Adoption of Disciplinary Strategies in Classroom by the Secondary Level Teachers in Kathmandu

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ABSTRACT

Favorable behavior modification is the goal of school discipline to foster a supportive learning environment. Students' academic performance improves when discipline is established in secondary schools. Discipline-related problems can have a long-lasting impact on a student's academic achievement and personal growth during the crucial secondary school years. Secondary-level teachers sometimes encounter circumstances where they must deal with disrespect, hostility, and numerous verbal and physical abuses in the classroom. Additionally, they are under pressure from unattainable expectations and are blamed for systemic failures that affect many children, which makes it even harder for them to survive in challenging classrooms. Therefore, this small-scale exploratory and descriptive qualitative research examines secondary-level teachers' opinions and experiences about challenging classroom settings. The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with the secondary-level teachers. The study findings can be divided into three themes: Discipline-based Strategy Definition, Classroom Behavior Issues among the students, and Efficacy of teachers' disciplinary techniques. This study reveals that teachers apply different disciplinary strategies to handle classroom behavioral problems. Because teachers are not entirely to blame for the problematic circumstances, the study's findings suggested that when teachers struggle to keep the classroom in order, they should expand their roles as change agents by inspiring students, changing the way instruction is delivered, creating effective plans and classroom strategies, and increasing awareness among stakeholders. There is no pre-made answer or

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definitive outcome for this issue, as the overall concept of classrooms and their layout has been continually revised worldwide.

Keywords: *Behavioral problems, classroom issues, disciplinary strategies, secondary-level teachers, students*

INTRODUCTION

The school is a mini-society. Students, teachers, and administrators have different qualities, skills, and capacities. Teachers realize that students are from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Students might have different levels of emotional intelligence. Teachers could interact with the students in various ways. As the teachers discover that their pupils are not prepared to learn or that they are attempting to disrupt the class purposefully, many teachers may frequently face comparable issues to function well in their classrooms. Such unruly kids make it difficult for the teachers to work effectively and accomplish their intended goals, which is a significant issue. The situation continues to put the teachers' jobs in danger. Therefore, acquiring the necessary abilities to deal with matters without feeling defeated is beneficial and puts the classroom on the correct road.

Disruptive behavior in the classroom has a detrimental effect on teachers' attitudes toward teaching, claim Cameron and Lovett (2015). Additionally, they observed that teachers lose interest in teaching when students act disruptively in class. Additionally, it is believed that disruptive student conduct directly affects teachers' emotional, mental, and physical well-being and may, to some degree, hinder their ability to teach pupils (Shakespeare et al., 2018).

Most learning occurs in schools in classrooms with teachers present, and according to Glenn (2001), effective schools have high-quality teachers. While classroom activities continue, the teacher who plays a leadership role appropriate to their position must deal with issues that arise frequently without assistance from outside sources. No matter how meticulously a teacher arranges lessons and takes significant safeguards, disobedience still happens. However, Kounin (1970) states that even in these situations, "teaching must go on," and s/he should handle the misconduct to prevent pupils from being distracted or the lesson from being stopped. According to Brainard (2001), classroom management should be mastered by all instructors to have a successful career. This is true for both beginning and seasoned educators. According to Jones and Jones (1995), the teacher looks for ways to halt the inappropriate behavior and ensure it does not happen again. An effective disciplinary

procedure in one situation might not be in another. Because of this, a teacher in this situation may think that the theory is useless or that they cannot successfully manage the class.

It is important to remember that everyone is responsible for creating an effective and efficient society. However, parents (homes) and teachers (schools) appear to be the primary actors in fostering individuals' integration into society. A teacher's professional responsibilities include minimizing student disruptive behavior, fostering a positive learning environment, which is essential for effective learning, and helping them instill positive behavior that will enable them to function well in society (Virtudazo & Guhao, 2020). Additionally, the legal doctrine of in-loco-parentis granted to teachers in the Nigerian educational system permits them to take on the parental rights, responsibilities, and duties that a parent would have for their child. As a result, teachers can discipline students as needed (Nakpodia, 2012).

According to Brown (2010), to avoid employing punishment, which often has adverse effects on behavior change, educators must be well-prepared for disciplinary methods. Herr, Reid, and Herr (1996) claim that experienced teachers use disciplinary methods to help with the difficult work that teaching requires. Another discipline problem that may arise in the classroom is the misuse or poor use of disciplinary measures. The teaching process is easier to manage through disciplinary measures as teachers teach not only the academic topics listed in the curriculum but also discipline, respect for others, and conformity to school rules.

Effective classroom management tactics are crucial to developing a sense of discipline among instructors and students. Oliver and Reschly (2010) argue that if teachers do not have a substantial collection of rules that might assist them in preventing misbehavior rather than devising ways to penalize it, maintaining order and discipline in the classroom can be challenging.

Any person who is enrolled in school is considered a learner. As a result, a learner may be an infant, a child, a teenager, or an adult. According to experts from the World Health Organization, adolescents are thought to be between the ages of 10 and 20 when transitioning from childhood to adulthood (Muzzo & Burrows, 1986). According to Williams and Burden (1997) and Muzzo and Burrows (1986), adolescence is a period of growth and change for everyone. Social and psychological issues and personality identification are part of the biological maturation process that the individual starts to go through. These significant changes drastically change students' mental architecture, which could affect their learning outcomes.

According to Harmer (2001) and Montijano (2001), teaching various age groups requires varied approaches. This is primarily due to the many psychological traits unique to

each age group and their stage of mental development. Thus, teenagers' training would be one of the biggest problems, given that their physical and cognitive systems are changing drastically. Teenagers begin forming their personalities and identities during adolescence, and they develop the ability to abstract from their immediate surroundings and adapt to them. The adjustments pupils make may have an impact on both their academic performance and classroom conduct. According to Harmer (2001), one of the constant worries for teenagers' instructors is losing control. The students' lack of power may be brought on by their distaste for the material, the instructor, their classmates, or the fact that they feel they need to participate. These are all effects of the well-known changes that occur during adolescence. Teachers must thus be highly aware of these psychological changes and cautious when addressing teenagers and their unique demands in the classroom.

The researcher's main areas of interest in this small-scale exploratory study include classroom disturbances and teachers' strategies to prepare their pupils for learning and encourage participation in the process. This will promote learning, make teaching more accessible, and help the teachers survive. When teachers are expected to teach students at different levels, they must prepare their lessons well. Teachers are also required to implement the programs. This study explores how secondary-level teachers see the phenomena of challenging classrooms and the methods they use to create an environment favorable to learning.

The main goal of this study was to evaluate instances of disturbance in the classroom to see whether secondary-level instructors encounter any disciplinary issues there. Additionally, this study examined the disciplinary strategies used by secondary-level instructors to preserve a positive learning environment.

DATA AND METHODS

This study uses exploratory and descriptive qualitative research based on interviews. As stated by Rossman and Rall (1998, referenced in Richards, 2003): "Interviewing is the hallmark of qualitative research", the researcher performed casual conversational interviews. Creswell (2011) states that "the one-on-one interview is a common strategy in educational research where the researcher poses the questions to the participants and collects replies from just one in the study at a time."

In this regard, interviews are a powerful tool for qualitative researchers (Cohen et al., 2007). In order to guarantee the study's validity and anonymity, the researcher interviewed two in-service teachers regarding the problematic situations they faced in the classroom throughout

their teaching careers. The researcher also asked them how they survived in their classrooms throughout those difficult times.

Furthermore, teachers were asked who was responsible for these issues and who could help them survive. This study's semi-structured interview was "the interviewer is free to follow up a question with additional questions that probe further (Perry, 2005). There were no preset questions; the researcher had planned themes or instructions for the interview.

For this small-scale inquiry, the researcher conducted two in-depth interviews with in-service secondary school teachers from the Kathmandu valley and subjectively assessed the results. The researcher had a good relationship with both teachers because they worked in the same place. The information gathered from the interviews was classified and divided into several codes.

These codes were arranged according to the goals of the research, and three key themes emerged: (1) Discipline-based Strategy Definition, (2) Classroom behavior Issues among the students, and (3) Efficacy of teachers' disciplinary techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the interview, a distinct picture of their perspective emerged. After schematizing the data linked to the topic's debate and analysis objectives, the findings are presented under the topics listed below.

Discipline-Based Strategy Definition

Formulating disciplinary strategies, the subject of two contrasting teacher conceptions, was the first theme to be examined. Discipline tactics are seen as a means to accomplish the lesson's goal and, simultaneously, as measures to preserve good behavior in the classroom. The following is what the participants who were interviewed regarding disciplinary tactics said. T1 said,

> "To me, disciplinary strategies are methods teachers may employ to run a class in a disciplined manner."

T2 said,

> "There are several methods to use discipline when you need to keep the class under control to complete the lesson's objectives and cover the material."

It can be argued that these participants have gone one step further when they mention that the use of effective disciplinary strategies enables teachers to achieve their teaching aim in a

lesson, as they do not merely follow the apparent definition that disciplinary strategies only help to maintain order and control in the classroom.

Classroom Behavior Issues Among the Students

Although they first hesitated to disclose their personal experiences or events, all of the participants' replies to the questions on the issues with students' behavior they had faced in the classroom were quite similar. When the researcher asked them to remember when classmates misbehaved toward them (if any), they said that disrespecting instructors through disobedience, rudeness, and verbal hostility was the most surprising behavior. Recalling experiences, T1 said,

> "Students occasionally argue with teachers. Once, a student responded casually to my important inquiry with an irrelevant response. The student grew angry and aggressive when I commented, and he then argued with me."

After speaking with the participants, it was discovered that they had experienced a range of behavioral problems from their pupils, especially in early teaching positions and at schools where the children did not know them. In addition to several behavioral problems like making noise, disrespecting the teachers, not paying attention in class, and not participating in teacher-led activities, they also had to deal with bullying in the classroom, excessive noise from the large class size, and a reluctance to participate in class activities. They stated that they occasionally observed kids who were uninterested and unwilling to participate in class. Interestingly, T2 said,

> "It takes about 15 minutes to manage the classroom environment before teaching, especially in classes 11 and 12."

Strangely enough, a participant claimed that when his pupils caused difficulties in the classroom, he felt like leaving the teaching profession. Additionally, the teachers indicated that the student's disruptive behavior hinders the efficiency and efficacy of instruction and the kids' learning ability. They noted that in addition to getting worse with time, students' misbehavior affected their academic performance and led to further delinquent behavior. The participants' viewpoints reveal that many teachers face situations where they find it difficult to continue teaching in the classroom. Their teaching experience is made more difficult by the different problems that the students in the classroom cause.

Efficacy of Teachers' Disciplinary Techniques

Sali (2011) contends that when instructors believe they are the only ones who can establish rules in the classroom, disciplinary measures are ineffective. The foundations of learner-centered education are incompatible with this viewpoint. One of these premises advises instructors to provide chances for the exchange of views on events in the classroom from both the teaching and learning perspectives.T1 said,

> "At the beginning of each year, I usually negotiate classroom rules. I like students to see they have something to say about discipline."

Making kids optimistic is essential in this way to prevent their disruptive tendencies. They continued using tales and real-life examples to help the children control their bad behavior. Instead of only concentrating on lectures, they focused on activities that actively included the students in the learning process.

The participating teachers in the study think that employing particular disciplinary techniques to maintain order in the classroom works well. However, they also admit that different approaches are usually needed to maintain discipline because every student reacts differently to the technique. Specific strategies work better for some disruptive students than others. T2 said,

> "Disciplinary strategies might be effective or ineffective. The student group is the main factor. Other kids do not modify their attitudes, while others do."

Encouragement, a range of classroom activities, games, stories, and anecdotes, sharing real experiences, and getting to know the students well—understanding their feelings, interests, and emotions—help teachers manage the classroom environment and make it comfortable for them instead of physically punishing them, according to the conclusion drawn from the entire conversation with the participants.

CONCLUSIONS

Many secondary school teachers deal with various behavioral issues in the classroom. Problems including disruptive pupils, low motivation, lack of passion, learners' preparation for the learning process, and other disciplinary measures inside the school are considered problematic. These issues negatively impact the teachers and make it harder for them to maintain order in the classroom, which may demotivate them. Naturally, these issues might only arise in some teachers' classes. However, rather than avoiding difficulties when they emerge, it is best to be prepared to deal with and solve them.

Teachers play a crucial role when dealing with discipline, and finding the best tools or approaches is an essential duty for them. Properly using disciplinary tactics might help instructors maintain classroom control and address student misconduct. Still, utilizing them at the appropriate time and place is also essential. This allows teachers and students to make the most of the time allotted for class.

Because teachers are not entirely to blame for the problematic circumstances, the study's findings suggested that when teachers struggle to keep the classroom in order, they should expand their roles as change agents by inspiring students, changing the way that instruction is delivered, creating effective plans and classroom strategies, and increasing awareness among stakeholders. According to the study, educators must also learn to tolerate difficult circumstances and offer their all to their pupils by exerting more effort and improving their efficiency to "make the impossible things possible."

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