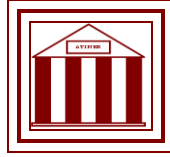


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**Classroom Management Strategies
Preferred by Teachers in the
Classroom**

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Classroom Management Strategies Preferred by Teachers in the Classroom

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Abstract

The idea of changing negative behaviors through their correction in addition to the idea of acquiring positive behaviors constitutes the foundations of education. The teacher has to be assuming the roles of both teaching and managing in the classroom with harmony. The means for the teacher being able to assume the role of teaching successfully is active classroom management. This study aims to determine the classroom management strategies preferred by teachers in Turkey. The universe of this study conducted in the spring semester of the 2012-2013 academic year consists of the public and private schools in the province of Ankara. Teachers and students of different socio-cultural backgrounds at public and private schools and in various grades participated in the study. The form consisting of open ended questions was utilized as the data collection instrument in the study. The study data were collected from a total of 268 students and 196 primary school teachers. According to data obtained in the study, it was ascertained that teachers preferred developmental, precautionary, and holistic approaches in classroom management, they acknowledged students to be individuals, they took the interests, needs, and expectations of students into consideration, and they attempted to include students in the process. In line with revealed findings, the recommendations have been developed for the development of classroom management strategies, placing students in the center of the teaching-learning process, and students being more effective in the process.

Keywords: Classroom management, classroom management strategies, primary school teachers.

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Introduction

Teaching is a profession that requires knowledge and skills in addition to attitude and behavior. On the one hand while the teacher is executing the teaching activities on the other hand, s/he influences the students with his/her behavior. The teacher acting in a sincere, understanding, and patient manner directs students to think positively and contrary actions have negative impacts on students.

Creating quality education and teaching environments can be dependent on effective school and classroom management and effective school and classroom management can be dependent on the classroom management skills of the teacher. Thus, the quality of education is largely dependent on the quality of classroom management (Harris, 1991; Demirel, 2005; Şentürk, & Oral, 2008).

Classroom management can be defined as all activities for having the classroom become an environment suitable for education by ensuring the interaction of the teacher, student, program, content, time, space, technology, and method (Saritaş, 2000: 48). In another approach, classroom management is the development of a positive learning atmosphere through the determination of classroom rules, ensuring a suitable classroom order, the effective management of teaching and time, and supervising student behavior (Çelik, 2002: 2).

Jeans (1995) emphasized that the attitudes and behaviors of teachers had a significant effect on students. The powerful impact of the teacher on the students and thus the individual and society is the result of the teacher being the person that plans, implements, and assesses education, which is a process of interaction. The teacher is the most influential element of classroom management. As an effective class manager, the teacher is expected to prepare the classroom for education, have the classroom rules determined and adopted by students, arranging and continuing education, and have students develop relevant behaviors (Ağaoğlu, 2002).

According to Harris (1991) in an effectively managed classroom the level of students being interested in their tasks is high, the level of disrupting behaviors is low, and the level of utilizing time in line with purpose is high (Cited by: Başar, 1994: 18). The teacher is responsible for the arrangement and execution of education processes required for effective classroom management. According to Clark et al (1984) the fundamental factors ensuring effective teaching in schools are the teacher and student. Physical means such as the size of class and education and teaching strategies are second degree factors in the performance of effective teaching (Cited by: Balcı, 1993:30).

One of the important variables of effective classroom management is actions of the teacher. In other words, the effective teacher is not only the teacher that knows how teaching shall be conducted or how problems encountered during teaching shall be overcome, but also the teacher that can decide on which of the things s/he knows to apply and when to apply this. Adequate teachers are teachers that are organized, speak properly, and can use

various instruments and tools and implement methods. Effectiveness is a function of the things the teacher and students do. The needs of the teacher and students and the requirements of the task to be performed have a role in effectiveness. Effectiveness is not a quality introduced into the setting but the things done to overcome the setting (Açıkgöz, 2003).

Teachers that do not have effective classroom management skills can be ineffective in the learning and teaching process and good classroom management and organization skills can save teachers from many difficulties they may encounter. Students being able to acquire educational experiences depend on the successful management of the classroom (Başar, 2004) and the success of management in the classroom directly depends on the teacher (Yılmaz, 2008).

Even if teachers have many qualities potentially considered important in the classroom, in case they are unable to maintain order in the classroom, students shall learn very little. This reveals the connection between teaching and management (Edwards, 1993; Lewis, 2001). The observation in studies investigating the relation between classroom management and student achievement that student achievement increases in well managed classrooms and absence of behavior preventing educational objectives in well managed classrooms supports this view (Evertson and Emmer, 1982; Veenman, 1984; Evertson and Harris, 1992; Tulley and Chiu, 1995; Veenman and Raemakers, 1995; Merrett and Wheldall, 1988). Demirel (1999, 188) emphasizes the importance of the discipline roles of teachers that have the need for establishing and maintaining order in teaching-learning activities in the classroom. This is because in classrooms with frequent undesired student behaviors, classroom order is interrupted frequently and teachers have to spend most of their time controlling these behaviors rather than teaching. Studies conducted regarding this matter, reach the conclusions that the problems encountered by teachers in classroom management are mainly concerning overcoming unwanted behaviors (Zuckerman, 2000; Glickman and Tamashiro, 1980) and that teachers spare more time for managing unwanted behaviors rather than the management of academic behaviors and these conclusions support this view (Merrett, and Wheldall, 1984, 1988; Rosen, Taylor, O' Leary and Sanderson; 1990; Özyürek, 1996).

There are various approaches in the literature on classroom management such as seven approaches of Wragg (1993) consisting of authoritarian, permissive, behavior modification, interpersonal relations, scientific, social systems, and folklore, the three approaches of Levin, & Nolan (1991) consisting of interventionist, non-interventionist, and interactionist, and Başar's (2004) reactive, precautionary, developmental, and holistic approaches. Among these approaches, in the "traditional approach" classroom rules are pointed out and the students are expected to comply with the rules determined by the teacher without questioning them. In the "Reactive approach" the teacher reacts to unwanted behaviors of students. In the "Precautionary Approach" the power of anticipation and planning and knowledge and skills of the teacher are emphasized and preventing unwanted circumstances or

behaviors before they occur is highlighted (Başar, 2004). According to Çelik (2003) in the “developmental approach” when teaching activities are being arranged and implemented, the consideration of the development phases of students and their preparedness for these applications are aimed. The “Holistic approach” focuses on the competency of the teacher for utilizing all classroom management methods (Girmen, Anılan, Şentürk, & Öztürk, 2006). Knowing these approaches shall guide teachers in achieving effective classroom management.

Today approaches that are authoritarian and based on controlling the student are losing their significance gradually and the significance of precautionary management models enabling the individual to control him/herself have started to increase. Teachers, administrators, and professional establishments concerned with education are abandoning old disciplinary approaches and discipline methods such as positive discipline and entrepreneur discipline are based on the idea that the individual is a social being that can guide and manage him/herself, think, feel, and solve problems when provided the opportunity (Kameenui and Darch, 1995).

Kırkkaya (2006) has determined that the level of awareness of teachers on the objectives of school, the level of knowing and implementing utilized methods and techniques during teaching, the level of sound, lighting, heating, and ventilation of the classroom, the number of students of the classroom, level of cleanness of the classroom, the predetermination of classroom rules, and the structure of classroom rules are the educational factors that affect the effectiveness of the teacher the most.

In the study of Korkmaz (2007), in which the teaching-learning processes and the behavior of teachers in the classroom were evaluated according to views of teachers and 6-8th grade students, the perception of teachers and opinions of students on the current status of in-class practices influencing education-teaching were compared. As a result of the study, it was revealed that teachers considered themselves more positively in comparison to the evaluation of students with regards to classroom management skills.

Classrooms, in which the academic sufficiency and self confidence of all students increase, these students demonstrate terminal social behavior, and gradually become independent, are considered to be successfully managed classrooms (Long, 1999). Studies conducted on effective classroom management reveal that every successful change to be conducted at school are related to the skills and talent of the teacher and suggest that the most important role of teachers are to create positive and supporting environments based on well organized and planned classroom management. Learning appears to be at the best level in classrooms, where students acquire new knowledge, are valuable members of the classroom, and feel free to take risks (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Fitzgerald and Bass, 1997: Cited by: Norris, 2003).

With effective classroom management, the formation of a organized and reliable learning environment that will increase student motivation (Karip; 2002: 2), developing the awareness of responsibility in students and learning to arrange their behavior, continuing positive behavior, and changing negative

behavior have been set as objectives (Çelik; 2002: 6). The effective teacher is expected to identify unwanted behaviors in the classroom in a correct and sound manner and eliminate and change these behaviors through suitable strategies (Aydın; 2000). As there is no strategy valid under every condition for effective classroom management, teachers prefer different strategies in classroom management.

Purpose of the Study

The determination of classroom management strategies preferred by teachers in primary schools in Turkey has been aimed with this study. Under the scope of this study, answers have been sought for the following questions.

1. Which strategies do primary school teachers utilize effectively in classroom management?
2. Which classroom management approach do primary school teachers prefer?
3. What do primary school teachers take into consideration when determining classroom management strategies?
4. At which level do primary school teachers consider themselves to be effective in classroom management?
5. What do primary school teachers believe that they have to do in order to develop themselves in terms of classroom management?

Method

Model of the Study

As the objective in this descriptive study aiming to determine the classroom management strategies preferred by primary school teachers in Turkey is to assert the existing circumstance as it is, the survey model was employed.

Population and Sample

The population of this study conducted in the spring semester of the 2012-2013 academic year consists of public and private primary schools in the province of Ankara. The sample of the study consists of 186 teachers teaching in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades of public and private schools with various socio-cultural properties. In the sample selection, the convenience sampling method model was utilized. The data of the study were collected from a total of ten schools consisting of one public and one private school from each of the five different districts in the province of Ankara with different socio-cultural properties. The study was conducted with teachers that could provide contributions in line with the purpose of the study based on voluntariness.

The distribution of teachers participating in the study according to their grade level has been provided in Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution of teachers according to their grades*

Grade	f	%
1 st Class	52	27.96
2 nd Class	38	20.43
3 rd Class	47	25.27
4 th Class	49	26.34
Total	186	100

As it can be observed in Table 1, a total of 186 teachers have participated in the study consisting of 52 from the 1st grade, 38 from the 2nd grade, 47 from the 3rd grade, and 49 from the 4th grade. The distribution of teachers participating in the study according to their graduation status has been provided in Table 2.

Table 2. *Distribution of teachers according to their graduation status*

Graduation Status	f	%
Department of Primary School Teaching	98	52.69
Other teaching Departments	46	24.73
Non-Teaching departments	42	22.58
Total	186	100

According to Table 2, it can be observed that nearly half of the teachers participating in the study are graduates of the primary school teaching department and rates of teachers graduating from other teaching departments and non-teaching departments are close to each other. Distribution of teachers participating in the study according to gender has been provided in Table 3.

Table 3. *Distribution of teachers according to gender*

Gender	f	%
Female	145	77.96
Male	41	22.04
Total	186	100

As it can be observed in Table 3, it can be said that the amount of female teachers participating in the study is nearly three times more than the number of male teachers participating in the study.

Data Collection Instruments and Analysis of Data

The form developed by researchers consisting of a questionnaire and open ended questions was utilized as a data collection instrument in the study. The data collected from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade primary school teachers under the scope of the study were presented as tables by examining their percentages and frequencies.

Questions in the forms applied to teachers:

- 1) Mark the option you consider to be suitable among the statements below with regards to your classroom management approach.
- 2) As a teacher, which one of the following approaches do you employ in classroom management? (Put them in order as 1-2-3... starting from the one you employ most)
- 3) When determining your classroom management strategies, what do you take into consideration? (Please write down at least three.)
- 4) At which level do you consider yourself effective as a teacher in classroom management?
- 5) What should teachers do in order to develop themselves in classroom management? Please write them down.

Findings and Interpretations

In this section of the study there are study findings and interpretations. Data collected from primary school teachers under the scope of the study have been grouped and presented in the form of tables. The distribution of views of teachers concerning classroom management approaches has been presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Distribution of views of teachers on classroom management approaches*

No	Statements	Yes		Partially		no	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	As the teacher, I determine the rules that need to be complied with in the classroom.	65	34.94	98	52.69	23	12.37
2	I instantly try to find solutions for problems I encounter in the classroom.	141	75.81	27	14.51	18	9.68
3	I try to keep all students in the classroom under control.	133	71.51	39	20.96	14	7.53
4	I do not permit attitudes and behaviors that will have an adverse impact on the flow of the lesson in the classroom.	148	79.57	26	13.98	12	6.45
5	I emphasize discipline and authority in classroom management.	106	56.99	63	33.87	17	9.14
6	Students should fulfill the roles and responsibilities they assume.	154	82.80	24	12.90	8	4.30
7	I believe that each student is different as an individual.	175	94.09	11	5.91	-	-
8	I take the interests, needs, and expectations of students into consideration.	172	92.47	14	7.53	-	-

9	As a teacher, I determine classroom management strategies as I wish.	34	18.28	103	55.38	49	26.34
10	As a teacher, I emphasize including students in the process.	169	90.86	17	9.14	-	-
11	It is necessary to be an effective teacher for effective classroom management.	151	81.19	24	12.90	11	5.91
12	Permanente and effective learning can be ensured through effective classroom management	133	71.51	41	22.04	12	6.45
13	I punish students that do not comply with classroom rules.	17	9.14	126	67.74	43	23.12
14	I demonstrate democratic attitudes and behavior in the classroom.	158	84.95	28	15.05	-	-
15	I take precautionary measures in the classroom against unwanted behavior.	162	87.10	24	12.90	-	-

When the data in Table 4 are examined, nearly half of the teachers have stated that they partially determined rules that need to be complied with in the classroom, they emphasized discipline and authority and a large majority of them stated that they attempted to immediately solve problems they encountered in the classroom. They attempted to take all students in the classroom under control, students needed to fulfill the role and responsibility they have undertaken, they did not permit behavior that adversely affected the flow of the lesson in the classroom, they emphasized including students in the process, they demonstrated democratic attitude and behavior in the classroom, and they took precautions to prevent unwanted behavior in the classroom.

Interesting data have been obtained among the findings of the study. For instance, according to the views of teachers participating in the study there are no teachers that consider students to be different as individuals, do not take the interests, needs, and skills of students into consideration, do not include students in the process, do not demonstrate democratic attitudes and behavior in the classroom, and do not take precautions preventing unwanted behavior. These data obtained in the study indicates that teachers emphasize the responsibilities of students and taking precautionary measures.

On the other hand, a large majority of teachers state that it is necessary to be an effective teacher for effective classroom management and permanent and effective learning can be ensured through effective classroom management. Even if teachers have many qualities potentially considered important in the classroom, in case they are unable to maintain order in the classroom, students shall learn very little. This reveals the interdependence of teaching and management (Edwards, 1993; Lewis, 2001). The observation in studies investigating the relation between classroom management and student achievement that student achievement increases in well managed classrooms and absence of behavior preventing educational objectives in well managed classrooms supports this view (Evertson and Emmer, 1982; Veenman, 1984;

Evertson and Harris, 1992; Tulley and Chiu, 1995; Veenman and Raemakers, 1995; Merreet and Wheldall, 1988).

The effective teacher is expected to identify unwanted behaviors in the classroom in a correct and sound manner and eliminate and change these behaviors through suitable strategies (Aydın; 2000). As there is no strategy that applies under every condition for effective classroom management, teachers prefer different strategies in classroom management. The distribution of approaches employed by teachers in classroom management according to order of priority has been provided in Table 5.

Table 5. *Distribution of Approaches employed by Teachers in Classroom Management according to Order of Priority*

Approaches	1.		2.		3.		4.		5.	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Developmental	82	44.09	87	46.77	29	15.59	8	4.30	6	3.23
Scientific	21	11.29	49	26.34	74	39.78	16	8.60	13	6.99
Precautionary	53	28.49	23	12.37	52	27.96	21	11.29	7	3.76
Reactive	14	7.53	19	10.22	17	9.14	118	63.44	26	13.98
Traditional	16	8.60	8	4.30	14	7.53	23	12.37	134	72.04

According to the data in Table 5, the approach primarily preferred by nearly half of teachers participating in the study is the developmental approach and it can be observed that the least consulted classroom management approach in the first stage is the reactive and traditional approaches. Based on the data obtained in the study, it can be said that in classroom management teachers primarily behaved according to the developmental, precautionary, and holistic approaches and they rarely preferred the reactive and traditional approaches.

Today approaches that are authoritarian and based on controlling the student are losing their significance gradually and the significance of precautionary management models enabling the individual to control him/herself have started to increase. Data obtained in the study support this information.

Depending on the classroom management approaches preferred by teachers in the classroom, the elements they take into consideration in classroom management can also change. The distribution of the views of teachers on what they take into consideration in classroom management has been provided in Table 6.

Table 6. *Distribution of views of teachers on what elements they take into consideration in classroom management*

No	Views	f
1	Development characteristics of students	118
2	Interests, needs, and expectations of students	106
3	Level of readiness of students	93
4	Attainments that need to be acquired by students	86
5	Rules that need to be complied with in the classroom	72
6	Problems in the classroom resulting from students	61
7	The implemented curriculum	54
8	Expectations of the family	46
9	Treating students fairly and equally	32
10	Social circles of students	21
11	Expectations of the school administration	13
12	Physical conditions of the classroom environment	7

According to the data in Table 6, teachers participating in the study have stated that in classroom management they take into consideration the development characteristics of students, interests, needs, and expectations of students, level of readiness of students, and the attainments that need to be acquired by students the most. Furthermore, it was also stated that in classroom management teachers take social circles of students, expectations of the school administration, and the physical conditions of the classroom environment into consideration the least.

This data obtained in the study overlap with the classroom management approaches preferred primarily by teachers in classroom management. It was determined that teachers prefer developmental, precautionary, and holistic approach the most in classroom management. On the other hand, the teachers taking into consideration the development characteristics of students, their interests, needs, and expectations and levels of readiness overlap with the classroom management approaches preferred by teachers.

As stated by Saritaş (2000: 48), classroom management covers all activities for converting the classroom into an environment suitable for learning through an interaction between the teacher, student, program, content, time, space, technology, and method. When elements taken into consideration in classroom management by teachers participating in the study are examined, it can be observed that the components of classroom management considered to be important have been stated.

According to Clark et al (1984), the basic factors ensuring effective teaching at school are the teacher and student. Physical means such as the size of the classroom, education and teaching strategies are the second degree factors in the realization of effective teaching (Cited by: Balcı, 1993:30). It can be said that the data obtained in the study are in line with this view.

The distribution of the level which teachers consider themselves effective in classroom management has been provided in Table 7.

Table 7. *The distribution of the level which teachers consider themselves effective in classroom management*

Level of Considering him/herself effective	f	%
Very effective	128	68.82
Partially effective	45	24.19
Not effective	13	6.99

As it can be observed in Table 7, a large majority of teachers participating in the study consider themselves to be effective with regards to classroom management. The distribution of why teachers consider themselves to be effective regarding classroom management has been provided in Table 8.

Table 8. *Distribution of why teachers consider themselves to be effective regarding classroom management*

No	Views	f
1	Student centered behavior	123
2	Establishing effective communication with students	116
3	Solving problems encountered in the classroom	108
4	Receiving feedback from students	97
5	Emphasizing effective and permanent learning	82
6	Determining classroom rules with students	79
7	Demonstrating democratic attitudes and behavior	64
8	Being tolerant and understanding	58
9	Teaching with relevance to attainments	43
10	Approaching students with affection	36
11	Being an experienced teacher	24
12	Developing the physical characteristics of the classroom	16
13	Taking the social circle into consideration	9

When Table 8 is examined, teachers participating in the study consider themselves to be effective the most regarding student centered behavior, establishing effective communication with students, and solving problems encountered in the classroom. On the other hand, the factors that teachers consider to be least influential in effective classroom management are developing the physical properties of the classroom and taking the social environment into consideration.

It can be observed that the properties specified by teachers participating in the study regarding the reasons why they considered themselves to be effective in classroom management are in line with the factors they took into consideration and the approaches they preferred in classroom management. In other words, it can be said that the statements expressed by teachers are consistent.

The distribution of the views of teachers on what they can do to improve themselves regarding classroom management has been provided in Table 9.

Table 9. *The distribution of the views of teachers on what they can do to improve themselves regarding classroom management*

No	Views	f
1	Participation in in-service training activities	112
2	Getting to know students well	107
3	Keeping closely up-to-date with current affairs	102
4	Reading sources and documents regarding the profession	98
5	Emphasizing professional sharing	94
6	Utilizing student centered techniques and methods	86
7	Acquiring knowledge on child development	73
8	Being investigative	67
9	Developing research skills	52
10	Enhancing professional motivation	48
11	Cooperating with families	33
12	Cooperating with universities	21
13	Increasing financial means	15
14	Participating in social and cultural activities	8

When Table 9 is examined, teachers participating in the study stated participating in in-service training, getting to know students well, Keeping closely up-to-date with current affairs, reading sources and documents regarding the profession, and emphasizing professional sharing the most in order to develop themselves regarding classroom management. When properties stated by teachers in order to improve themselves regarding classroom management are examined, it can be observed that properties such as observation, being investigative, keeping up-to-date with current affairs, emphasizing cooperation and sharing are prominent.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusions obtained as a result of this study aiming to determine the classroom management strategies preferred by primary school teachers in Turkey are as follows:

It was revealed that nearly half of the teachers determined the rules that needed to be complied with in the classroom themselves, they emphasized discipline and authority, a large majority of them attempted to solve problems encountered in the classroom instantly, attempted to keep all students in the classroom under control, believed that students should fulfill the responsibility and roles they have assumed, did not permit behavior and attitudes in the classroom that affected the flow of the lesson adversely in the classroom, emphasized including students in the process, demonstrated democratic attitudes and behavior in the classroom, and took measures preventing the formation of unwanted behavior in the classroom.

It was determined that teachers primarily preferred to act according to the developmental, precautionary, and holistic approaches in classroom management and rarely preferred the reactive and traditional approach.

The teachers participating in the study stated that they mostly took into consideration the development characteristics of students, interests, needs, and expectations of students, level of readiness of students, and the attainments that need to be acquired by students. Furthermore, teachers have stated that in classroom management they least took into consideration the social circles of students, expectations of the school administration, and the physical conditions of the classroom environment. A large majority of teachers consider themselves to be effective in classroom management. Teachers consider themselves to be most effective in the fields of student centered behavior, establishing effective communication with students, and solving problems encountered in the classroom and they considered themselves to be least effective in developing the physical properties of the classroom and taking the social environment into consideration.

In order to improve themselves with regards to classroom management, teachers participating in the study have stated characteristics such as participation in in-service training, getting to know students well, keeping closely up-to-date with current affairs, reading sources and documents related to the profession, and emphasizing professional sharing the most.

In line with these results, the following recommendations have been put forward:

- 1) An internet based medium could be formed that enables teachers to perform more sharing with regards to effective classroom management.
- 2) By awarding teachers successful in effective classroom management improvement of classroom management skills could be encouraged.
- 3) Teachers should know characteristics of students very well and should behave in a manner relevant to their characteristics in classroom management.
- 4) Rules that need to be complied with in the classroom should be determined with the active participation of students and common solutions should be developed for problems encountered in the classroom.
- 5) Teachers should constantly improve themselves with regards to effective classroom management.
- 6) With regards to classroom management, traditional approaches should be abandoned and developmental, holistic, and democratic approaches should be preferred.

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