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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES OF TEACHERS AT CHENGDU UNIVERSITY, SICHUAN PROVINCE, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to 1) study classroom management competencies of teachers and 2) to compare classroom management competencies of teachers at Chengdu university, Sichuan province, China as classified by genders, educational levels. The study methodology was a quantitative research. The conceptual framework of this study was applied from Mark's study. The population consisted of 15,000 teachers. The sample size of 390 teachers was determined by Taro Yamane/ formula. The instrument used in the study was a 5-rating scale questionnaire. The statistics used for data analysis were percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation. The research results revealed that 1) classroom management competencies of teachers at Chengdu university, Sichuan province, China was at a much level. When considering each aspect from high to low showed that classroom environment management, classroom order management, classroom activity management, and management of classroom routines were at low level respectively. 2) The comparative results on classroom management competencies of teachers at Chengdu university, Sichuan province, China showed that teachers with different genders and educational levels showed no difference on classroom management competencies with a statistically significant level of .05.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Competencies, Chengdu University

INTRODUCTION

Classroom management is a cornerstone of effective teaching and learning, serving as a vital foundation for successful educational experiences across all levels of education. It encompasses a broad spectrum of strategies, techniques, and practices that educators utilize to establish and maintain an optimal learning environment. While the term "classroom management" often evokes notions of maintaining order and discipline, its true essence extends far beyond mere regulation of behavior. Effective classroom management is about creating a positive and supportive atmosphere that fosters academic achievement, enhances student engagement, and promotes personal growth. In the context of higher education, particularly at institutions such as Chengdu University in Sichuan Province, China, the competencies associated with classroom management play a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of students.

Chengdu University, located in the vibrant and culturally rich city of Chengdu, is recognized as a leading educational institution committed to fostering intellectual development and innovation. As one of the prominent universities in China, it attracts a diverse student body, comprising individuals from various backgrounds, cultures, and academic preparedness levels. This diversity presents unique challenges for the institution as it strives to meet the varied needs of its students. The dynamic nature of the student population requires educators to be highly adaptable and responsive to the individual learning needs of their students. As the university navigates the complexities of modern education, the role of its teachers in managing classrooms becomes increasingly significant. University educators are not only responsible for imparting knowledge in their respective fields but also for creating an inclusive environment that accommodates a wide array of learning styles and behaviors. This multifaceted role requires teachers to balance their subject matter expertise with the ability to facilitate an engaging and productive learning atmosphere.

Classroom management in higher education presents distinctive challenges and dimensions compared to primary and secondary education. University instructors often face larger class sizes, which can complicate efforts to actively engage every student. The diversity of the student body further complicates this task, as students arrive with varying levels of motivation, interest, and prior knowledge. This variability necessitates the use of innovative teaching methods that can adapt to different learning preferences and foster an inclusive environment. Additionally, the increasing integration of technology into the classroom has transformed the educational landscape, providing both opportunities for enhanced learning and challenges in maintaining student attention and discipline. While technology can facilitate interactive learning experiences and improve access to information, it also requires educators to manage its use effectively to prevent distractions that can hinder the learning process.

In addition to technological integration, university educators must navigate behavioral issues that may arise in the classroom. Addressing these challenges while promoting a respectful and fair learning environment is a delicate balancing act. Teachers are tasked with implementing strategies that support learning and foster student engagement while also maintaining classroom order and respect. The complexity of this task is compounded by the need to cultivate student motivation and engagement, as students may vary significantly in their levels of interest and investment in the subject matter. Innovative and flexible teaching strategies are essential to address these disparities and ensure that all students feel valued and motivated to participate actively in their education. Creating an environment where students feel empowered and involved in their learning is crucial for maximizing their educational outcomes.

Recognizing these challenges, the objectives of this study are twofold: first, to investigate the classroom management competencies of teachers at Chengdu University, and second, to compare these competencies based on gender and educational levels. By examining these competencies, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of

classroom management practices and their implications for student learning outcomes. Understanding the dynamics of classroom management within the context of higher education can contribute to the ongoing development of effective teaching strategies that enhance the academic experiences of students at Chengdu University and beyond. This research aims to identify the specific skills and approaches that characterize effective classroom management, offering a framework that educators can utilize to improve their practices.

Moreover, this study will explore the potential differences in classroom management competencies across various demographics, including gender and educational levels. This comparative analysis is essential for understanding how different factors influence educators' approaches to classroom management and can help identify best practices tailored to diverse teaching contexts. By shedding light on the competencies that contribute to effective classroom management, this research aims to inform professional development initiatives and support educators in honing their skills in this critical area.

Ultimately, this study seeks to inform best practices that promote a positive and productive learning environment, equipping educators with the tools they need to navigate the complexities of modern teaching effectively. By fostering an environment that supports both teachers and students, we can enhance the overall educational experience, preparing students not only for academic success but also for their future roles as engaged and informed members of society. Through this research, we aim to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on classroom management in higher education, providing insights that can benefit educators, administrators, and policymakers alike.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Classroom management has emerged as a critical area of educational research, especially following the publication of significant works like the Great Theory of Teaching by Czechoslovakian educator Temenius. Although the foundational concepts of classroom management have existed for decades, it was not until the 20th century that systematic scientific inquiry into the field began to gain traction. The 1950s marked a pivotal turning point, ushering in an era of research characterized by rigorous methodologies and empirical evidence. This shift highlighted the need to address the limitations of traditional classroom management approaches and paved the way for new frameworks and theories.

Evolution of Classroom Management Research

The evolution of classroom management research can be categorized into several key stages, each reflecting the prevailing educational philosophies and pedagogical practices of its time.

1) Behaviorist Approach (1970s)

The behaviorist approach to classroom management dominated educational discourse in the 1970s, as behaviorism became a widely adopted framework for understanding and shaping student behavior. This model posited that external factors, primarily teacher interventions, significantly influence student actions. Teachers were seen as authority figures responsible for delineating acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

During this period, assertive communication became a hallmark of effective classroom management. Educators were encouraged to create comprehensive plans for managing student behavior, with the goal of reinforcing positive actions and addressing negative ones. Lee Canter's decisive discipline method exemplifies this approach, emphasizing the importance of teacher-led interventions and environmental controls. While this methodology marked a departure from consultative strategies by integrating environmental factors into classroom management, it has been critiqued for its limited focus on students' self-management capabilities. The overemphasis on external reinforcement and control often downplayed the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation and personal responsibility among students.

2) Teacher Effectiveness Research (Late 1960s)

The late 1960s ushered in a new wave of classroom management research centered around teacher effectiveness. This approach shifted the focus from reactive management strategies to proactive measures aimed at preventing behavioral issues before they arose. Pioneers in this field, such as Jacob Kounin, Anderson, and Jere Brophy, contributed to a growing body of knowledge that identified key competencies of effective teachers.

Research in this area highlighted three core competencies essential for effective classroom management: organizational skills, interpersonal relationship management, and instructional proficiency. Teachers equipped with these skills were seen as more capable of maintaining a positive learning environment and mitigating potential disruptions. This perspective suggested that effective classroom management could be achieved through targeted teacher training and development. However, like the behaviorist approach, this model has been critiqued for its somewhat narrow focus, as it often fails to account for the multitude of contextual factors that can influence classroom dynamics.

3) The Complex Interplay of Factors in Classroom Management

Contemporary literature increasingly recognizes that classroom management is not an isolated phenomenon but rather a complex process influenced by a myriad of interrelated factors. It has become evident that the effectiveness of classroom management practices is contingent upon various elements, including student demographics, classroom environment, institutional policies, and cultural contexts. These factors interact dynamically, shaping the effectiveness of management strategies employed by educators.

Moreover, research indicates that effective classroom management benefits both teachers and students. For educators, well-managed classrooms facilitate better instructional delivery and enhance job satisfaction. For students, a positive classroom environment promotes engagement, motivation, and academic success. Consequently, the integration of diverse management strategies that acknowledge the complexity of classroom dynamics is essential for creating an effective learning environment.

The literature on classroom management has evolved significantly, reflecting changing educational paradigms and the need for more nuanced approaches. From the behaviorist framework that emphasized external controls to the emergence of teacher effectiveness research, each stage has contributed to a deeper understanding of how to manage classrooms effectively. As the field progresses, it is crucial to embrace the complexity of classroom management, recognizing the interplay of various factors that impact teaching and learning. Future research should continue to explore these interactions and develop comprehensive strategies that enhance the educational experience for both teachers and students, ultimately leading to improved outcomes in higher education settings.
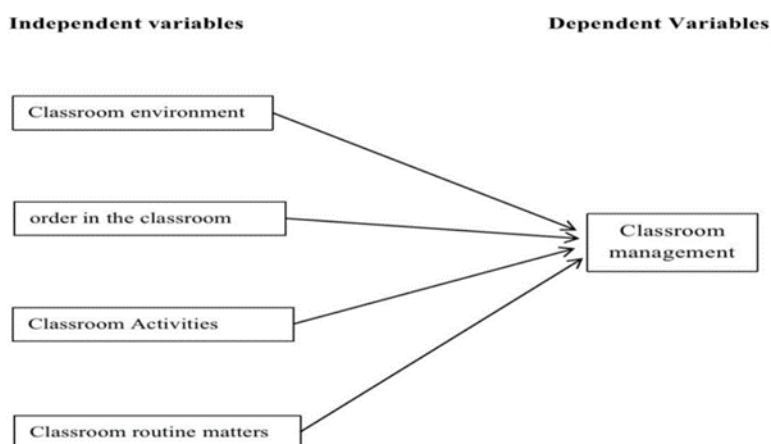

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and sample Group

Population of this paper is 15,000 students and teachers at universities in Sichuan Province. The sample group consisted of students majoring in finance and economics at a university in Sichuan Province. The sample size of this questionnaire was determined by purposive sampling and simple random sampling with reference to the use of Krejcie and Morgan tables.

Research Instruments

The instrument used in the study was a 5-rating scale questionnaire.

Data collection

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher used the following methods to collect the sample dathe questionnaire mainly investigates classroom management from the aspects of management of classroom routines, management of classroom environment, management of classroom order activities, and management of classroom activities. This survey was conducted in the university of Chengdu, Sichuan Province, with 285 students and 90 teachers to understand the current situation of classroom management.

Data Analysis

The statistics used in this study are as follows:

1) Frequency distribution
2) Percentage
3) Average value ($\overline{X}$)
4) Pearson correlation coefficient

RESEARCH RESULTS

This Classroom management is a dynamic process, its content is not only broad but also varied, and the center of classroom management changes constantly with the change of classroom content. From the definition of the concept in the previous section, we can learn that the links of classroom management mainly include the management of the classroom environment, the management of classroom order, the management of classroom activities, and the management of classroom routines, and we start from the four aspects, and carry out questionnaire surveys and combine with classroom observation and interviews to find out the current situation of classroom management, and analyse the reasons behind these situations. The questionnaire survey, combined with classroom observation and interviews, was conducted to find out the status quo of classroom management and to analyse the reasons for these status quo, to analyse the hidden things behind the phenomena appearing in classroom management in universities in Sichuan Province, with a view to making theoretical analyses and explanations of these problems, to help teachers understand the reality of classroom management more clearly and to analyse the problems in classroom management from different perspectives and different concepts. This will help teachers to understand more clearly the real problems in classroom management, and to analyse the problems in the classroom from different perspectives and concepts, so as to provide theoretical and practical support for teachers to carry out classroom management. The survey focused on teachers and students at a university in Sichuan Province, with a sample size of 375, 90 of whom were teachers and 285 of whom were students.

Table 1 Extent to which the physical environment affects the classroom

Form	It's a big impact	General impact	Less impact
	Number of persons Ratio	Number of persons Ratio	Number of persons Ratio
principals	18 20 per cent	59 65.6 per cent	13 persons 14.44 per cent
schoolchildren	76 26.67 per cent	148 51.93 per cent	61 persons 21.4 per cent

Table 1, it can be seen that the vast majority of teachers and students are aware of the physical environment of the classroom, and they indicated that the physical factors of the classroom are a very important factor affecting learning in the classroom. The vast majority of teachers and students believe that the physical environment has an impact on the management of the classroom physical environment. The percentage of teachers who believe that the physical environment has a great impact on classroom management is 20 per cent, and nearly 27 per cent of students believe that the physical environment has a very great impact on the classroom.

Table 2 Extent to which the physical environment affects the classroom

Form	It's a big impact	General impact	Less impact
	Number of persons Ratio	Number of persons Ratio	Number of persons Ratio
principals	18 20 per cent	59 65.6 per cent	13 persons 14.44 per cent
schoolchildren	76 26.67 per cent	148 51.93 per cent	61 persons 21.4 per cent

Table 2 the level of satisfaction of teachers and students with the physical environment of the classroom is 48 per cent of students and 12.22 per cent of teachers are dissatisfied with the physical environment of the classroom. Most of the rest of the teachers and students are biased towards average level of satisfaction with the physical environment of the classroom.

It is obvious from Table 1 and Table 2 that both teachers and students in the classroom attach great importance to the physical environment of the classroom, and both believe that the physical environment has an impact on classroom management, which may directly affect their learning to varying degrees. Although the physical environment in the classroom has improved, and many teachers and students expressed general satisfaction with the classroom, the physical environment in the classroom does not meet their needs and still falls short of their satisfaction level, which means that there is a need to further optimise the physical environment in the classroom.

Through the observation of the classrooms, it was found that the classroom environments of the university classrooms in Sichuan Province were almost the same, all of them were neat and tidy, with no special features. The blackboards, walls, desks and chairs are uniform in all classrooms, and even the placement is almost the same. This excessive sameness in classroom planning hides the individual classroom differences and loses the individuality and own characteristics that a university classroom should have.

Seating arrangement also occupies a very important position in classroom teaching and is an important means for teachers to manage students, which is usually neglected by teachers because college students usually sit in any position they want. In the classroom observation, the author found that the students sitting in the front seat usually always sit in the front, while the students sitting in the back always sit in the back. This inevitably leads to a lack of whole-class communication in the classroom.

It is also found that the placement of desks and chairs in classroom management is also an important factor affecting classroom management, the placement of desks and chairs should be consistent with the teaching method, and should be conducive to classroom management and teaching, due to the large number of college students in the classroom, by the influence of the

class size, the university generally use the rice planting type of arrangement of desks. Although the arrangement of desks in a plug-in style is conducive to some of the hard-working students and regulates the behavior of students, all classes cannot be arranged in a plug-in style.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The findings from this study illuminate the multifaceted nature of classroom management in higher education, particularly in the context of universities in Sichuan Province, China. Classroom management is revealed to be a dynamic process influenced by various factors, including the physical environment, seating arrangements, and the overall design of the classroom. The comprehensive approach taken in this research—utilizing questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews—has provided valuable insights into the current status of classroom management and the underlying reasons for observed phenomena.

1) The Impact of Physical Environment on Learning

The results indicate a strong consensus among teachers and students regarding the significance of the physical environment in facilitating effective classroom management. As highlighted in Tables 1 and 2, a substantial number of participants believe that physical factors significantly impact learning and classroom dynamics. This recognition underscores the need for educators and administrators to prioritize the optimization of classroom environments. Despite the general satisfaction expressed by many participants, the evident dissatisfaction among a notable percentage indicates that existing physical conditions do not fully meet the needs of students and educators alike.

The uniformity observed in classroom designs across Sichuan Province's universities raises concerns about the lack of individuality and character in learning environments. Such homogeneity can inhibit creativity and personal connection to the learning space, potentially diminishing student engagement. Future improvements should focus on creating more diverse and adaptable classroom layouts that reflect the unique needs and preferences of both students and teachers, fostering a sense of belonging and ownership over the learning environment.

2) Seating Arrangements and Classroom Communication

The study also highlights the critical role of seating arrangements in classroom management. Observations revealed a tendency for students to gravitate towards habitual seating choices, which inadvertently hampers whole-class communication and interaction. The tendency for students sitting in the front to consistently occupy those seats while those in the back remain disengaged demonstrates a missed opportunity for fostering a more inclusive learning atmosphere.

To enhance student engagement and promote collaborative learning, educators must reconsider traditional seating arrangements. Flexible seating that encourages movement and interaction, such as circular or group configurations, can facilitate better communication among students and enhance their overall learning experience. Implementing such arrangements may also help educators to better manage classroom dynamics by promoting active participation and peer-to-peer interactions.

3) Alignment of Classroom Layout with Teaching Methods

The alignment of desk and chair placements with instructional strategies is another critical factor influencing classroom management. The prevalent "rice planting" style of desk arrangement, while functional for some teaching approaches, may not be conducive to all learning activities. The findings suggest that a more versatile approach to classroom layout, which adapts to the specific teaching methods being employed, could enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

By thoughtfully considering how classroom arrangements can support different teaching methodologies—such as group work, discussions, or lectures—educators can create more effective learning environments. Such adaptability not only helps to regulate student behavior

but also enriches the overall educational experience, allowing for a variety of instructional strategies to be employed effectively.

Conclusion

This study underscores the complexity of classroom management in higher education, revealing that it is influenced by a myriad of factors, particularly the physical environment and seating arrangements. The strong recognition among teachers and students of the importance of these elements emphasizes the need for continued investment in optimizing classroom conditions to support effective learning.

While some progress has been made in improving physical environments, the existing dissatisfaction among a segment of the population signals a pressing need for further enhancements. Moving forward, it is essential for educational institutions, particularly those in Sichuan Province, to prioritize the customization and diversity of classroom designs to better cater to the varied needs of students and educators.

Additionally, reevaluating traditional seating arrangements and aligning classroom layouts with instructional strategies can significantly enhance student engagement and classroom communication. By fostering an inclusive and adaptive learning environment, educators can not only improve classroom management practices but also create more meaningful and impactful educational experiences.

Ultimately, this research contributes to a growing understanding of the intricacies of classroom management in higher education. It provides practical insights for educators seeking to refine their management strategies and enhance student outcomes, paving the way for a more effective and engaging learning environment. Further research could explore the long-term impacts of optimized classroom management strategies on student achievement and satisfaction, as well as their implications for professional development in educational settings.

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