



SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT COMPETENCE AND THEIR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: A CASE OF KILOMBERO DISTRICT

Mohamed, M and Kimaro, A. R

Institute of Adult Education Tanzania

Email: mohamedmwajuma@yahoo.com, rabeltrandumi@gmail.com

Abstract: Undesirable student behaviors can disrupt classroom activities and can prevent instruction from taking place. At secondary school, some teachers lacked effective classroom management strategies to address undesirable student behaviors that impeded their abilities to instruct students. The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' classroom management competency and their classroom management strategies. The study, specifically, sought to find out the levels of secondary school teachers' classroom management competence, establish most used classroom management strategies by secondary school teachers, assessed whether or not classroom management competence had any effect on teachers' classroom management strategies (organization in classroom, rules routines, relationship with students, meet the basic needs and team work). Lastly, the study sought to compare the difference in teachers' classroom management strategies by gender. The study was conducted in 5 public secondary schools in Kilombero District of Morogoro Region. The study revealed that teachers thought that they did not have sufficient classroom management competence. It was also found that the mostly used classroom management strategies were rules routines and organization in classroom whereas building relationship with students, meeting the basic needs and team work were least used. The results highlighted that significant univariate effects on classroom management competency were obtained for rules routines and organization in classroom. It was concluded that minimal content that is provided in classroom management is too theoretical and does not adequately address situations likely to be encountered by teachers in the classroom. Based on the findings of the study and conclusion made, it was recommended that, teacher education programs in colleges and universities should place more emphasis on training student teachers in classroom management skills in order to promote quality learning by students. Teachers on their own should also make efforts to equip themselves with the knowledge of classroom management and apply the techniques involved.

Keywords: *Classroom, management, strategy, classroom management, classroom management strategy.*

1.0 Introduction

Few aspects of education have generated as much concern as classroom management and organization. They are among the most frequently addressed topics for teachers in service; they head the list of concerns of school administrators and have recently attracted more attention from



education stakeholders and researchers because a teacher's ability to effectively manage the classroom and to organize instruction are basic components of teaching (Evertson and Weinstein, 2006). In fact, Back, *et al.*, (2016) indicate that well-managed classrooms are characterized as safe environments where learning occurs freely (Emmer *et al.*, 2000). Effective classroom management training is provided to preservice teachers while they are preparing to enter the field of education, and teachers continue to receive professional development through in-service workshops to improve this skill. Limited training in behavior management creates questions pertaining to what strategies teachers use and where those strategies originate (Guner, 2012).

Numerous undesirable student behaviors interrupt the classroom and prevent instruction from taking place at a local middle school. Studies show (Hochweber, *et al.*, 2014; Kleinert, *et al.*, 2017; Marks, 2010), that many teachers lack the ability to deal with an increasing amount of negative student behaviors that interfere with their ability to instruct students. Students continue to misbehave and disrupt or even halt the learning process in their classrooms (Marzano, 2011). According to Marzano and Marzano (2003) teachers lack effective strategies to engage students, and they often address undesirable behaviors in negative ways that interrupt the flow of teaching and learning. This study sought to examine secondary school teachers' classroom management competence and their classroom management strategies.

2.0 Concepts

2.1 Classroom management concept

Classroom management is a complex concept with many dimensions (Burden, 2000) and hence, it has been defined in various ways. For example, in their book, *The First Days of Teaching*, Wong and Wong (2014) define classroom management as "all of the things a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place" (p. 35). In the same line of thinking, Good and Brophy (2000) describe classroom management as the orchestration of classroom life: planning curriculum, organizing procedures and resources, arranging the environment to maximize efficiency, and monitoring student progress in anticipation of potential student problems. Moreover, teachers use the term "classroom management" to describe as the actions a teacher takes to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning (Larrivee, 1999). It is further regarded that organization of the physical setting, planning and implementation of an effective education, and the management of children's behavior have been accepted as sub dimensions of classroom management (Martin, and Yin, 1999; Martin, and Shoho, 2000; Marzano, and Marzano, 2003).

2.2 Dimensions of Classroom Management

Classroom management is multidimensional skill to be acquired and discussed. As per Marzano et al (2003) comprehensive classroom management includes five areas of knowledge and skill: i) The most effective way of classroom management if the personal and psychological needs should be kept in consideration by the teacher, (ii) Students will learn more when they experience that more care, value, and love is given to them by the teacher, (iii) In order to create smooth-flowing classroom management teacher should involve the students and provide them



physically and psychologically safe environment for learning, (iv) One of the basic needs of classroom management is that teacher should be attentive and knows how to tackle the students to avoid destruction in classroom, (v) If any student distracted from his learning path, teacher should be capable to help the student to refocus his/her learning as well. Also, Quarto (2007) highlighted four factors: (i) Classroom management includes preparation and employment of planners (ii) the organizing strategies of teachers (iii) teacher should encourage the students to learn more (iv) continuous evaluation of students should be keep in consideration by teacher regarding to classroom management.

Moreover, Evertson and Weinstein (2006) argue that in order to attain a high quality of classroom management, teachers must perform following five actions: (1) develop caring, supportive relationships with and among students and (2) organize and implement instruction in ways that optimize students' access to learning. Additionally, Evertson and Weinstein (2006) state that teachers should (3) encourage students' engagement in academic tasks, which can be done by using group management methods (e.g., by establishing rules and classroom procedures). Teachers must (4) promote the development of students' social skills and self-regulation. Ritter (2003) refer to this as making students responsible for their behaviour. Finally, Evertson and Weinstein (2006) state that teachers should be able to (5) use appropriate interventions to assist students with behaviour problems. A key element of each of these definitions is that they both rely on proactive and preventative teacher actions, rather than teacher reactions to situations that have already occurred.

2.3 Classroom management competence

Classroom management competencies are assets to any classroom teacher. Classroom management is frequently at the top of the list of factors that contribute to student achievement (Tal, 2010; Smith and Laslett, 2002). Classroom management competence consist of a teacher's ability to create an atmosphere where they can teach and students can learn. Wong, et al., (2012) explained that effective teachers are organized, structured, and consistent with their procedures. Teachers use procedures to manage their classrooms so that instruction and learning occur. The ability to manage a classroom involves several skills that every teacher must possess. According to Baker (2005) teachers must be proactive to prevent problems, plan engaging instruction, and maximize Onage time, and plan transitions, Charles and Senter Wong (2008) posited that classroom management skills refer to all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so learning can take place in a consistent environment.

In addition to the skills of organizing, planning, being proactive, taking charge, and being consistent, teachers must be able to manage student behavior. Teachers of all experience levels perceive behavior management as a fundamental part of effective classrooms. Behavior management is a critical element of any classroom makeup and a consistent thought in teacher's mind (Levin and Nolan, 2004). Effective teachers must have a classroom management plan that contains strategies and routines that are designed to help create and maintain a classroom



environment that facilitates learning (Ming-Tak, and Wai-Shing, 2008). Classroom management consists of arranging the layout of the classroom, modeling student interaction, controlling student behaviors, designing classes, and monitoring instructional time (Slider, *et al.*, 2006).

Another important skill that teachers must possess is the ability to build relationships with parents and encourage parent involvement. Relationships between parents and teachers are key in creating effective classrooms. In a study of 28 preschool teachers and 23 parents spanning across five schools, Savas (2012) found that teachers do not feel supported with student behavior problems, parents feel that teachers do not emphasize classroom expectations enough with students, and both groups felt that there is room for improvement in the area of school family cooperation. Savas (2012) also explained that effective classroom environments consist of administrators, teachers, and parents working cooperatively to help manage student misbehaviors.

3.0 Research Methodology

The present descriptive study was quantitative in nature and survey method was used. All the public secondary school teachers in Kilombero District constituted the population of the study. The data were collected from a sample of 125 secondary school teachers, teaching in 5 public secondary schools in Kilombero district. All the teachers were trained, their experience ranged from 3 to 25 years. Data were collected via Classroom Management Inventory (CMI), developed by the researcher, keeping in view the Tanzanian context. CMI was designed to measure teachers' perceptions of their classroom management competence and strategies and practices, consists of 42 Likert format statements and includes items on five dimensions of classroom management (Easter, 2008): i) Meet the Basic Needs of Students, ii) Teamwork, Build Relationships with Students, iii) Organization in the Classroom and Establishment of Rules, v) Standards, and vi) Routines.

A pilot study was conducted to determine if questionnaire items were understandable by participants and if measures of internal consistency were satisfactory. The reliability test of the questionnaire reflected 0.876 value of Cronbach's Alpha, which showed the high reliability of the instrument. Data analysis was conducted and analysis of the frequency was used to reveal the mean score, the standard deviation, and the data distribution. This study used Pearson Product Moment Correlation to describe and measure the degree of association between teachers' classroom management competence and classroom management strategies. Before the analysis, data cleaning, normality and homogeneity tests were performed.

4.0 Research Finding Results

4.1 Teacher's classroom management competence

Teachers' classroom management competence was measured using a 3-point likert-scale. Teachers were asked to indicate their levels of agreement to various statements that they were given regarding classroom management knowledge and skills. Frequency and percentages of their responses on each of the statements are presented in Table 1.



Table 1: Teachers' on Classroom Management Competence

Item	Teachers (N=125)						
	Agree		Certain		Disagree		
	F	%	f	%	F	%	
1	I was taught classroom management theoretically not practically	95	76	2	1.6	28	22.4
3	I think I need more training on classroom management	102	81.6	18	14.4	5	4
4	I was not exposed to classroom management in the teacher's college. I don't even know what it's all about	98	78.4	7	5.6	20	16
5	I am using trial and error; no skills really were imparted during college day on classroom management	74	59.2	5	4	46	36.8
6	I was not taught classroom management in class but during teaching practice	76	60.8	22	17.6	27	21.6

Data in Table 1 shows that the overwhelming majority 81.6%, of teachers agreed that they need more training on classroom management. This implied that teachers thought that they do not have sufficient classroom management competence they require to manage their classes. This was also confirmed as a considerable number of teachers 78.4% and 76% agreed that they were not exposed to classroom management in teacher's college and they did not even know what it's all about and they were taught classroom management theoretically not practically respectively. This clearly denotes that they had limited knowledge on classroom management. On the other hand, 60.8% and 59.2% of teachers agreed that they were not taught classroom management in class but during teaching practice and they are using trial and error, no skills really were imparted during college day on classroom management respectively.

4.2 Most used classroom management strategies

Teachers' classroom management strategies were measured using a 5-point likert-scale with scores ranging from one point for Strongly Disagree to five points for Strongly Agree. Table 2 present the summary of the study findings.



Table 2: Most used classroom management strategies

	Item	M	SD
1	Organization in classroom	4.37	0.70
2	Rules routines	4.73	0.55
3	Relationship with students	2.96	1.15
4	Meet the basic needs	3.3.1	0.95
5	Team work	2.77	1.05

Analysis of secondary school teachers' classroom management practices indicated that the most frequently used classroom management strategies included rules routines and organization in classroom. The least frequently occurring classroom management strategies included building relationship with students, meeting the basic needs and team work. The finding implies that most of the secondary school teachers use mostly reactive classroom management strategies rather than preventative.

4.3 Variations in classroom management strategies (organization in classroom, rules routines, relationship with students, meet the basic needs and team work) towards classroom management competence

The study assessed whether or not classroom management competence had any effect on teachers' classroom management strategies (organization in classroom, rules routines, relationship with students, meet the basic needs and team work). A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to examine the extent to which classroom management strategies differed with teachers' classroom management competence. Five dimensions of classroom management strategies were used: organization in classroom, rules routines, relationship with students, meet the basic needs and team work. Using Wilks' Lambda test, at 0.05 level of significance, the results revealed statistically significant differences between the classroom management competence in the combined dependent variables $F(3, 1038) = 6.18$, $p = .000$, Wilks' Lambda = .92, partial eta squared = .03. Given the significance of the MANOVA test the main univariate effects were examined to determine how classroom management competences affect each of the dependent variables.

The findings showed that significant univariate effects on classroom management competence was obtained for rules routines $F(3, 1038) = 9.02$, $p = .000$ partial eta squared = .03 and organization in $F(3, 1038) = 10.61$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .03.

4.4 Compare the difference in teachers' classroom management strategies by gender

Table 3 presents the comparison of female and male secondary school teachers' classroom management strategies on five dimensions of classroom management by conducting independent sample t-test and depicts that there is significant difference between the mean scores of



classroom management strategies of female and male teachers on the dimensions ‘Organization in classroom’, ‘Meet the basic needs’, ‘Team work’, as $\rho < 0.05$. It is obvious that female teachers’ mean score is greater than male teachers’ mean score. The magnitude of difference in the means by calculating effect size is small (Eta squared = 0.002).

Table 3: comparison of female and male teachers’ classroom management strategies on five selected dimensions

Dimensions of classroom management practices	Gender	Mean	SD	t	p
Rules routines	M	3.51	0.43	-0.952	.345
	F	3.64	0.54		
Organization in classroom	M	3.82	0.53	-2.202	.030*
	F	4.04	0.45		
Relationship with students	M	3.89	0.47	-1.843	-.068
	F	4.09	0.42		
Meet the basic needs	M	4.16	0.48	-2.579	.011*
	F	4.50	0.44		
Team work	M	3.96	0.32	-2.108	.037*
	F	4.08	0.46		

Table 3 data shows that teachers’ gender affects their use of classroom management strategies. Female teachers exhibited more preference on four classroom management strategies out of five strategies than the male teachers.

5.0 Discussions

The study examined relationship between secondary school teachers’ classroom competence and classroom management strategies. The study revealed that teachers feel that their classroom management training is inadequate. This finding concurs with Hammerness (2011) who found that that teacher education programs are not preparing student-teachers in the area of classroom management. In same line of thinking, Hochweber, *et al.* (2014) asserted that findings over the past 50 years have noted beginning teachers regularly pinpoint classroom management as a major concern. To buttress the findings, Kane, (2011) found that teachers felt extra classroom management training would have benefitted their teaching practice. Kleinert, *et al* (2017) reported numerous teachers perceived their classroom management training was insufficient and



unproductive. Marks, (2010) asserted that most teachers admit to learning more about managing a classroom on their own, while some rate their preservice training as beneficial.

Teacher preparation programs may need to change the way student-teachers are prepared to address classroom management so beginning teachers can be more effective teachers. Niemeyer, (2014) stated those responsible for educating future teachers must ensure teacher candidates acquire classroom management strategies. In a study of eight preservice teachers that felt underprepared to manage a classroom, Niemeyer, (2014) found that teachers welcomed the experience of using a virtual environment to help them prepare for the rigors of classroom management, but they felt the experience lacked authentic experience with students that displayed behavior problems in a classroom. Better preservice training would result in more proactive teachers who would need fewer office referrals to address negative student behaviors (Oliver, 2007).

Moreover, the study found that teachers' gender affects their classroom management. Female teachers exhibited more classroom management skills on all the five dimensions of classroom management than the male teachers. Various results were found from studies throughout literature comparing classroom management skills and competencies of teachers who are compared according to their genders. Some studies revealed that teachers' perceptions and opinions regarding their classroom management skills and competencies have been affected by their gender (Çelik, 2006). Results of some studies yielded that there are not any significant differences between male and female teachers' classroom management strategies (Slider, *et al.*, (2006); Quarto, (2007); Marzano, (2011). Smith and Laslett, (2002) found male teachers' behaviours to be more controlled, authoritarian, rigid, impersonal, assertive and aggressive than female teachers. On the other hand, Marks, (2010) found out that female teachers are better at instructional strategies while males are better at student engagement. This variety of results may be due to cultural considerations and different environments. The gender roles vary from society to society and societal responses also vary as per cultures.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

At this juncture, the researchers concluded that minimal content that is provided in classroom management is too theoretical and does not adequately address situations likely to be encountered by teachers in the classroom. Based on the findings of the study and conclusion made, the following recommendations were put forward by the researchers: 1. Teacher education programs in colleges and universities should place more emphasis on training student teachers in classroom management skills in order to promote quality learning by students. (2) Heads of schools should make provisions for teachers employed to be given detailed orientation on techniques of classroom management techniques. (3) Teachers on their own should make efforts to equip themselves with the knowledge of classroom management and apply the techniques involved. Teachers should ensure that techniques such as seating arrangement, counselling approach, rote discipline, addressing the needs of students both in terms of what they teach and



how they teach, walking around the class to be close to every learner at different times, facial expressions and gestures, and devoting time to each individual learner are employed in the classrooms



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