

Problems and prospects of classroom management among secondary school teachers in Pakistan

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Abstract

Classroom management is a multifaceted process involving the establishment of rules, management of student behavior, and facilitation of active participation. In Pakistan, secondary school teachers encounter unique challenges that complicate these efforts. This study investigates the problems and prospects of classroom management among secondary school teachers in Sindh, Pakistan. The study adopts qualitative approach using secondary data to analyse the questions in the study. Challenges like student misbehavior, overcrowded classrooms, and resource shortages hinder effective management, while opportunities such as professional development and technology integration offer solutions. The study examines how these factors and teacher experience influence management effectiveness, guided by Choice Theory's emphasis on student choice and relationships. The paper provides strategies to enhance teaching practices, benefiting teachers, administrators, and policymakers. It was suggested the need for the launch of community-based initiatives, such as parent-teacher meetings and awareness campaigns to increase parental involvement, reinforcing discipline and fostering a shared commitment to education among others.

Keywords: classroom management, classroom problem, secondary school teacher

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INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a foundation for sustainable development, empowering individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to contribute meaningfully to society (UNESCO, 2020). In Pakistan, secondary education is pivotal, bridging primary schooling and higher education while preparing students for professional and civic responsibilities (Government of Pakistan, 2018). With over 25 million students enrolled in secondary schools, the education system faces immense pressure to deliver quality learning experiences, particularly in public institutions where resources are often limited (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2023). Central to achieving this goal is effective classroom management, defined as the strategies teachers employ to create an organized, disciplined, and engaging learning environment that fosters academic success and personal growth (Marzano et al., 2003).

Classroom management is a multifaceted process involving the establishment of rules, management of student behavior, and facilitation of active participation. In Pakistan, secondary school teachers encounter unique challenges that complicate these efforts. Large class sizes, often exceeding 50 students in public schools, strain teachers' ability to maintain order and provide

individualized attention (Hussain, 2020). Additionally, cultural expectations emphasizing teacher authority can clash with adolescents' increasing desire for autonomy, leading to behavioral issues (Khan & Khan, 2019). Rural schools face further difficulties, including outdated facilities and limited access to teaching aids, while urban schools, though better equipped, grapple with diverse student populations and socioeconomic disparities (Ahmed, 2021). These contextual factors shape the classroom dynamics teachers must navigate daily.

The effectiveness of classroom management directly influences educational outcomes. Research indicates that well-managed classrooms enhance student motivation, reduce disruptions, and improve academic performance (Razzaq, 2020). Conversely, poor management results in lost instructional time, teacher stress, and disengaged students, undermining Pakistan's educational goals (Malik, 2022). Despite its importance, classroom management in Pakistan remains understudied, particularly in rural settings where challenges are most pronounced. Existing literature often highlights issues like student misbehavior or resource shortages but rarely explores solutions such as teacher training or technology integration in depth (Razzaq, 2020).

This study focuses on classroom management effectiveness as the dependent variable, defined as a teacher's ability to maintain discipline, engage students, and achieve lesson objectives. The independent variables include problems in classroom management (e.g., student disruptions, inadequate training) and prospects (e.g., professional development, supportive policies). Teacher experience, measured by years of service, is also considered, as it may influence how teachers address challenges and leverage opportunities. By examining these variables in Sindh's public secondary schools, across both urban and rural contexts, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of classroom management dynamics. It seeks to fill gaps in the literature by addressing underexplored areas, such as rural challenges and scalable solutions, contributing to improved teaching practices and educational quality in Pakistan.

Problem statement

Effective classroom management is essential for fostering a productive learning environment in Pakistani secondary schools, yet teachers face persistent challenges that hinder their ability to achieve this goal. Student misbehavior, such as talking out of turn, defiance, or disengagement, disrupts lessons and undermines instructional flow in public schools. Overcrowded classrooms, particularly in rural areas, make it difficult for teachers to monitor students or implement interactive teaching methods. Limited access to resources, including textbooks, visual aids, and technology, restricts teachers' ability to engage students effectively, often leading to boredom and further disruptions. Additionally, many teachers lack formal training in modern classroom management techniques, relying instead on traditional, control-based approaches that may escalate conflicts. Low parental involvement exacerbates these issues, leaving teachers solely responsible for enforcing discipline without external support. Cultural and socioeconomic diversity among students introduces further complexities, as teachers struggle to address varied behavioral expectations and needs. These problems collectively create chaotic classroom environments, reducing teaching effectiveness and compromising educational quality in Sindh's public secondary schools. This study seeks to examine these challenges in depth and explore potential solutions to enhance classroom management practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopts qualitative approach using secondary data to analyse the questions in the study. Challenges like student misbehavior, overcrowded classrooms, and resource shortages hinder effective management, while opportunities such as professional development and technology integration offer solutions. The study examines how these factors and teacher experience influence management effectiveness, guided by Choice Theory's emphasis on student choice and relationships. The paper provides strategies to enhance teaching practices, benefiting teachers, administrators, and policymakers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature review

Concept of classroom

Classroom management encompasses the strategies teachers employ to create an orderly, productive learning environment conducive to achieving educational goals (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). It involves establishing rules, managing student behavior, and fostering engagement to ensure lessons proceed smoothly. In the context of Pakistan, where secondary schools often face challenges like large class sizes, classroom management is critical to maintaining instructional quality (Khan & Khan, 2019). Effective management requires balancing discipline with motivation, as teachers must address disruptions while encouraging participation. Marzano et al. (2003) argue that clear expectations and consistent enforcement of rules reduce chaos, a principle highly relevant to Pakistani classrooms where disruptions are common. This study focuses on classroom management as the ability to maintain order and achieve lesson objectives, forming the basis for examining its effectiveness.

The importance of classroom management extends beyond discipline to influence student outcomes. Research shows that well-managed classrooms correlate with higher academic achievement and better student attitudes (Razzaq, 2020). In Pakistan, cultural factors, such as respect for authority, shape how teachers implement management strategies, often relying on traditional methods like verbal reprimands (Ahmed, 2021). However, modern approaches, such as positive reinforcement, are gaining traction, suggesting a shift in practices. These approaches require teachers to adapt to diverse student needs, particularly in urban versus rural settings where classroom dynamics differ. Understanding these nuances is essential for identifying effective strategies in this study. The concept of classroom management thus serves as the dependent variable, measured by teachers' success in maintaining discipline and engagement.

Classroom management is not a one-size-fits-all practice; it varies by context and teacher skill level. In Pakistan, public schools often lack standardized guidelines, leaving teachers to develop their own methods (Malik, 2022). This variability can lead to inconsistent outcomes, as some teachers excel while others struggle with basic discipline. For instance, urban teachers may have access to better facilities, enabling interactive teaching, while rural teachers face resource constraints, limiting their options (Hussain, 2020). Such disparities highlight the need to explore context-specific challenges and solutions. The study will investigate how these factors influence management effectiveness, building on the concept's multifaceted nature.

Effective classroom management also involves proactive planning, such as designing engaging lessons to prevent misbehavior (Marzano et al., 2003). In Pakistan, where rote learning dominates, teachers often prioritize content delivery over engagement, leading to student disinterest (Khan, 2019). Proactive strategies, like group activities or real-world applications, can mitigate this issue, but their adoption is uneven. Teachers' ability to plan effectively depends on training and experience, which this study will examine. By defining classroom management as a dynamic process, the study aims to capture both its challenges and opportunities in the Pakistani context.

The role of teacher-student relationships is central to classroom management, as trust and rapport reduce conflicts (Glasser, 1998). In Pakistan, cultural norms encourage hierarchical relationships, which can inhibit open communication (Razzaq, 2020). Teachers who build positive relationships report fewer disruptions, suggesting that emotional connections enhance management. This aspect is particularly relevant in secondary schools, where adolescents seek autonomy, challenging traditional authority. The study will explore how such relationships contribute to effectiveness, emphasizing the human element of management.

Moreover, classroom management is influenced by external factors, such as school policies and parental involvement (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). In Pakistan, low parental engagement often leaves teachers solely responsible for discipline, increasing their workload (Malik, 2022). Supportive policies, like clear disciplinary frameworks, can alleviate this burden, but many schools lack such structures. This study will consider these external influences, defining classroom management as a system shaped by both internal (teacher actions) and external (school environment) factors, setting the stage for analyzing problems and prospects.

Problems of classroom management

Problems in classroom management are barriers that hinder teachers' ability to maintain order and deliver lessons effectively (Razzaq, 2020). Common issues include student misbehavior, such as talking or defiance, which disrupt instructional flow. In Pakistan, surveys indicate that 70% of secondary school teachers face daily disruptions, reducing teaching time by up to 30% (Malik, 2022). These behaviors stem from various causes, including lack of student motivation and overcrowded classrooms, particularly in public schools. This study identifies problems as a key independent variable, directly impacting classroom management effectiveness.

Overcrowding is a significant challenge in Pakistan, with class sizes often exceeding 50 students (Hussain, 2020). Large classes make it difficult for teachers to monitor behavior or provide individual attention, leading to chaos. Urban schools may have slightly better ratios, but rural schools frequently lack space and staff, exacerbating the issue (Ahmed, 2021). Overcrowding not only increases misbehavior but also strains teachers' energy, reducing their ability to implement creative strategies. This study will explore how class size contributes to management problems, focusing on both urban and rural contexts.

Lack of resources, such as textbooks, projectors, or seating, further complicates classroom management (Khan & Khan, 2019). In Pakistan, public schools often operate with outdated materials, limiting teachers' ability to engage students. For example, without visual aids, lessons may fail to capture attention, leading to boredom and disruptions (Razzaq, 2020). Resource scarcity

is more pronounced in rural areas, where electricity shortages hinder technology use. The study will examine how resource availability shapes management challenges, highlighting disparities across settings.

Inadequate teacher training is another critical problem, as many Pakistani teachers lack formal preparation in modern management techniques (Ahmed, 2021). Traditional training emphasizes content delivery over discipline strategies, leaving teachers ill-equipped for diverse classrooms. Novice teachers, in particular, struggle with establishing authority, resulting in frequent conflicts (Hussain, 2020). This gap in training underscores the need for professional development, which this study will address as both a problem and a potential prospect. The focus on training will reveal its role in overcoming management barriers.

Parental non-involvement adds to management woes, as teachers often lack support in addressing student behavior (Malik, 2022). In Pakistan, cultural factors and economic pressures reduce parental engagement, especially in rural areas where parents prioritize work over school involvement (Khan, 2019). Without parental reinforcement, teachers face an uphill battle in enforcing rules, as students may not value education. This study will investigate how external support, or its absence, affects classroom dynamics, emphasizing the broader context of management problems.

Lastly, cultural and social diversity among students poses challenges, as teachers must navigate varying expectations and behaviors (Razzaq, 2020). In Pakistan, secondary schools include students from different linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds, leading to misunderstandings or cliques (Razzaq, 2020). Teachers untrained in inclusive practices may struggle to unify the class, resulting in fragmented management efforts. This study will explore diversity as a problem, aiming to identify strategies that turn challenges into opportunities for effective management.

Prospects of classroom management

Prospects in classroom management are opportunities that enhance teachers' ability to create effective learning environments (Razzaq, 2020). These include professional development, technology integration, and supportive school policies, which empower teachers to address challenges. In Pakistan, where management issues are prevalent, prospects offer hope for improvement, particularly in public schools (Khan, 2019). This study treats prospects as an independent variable, examining their potential to boost classroom management effectiveness.

Professional development programs are a key prospect, equipping teachers with skills to handle disruptions and engage students (Razzaq, 2020). In Pakistan, workshops on behavior management have shown promise, reducing disruptions by up to 40% among trained teachers (Razzaq, 2020). However, access to training is uneven, with urban teachers benefiting more than rural ones (Ahmed, 2021). Expanding training opportunities could standardize management practices, a focus of this study's exploration of prospects.

Technology integration, such as interactive boards or online resources, enhances engagement and reduces misbehavior (Khan & Khan, 2019). In urban Pakistani schools, teachers using projectors report higher student interest, minimizing disruptions (Hussain, 2020). Yet, rural schools often lack electricity or devices, limiting technology's reach (Malik, 2022). This study will investigate how technology can be leveraged across contexts, identifying ways to bridge the urban-rural gap as a management prospect.

Supportive school policies, such as clear disciplinary guidelines or mentorship programs, strengthen teachers' management capabilities (Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). In Pakistan, schools with structured policies report fewer behavioral issues, as teachers feel supported (Razzaq, 2020). However, many public schools lack such frameworks, leaving teachers to improvise (Ahmed, 2021). This study will explore policy as a prospect, assessing its potential to create consistent management environments.

Peer mentoring, where experienced teachers guide novices, is an emerging prospect in Pakistan (Khan, 2019). Mentoring helps new teachers develop confidence and strategies, reducing classroom conflicts (Hussain, 2020). Programs are more common in urban schools, leaving rural teachers underserved (Malik, 2022). This study will examine mentoring's impact, considering how it can be scaled to enhance management effectiveness nationwide.

Also, building positive teacher-student relationships is a powerful prospect, as trust fosters cooperation (Glasser, 1998). In Pakistan, teachers who invest in rapport report fewer disruptions and higher engagement (Razzaq, 2020). Cultural barriers, like hierarchical norms, may hinder this approach, but training can help teachers overcome them (Khan & Khan, 2019). This study will highlight relationships as a prospect, exploring their role in transforming classroom management practices.

Theoretical framework

Choice Theory, proposed by William Glasser, asserts that all behavior is chosen to meet five basic needs: survival, love, power, freedom, and fun (Glasser, 1998). Its components include these needs, which drive student and teacher actions, and the concept of choice, where individuals select behaviors to fulfill them. The principle is that teachers can guide students to make positive choices by creating supportive environments. The scope applies to classrooms, emphasizing relationships over control, ideal for fostering engagement in Pakistani schools.

In Pakistan, where hierarchical norms dominate, Choice Theory suggests that authoritarian management may fail to meet students' need for freedom, leading to rebellion (Khan & Khan, 2019). Teachers who offer choices, like selecting group roles, satisfy this need, reducing disruptions (Razzaq, 2020). This approach contrasts with traditional methods, offering a prospect for modernizing management, which this study will explore. The theory's focus on choice aligns with addressing student disinterest, a key problem.

Choice Theory emphasizes teacher-student relationships as a management tool (Glasser, 1998). In Pakistan, teachers who build trust report fewer conflicts, as students feel valued (Hussain, 2020). Rural schools, where community ties are strong, may benefit most from this approach, unlike urban settings with more transient populations (Malik, 2022). The study will investigate how relationships enhance effectiveness, testing the theory's applicability across contexts.

The theory also applies to prospects like training, as teachers must learn to facilitate choices effectively (Razzaq, 2020). In Pakistan, workshops on relational strategies are rare, leaving teachers reliant on control tactics (Ahmed, 2021). Training programs inspired by Choice Theory could empower teachers to meet students' needs, a prospect this study will evaluate. The theory's emphasis on empowerment aligns with improving management outcomes.

A limitation is that Choice Theory requires time to build relationships, challenging in large Pakistani classes (Khan, 2019). Teachers under pressure to cover curricula may prioritize content over rapport, reducing the theory's impact (Razzaq, 2020). This study will explore whether time constraints limit relational strategies, seeking practical ways to implement the theory. Its focus on internal motivation complements Behaviorist Theory's external focus, offering a balanced framework. Choice Theory is relevant, as it supports prospects like positive relationships and training to enhance classroom management. By examining how teachers foster student choices in Pakistan, the study will assess the theory's role in overcoming problems (e.g., disengagement) and leveraging opportunities to create effective classrooms, aligning with the study's objectives.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of classroom management dynamics in Sindh's public secondary schools by examining problems, prospects, and the role of teacher experience. By addressing underexplored areas, such as rural challenges and scalable solutions, it seeks to contribute to improved teaching practices and educational quality in Pakistan.

Suggestion

To address the challenges and leverage opportunities in classroom management among secondary school teachers in Sindh, Pakistan, the following strategies are recommended:

1. Implementing mandatory, regular workshops on modern classroom management techniques, focusing on behavior management and inclusive practices, with priority access for rural teachers to address training disparities.
2. Equip schools with affordable technology, such as projectors and tablets, and ensure reliable electricity in rural areas to facilitate interactive lessons that reduce student disengagement.
3. Increase teacher recruitment and optimize resource allocation to reduce class sizes, particularly in rural schools, enabling better student monitoring and engagement.
4. Establish standardized disciplinary guidelines and formal peer mentoring programs across schools to provide consistent support for teachers, enhancing management capabilities.
5. Launch community-based initiatives, such as parent-teacher meetings and awareness campaigns, to increase parental involvement, reinforcing discipline and fostering a shared commitment to education.

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