



# Self-Efficacy of Teachers in Managing Inclusive Classroom Behavior: An Analysis

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## Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author SS edited the article. Author PK designed the study and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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## ABSTRACT

Classroom management, a plagues aspect of the teaching-learning process over the past century is the single skill that has contributed to self-efficacy of teachers and achievement of students. Self-efficacy, standing at the core of social cognitive theory has contributed in teachers' ability to achieve desired outcome in the classroom. In the present study, an attempt has been made to analyze the relationship between classroom behavior management and self-efficacy of teachers and to identify the strategies for effective classroom behavior management from the literature. The relationship between teachers' classroom behavior management and self-efficacy beliefs is cyclic. Teachers with higher self-efficacy are more prone to use effective strategies resulting more student achievement which in turn causes higher self-efficacy of teachers. Identifying behavioral demands of the mainstreamed classroom, school wide discipline, peer- relationship establishment, affective education strategies, problem solving approach, self-management intervention, promoting positive behavior and decreasing inappropriate behavior are some of the effective strategies found in the literature which have effective implications in teacher education program which are still lacking in the revamped teacher education curriculum in our country and most importantly, teachers are to be trained in selecting and implementing respective strategies according to the situational demand and the individual needs of the students.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy; behavior management strategies; inclusive classroom.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom management, an ongoing and long-term concern of teachers and a plaguing aspect of the teaching- learning process over the past century, is a broad umbrella term describing a teacher's efforts to oversee classroom activities such as learning, social interaction and student behavior [1]. This single skill has significantly contributed to overall teacher self-efficacy [2], student achievement and teacher performance in classrooms [3,4].

The biggest concern for teachers and the school system in managing a classroom is controlling student behaviors. There are many reasons behind this concern. The valuable instructional time loose when teachers struggle for dealing students' with inappropriate behaviors [5]. When discipline issues are not handled properly, all students in the classroom suffer. The challenge for many teachers is to manage classroom behavior in an effective way when disruptive behaviors of students increase in frequency, duration, and intensity [6]. One of the most serious concerns for teachers is establishing discipline in their classrooms because of the impact of disruptive behavior on instruction and learning [6]. It has been found in the reality that some teachers resort to yelling at misbehaving students [6]. School administrators are highly acquainted with the fact that the majority of behavioral referrals come from classrooms where the teachers are ineffective in classroom management. Another major aspect of concern is the distrust of parents in the mainstream education system which leads them to keep their children with special needs at home for fear of their abuse or neglect in the classroom, which are often interpreted as a lack of community interest in education for their children [7].

Towler [8] found that no variable influences student achievement more positively than effective classroom management. Learning to employ behavior management strategy more efficaciously results in better student achievement [9]. Recent researches have confirmed that self-efficacy is a determining factor in teacher performance and affects teachers' ability to achieve desired outcomes in the classroom, including classroom management ability [10,11]. If the teachers' belief reflects his capability to manage his classroom and conduct meaningful lessons, he will be more likely to do just that [12]. In this connection the researchers [13,14] have repeatedly recognized teachers'

high level of self efficacy as an important factor for successful implementation of classroom behavior management.

Self-efficacy is standing at the core of social cognitive theory [15,16,17] and is defined as peoples' beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives [17]. The Social Cognitive Theory consists of four processes of goal realization i.e., self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reaction and self-efficacy [18]. These four components are interrelated and effect on motivation and goal attainment [18]. This theory views that learning occurs in a social context with dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behavior. He used the concept of reciprocal determinism to explain that each of these three factors influences and is also influenced by the others. It indicates that the personal factors in the cognitive, affective and biological forms should not be ignored when investigating human behavior [19]. Self-efficacy is often divided into two categories: general teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy. General teaching efficacy refers to the beliefs that a teacher held, concerning the power of external factors such as home environment, violence or abuse have in comparison to the influences that teachers and schools have on student learning [20]. Personal teaching efficacy refers to the degree to which teachers believe that they have adequate training or experience to develop strategies to overcome obstacles to student learning [20]. These two constructs work together to comprise the subject of self-efficacy.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to analyze the relationship between classroom behavior management and self-efficacy of teachers and to identify the strategies for effective classroom behavior management from the existing literature.

## 2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLASS ROOM BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT& SELF-EFFICACY OF TEACHERS

The relationship between teachers' classroom management and self-efficacy beliefs may reflect the ways in which an individual's expectation for success impact classroom management behavior. This relationship is likely cyclical, such that classroom management behavior likely affects one's beliefs on his or her self-efficacy [21]. Sharon [22] indicated that the teachers of

high self-efficacy scored higher levels in controlling beliefs about classroom management than those teachers who had low self-efficacy levels. Henson [21] indicated that more efficacious teachers use positive strategies for classroom management. Woolfolk & Hoy [23] argued that prospective teachers' beliefs about student control would impact how they facilitated their classroom. They found that teachers with high efficacy were more humanistic in how they viewed students and held a lower student control ideology. Main & Hammond [24] conducted a study to investigate the pre-service teachers' beliefs about effective behaviour management strategies and reported self-efficacy. They found that respondents who reported high levels of self-efficacy in behavior reported frequent use of effective strategies in classroom management behavior. Gibson & Dembo [25] conducted an observational study to investigate the differences in classroom management between high and low efficacy teachers and reported that low efficacious teachers easily gave up when students face difficulty to answer questions quickly and criticize students for their failure. Conversely, highly efficacious teachers spent more time on academic activities, and go on to guide unsuccessful students and still encouraging. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to divide a class for small group instruction as opposed to instructing the class as a whole and are more likely to declare regular education as the appropriate placement for students having learning problems or behavior problems or both [26].

Despite research over the last century that shows classroom management as being a monumental problem for novice teachers, historically teacher education programs have failed to provide a well-conceptualized practical approach to classroom management (Burden, 1983; [27]. Mac Suga and Simonsen [28] explained that teachers need a wide variety of strategies to manage behaviors in the classroom. Because teachers receive very little formal training in classroom management techniques, their practices in real classroom situation are based upon their past experiences and personal characteristics Etheridge [6]. Potential gaps in the area of classroom management that continue to exist between teacher preparation and teacher practices, leads to a question about which components or strategies in pre-service teacher education programs might be needed to focus to close this gap. Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering [29] pointed out that the study of

effective classroom management has been a recent development in the educational research world. Kounin's findings included critical dimensions of classroom management that included (a) "with-it-ness," (b) appropriate pacing during lessons, (c) making students aware of the behavior expectations, and (d) differentiation in the seatwork. Teachers must constantly decide whether they should tackle disruptive behaviors in the form of disciplinary actions or choose to try to teach their students [6].

## **2.1 Strategies for Classroom Behavior Management**

### **2.1.1 Behavioral demands of mainstreamed classroom**

A student's behavior is considered more important than academic performance in determining his success in a mainstreamed setting (Wilkes, Birele and Schultz, 1979). Salend [30] found that teachers in his survey identified 17 behavioral skills in elementary level and 29 behavioral skills for secondary level to be developed in students for success in a mainstream classroom. Salend and Lutz [31] surveyed elementary-level teachers to successfully identifying behavioral skills in social skill area such as demonstrating adequate attention span, engaging in nonaggressive behavior, demonstrating pro social behaviors etc. are important for success in the social skill area. Definitely, the focus of these studies leads teachers for successfully identifying the behavioral expectations from the students in their classroom.

### **2.1.2 School wide discipline**

Teachers may start the school year with the creation of discipline policies that they can follow consistently over the year, build relationships with students and decide on the individual needs of students [32]. The teachers who are proactive in setting up rules and procedures are found to be less likely to experience severe behavioral concerns in their classrooms [33]. There has been an increasing trend over the last decade in United States to implement school-wide discipline systems for the schools.

## **2.2 Affective Education Strategies**

Appropriate classroom behavior also can be promoted by the use of affective education

strategies, which help students to gain insights into their feelings, attitudes and values [34]. These strategies are supportive to enhance students' emotional, social and behavioral development through enhancing their self-esteem and ability to be engaged in positive emotional expressions [35].

Values clarification strategy views inappropriate classroom behavior as a function of confused values. Thus, value clarification activities, integrated throughout the curriculum, teachers can help students to examine their own values and how they affect their behavior. Then the teachers can take role in clarifying responses. Life space interviewing is another strategy where the teachers talk empathetically with students who are experiencing school-related problems [36]. It may take the form of either or both emotional first aid and clinical exploitation of life events. In addition to these strategies, humor also can help to defuse a difficult classroom situation, help students to view a situation from another perspective and decrease the likelihood of conflicts [37]; (Meier, 1992). Rand (2012) outlined the importance of meeting the students' need for love and belonging. He explained that this need is particularly important when dealing with students who have challenging behaviors and poor social skills. Such students are often become easy for teachers and other students to be pushed away and avoided. These students need as much positive attention as possible because such students are hungry for positive relationships with all the stakeholders of their classroom (Rand, 2012).

### **2.3 Peer Relationship**

A major goal of mainstreaming is the social integration of students who need to be taught appropriate behavior for establishing and maintaining positive peer relationships. Many students with emotional and behavior problems may exhibit behaviors that result in social rejection from their non-disabled peers [38]. Crowe [39] noted that teachers should look at students' relationship building skills in an effort to help the students to improve their social skills and peer relationships.

#### **2.3.1 Problem solving**

For learning appropriate social skills problem solving approach is beneficial for students. Vaughn, McIntosh and Spencer-Rowe [40] developed a learning strategy entitled FAST i.e.,

Freeze and Think, Alternatives, Solution and Try to teach students interpersonal problem-solving skills. Crank [41] also developed a list of questions for teachers to evaluate problem-solving solutions.

### **2.4 Self-Management Interventions**

Self-management intervention strategies are helpful for developing within students the procedure for monitoring and controlling their behavior. These strategies can be used unobtrusively in a variety of settings to encourage development of appropriate behavior and promote independence [42]. Self-recording technique has been successful in modifying a variety of classroom behaviors such as aggression towards others, staying seated etc [42]. Because the effects of self-recording can last for a short time duration, educators should consider using self-reinforcement strategy [43] where the student is taught to evaluate his behavior and then deliver reinforcement if it is appropriate. One system to combine the elements of self-recording and self-reinforcement is self-managed free- token response-cost that has been successfully employed by mainstreamed students in regular classrooms [44]. In this technique, each time an inappropriate behavior occurs, student crosses out one of the symbols on the index card provided by his teacher. If any of the symbols remain at the end of the class time, the student receives the agreed upon reinforcement. In self-evaluation, students are taught to evaluate their in-class behavior using a rating scale and earn points which they can exchange for reinforcers based on both their behavior and the accuracy of their rating.

### **2.5 Peer Mediation**

This method involves students in resolving class room and school related conflicts, particularly those are based on age and cultural differences [45]. It is an approach to resolve conflicts in which disputants, or people who disagree, have the chance to sit face to face and talk uninterrupted so each side of the dispute is heard and solutions are created and evaluated. Students are trained to serve as peer mediator through role play and practice.

#### **2.5.1 Non-verbal communication**

Non-verbal communication involves representations which include "graphic

representations, physical models, and mental pictures; the drawing of pictures and pictographs; and engagement in kinesthetic activity” [29]. Nonlinguistic representations should elaborate on knowledge and the fact that this strategy is the most underused instructional strategy which helps to learn students in a different way.

### **2.5.2 Student engagement strategy**

An effective engagement strategy that teachers can implement is cooperative learning, in which a specific number of students are assigned to a group in order to complete a given learning assignment [29]. The groupings can be small or heterogeneous. Cooperative learning groups have positive outcomes for students that include the practice of appropriate social skills with their peers, the combination of individual and group accountability, and face-to-face interactions. This instructional strategy becomes most effective when the groups are consistent, purposeful and remain systematic during instruction [29]. Tomlinson [46] found some techniques for teachers to help students with challenging behaviors. Tomlinson advised teachers to ensure that their lessons are engaging and carefully planned so that all students have the opportunity to be successful. She also suggested showing respect for all students, finding students' individual characteristics, and trying to find out the reasons for occurring any negative behavior in the classroom.

### **2.5.3 Measuring classroom behavior**

Educators can measure students' mastery of behavioral skills in several ways. Cartwright [47] suggested some guidelines for observing students' behavior employing recording system. If the behavior to be observed has a discrete beginning and ending and if it occurs for brief time periods, event recording is an appropriate choice. If time is to be considered an important factor of the observed behavior, either duration or latency recording strategy would be an appropriate one [42]. When using interval recording, the observer divides the observation period into equal half and records whether the behavior occurred during each of the intervals. An anecdotal record is a narrative of the events that took place during the observation [48]. While recording behavior, teachers also should attempt to perform an antecedents-behavior-consequences (ABC) analysis which can assist a teacher in selecting appropriate behavior modification strategy.

### **2.5.4 Promoting positive classroom behavior**

An important goal of a teacher's classroom management is promoting positive classroom behavior. A widely used method for increasing desirable behavior is positive reinforcement. One form of positive reinforcement used by many teachers is the premack principle [49]. Students and teachers may formalize agreements concerning specific behavior and the exchange of reinforces by also contingency contract strategy. Homme [50] suggested that contracts should provide for immediate and frequent reinforcement, be structured for success by initially calling for small changes in behavior. Swanson [51] proposed an ICAN strategy, whereby teachers and students develop a contract that outlines students' academic and behavioral goals in terms of Independence, Completion, Accuracy and Neatness. A key component in the success of positive reinforcement is the reinforces that students receive. Many behavior management systems fail due to teachers' incompetence in identifying appropriate and effective reinforces. Teachers can develop their own surveys to encompass the special characteristics of their students and the class.

### **2.5.5 Decreasing inappropriate classroom behavior**

Educators are certainly concerned about inappropriate behavior of the students [38] and how these behaviors impact on the learning environment and spill over to other students in the class [52]. Teachers can use several strategies to decrease inappropriate classroom behaviors. Positive reductive procedure which is also called differential reinforcement technique has been effective in decreasing a wide range of inappropriate classroom behaviors [53]. Three strategies comprise positive reductive procedures: differential reinforcement of other behaviors (DRO), differential reinforcement of incompatible behavior (DRI) and differential reinforcement of lower rates of responding (DRL). DRI refers to reinforcing a behavior that is incompatible with the behavior to be decreased. DRL is used to decrease behaviors that are tolerable or desirable at low rates of occurrence, and can be reduced gradually or are habitual [42]. Storey and Horner [54] suggested that educators should use interspersed requests to help students make transitions, learn difficult material, and refrain from engaging in a series of escalating behaviors. Teachers implement this strategy by asking students to perform two to five

easy tasks prior to presenting a task that might trigger a negative or noncompliant response from students. When teachers identify and withhold all sources of reinforcement that are maintaining inappropriate classroom behavior, extinction may be a appropriate behavior reduction strategy [55] in which the positive reinforces maintaining a behavior are terminated or withheld, resulting in a reduction in the behavior to reinforcement levels.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Classroom management is the foundation for teaching-learning process. Research over the past few decades has concluded that classroom management is a skill that can be taught and perfected over the lifetime of teachers. Teachers have been expected to have efficacy in classroom behavior management which comprises a major part of teachers' self-efficacy in a mainstream classroom. The issue of classroom management skill deficiency among teachers is historically evident since early 1900's. The challenge for many teachers over the world is to manage classroom behavior in an effective way when disruptive behaviors of students increase [6]. The relationship between classroom management behavior of teachers and their self-efficacy is cyclic in a sense that the existence of this single skill contribute to a major part of teachers' efficacy level. Higher efficacious teachers are more prone to consistently implement positive behavior management strategies in classroom which result in higher achievement by students and enhanced social inclusion. Researchers have identified several classroom behavior management strategies. But, most importantly, teachers are to be trained in selecting and implementing respective strategies according to the situational demand and the individual needs of the students. Thus, it may be considered as a serious concern of teacher education curriculum in our country as this area has yet not got respectful consideration in the revamped curriculum of teachers' education.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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