



## Role of Classroom Management in Teaching Learning Process at ECE Level

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this research study was to explore the role of classroom management in student participation and the teaching-learning process at the ECE level. To calculate the results of the study a sample of teachers from 49 girls' schools and 44 boys' schools were selected through a stratified random sampling technique and a further 40% of teachers were selected from each stratum. The study was delimited to government schools in the district Sahiwal where the ECE program was executed. This was quantitative research. A questionnaire on the 5-point Likert scale and an observation sheet were used to collect the data from participants of the study. The findings of the study reflect that well-managed classrooms lead to the learning of children and enhance the achievement of the students at the ECE level. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the teachers may give specific attention to the management of the classroom so it will accelerate the learning of the children at the ECE level.*

**Keywords:** Classroom Management, ECE, Teaching Learning Process.

### Introduction

Education may be considered a necessity of life in this technological era. It prepares us for a social life compatible with our social needs. There are different stages of formal education but the very first stage in the formal education system is early childhood education (ECE). This is a very basic stage of personality development. Therefore, ECE serves as a foundation stone on which the whole



personality of an individual builds. Gordon and Brown (2000) defined early childhood education (ECE) as preschool education; kindergarten; Nursery; Montessori and early education from two to eight years of early age. Similarly, the National Education Policy of Pakistan (2009) has laid stress on all the basic needs of the child, which are essential for interaction and stimulation; affection and security, and necessary for exploration and discovery (Barnett & Boocock 1998). International experiences related to early childhood education suggest that early intervention of children in schools provides them with unique opportunities, which enable them to foster learning problems in the future. Rehman (2006) described that it is now widely accepted all over the world that the early eight years of a child are probably considered foremost crucial in attaining the individual's life experiences.

During the last few decades, there has been an increasing emphasis on early childhood education, particularly in the field of literacy and numeracy, and on the pedagogical skills related to literacy and numeracy. The reason is that in the early childhood period, the child develops faster than in his later years of life (Gordon & Browne, 2000). It is the responsibility of the parents, teachers, and all other stakeholders to seek the needs of the children at an early age and take some adaptive measures, which can lift them to improved levels in their later lives (Mishra, 2005). Thus, looking into the prevailing situation and realizing the emerging needs of education in the 21st century, it becomes indispensable to streamline the early childhood education system in the light of the economy & proper utilization of natural resources.

Although there is a huge pile of literature dealing with classroom management that elaborates the effective classroom strategies, minimal literature exists related to early childhood education in general, particularly in Pakistan which tells about classroom management and its role in child learning (Rehman, 2006). Similarly, Everston and Weinstein (2006) commented that nearly all the classroom research has been constructed in primary schools or at a higher level, but very little work research work has been done at the ECE level in Pakistan. Further studies are required to be executed to enquire what strategies the early grade teachers are adopting to manage their classrooms for effective teaching and learning processes.



Given the above facts and the emerging needs of ECE education, it's a necessity to conduct more and more research studies related to ECE education from different perspectives to uproot the assorted problems and problems with ECE education in Pakistan. Keeping seeable the undeniable facts that ECE education has remained a neglected area in Pakistan. There is a dire need to conduct research related to different aspects of early childhood development and education. The current study is one of the efforts to find out the role of classroom management and the participation of students in teaching teaching-learning process at the ECE level.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Due to the importance of ECE and the emerging needs of ECE education, classroom management is at the heart of achieving the desired goals of teaching the learning process at the ECE level. Effective classroom management provides a thriving learning environment and enthusiastic students. Edward & Raikes (2002) viewed a positive relationship between ECE and classroom management as a successful tool. Similarly, Kostelnik, et al., (1993) found that creating a positive classroom environment is essential for a learning environment wherein the children build a sense of being valued, confident, and competent. It is an admitted fact that effective classroom management yields an optimum and conducive learning environment for the students where they can interact with each other in democratic ways and are enabled to engage themselves in the work according to their own abilities. No doubt, effective classroom management demands untiring efforts and time and it varies from teacher to teacher due to individual differences and preferred teaching styles.

The deep insight into the literature indicates that there are different types of classroom management concerning the different approaches to pedagogy. Everston and Weinstien (2006) have described classroom management as an action taken to develop an environment that facilitates and supports academic as well as socio-emotional learning. Similarly, the physical environment of the classroom contributes a lot to the teaching-learning process, particularly at the ECE level. Generally, the students feel ownership of their school and particularly they seem to be more conscious about their own classrooms. They are very sensitive to the atmosphere within their



classrooms. In addition, Scott, et al, (2008) have worked out some criteria for effective classrooms environment in the following ways;

- Are the classrooms inviting and looking warm?
- Are all the areas of classrooms accessible to all students or for only a few students?
- Are all the walls looking drab and lacking colors?
- Are the students feeling comfortable while sitting in the classrooms?
- Are the areas well-defined concerning design and purpose?

Literature related to classroom management reveals that the classroom environment can either improve or impede student's abilities. The students feel comfortable and safe as a member of the class. Educational research can help in creating an environment of mutual respect and cooperation where the students feel liberty in asking questions and expressing their thoughts and feelings freely (Stronge, 2002). A warm classroom environment can enhance the teaching-learning process. Hinde et al., (2007) suggested that a supportive environment involves those teachers who have high expectations for students' individual learning abilities. Various research in classroom management studies reflects those teachers having much exposure in classroom management, supply students with more opportunities to rearrange students, space, time, and materials. Now, to gain positive educational outcomes, the teacher must have the ability to organize classrooms and manage the behavior of the students. The challenging behaviors within the classroom often take the form of disrupted sleeping and eating, physical and verbal aggression, property destruction, severe tantrums, self-injury, noncompliance, withdrawal, etc. (Smith & Fox, 2003). Similarly, Vaughn, et al, (2000) argue that to avoid problems of behavior in the classroom, the teacher is bound to change their own behavior. The classroom routines can be even more effective for students' performance than their behavior (Cheney, 1989; Vallecorsa, et al, 2000). Furthermore, Emmer and Stough (2001) described that although the behavior does not guarantee instructions, it establishes an environmental context that makes good instructions possible.

Now, for the creation of a mutually respectful environment, certain areas like classroom design, classroom procedures, and classroom strategies must be taken into consideration. These



strategies can encourage positive interactions and a cooperative learning environment among the students. Hinde et al., (2007) suggested that a supportive environment involves those teachers who have high expectations for students' individual learning abilities. These teachers can handle unexpected events and possess abilities to change students' behavior by using effective classroom management strategies. So, effective classroom management and positive classroom climate construction are essential goals for all teachers. Now, to gain positive educational outcomes, the teacher must have the ability to organize classrooms and manage the behavior of the students.

To gain positive results, teachers need to adopt the strategy of universal learning design and ensure that the activities, materials, and equipment are physically accessible and useable by all the students. Samules (2007) described the universal design of instructions as a set of principles that helps in designing the classroom environment and instructions that might work out education for all the students. General experience and field practice show that most teachers reflect experts in the area of study that they teach, but very few of them are aware of the discipline problems in the classrooms. Matsagouras (2001) described that most of the issues that teacher faces within the classroom are because of; the school's lack of ability to meet students' needs or inadequate student socialization. So, effective classroom teaching is the only remedy for classroom management and motivation. To become successful teachers, there is a need to develop the behavior of students in the classroom. Moreover, Lewis et al (2008 & 2011) indicated that usually, teachers use six types of discipline categories such as punishment, reward, involving the students in decision making, discussion and negotiation, hinting, and aggression. Furthermore, the integration of one or more of these types of yield value approaches for discipline management (Charles, 2008; Tauber, 2007).

Expert and dedicated teachers create such a classroom climate that enhances class enrollment; they establish trust and rapport between the teachers and students and among the students. Hattie (2012) found that the optimal classroom climate for learning welcomes the students' mistakes and where the mistakes are considered essential for learning. Bulger et al (2002) further added that teachers can stimulate a positive learning environment by demonstrating passion towards their relevant subject matter, welcoming students' involvement during classroom



discussion, generating goodwill among the students, and developing an atmosphere of respect and cooperation among the students. Marzano et al., (2001) found that effective teachers have to perform many functions which can be differentiated into three major roles which are making wise choices about the foremost instructional strategies, designing classroom curriculum to facilitate students learning, and making effective use of classroom management techniques.

Matsagouras (2001) affirmed that it is true no matter how good a teacher or his / her students could be, there may arise such circumstances that need a call for effective management either at a personal level or classroom level. Effective classroom managers actively participate in classroom activities; anticipate those areas where the students feel difficulty and plan to minimize confusion and strive for maximum success. When the students have misunderstandings about content or instructions, effective managers seek ways to realize the content and spice up their communication. Research shows that if children are provided with a healthy environment, they can learn at a fast pace. The teachers play a pivotal role in this process. So, they must equip themselves with sound qualifications to fulfill the learning needs of the students. If they adorned themselves with the principles of affection, kindness, and care, they would be able to inculcate the values among the students at the ECE level.

### **Objective of the Study**

The following objectives were formulated to carry out this research:

- i. To investigate the role of classroom management in teaching the teaching-learning process at the ECE level in public schools.
- ii. To investigate the difference in classroom management practices between male and female teachers at the ECE level.

### **Hypotheses**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant difference between classroom management among male and female teachers at the ECE level.



H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant difference in the practices of the male and female teachers regarding the management of classrooms for the teaching-learning process at the ECE level in public schools

### Research Questions

1. What is the opinion of teachers about the role of management of the classroom in teaching the teaching-learning process at the ECE level?
2. What is the difference between the practices of male and female teachers regarding classroom management at the ECE level in public schools?

### Research Methodology

This study was a quantitative and descriptive survey research in nature. A survey was conducted to explore the views of the teachers through a researcher-self-developed questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale. The observation sheet was also used to check the classroom management practices of ECE teachers. The population for the current study was all the government schools in district Sahiwal where ECE rooms were in functional condition. All these schools were taken as the population of the study, comprising 109 boys' schools and 123 girls' schools in district Sahiwal. The teachers who were teaching ECE children in these schools were taken as the population of the study. A stratified random sampling technique was used for this research. The data was divided into two strata i.e., were boys' schools and girls' schools. 40% of the sample from each stratum was randomly selected. So, in this way, 49 teachers from girls' schools and 44 teachers from boys' schools were the total sample of this study. The research study was delimited to the district Sahiwal. The research tools used for the current study were an observation sheet and a questionnaire. These tools were developed after a thorough review of related literature. The research instruments were validated through expert opinion. The instruments were validated by 10 experts who had 5 years of experience at the ECE level along with 16 years of Education relevant to ECE. The pilot testing of the instruments was also conducted on at least 25 respondents and Cronbach Alpha was calculated which was .08 for the questionnaire. The data was collected through the research tools and was calculated through statistics of Mean score and Standard





Deviation. The mean difference was calculated by applying a t-test between male and female teachers' opinions. The results were obtained, and findings were drawn.

**Table 1.** *The role of management of classroom environment in teaching and learning.*

S. No	Statement	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1	Well-organized ECE classroom for teaching learning	34.4%	6.5%	54.8%	4.3%	0.0%
2	Suitable sitting arrangement in ECE classroom	18.3%	50.5%	17.2%	10.8%	3.2%
3	Arrangement of supportive charts on the walls	25.8%	10.8%	33.3%	15.1%	15.1%
4	Role of spacious classrooms for ECE	28.0%	12.9%	31.2%	18.3%	9.7%
5	Arrangement of adequate distance from the Board	18.3%	12.9%	38.7%	15.1%	15.1%
6	Classroom size according to the number of students	20.4%	30.1%	23.7%	16.1%	9.7%
7	ECE-based furniture for the learning room	25.8%	18.3%	32.3%	11.8%	11.8%
8	Management of audio-visual aids in ECE classroom	21.5%	23.7%	24.7%	12.9%	17.2%
9	Management of play corner in ECE classroom	12.9%	21.5%	30.1%	21.5%	14.0%
10	Management of Educational toys in ECE classroom	21.5%	20.4%	22.6%	26.9%	8.6%

The above table shows the opinion of ECE teachers about the management of the physical environment of ECE classrooms for teaching and learning in public schools. The above data





reflects that the majority of 54.8% of teachers were undecided and 34.4% strongly agreed that well-arranged ECE classrooms have an important role in teaching and learning of students. Similarly, the majority 50.5% of teachers thought that proper sitting arrangements in ECE classrooms accelerate the teaching and learning of children. Moreover, 33.3% of teachers were undecided and 25.8% strongly agreed with the proper arrangement of charts on the walls in the classroom 31.2% of teachers were undecided, and 28% of teachers strongly agreed with the importance of spacious ECE classrooms for better learning of children. The majority of 38.7% were undecided and 18.3% strongly agreed to provide adequate distance between children and board in the classroom. 30.1% agreed and 23.7% of teachers were undecided about the role of classroom size and the number of children within the classroom. Similarly, 32.3% were undecided while 25.8% of teachers strongly agreed with the positive role of ECE-based furniture in the teaching and learning of ECE children 24.7% of teachers were undecided and 23.7% agreed about the management of audio-visual aids in ECE classrooms, and its positive role in learning of children. 30.1% of teachers were undecided while 21.5% were agreed and 21.5% have also disagreed for the role of managed play corners in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, the data shows that 26.9% of ECE teachers disagreed with the management of educational toys and 22.6% were undecided about the role of managing educational toys in teaching and learning of children in ECE classrooms.



**Table 2.** Mean Score of the Opinion of teachers about classroom management in teaching-learning process

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	Well-organized ECE classroom for teaching learning	3.71	0.995
2	Suitable sitting arrangement in ECE classroom	3.70	0.998
3	Arrangement of supportive charts on the walls	3.17	1.372
4	Role of spacious classrooms for ECE	3.31	1.319
5	Arrangement of adequate distance from the Board	3.04	1.276
6	Classroom size according to the number of students	3.35	1.248
7	ECE-based furniture for the learning room	3.34	1.306
8	Management of audio-visual aids in ECE classroom	3.19	1.377
9	Management of play corner in ECE classroom	2.98	1.233
10	Management of Educational toys in ECE classroom	3.19	1.288

The data of the above table shows the mean and standard deviation scores of the role of well-organized classrooms, suitable sitting arrangement, and arrangement of supportive charts on the wall with the means score of 3.71, 3.70 and 3.17 while their score of standard deviation is 0.99, 0.99 1.37 respectively. The Mean score for the role of a spacious classroom is 3.31 with a standard deviation of 1.31 while the adequate distance from the board is 3.04 and the standard deviation is 1.27 respectively. Furthermore, the means score and standard deviation of classroom size as per the number of students are 3.35 and 1.24 while for the ECE-based furniture, it was 3.34 and 1.30. The mean score for management of audio-visual aids is 3.19 and the standard deviation is 1.37, For management of play corners it is 2.98 and 1.28 while for the management of educational toys, it is 3.19 and 1.28 respectively. So, it is concluded from the above table that the role of well-organized classroom and proper sitting arrangement have the most important role in learning and teaching at the ECE level according to the opinion of ECE teachers as these both have the highest



mean scores while management of play corners in the classroom have lowest mean score according to their opinion.

**Table 3.** *Observations of classroom management of ECE teachers*

S. No	Statement	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
1	ECE classroom management is according to children's needs	00.00%	7.5%	58.1%	30.1%	4.31%
2	Suitable sitting arrangement in ECE classroom	00.0%	00.0%	39.8%	53.8%	6.50%
3	Supportive charts on the walls facilitate students' learning	00.0%	10.8%	38.7%	37.6%	12.9%
4	Management of space in ECE classrooms	00.0%	00.0%	37.6%	53.8%	8.60%
5	Distance between Board and children's seats	00.0%	6.5%	48.4%	30.1%	15.1%
6	Management displays in ECE classroom	00.0%	00.0%	30.1%	58.1%	11.8%
7	Set of rules and regulations for classroom	00.0%	00.0%	16.1%	54.8%	29.0%
8	Management of Ventilation in the classroom	00.0%	12.9%	46.2%	32.3%	8.6%
9	Set of positive behavior approaches of teachers for children	00.0%	00.0%	9.7%	65.6%	24.7%
10	Mutual respect of children for each other in the classroom	00.0%	00.0%	10.8%	54.8%	34.4%



The above table shows the observations of practices of ECE teachers in their classroom management. The management of ECE classroom as per needs of children was on average at 58.1%, suitable sitting arrangement was found as poor at 53.8%, supportive charts on the walls was average at 38.7%, management of space in classroom was 53.8%, distance of children from board was average with 48.4%, management of displays in class was poor with 58.1%, positive behavior approaches by the teacher was poor with 65.6% and mutual respect of children for each other was also recorded as poor with 54.8%.

**Table 4.** Gender-wise analysis of the management of the classroom environment at the ECE level

Gender	N	Mean	St deviation	t- value	Significance
Male	44	2.87	0.321		
Female	49	2.83	0.338	0.575	0.786

The above table shows the gender-wise analysis of the data of the questionnaire, which reflects that the t- t-value is 0.575 and the p-value is  $0.786 > \alpha (0.05)$ . So, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the male and female teachers regarding the management of the physical environment of classrooms is accepted and differences between the management of the male and females regarding the physical environment have been found as per data of the table.

**Table 5.** Comparison between male and female teachers regarding observation of the classroom environment.

Gender	N	Mean	St deviation	t- value	Significance
Male	44	2.988	0.294		
Female	49	2.943	0.287	0.610	0.372



The above table Shows the comparison of the management of the physical environment of male and female teachers which is observed by the researcher. The table depicts that the t- t-value = 0.610 is not significant as the p-value (0.372) >  $\alpha$  (0.05). It means that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the management of the physical environment is accepted.

## Discussion

Classroom management has always remained an important discussion among researchers because it is an important element of the teaching and learning process. It includes the physical setting, the psychological environment, and several instructional procedures that are related to teacher characteristics and behavior (Miller and Cunningham, 2003). The results of the current study also reflect that the teachers thought that management of the environment of ECE classrooms plays a positive role in the learning of young students. Gouriotou (2008) found that child social behavior is affected (positively/ negatively) by the general imbalance of the kindergarten classrooms. Good classroom arrangement inspires and encourages children to easily interact with each other and develop various skills including language, and social behavior. Poor classroom physical arrangement may affect children's free movement and can result in social behavior problems (Schunk & Zipperle, 2023). It directly influences learning engagement, motivation, and social interaction among classroom members. The classroom environment may be considered to be associated with good planning, effective teaching, the teacher's concern for the children's welfare, and the beauty that is reflected in the classroom (Barth et al., 2004). Torelli & Durrett (1996) found that the physical environment affects children themselves, and their movements, making it difficult to interact with each other. The study under consideration also concluded that attractive ECE rooms enhance the interest of the students; provision of adequate educational toys can enhance enrollment and learning in ECE classrooms; ECE teachers' provision of a friendly environment for students and handling their behavior positively can yield better performance on the part of the children. Furthermore, the study depicts that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the management of the environment in the classroom.



The physical environment may affect children's movement and interfere with their interaction. Classrooms that lack specific architectural design for early childhood learning cause some confusion and sometimes make children develop poor attitudes toward schooling. Materials that are placed in learning centers that engage children in various activities and learning should be attractive. If the materials located in learning areas are beyond the age level of the children, it may be hard for them to comprehend and formulate new knowledge but instead, they will cause discomfort and sometimes aggression. Isbell and Raines (2007); and Beaty (1996) explained that "the materials placed in every learning area should match the age, development level, and the interest of the children for which they are intended". The current study concluded that poor mutual respect among the children in the classroom had been observed due to the low standard physical environment in the ECE classrooms and very poor behavioral management skills were being utilized in the classrooms at the ECE level. The poor light arrangements, average ventilation, and the poor visibility of the whiteboard to all the students in the class had also been reported in the classrooms. Classroom arrangement that focuses on space for groups to work and play, appropriate materials placed in their respective learning areas, and a good room lighting system, would be considered an environmentally appropriate classroom. There was found to be no significant difference between the male and female teachers regarding the physical environment observation of the classrooms at the ECE level. Herbert (1998) urged architects to design buildings that respond to future school visions. An appropriate classroom for young children should contain displays of beautiful materials. Designing a classroom that has an environment that is conducive to young children's learning should be a collaborative effort. The architects should consult the educationists, health officials, and parents to design a classroom that provides enough space for various learning centers, space for the teacher, and space for free movement. Patton et al. (2001) found that the majority of teachers use semicircle or clustered arrangements in the classrooms for arranging desks. This kind of arrangement promotes cooperative learning and makes use of available space in the best way. The ideal arrangement provides opportunities to students so that they might engage themselves actively in learning and they get more chances to work with their peers cooperatively. Designing schools for the 21st century should be prioritized to accommodate the emerging and



expanding population and technology that require modern and special facilities. Sustaining such facilities needs experts who focus on the achievement of knowledge that is used to create and solve problems as one family. Wiseman and Hunt (2008) gathered very useful statistics prevailing over about fifty years from 1968 to now wherein discipline was to be found the most gigantic problem among teachers during their teaching in the classroom. So, it is evident from the research that the serious problems related to classroom management in schools are discipline; and handling students' social and emotional problems; The fundamental problems, the teachers are facing in this era seem to be students' behavior and motivation.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded the opinion of the ECE teachers about the role of classroom management and its importance for teaching and learning of children in public schools of Sahiwal. The study shows that many of the teachers were undecided about the importance of the role of a well-organized classroom for the learning of children while on the other side, they agreed on the suitable seating arrangements in the classroom for children. The ECE teachers at public schools were not aware of the importance of the management of Audio-Visual Aids and the management of learning corners for the learning of children and also for teaching. The study concluded that the ECE teachers at public schools were not fully aware of the importance of management of basic requirements of ECE classrooms such as educational toys and learning corners. However, on some points, they agreed with these mentioned requirements but the results of the observations of their actual classroom teaching show that their skills of management of classroom displays and learning corners along with positive behavioral approaches were found poor which also resulted the poor mutual respect of children for each other in their classroom.





## Recommendations

Keeping in view the results of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. ECE Teachers may develop rules for their classrooms which may help in disciplining the children.
2. Teachers may need to update their knowledge regarding the management techniques of ECE classrooms.
3. ECE-based furniture and environment may be provided to children for managing the classroom discipline which will enhance the learning of children.
4. There is a need to take serious initiative regarding the provision of facilities for ECE classrooms in the public sector to enhance learning and to help manage the issues of discipline, and behaviors, and control overcrowded classrooms.

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