

The Teachers' Knowledge on Classroom Control and Management

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Abstract

This article presents the results of a study aimed at identifying the concepts of classroom management and control by teachers. The research explored the teachers' knowledge on classroom management and how it was acquired. This study also surveyed participants' levels of various concepts on how teachers establish and maintain control of the classroom, including dominant and enriching rule-based concepts. This study utilized a mixed method approach, in which the quantitative part included a rating scale in and answers to open questions of the interview in the qualitative part. The subject's response was recorded and notes were taken. The data is first transcribed and checked again for grammatical errors. The method used to determine the common themes that appear among the interviewees is the constant comparison and analysis induction. The main finding of this research is that rule-based concepts dominate. In their answers to open-ended questions, almost all teachers mentioned the concept of rule-based, especially consistent rule making and following, which is very important for teachers' ability to control the classroom. Some teachers expressed alternative concepts of domination and nurturing. Even teachers who agreed with the concept of domination or upbringing showed strong support for the concept of rules. The importance of this research to classroom practice is that knowing how to manage the classroom is one of the most important characteristics of quality teaching. Therefore, both new and old teachers, it is important to find the best way to manage the classroom in order to create a peaceful atmosphere for high-quality learning.

Keywords: *Classroom management; teacher knowledge; classroom control; awareness of classroom management; effective teaching*

A. Introduction

Research on the field of teaching has explained that classroom discipline and management are main concerns to a lot of teachers (Demirdag, 2015; O'Niell, & Stephenson, 2012).

Management of classrooms are defined as the activities done by teachers in creating a conducive classrooms situation to improve the effectiveness of learning and teaching (Cerit & Yuksel, 2015). Over the past 30 years, research on

classroom management has largely determined that teachers embrace concepts such as student choice, student ownership, restitution, and conflict resolution as the main channels for strengthening good teaching (Levin, 2000). Some discipline problems can arise in a classroom that is poorly managed (Kaufman & Moss, 2010), yet a well- managed classroom lets a conducive teaching and learning environment occur. Classroom management and discipline is even considered as second influential factor to the burnout of teachers (Hultell & Gustavsson, 2013).

Highlighting teachers' ability in having good classroom management skills and apply the skills in the real teaching practice in the class cannot be more relatable in he 21st century. In fact programs of teacher education now focuses on how teachers can nurture the mastery of effective method for managing classrooms and maintaining discipline. Also, the program highlights how teachers can be capable enough of making effective decisions on classroom

management (King,2000).

Evertson, Emmer, Clemments, Sanford, and Worsham (1999) noted that it starts with a physical setting arrangement that is considered proper to have a classroom management that is deemed good. This researcher also showed that a learning and teaching environment that was well thought and managed with purpose could provide teachers and learners with the foundation of building the teaching process. Classroom discussions, on the other hand, can focus on the control and behavior of the students (Johnson, 2004).

A researcher suggest that teachers can select to follow one of the two specific schools of thought related to how to manage a classroom (Brophy, 1998). On the one hand, several teachers may believe that the main key to the classroom management that is effective was obtaining respect from the students and how to make them follow teachers' commands through either punishment or intimidation. On the other hands, the second school of thoughts

highlight how teachers who used love in teaching can provide a friendly and warm interaction between student and teacher without having the urge for the teachers to act as figures of authority. Based on those concepts, the following concepts are going to be used in this research: (a) Conceptions of dominance that deals with personal authority and power of a teacher shown by his/her power display, demands of being listened by students, tendency of being strict, and tendency to use punishment to avoid misbehaving students; (b) conceptions that is rule-based that deals with the significance of establishing and consistently maintaining rules in the class, creating well-paced and well-planned classroom lessons, and constant monitor on students' behavior to avoid misbehaving students, and (c) conceptions of nurturance that deals with the significance of friendly, warm, and also personal interaction between students and teachers. It focuses on friendly and fun classroom lessons, and it lets student make decisions in

the class. This conception emphasizes less on the obligatory on following classroom policies or rules but more on obtaining approval from students to prevent any misbehavior.

This research attempts to enrich the horizon of the study on classroom management from the perspectives of teachers. This research, more specifically, explores the knowledge of classroom management of the teachers, and conducts an examination on how that knowledge is obtained. In addition to that, this research also investigates which teachers hold various types of conceptions such as dominance, rule-based, and nurturance conceptions.

B. Research Method

Creswell's (2013) mixed method approach was utilized in this research. It is a research technique that integrate qualitative and quantitative. This type of research method was used because neither method (quantitative or qualitative) was considered

individually enough to capture what was needed for the research. When both methods were utilized, they could complement each other and could give a more detailed description of the case being researched (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008).

The mixed method design used in this study was the sequential explanatory one consisting two different stages (Invankova et al, 2006), which were: collecting and analyzing quantitative data and collecting and analyzing the qualitative ones to provide more elaboration on the results of quantitative.

Questionnaires in form of a survey were distributed to students before the end of a class. They had a maximum of 15 minutes to do the survey. This research instrument was aimed to collect the quantitative data. Meanwhile, the qualitative data were collected this way: setting up an interview appointments four different students. The interview was conducted either in person or by phone, depending on the students'

availability. The interview was estimated to finish in more or less 30 minutes and was recorded and noted. The results of the interview was transcribed by the researcher and then proofread for checking any grammatical mistakes. The researcher then identified any emerging themes across all respondents that participated in the interview.

The participants of the survey itself was 65 people who were currently in undergraduate program. They were all enrolled as pre-service teachers at one of Indonesian Colleges of Education. All of the participants were selected utilizing a sampling method named convenience. All of the participants came from English major and their teaching experience ranged between 1 – 5 years.

The survey was conducted in a form of paper-and-pencil type of questionnaire and consisted of twenty one items in a Likert's scale type. The questionnaire used three subscales (nurturance, rule-based, and dominance) and 11 statements about teacher authority and control.

The questionnaire adopted the Managing Student Scale created by Johnson (2004).

C. Results and Discussions

The response rate on the questionnaire was successfully obtained at 100%. It was possible because the research instrument was distributed right at the end of the class and the researcher collected it right away. From all of the 65 participants, the ones who had one year or so experience of teaching K-12 was only a third. The rest of the participants were quite evenly distributed in other grade levels (high, middle, and elementary).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics on
Experience of Teaching K-12

Number of years	Frequency	Percentage
1	29	47.7
2	20	32.8
3	10	18.5
4	2	0.07
5 or more	4	0.03

Table 2.
Descriptive Statistics on
Levels of the Grade

Grade Level	Frequency	Percentage
High School	16	24.6
Middle School	34	52.3
Elementary	15	23.1

The quantitative result of this research is elaborated to answer the first formulated question that deals with the extent to which the participants hold various types of conceptions, namely nurturance, dominance, and rule-based and how the participants manage to control the class and maintain the control. The data show that from the total sample of the participants, it could be seen that the highest mean for the overall group was the conception type of rule based stating that teachers have to be consistent with the classroom policies and also consequences, which obtain mean ranging from 3.5 to 4.6. On the other hand, the lowest mean came from the nurturance and dominance which obtained mean ranging from 2.0 to 4.3.

Of all responses in nurturance conceptions statements, the participants showed strong agreement to the questionnaire item of "Giving a personal and warm treatment to students can lead to good-behaving students" with the mean of 4.0 and "The fact that students are willing to listen to the teachers that they favor" with the mean of 3.6. Meanwhile, the participants showed disagreement with questionnaire items stating, "The misbehavior of students is the indication of the bad friendliness of teachers to their students" with the mean of 2.4.

The questionnaire item dealing with dominance type of conception revealed that the participants highly agreed this questionnaire item, "Teachers have to urge the implementation of authority from the beginning of the class" with the mean of 4.1. However, the participants did not favor the questionnaire item stating that. "You are not allowed to smile until Christmas" with the mean of 2.1.

In general, the researcher found out the least variance of all responses on the type of conceptions named rule-based that deals with creating rules and also the consequences (.49), on the items about conceptions of nurturance dealing with lack of friendliness from the teachers (.69), and on the items about the conceptions of dominance dealing with urging teacher's authority from the beginning of the class (.93). On the opposite, the highest variance could be found on the subscale items on the conception type of dominance, stating "students who test their teachers" 1.34 and "teachers who punish their students who showcase misbehaviors as an example to the classroom" (1.33).

The researcher has presented the quantitative data obtained from this research to capture the needed information to answer the first research question. The next part will deal with the qualitative data which complement the quantitative ones. The qualitative data were obtained from the responses of the participants participating in the

interview. The results of the interview were organized into several themes or categories by the researcher. Once all the responses from the interview were categorized, the researcher tried to develop titles to every group and also the representative response that were then listed for every determined themes. The researcher then read the themes again and then tried to merge some themes considered similar as suggested by Glesne (2006). The list of themes that were merged by the researcher included the knowledge origin of the teachers, the knowledge influence of the teachers, the teachers' knowledge evolution and origin, and the teachers' knowledge content. The detail discussion on the themes will be presented in the next section. In presenting the results and also the discussion, a pseudonym will be used to keep the participants' real name confidential.

The Teachers' Influences and Knowledge Origin

The participants of this research derived the development of their knowledge about classroom management from a wide variety of resources, including colleague, students, and their chosen professional development. Some of the teachers acknowledged the contributions of the program of their teacher education. Some participants even gave credit to common knowledge sources. Duma, a third-year English teacher, stated "I improve my knowledge from my experience...each of my experience in teaching is different and unique, and so I keep on improving my knowledge every time I teach".

The participants also emphasized the importance of continuously developing their professional capability. That being said, they highlighted the need of joining academic conferences or seminars or workshops, reading specialized books and journals. Dicka, a fifth-year English teacher, explained how his teachings had changed over time. He explained

that he learned a lot when he interacted with more senior teachers who had more experience than he did after joining an academic seminar. Simply put, Dicka's skills in managing a classroom had significantly improved because he joined such event.

The Teachers' Evolution and Origin of Knowledge

The participants explained how they obtained their knowledge about managing their classrooms and how such knowledge could change over time. Most of the participants explained that they had learned about managing classrooms in their previous classes in Education major, while a few of them stated that their knowledge on classroom management came from in-service training. The participants cited that influences that were contextual to be the primary source of the evolution of their classroom management knowledge. Jack, when asked about the evolution of his classroom management knowledge, explained that "My teaching is always changing

because the students I am teaching are also always changing too. Therefore, I have to have". He said the changes outside of school included problems such as single-parent families, dysfunctional families, and a lack of expectations for parental behavior, he said. Changes within schools point out that since corporal punishment is a common practice in schools and has been abolished as part of the school's disciplinary action, teachers have discovered new ways to overcome misbehaving students.

The Teachers' Knowledge Content

The teachers said that interaction with students needs to be consistent when setting up routines. In particular, first-year English teacher Louisa said, "Children find the comfort in the classroom when they understand precisely where their teachers come from and what they expect out of the students." She advised teachers that their students weren't just taken for granted, as some students were so intelligent that they could easily figure out stuff on their own. She

emphasized that every time a teacher enters the classroom, she needs to be very prepared, knowledgeable, and confident.

Kevin, a third-year English teacher, explained about how important consequences and rewards were (e.g. letters to students' parents and verbal rewards) that help improve students' behavior. He emphasized that it was important that students took responsibility for their actions, as it helped students to set up the desired classroom and helps them to take responsibility for their learning experience.

Management of classroom remains to be the primary concerns for teachers and educators, both for experienced and novice teachers (Cerit & Yuksel, 2015). The results of this research have shown that learning how to do classroom management is a work in progress that is influenced by some factors that are both contextual and personal in nature. The teachers in this research mostly valued the knowledge on classroom management as the one came from

teachers' personal practice. Most of the participants acknowledged their teacher education program as the main resource of their classroom management knowledge. It is then obvious that teacher education in undergraduate program has performed an excellent job in providing students with the needed techniques in managing classrooms.

The results of this study show that learning how to manage a classroom is, by its very nature, a development process that is influenced by personal contextual forces. Similar to the results of Schemp (2003), the teachers in this study considered the knowledge of classroom management that comes out in individual practice to be of utmost importance. Most teachers have put a lot of ball into the knowledge gained in teacher education programs. It is obvious that the undergraduate program played a major role in dealing with classroom management skills. Unlike the two claims made by Borko and Putnam (2006), that is, preparatory teachers are closely involved in the information and

experience provided in the unknowing process associated with the process of learning how their process teaches. You may not have. The teachers in this study felt the importance of what they learned in the classroom and put it into practice.

D. Conclusion

The main finding in the study of quantitative elements is that the rule-based concept predominates. In response to the study's open questions, almost all teachers pointed out that rule-based concepts are particularly important for the ability to control lessons with consistent setting and monitoring of rules. Alternative concepts of domination and nurturance were expressed by several teachers. Even those who agreed with the concept of domination and nurturing showed strong support for the rule-based concept.

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