Challenges Faced by Novice Public College Teachers Regarding Classroom Management

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges of novice public college teachers regarding classroom management and to know the strategies they adopted to manage classrooms. The study was qualitative. A basic qualitative research design was used. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. By using the purposive sampling technique, 15 novice teachers who had six months of teaching experience were selected as a sample of the study. The result of this study showed that novice teachers face challenges such as dealing with individual differences, motivating students, dealing with uninterested students, and time management. It was found that the majority of the teachers use a variety of instructional methods including questioning techniques, activity-based learning, and discussion. The study concluded that providing teachers' training, administrative support of senior staff, and learning with time could help teachers to manage their class effectively.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Novice Teachers, Public Colleges, Challenges, Teaching Strategies.

Introduction

Classroom management has been defined as a teacher's skill to manage classroom activities, managing positive social interaction of the students, and addressing their differences for effective learning (Adedigba & Sulaiman, 2020). It also include all classroom practices of teachers which not only help in academics of the students but also in their social and emotional learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). Classroom management helps teachers to create and maintain a learning environment that is conducive for effective teaching and learning. Eggleston (2018) explained that classroom management includes a full range of classroom activities, including learning social interaction and addressing students' issues and behavioral problems.

Saleem, Muhammad, and Masood (2019) have argued that classroom management has been considered the most challenging part of teaching for newly inducted teachers. They further discussed those novice teachers in their early years of teaching try to develop a positive relationship with their students to make learning meaningful for them.

In the literature, concerns about classroom management have gained a lot of attention on how learning activates and daily tasks are managed and executed (Grant, 2017). Maintaining a positive learning environment has also been discussed as an issue by various authours (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). As such, addressing the classroom management concerns, teaching classroom management skills and facilitating teachers in teaching are important in building their confidence in teaching. Similarly, supporting the novice teachers during their first years of teaching is important about classroom management (Sadiq, Ramzan, & Akhtar, 2017; Saleem, Muhammad, & Masood, 2020).

Good classroom management is entirely dependent upon both students and teachers when both teachers and students are working together equitably in the teaching and learning process (Laslett & Smith, 2002). As discussed that a skillful teacher organizes and manages the class in a way that all pupils are actively engaged in the process of learning. Classroom management does not only provide teachers an organized procedure for the teaching of reading, writing, mathematics, and learning rather it also teaches values to the students (Lewis, 2008). Classroom management also helps to develop a learning community in a class where students feel connected and bonded (Cummings, 2000), It has been observed that novice teachers with all the preparation face a lot of classroom management issues (Davis, 2017; Dos et al., 2016; Zoromski, Evans, Owens, Holdaway, & Royo Romero, 2020). It is also discussed that usually novice teachers are more concerned with maintaining discipline and controlling the behavior of students in the most traditional way (Wolff, Jarodzka, & Boshuizen, 2020; Wolff, van den Bogert, Jarodzka, & Boshuizen, 2015).

A novice teacher is characterized by a teacher who has started to work in an actual classroom, after having a teacher preparation program (Collins & O'Brien, 2011). Novice

teachers' classroom management challenges can be divided into four areas as described by Everston and Weinstein (2013). The first aspect is developing positive relationship between the teacher and children. It highlights the role of the teacher as a warm, caring and supportive person. The second aspect is classroom management as a social and moral curriculum. It refers how teachers' decision influence on moral or social development of students. Punishment and reward is another important dimension which effects the classroom atmosphere. Recongnizing students' background including ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic status is also another important area of classroom management. Evertson and Weinstein (2013) framework was used in the current study to investigate beginning teachers' classroom management concerns and practices.

Teaching is becoming a challenging profession. It has also been observed that students' behavior issues are becoming a challenge for teachers. Uninterested, disrespectful and unmotivated students is a hard task for teacher to manage (Butt & Khalid, 2015; Cakmak, Gunduz, & Emstad, 2019). Teachers also complain about a lack of parental cooperation and guidance with them. Berhanu and Sabancı (2017) have also argued that without parents cooperation, it becomes difficult for teachers to correct the behavior of students. They have also pointed out that sometimes parents use to defend their children without recognizing their children' behaviours. One of the challenging issues for teachers in the classroom is the use of cell phone. It has been noted that students do not follow the rules regarding the use of cell phone and its consequences upon their studies (Ali, Sharma, & Zaman, 2017; Ayub, Hussain, & Ghulamullah, 2018).

Five major concerns for novice teachers which are reflected in research include workload and time management, managing the content and subject knowledge, developing relationship with parents, students and supervisors, assessment and grading and autonomy (Jabbar, Hashmi, & Ashraf, 2019). Furthermore, Zhong and Craig (2020) highlighted challenges such as a gap between pre-service training and real classroom situations, challenge of completing the tasks on time, fear of inspection and adaption to college environment. To support novice teachers, it is essential to recognize them as a beginning teacher and address the issues which they face. The lack of instructional repertoire among beginner teachers may also cause more frustrations among them (Alwi, Rauf, & Haider, 2015; Saleem et al., 2020).

This research will focus on the experiences of newly inducted college teachers. Issues perceived by novice teachers include classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationship with parents, and organization of classwork, insufficient teaching material and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students.

The Objective of the Study

- 1. To explore the experiences of novice college teachers related to classroom management
- 2. To explore the challenges faced by novice college teachers related to Classroom Management
- 3. To explore the strategies novice college teachers use in managing their classes

Research Questions

- 1. How does a novice college teacher describe their experiences related to classroom management?
- 2. How do novice college teachers describe the challenges they face related to classroom management?
- 3. Which classroom management strategies do novice college teachers use in managing their classes?

Literature Review

Teaching in the twenty-first-century schools is difficult, therefore, the teachers should be taught the twenty-first-century skills to manage their classes in a better manner (Guerriero, 2017). The twenty-first-century teachers need to understand the fact that classroom management is different than before. Now the teachers need to inculcate positive behaviors among students, respecting the dignity of students; instead of yelling, humiliating, and hitting the students. The teacher needs to behave more politely and humbly to handle a variety of classrooms and avoid miss-management during the learning process (Bluestein, 2014).

It is evident from the literature that even when novice teachers come prepared in the class, they face different challenges (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2007). One of the major challenges of classroom management a novice teacher has to face is the behavioral management of students in the classroom (Laslett & Smith, 2002). Most of the teachers' time is spent in managing the behavior of difficult pupils (Al zubi,2013). The issues of disruptive pupils are reported heavily in the literature (Sullivan, Johnson, Owens, & Conway, 2014). It has also been noted that disruptive students may have received a rejection from family or friends, they want to take revenge from others and they usually show aggression and indulge in bullying (Garandeau, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2014). It is also reported that student misbehavior and complaints, passing comments on teachers and students cause a lot of management issues. These challenging issues result in the frustration of teachers and sometimes teachers feel annoyed and use to leave the profession(Saleem et al., 2019; Sullivan et al., 2014).

Novice teachers consider the first few years of teaching very difficult because they are new to the classroom setting, need constant support at the workplace. Therefore,

they have some expectations which need to be fulfilled. The school authorities should try to help them by providing constant support and encouragement to settle in the profession (Saleem et al., 2020). Novice teachers need sharing with teacher colleagues, staff problem-solving groups, consultant teachers, team teaching, and feedback from principals (Buchanan et al., 2013; Laslett & Smith, 2002; Raba, 2016). When the novice teacher enters in actual classroom and practices the knowledge of teacher education program at this time he/she needs the sharing relationship with a colleague because they might be facing the same situations and then can tell each other better ways and strategies to deal with classroom management issues (Girardet & Jean-Louis, 2018; Saleem et al., 2020). The support of mentor teachers and positive feedback from principals are considered to have a positive impact on novice teachers' classroom management (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010). The support of school administration in classroom management in particular principal and expert teachers decreases the stress of novice teachers and increases the effective management of the classroom (Fisher, 2011).

Methodology

Qualitative research design was used for this study. Qualitative research starts from some assumptions while using the basis of some theoretical background and studying the meanings that individuals and groups ascribe to their social and human problems. Qualitative research is an emerging research inquiry in which the researcher investigates the problem and collects the data in the actual setting, remains sensitive to the people and problem, and reaches to themes from the voices of respondents through the inductive method. The final research report includes the actual voices of respondents, the reflectivity of the researcher, discussing the problem under study, and drawing out themes from their responses to reach the conclusions (Creswell, 2014). At the same time, they attain help from literature to find the action plan to resolve the problem (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). Interviews were conducted to collect information about challenges faced by newly inducted college teachers related to classroom management. Interviews were conducted to know the challenges related to teachers who are new at college and their perceived level of adjustment and pedagogical success.

The sample of this study was 15 novice college teachers. The novice teachers were those who had less than six months of experience and doing their first job as a college lecturer. The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique. The researcher gathered data from 15 newly inducted college teachers in Lahore. For purposive sampling, the researcher selects the individuals and sites because they can purposefully understand the problem or they are facing the problem under study (Creswell, 2007, p. 126).

After reviewing the related literature, the researcher developed the interview guide to explore the challenges faced by newly inducted college teachers related to classroom management. Considering the initial, research questions, and the topic of the study, an interview guide consisted of five main questions with their 15 sub-questions.

Following were the main parts and sub-parts of the interview guide), (1) experiences of classroom management (2) strategies of classroom management (3) common challenges regarding classroom management including workload challenges, maintaining discipline, dealing with individual differences, building relationship with colleagues, students, and parents, knowledge of the subject matter, planning and evaluation (4) opinion about how your experience as a novice teacher can be improved.

Qualitative data were analyzed by employing qualitative data analysis techniques of open coding and axial coding. The researcher analyzed the response of each question, analyzed them separately, sorted the similarities and differences, and categorized them to develop themes. Common responses have been mentioned under a theme. Findings and discussion are presented below.

Findings

Common challenges experienced during classroom management

All of the participants described that they have struggled during their initial period of teaching at college. They also shared that lack of experience has affected negatively their classroom management and learning of the students. The respondents expressed although they had learned classroom management strategies in their teacher education program, however, they were unable to manage the class effectively at the beginning of their teaching. As one respondent stated:

"Yes, of course, I have realized that a lack of management skills reduces learning in the classroom and negatively affects the performance of the students. I was not familiar with the classroom management skills at the start of the job...I think teachers should have organization and leadership qualities to control their class" (Teacher 5). Another narrated:

"I have experienced a lot of challenges in classroom management because I did not have any prior experience and students know the new teacher is learning and they create challenges for you in class. At this point, I used to panic." (Teacher 1).

Varied responses were received regarding classroom management challenges of novice teachers.

Some of the participants briefed that dealing with individual differences is one of the biggest challenges for them in the classroom. Because of the shortage of time teachers could not pay attention to each individual separately. They expressed that as we know that each student is a unique individual with differences in ability and learning styles. Therefore, teaching them together becomes very difficult for a novice teacher. Class size was also reported as one of the main hurdles in managing individual differences. As one of the respondents reported:

"Dealing with individual differences is one of the challenges that I frequently faced in the class of 50 students" (Teacher 13).

Some of the participants declared that managing discipline problems were challenging. They described that there were several types of students in the classroom and disciplinary problems such as disrespect, defiance, bullying, and aggression were a routine in the classroom. And all these misbehavior affects negatively on their teaching. It becomes challenging to deal with the unique behavioral problems of students. As one of the respondents described:

"Normally I face a lot of challenges regarding discipline in the classroom. I usually face a lot of behavioral issues in my class; bullying and disobeying behaviors. these disturbing activities distract me and I lose interest in my lesson (Teacher 10).

Some of the participants mentioned that lack of motivation was the major problem they were facing. They said that it was challenging for them to motivate the demotivated students towards their studies. The young students of today have a concept that education does not make any difference to their financial position in their life; they have seen highly educated persons unemployed searching for a job. Secondly, social media fascinated them and they used to think that they could run their online business without putting a lot of effort into education. As one respondent believed:

"For me, a lack of motivation is the biggest challenge that I face in the classroom. In this modern age as we know that social media has its influence on young people and therefore, it is quite difficult to motivate students towards their studies (Teacher 8)

Some of the participants expressed that lack of parental support was a challenge for a teacher while teaching. The parental educational aspirations for their children proved to be strongly related to students' academic growth. When the parents were uneducated and had no particular dreams for their siblings then motivating them to study became very difficult for a teacher. As one respondent stated:

"Lack of parental support is a huge challenge that teachers experience daily. They are not taking interest in their children's education; they left all the burden of teaching their children on teachers. This is also one of the problems I am facing these days (Teacher 14).

A few of the participants mentioned that dealing with uninterested students was the biggest challenge for them. A student who had no interest in lessons and developing their interest was a very difficult and time-consuming job. As one respondent described:

"I have to face a lot of distractions in the classroom daily. Firstly, I have to deal with the uninterested students... teaching young students is quite challenging. They often show ignoring and neglecting behavior as they do not know the importance of education. Treating such uninterested students is a real challenge for me..." (Teacher 2).

Methods or strategies used by novice college teachers in managing their Class

Almost half of the respondents declared that they used effective questioning as a strategy to gain students' attention. Questioning students was the foundation of teaching and it could transform a traditional teacher-led classroom into students led. The questioning technique arise curiosity in students and brings clarity of thought towards a particular topic. As one respondent narrated;

"The best thing I consider is engaging students in different tasks. Secondly, asking questions is also one of the effective strategies that I use to gain students' attention towards the lesson..." (Teacher 12). Another reported:

"I used questioning throughout the period as a strategy to keep students involved in learning. This is how the attention of students is focused on what is taught in the class. Because the students have an idea that any time teacher could ask a question from them..." (Teacher 2).

Some of the respondents stated that they use to adopt the strategy of managing class according to the situation in class. They expressed that sometimes they involved students in discussion and writing activities to keep them involved and made them learn. Both of these strategies helped them in managing their class. As one respondent reported;

"I don't focus on a single strategy while managing class. I mostly use group methods, activity-based learning and discussion while teaching" (Teacher 3).

Strategies to prevent Misbehavior

Some of the respondents managed the disrespectful behavior of students by showing them the different behaviors from polite to strict warnings. At times they showed strict behavior to handle disobeying behaviors of the pupil in the class. However, when the teacher knew that the pupil was intelligent they tried to handle that pupil politely. As one of the respondents described;

"In most of the cases this sort of behavior occurs between students and students so, Teachers are supposed to control that sort of situation too. So, to control the situation or to cater to the situation I first warn them politely...if the situation remains the same then I ask for a written apology from the students" (Teacher 9).

Very few of the respondents used strict language to prevent misbehavior of students in the classroom. According to them, this was the only best way they could control the misbehavior of students. As one respondent reported;

"To prevent misbehavior in the classroom I only use snubbing...This is the strategy that I use to prevent discipline problems in the class...but I talk to the students after the

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class that my strictness is just to make the students realize about their inappropriate behavior (Teacher 15).

Almost half of the novice teachers believed that their experience as a novice teacher could be improved with time. Respondents declared that although they did teaching practice during the teacher education program they had not experienced real classroom challenges as permanent teachers. They emphasized the point that consistent practice could help them. They believed that they would learn classroom management with every passing day. As one respondent stated;

"There is always room for improvement. As you know learning is a continuous process. And with the time you gain experience and you try to overcome things. And I think my experience as a novice teacher can be improved by learning from my previous experiences." (Teacher 5). Another described:

"I think teaching is an evolving experience and I am learning classroom management with each passing day. The difference between a novice and an experienced teacher is the level of time spent by each in teaching in an actual classroom." (Teacher 13).

Some of the respondents thought that their experience could be improved by attending teacher training sessions. They believed that to achieve professional development they have to attend various workshops to excel in the field. Some respondents mentioned that to become a truly great teacher, one must go beyond the textbook and must-attend workshops and ongoing education courses to truly master the practice. As one respondent narrated;

"I think teacher training can help me adjust in the job of teaching. Because this training increases your knowledge and teach you the different ways to improve your classroom management skills" (Teacher 15).

Some of the respondents considered that their experience as a novice teacher could be improved with the support of management and by sharing their problems with the senior staff. Some respondents declared that administrators should encourage their teachers to seek help from them and find the solution to those problems by sharing with them. As one respondent expressed;

"I think good support from management and staff can improve the experience of novice teachers. At the beginning of the teaching years, all the teachers face several challenges. If I recall my starting days, I also face some emotional challenges of adapting to a new workplace. So with the cooperation of management, I think all novice teachers can adjust to a new environment." (Teacher 6).

Discussion and Conclusion

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In response to the question about classroom management challenges of novice teachers, it was revealed that novice teachers experienced classroom management challenges like time management, maintaining discipline, dealing with individual differences, motivating students, and students' disruptive behavior. The findings of the current study are consistent with the previous researchs (Weare & Nind, 2011; Weeden, Wills, Kottwitz, & Kamps, 2016; Yusoff & Khan, 2013) which have highlighted the issues of managing students' behavior problems in the classroom.

The current study has also pointed out the stress which novice teachers have to face as a result of the challenges of classroom management issues. Previous studies (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007; Raba, 2016; Voss, Wagner, Klusmann, Trautwein, & Kunter, 2017) have also reported that teachers have to face a lot of stress the whole year in terms of planning the lesson, grading, and managing the students in the class. Lack of time for planning and stress has also been linked with classroom management challenges for novice teachers. Hochweber, Hosenfeld, and Klieme (2014) named classroom management issues as the 'single most difficult challenge' and Hong (2010) calling it as 'teachers' nightmares'.

Thirdly, the research had revealed that the majority of the novice teachers use a variety of instructional methods and strategies to maintain classroom management and they adopt the strategy according to the situation. Instructional challenges in current research appeared to be less serious as some of the literature (Ahmad et al., 2012; Bakker & Bal, 2010) which have depicted instructional tools and methods as of less challenging issue. On the other hand, the current research revealed that some of the novice teachers use collaborative learning and cooperative learning to promote social interaction between the students. It can be concluded that peer support and advice could be useful in managing the stress caused by classroom management issues. MacDermott (2013) argued that 'relationships are at the heart of teaching' (p-57) and cooperation among teachers and support from management is seen as support for novice teachers. Similarly, collaborative learning (Malik, Mansoor, & Jumani, 2010) is also considered an effective teaching approach to deal with classroom management issues for novice teachers to cope with stress and to teach better. Similarly, most of the research (Cangelosi, 2013; Danielson, 2006; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009) have also highlighted the importance of students 'engagement and participation to deal with the behavioral issues of students. The same was highlighted in current research by novice teachers.

The research had revealed that although it is quite challenging for the novices to motivate youth in this modern age they tried their best to motivate them by using a variety of techniques. Some of the respondents mentioned that they motivate their students by giving examples to them, which was consistent with one of the literature as pointing out that making the content relevant to real-life can increase student's motivation (Popa, 2018). Whereas, some of the novice teachers declared that to motivate their students they encourage their students. Similarly, in other research, it is contended

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that encouragement and praise can be effective in motivating the disruptive students of the class (Pogodzinski, 2014).

Based on the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1. The majority of the respondents used a variety of instructional methods and strategies to maintain classroom management. And they adapt their strategy according to the situation. They used the implementation of lesson planning and questioning techniques.
- 2. For some of the novice teachers, dealing with uninterested students, maintaining discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, managing time were the challenges regarding classroom management.
- **3.** Based on findings, it was found that the majority of teacher-managed classrooms by using a variety of strategies according to the situation, and few teachers use snubbing to manage the behaviors of students.
- **4.** The study also concluded that providing teachers' training, administrative support of senior staff, and learning with time could help teachers to manage their class effectively.

In this study, various challenges regarding classroom management faced by newly inducted college teachers were highlighted and strategies were also discussed. However, the findings of this study could be strengthened more by taking multiple instruments and views of principals and administrators to have a more holistic picture.

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