementing some sort of regulations and discipline in the classroom. Creating a healthy productive environment in the classroom depends upon the training of teachers in area of classroom management skills. When a newly appointed teacher implements a classroom management plan, he creates an environment that enables the students to be more confident, active learner, social, calculated, critical and motivated to perform their role as a responsible individual. Teacher engages the students exclusively in the lesson under discussion (Feyter, 2006). There is a wide range of topics including the ways, methods and practices used by the teachers to manage the learners' behavior, classroom capacity and discipline (Stephen, 2006).

Classroom management is meant for the provisions and procedures necessary for maintaining the environment where teaching and learning can take place (Duke, 1979). It is not only to maintain discipline in the classroom against non accepting behaviors but is multidimensional in nature. It also includes planning and execution of activities and projects in the classroom. Teacher's self efficacy and attitude is also important for classroom management (Latz, 1992). Effectiveness in management of classroom is a continuous process based on motivation of students by providing them special guidelines and feedback (Colville, 2004). Teacher's competence for classroom management and organization of instruction is basic component of effective teaching (Brophy, 1988; Evertson, Emmer, Sanford, & Clements, 1983; Brophy & Alleman, 1998; Evertson, Emmer & Worsham, 2000). Classroom management is the most common concern cited by student teachers (Clement, 1999, 2000) as well

as beginning and experienced teachers (Pigge & Marso, 1997; Veenman, 1984; Wesley & Vocke, 1992; White, 1995). Good and Brophy (1984) found that classroom studies of effective teaching have emphasized the behavioral aspects of teaching and highlighted classroom management as an important facet of effective teaching.

The aim of classroom management now has been changed from classical to a modern paradigm. According to McCormack (2001), the focus has been shifted from maintaining discipline as a response to misbehavior to a more holistic approach using effective classroom organization and management for effective learning. This change in paradigm shift necessitates rethinking on the teacher education programs. Classroom management is complex in nature depending upon the interactive senses. It is a part of daily learning activities. It involves careful holistic monitoring of the total educational environment to promote an atmosphere where learning can take place effectively. The classroom activities, the student teacher interaction, as well as the physical structure of the room contribute for a well managed classroom (Brophy, 1983; Snyder, 1998). The basic function of classroom management is to ensure such an environment and the culture within the classroom which helps the teacher to make his teaching effective and the learner to gain knowledge and skills in a supportive atmosphere. It is not a context and value free because the learners have different set of values and possess different cultural backgrounds. Learners' cultural diversity effects classroom, behavioral, environmental and instructional management techniques used by their teacher (Sobel, Basile, Powell, Bryan & Green, 2002).

Different researches indicated 228 variables that effect student's achievement. Among these variables classroom management is at top of the list (J. Marzano & S. Marzano, 2003). A cohesive and thoughtfully constructed teacher's perception and philosophy provides basis for classroom management skills. Educators can make decisions about the instances of student misbehavior (Charles, 1992; Turner, 1993; Malmgren, Trezek & Paul, 2005). The worth of teachers is gauged on the basis of application of management skills. Teacher's attitude and belief about learning environment positively assists student in learning by classroom management (Doyle, 1986; Martin & Baldwin, 1992; Henson, 2001; Pamukkale & Cakroglu, 2003). Teachers' sense of classroom management significantly affects the climate, motivation, and goal achievement in their

classrooms (Hosford, 1984). The researches of Tucker, Plax & Kearney (1985) and Cangelosi (2000) concluded that teachers with knowledge of classroom management skills can utilize 90% of time allocated for classroom activities more than those who are not with such training and knowledge to face the odd situations being emerged in the classroom as the result of misbehavior of students. Classroom management refers to begin the year with enthusiasm providing cordial arrangements for learning by implementing regulations (Long, Biggs & Hinson, 1999; Emmer, Evertson & Worsham, 2003). It was observed that the teachers' perceptions about the classroom management contributed positively towards the student teacher interaction. This healthy relationship provides the foundations for the classroom management (Marzano, 2003). It is a common belief that for proper functioning of a classroom depends upon the quality of discipline available. Teachers take it as their prime responsibility to create discipline in the classroom but it depends upon their philosophy or definition of discipline. In real words it is not to harass the students but is to engage them in class activities and lessons by using different techniques and ways. This aspect guides the teachers to learn how to maintain discipline in their classrooms effectively. Discipline becomes such an entity which can be learnt and can be taught for purposeful living and functioning. It is not only to reduce the disruptive behaviors of students but also to minimize their problems and maximize learning opportunities for them (Hamby, 1995).

Although innumerable efforts have been made, statistics have been compiled and an abundance of research has been conducted to explore the factors affecting classroom management. There is a limited amount of information about what the prospective teachers say about the factors affecting classroom management. Prospective teachers were the first hand source to collect information because they have got training at post graduate level. The perceptions of future teachers about these factors may shed more light on the existing body of knowledge, and will bring change in the ways educational authorities should respond to this serious issue. The primary audience for this research will be the teacher trainers and future teachers. They may benefit from the results of this research because the perceptions of prospective teachers about classroom management factors may provide valuable information that may help teachers in determining the best way by experiencing good management in their classrooms in future. This study of prospective teachers' perceptions about the factors of classroom management will have the greatest impact

on the teacher trainers' decisions for developing such skills that enable their students to manage their classrooms effectively. This research has scholarly significance because it attempted to extend the existing information base about classroom management factors. By this study, it is hoped to provide an extension of understanding to the process of classroom management phenomenon for teachers and teacher trainers. Keeping in view all the researches it was decided to conduct a survey research for exploring the perceptions of prospective teachers about the factors affecting classroom management after the completion of their Master degrees in the subject of Education from the teacher training institutions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The basic intention of this study was to:

a. explore the perceptions of prospective teachers about the factors affecting the classroom management.
b. investigate the difference in the perception of male and female prospective teachers in relation to factors influencing classroom management.
c. compare the perceptions of prospective teachers of three teacher training institutions about the factors contributing towards the classroom management.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study answered the following questions:

a. What are the factors influencing classroom management as perceived by the prospective teachers?
b. To what extent male and female prospective teachers' perceptions are different about the factors influencing classroom management?
c. Is there any difference in the perceptions of prospective teachers graduating from three different teacher training institutions?

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The descriptive study was conducted by using survey methodology consisting of self-report research method. Self-report research necessitates gathering standardized information from all members of a population or sample. It means that the questions should be same for each and every member of the population. The well-known methods for collecting self-report data are the questionnaire study and the interview study (Gay, 1996). According to Dillman (2000), the number of self-administered surveys conducted each year far exceeds the number of interview surveys. This survey was designed to explore the perceptions of prospective teachers about the factors affecting classroom management.

A questionnaire consisting of the questions related to factors and ways of classroom management was developed based on five point Likert scale. For the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted over a sample of 120 prospective teachers. The data obtained through this pilot study were analyzed by using SPSS and the value of reliability coefficient was 0.808. The revised instrument consisted of 22 items was administered on the actual sample of the study for data collection.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants of this study were the prospective teachers who completed their Master in Education in the current year from three teacher training institutions of Lahore. They were with fresh knowledge and understanding about the content and the practical work related to teaching. The sample comprised of 700 prospective teachers selected on available basis from these teacher training institutions. The number of subjects selected from Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore was 400, from University College of Education, Lahore was 150 and from University College of Education for Women, Lahore was 150. These institutions enjoy a prominent position in the domain of teacher training in Pakistan. Study was delimited to the post graduate level prospective teachers from only three teacher training institutions of Lahore-Pakistan due to shortage of time and limited resources.

RESULTS

Data were analyzed by applying descriptive statistics. ANOVA and t-test were used for comparison of means of different groups by using SPSS. Following results were revealed.

Table 1: Perceptions of Prospective Teachers about Factors contributing in Classroom Management

Sr. No.	Factors	S. D	Mean
1	Classroom environment	0.65	4.44
2	Student teacher interaction	0.68	4.37
3	Confidence in students	0.71	4.36
4	Parent Teacher meeting	0.80	4.33
5	Students' encouragement	0.86	4.32
6	Facilities in classroom	0.73	4.31
7	Teacher's communication skills	0.71	4.30
8	Teacher's personality	0.95	4.23
9	Competition among students	0.88	4.21
10	Students' behavior	0.76	4.19
11	Mutual cooperation among students	0.80	4.15
12	Class rules and regulations	0.84	4.11
13	Suitable seating arrangement	0.91	4.07
14	Students mutual interaction	0.88	4.05
15	Teachers' problem solving skills	0.93	4.03
16	Student's self control	0.89	3.95
17	Motivation to students	0.93	3.89
18	Teachers first day briefing in class about class norms	1.02	3.85
19	Well decorated classroom	1.05	3.83
20	Group work	1.10	3.74
21	Corporal punishment	1.16	3.73
22	Assigning responsibilities without supervision to students	1.06	3.68

(Note: Strongly agree=5, Agree=4, Undecided=3, Disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1)

Table 1 indicates that most of the prospective teachers perceived that 'Classroom environment' (Mean=4.44; S.D=0.65) is the most influential factor for classroom management followed by the factors 'student teacher interaction' (Mean= 4.37, S. D=0.68) and 'Confidence in students' (Mean=4.36, S.D=0.71). Whereas 'assigning responsibilities without supervision to students' (Mean=3.68, S.D=1.06) is the least important

factor to affect the classroom management followed by the factors 'Group work' (Mean=3.73, S.D=1.16) and 'Corporal punishment' (Mean=3.74, S.D=1.10). The standard deviation of the most affecting factor 'classroom environment' (S.D=0.65) has a great difference with the least affecting factor 'assigning responsibilities without supervision to students' (S.D=1.06). Hence it is concluded that for effective classrooms the environment of the classroom should be conducive and well equipped. All other factors are also having a reasonable effect on classroom management but the discussed ones are with significant effect.

Table 2: Comparison of Perceptions of Male and Female Prospective Teachers about Factors Influencing Classroom Management

Variable	N	Mean	t- value
Male prospective Teacher	322	92.68	-5.003*
Female prospective Teacher	378	95.25	

*P<0.05 level of significance; df=698

Male and female prospective teachers have significant difference (t=-5.003) in their opinions regarding the factors affecting classroom management (Table 2). Further it is evident that female prospective teachers (Mean=95.25) pay more importance to all the factors affecting classroom management as compared to the male prospective teachers (Mean=92.68). Hence it is concluded that female prospective teachers are more sensitive towards the factors for classroom management as compared to the male prospective teachers.

Table 3: Comparison of Perceptions of Prospective Teachers belonging to Three Teacher Training Institutions about Factors Influencing Classroom Management

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Prospective Teachers of three Institutions	42.797	2	21.398		
Within Groups	39097.723	697	56.094	.381	.683
Total	39140.520	699			

P<0.05 level of significance

Summary of the ANOVA table reveals that there is no significant difference (p=0.683) in the perceptions of prospective teachers of three

different teacher training institutions (Table 3). It is concluded that all the prospective teachers trained from different institutions pay same concern to the importance of factors affecting classroom management and it seems that they are aware of the importance of management in the training of students.

Table 4: Comparison of Perceptions of Prospective Teachers belonging to different Programs

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Degree Programs	1328.866	11	120.806		
Within Groups	37811.654	688	54.959	2.198	.013*
Total	39140.520	699			

* P<0.05 level of significance

Table 4 shows that the respondents belonging to different master degree programs have significant difference (p=0.013) in their perceptions. It may be concluded that the courses which they have taken during their training may have different sort of content or emphasis on the skill of classroom management. To get insight about the comparison of their perceptions Post Hoc was used for analysis.

Table 5: Comparison of Perceptions of Prospective Teachers belonging to M. A. (Elementary Education) Vs M. Ed. (Secondary Education) and M. A. (Research & Assessment)

Program	Program	Mean Difference	Sig.
M. A. (Elementary Education)	M. Ed. (Secondary Education)	-5.40	.023*
	M. A. (Educational Research & Assessment)	-6.42	.004*

*P<0.05 level of significance

From the comparison (Table 5) in relation to respondents' programs of study, it is obvious that respondents from M. A. (Elementary Education) have significantly different opinion than the respondents belonging to the Programs M. Ed. (Secondary Education) (p=.023) and M. A. (Educational Research and Assessment) (p=.004). The mean difference shows that both have better consideration than the respondents from M. A. (Elementary Education).

Table 6: Comparison of Perceptions of Prospective Teachers, M. Ed. (Secondary Education), Vs M. Ed. (Elementary Education), M. S. Ed., M.A. (Islamic Education) and M. Ed. From Colleges of Education

Program	Program	Mean Difference	Sig.
M. Ed. (Secondary Education)	M. Ed. (Elementary Education)	6.28	.012*
	M. S. Ed.	8.30	.001*
	M. A (Islamic Education)	5.70	.039*
	M. Ed. (Colleges of Education)	4.92	.034*

* P<0.05 level of significance

Table 6 shows that respondents from M. Ed. (Secondary Education) have significantly different opinion than the respondents belonging to the program M. Ed. (Elementary Education) (p=.012), M. S. Ed. (Master in Science Education) (p=.001), M. A. (Islamic Education) (p=.039), and M. Ed. (p=.034) from Colleges of Education. It can be concluded from the mean differences that the respondents from M. Ed. (Secondary Education) have better perceptions about factors affecting classroom management than the respondents from M. Ed. (Elementary Education), M. S. Ed., M. A. (Islamic Education), and M. Ed. from Colleges of Education.

Table 7: Comparison of Perceptions of Prospective Teachers, M. A. (Educational Research & Assessment) Vs M. A. (Technology Education), M. A. (Early Childhood Education), M. Ed. (Elementary Education), M. S. Ed., M. A. (English Language Teaching & Linguistics), M. A. (Secondary Education), M.A. (Islamic Education), M. A. Education and M. Ed. (from Colleges of Education)

Program	Program	Mean Difference	Sig.
M. A. (Educational Research & Assessment)	M.A. (Technical Education)	5.63	.024*
	M. A. (Early Childhood Education)	5.66	.015*
	M. Ed. (Elementary Education)	7.30	.002*
	M. S. Ed.	9.32	.000*
	M. A. (English Language Teaching & Linguistics)	4.96	.027*
	M. A. (Secondary Education)	5.59	.017*
	M. A. (Islamic Education)	6.72	.010*
	M.A. Education. (Colleges of Education)	5.33	.013*
	M. Ed. (from Colleges of Education)	5.94	.006*

*P<0.05 level of significance

Summary of the results (Table 7) shows that the respondents from the Program M. A. (Educational Research & Assessment) and from Programs M. A. (Technology Education) (p=.024), M. A. (Early Childhood Education) (p=.015), M. Ed. (Elementary Education) (p=.002), M. S. Ed. (p=.000), M. A. (English Language Teaching & Linguistics, ELTL) (p=.027), M. A. (Secondary Education) (p=.017), M. A. (Islamic Education) (p=.010), M. A. Education (Colleges of Education) (p=.013) and M. Ed. (Colleges of Education) (p=.006) have significantly different opinion.

Table 8: Comparison of Perceptions of Prospective Teachers, M. A. (Early Childhood Education) Vs M. S. Ed.

Program	Program	Mean Difference	Sig.
M. A. (Early Childhood Education)	M. S. Ed.	3.66	.032*

* P<0.05 level of significance

Respondents belonging to M.A. (Early Childhood Education) have significantly (p=.032) different perception from the prospective teachers belonging to Master of Science Education (Table 8).

Table 9: Comparison of Perceptions of Prospective Teachers, M. S. Ed. Vs M. A. (English Language Teaching & Linguistics), M. A. (Secondary Education), M. Ed. and M. A. Education (from Colleges of Education)

Program	Program	Mean Difference	Sig.
M. S. Ed.	M.A. ELTL (English Language Teaching & Linguistics)	-4.36	.006*
	M.A. (Secondary Education)	-3.73	.032*
	M. Ed. (Colleges of Education)	-3.38	.020*
	M.A. Education (Colleges of Education)	-3.99	.006*

* P<0.05 level of significance

Table 9 indicates that prospective teachers from M.S. Ed. (Master of Science Education) have significantly different perception about the factors affecting classroom management from the trainee teachers from M.A. (English Language Teaching & Linguistics) (p=.006), M.A. (Secondary Education) (p=.032), M.Ed. from Colleges of Education (p=.020) and M.A. Education from Colleges of Education (.006). Further it

is resulted that all from four said programs have better perception than the prospective teachers from M.S. Ed. (Master of Science Education).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of data analysis lead towards the conclusion that all the prospective teachers showed special concern about the factors affecting classroom management. Classroom environment and student teacher interaction affects most whereas assigning responsibilities without supervision to students and corporal punishment affects least towards classroom management. Male and female prospective teachers, significantly differs in their perception about the factors effecting classroom management. All the respondents from three institutions have no significant difference in their opinion regarding classroom management. Respondents of some different programs have significantly different opinion from some others. Graduates belonging to different programs of Institute of Education and Research have better perceptions about classroom management as compared to the graduates of Colleges of Education for Men and Women. It is highly recommended that the Colleges of Education should revisit their programs of studies at master level for catering the need of training to their graduates. Students studying at teacher training institutions should be provided with ample opportunity of practicum of teaching and feedback during training. The sense of curiosity, confidence, hard work, commitment to their job, courage to face challenges, adaptability to new situations, self control, self motivation, dignity, critical thinking, decision making, self evaluation, realistic approach to facts, truthfulness and trust worthiness are the major qualities to be inculcated among the young ones through formal schooling. The learners can be equipped with such salient traits only by providing them quality education opportunities to make them quality learners. For quality learning classroom management is the basic and necessary element. Classroom management is not only the management of things but it is also the management of individuals. These two types of managements need different type of skills exhibited by the teachers. Materials can be easily arranged but to manage individuals need special type of psychological treatment based on the mutual cooperation of all the parties working together in the teaching learning process. The role of teacher cannot be ignored for establishing a system of dynamic and ideal classroom. Teachers should be well aware of all the pre requisites of their profession because properly managed classrooms guarantee a cordial

relationship between teacher and learners which leads the mechanism for lifelong learning (Crawford, Bodine & Hoglund, 1993). Every graduate of teacher training institution should be outfitted with the classroom management skills. Classroom situation is day by day changing because there is a rapid shift from the traditional classroom to the classroom of technologically advanced century that is equipped with the latest technological devices. In such scenario the role of teacher is not only to manage the students but also to handle and operate effectively the latest devices. There is also a shift from teacher centered approach to student led approach. So the teachers should be provided best techniques and skills to perform their job. The traditional methods and techniques for classroom management also need to be revisited accordingly.

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