Psychological Techniques Used in Classroom Management

MALIK HAQNAWAZ DANISH[1]
Gojra, Pakistan
ASMA IQBAL
Faisalabad, Pakistan
KASHIF REHMAN
Gojra, Pakistan

Abstract:

This article offers a brief overview of psychological techniques used in classroom management. Empirical studies have demonstrated the change in behaviour and learning abilities. This review examines the development in research to promote cognitive development and motivation in students in order to culture discipline and maintain learning environment in the classroom. The nature of the psychological techniques has dignity of uniqueness and certainty in bringing about sea change in the academic performance as well as behavior of a child.

Psychological techniques direct the course of action of a student in order to gain desired results. I have focused on various psychological techniques that can be utilized in the classroom management and the relationship between learning and discipline is also mapped out. Researchers observed two class rooms having same instructors for six months. It is also discussed that harsh treatment with the students creates an environment that contributes towards school violence. However, there is a need to assess the effectiveness of psychological techniques in classroom management and discipline. On the other hand, the psychological needs of the students must be met in order not to misdirect them at their own will. Peer checking has been involved to observe this in order to get more reliable and valid result.

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[1] Corresponding author: Dani_malik@hotmail.com

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Introduction

Psychology may be defined in its simplest form as the study of behaviour. The psychologist is ultimately interested in formulating the laws of human behaviour. According to psychology, all living creatures, operate, act or behave according to laws. Similarly, the focus of behaviours in the field of education is "Educational Psychology".

"Educational psychology is a subject to be studied ,an area or field of knowledge, a set of applications of laws and principles from a field of knowledge to a social process, a set of tools and techniques, and a field for research". G.L.Anderson (1949)

Educational psychology is a distinct discipline with its own theories, methods, problems and techniques.

It uses the methods of science. Educational psychologists approach their problems with a scientific attitude. In the course of research, new methods and variations of methods and techniques appear every year. Educational psychology offers many frame works to be utilized in the field of education, but I have focused on some psychological techniques used in classroom management, such as motivation, reinforcement and teacher student relationship.

Education psychology offers so many techniques to carry out learning process with success and desired results. Classroom management has become a challenge for the teachers and education psychology provides techniques to maintain discipline and enhance learning process. Many psychologists have conducted research on the management problem and the effects of psychological treatments to solve those problems. A brief introduction is given in the article regarding the research and findings.

Hypothesis

Psychological techniques used by the instructor have strong impact to motivate or demotivate the students and always have impact on results.

Research question

Following are the research question of my study
* What are the psychological techniques used in the classroom to motivate or demotivate the students.?
* How Psychological techniques help student in order to gain desired results?
* What are basic psychological issues behind the misbehavior of the learners?

Research objective

Following are the objectives of my study:
*To check the techniques how they affect learners
* To mark the validity and reliability of the classroom environment
*To explore the attitude of learner when instructor implies the psychological techniques.

Delimitation of the research

Following are the delimitations of our study
* The researcher conducted research on learners of grade 7th
* Only two classrooms had been studied to check these phenomena.
* Only one institute has been selected for this study.
*Only those instructors were been observed who knew psychological techniques and their implications in their class.

Literature Review

Psychologists have conducted research on the factors affecting the environment of the classroom. Still there are a number of psychologist working to engineer theories in order to explore the psychological being of students and their respective needs. Most of the psychologists have contributed a lot towards theories that are useful in maintaining discipline and learning environment of the classroom. They have worked collectively to contribute their share in the theories regarding the psychological treatment of the students.

Jones (1979) emphasizes the need of reinforcement to facilitate learning and minimize disruption. The effects of reinforcement claim more success in facilitating learning and minimizing disruption. Herbert Grosman emphasizes on the basic need of the students that they should be met in order to produce responsible members of the society. Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler present a lot of global causes of misbehavior that explain basis of classroom disturbance. Anderson cultivated the need of motivation in trimming the character of a student and the need of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to transform the learning process into a kind of activity which is interesting and rewarding.

In the same context, Meichenbanm (1977) offers his findings as 'cognitive behavior modifications' the basic skills of self-control for the desired results in behavior and academics. The turtle technique of Robin, Scheider and Dolnick (1976) is also a contribution towards the behavior modification techniques.

All of them have conducted research to facilitate learning process in a different way. I have tried to string these psychological techniques up as a module of psychological techniques for classroom management. These techniques are offered to the teachers to be utilized in the classroom

management to attain the desired results in behavior and academics.

Research Methodology

The research falls into the realm of qualitative research. The research only focuses on the case study without including any statistics. Qualitative study has been selected only to test these phenomena at deeper level as qualitative research gives us a chance to study any phenomenon elaborately and find the hidden reasons and attitudes.

To investigate researchers null hypothesis, researchers have selected two class rooms of same level and same age group who have same instructor and two researchers chose one classroom each to check the phenomena how instructor implies these techniques to get good result.

Two researchers tested this phenomenon to make this research more reliable and valid and they peer reviewed it to make their results more authentic.

Six months duration have been selected by the researcher to observe this phenomena in a natural setting. Researcher will not involve in classroom discussion and not free to share his opinion at any cost even with other researchers. He only observes the phenomena to develop objective opinion. Later on the researcher shares the results with research partners to get them compiled by checking the results of both the classes and by discussing the opinion of all the researchers.

The research falls into the category of longitudinal research because six months observation of two researchers have been involved in a natural setting to check how psychological techniques helped learners and teacher to understand any phenomena and perform well next time.

According to the ethical guidelines of the research the name of the institute is not mentioned there.

Discussion

The most difficult problem for the teachers particularly novice teacher is to maintain Classroom discipline. Murmuring, humming and creating disturbance, chatting, laughing in sleeves, they all have been the most hideous problems. Disturbance in the classroom is not on the part of a student, but it hampers the smooth process of teaching and learning. The immediate response of a teacher to such a disturbance may invite blows, slapping or spanking. But, the output of corporal punishment is again devastating; it fuels up aggression in the student and negative attitude towards the teacher. Such situation in the classroom requires discipline strategies and management techniques to overcome troubles in this regard. Let us discuss what the rationale for an effective management strategy is.

First of all, a little or infact no learning can occur in classroom lacking in discipline. Implementing management strategy is time consuming but indispensable. Secondly, effective management strategy injects a sense of responsibility and self control in students. Thirdly, an effective classroom management strategy shelters the teachers and administrators to face responsibility for failure or any other damage. Fourthly, it reduces undue stress on a teacher and learning process claims more success.

The basic function of strategy is to meet the needs of the students, so that they can produce better results. Scaffolding the needs of the students enhances their learning ability and interest in the classroom. Herbert Grossman emphasizes on the basic needs of the students that should be met in order to produce responsible members of the society in the future. To meet the needs of the students to maintain discipline in the classroom, certain basic elements should be kept in mind. One of the basic needs of the student is getting loved and cared. This requires an environment of fair, humane, consistent,

favouritism and devoid of criticism. Students learn in a loving atmosphere and it can be conjectured that they will learn to love and care others also. Such atmosphere not only contributes to the discipline of a classroom, but also encourages positive attitude and behaviour of the students with the teacher also. The attitude of indifference between the teacher and the student hinders the way of progressive learning and pollute the relationship between them. Students who are loved and cared adopt caring qualities easily which paves the way to gain confidence and realizing one's own potential. There is much more to comment on the needs of the students but we limit ourselves to the psychological aspects of the students. Richard Curwin and Allen Mender present a lot of global causes of misbehavior that explain basis of classroom disturbance. They also point out the psychological distress in students and the causes. They comment that (a) unstable home situation (b) throw-away society mentality (c) personal attack on one's dignity (d) feelings of powerlessness are all contributing factors in classroom dissension.

Misbehavior on the part of a student is a multiple product of so many psychological imprints. For e.g. a teacher's indifferent attitude can invite misbehavior and provides a room for aggression or if a student feels unattended, he will behave in an odd manner to gain the attention. Another psychological distress grips the student when he experiences feelings of inferiority and fears of failure. At such a stage, he merely observes formalities in learning or withdraws from taking risks in learning. Another difficulty occurs when teacher becomes "buddy" to students. In such cases, the idea of getting respected gets vague. Difficulties arise in maintaining discipline when student view the teacher as their buddy rather than authority. All such factors play with the psychological being of a student and force them to misbehave in a way they like. The treatment to be offered for such psychological distress among students is using psychological techniques to spark interest in them and to

eradicate the rebellious attitude towards teachers. Psychological treatment drives attention towards the instructions and replaces disorders in children. This psychological ailment in students creates inactiveness, hyperactivity and poor academic performance. The psychological distress also contributes towards poor relationships with the peers and siblings, failure in obeying adults and poor relationships with parents.

Researchers have conducted research on a variety of motivational characteristics of students and how this psychological distress can claim a change in the behaviour and attitude towards learning. The basic need is to invite involvement and responsibility for learning without creating disturbance and misbehavior in the class. It is often quoted proverb "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink ".

Similarly, students are sent to schools but they can't be forced to learn and maintain harmony and equilibrium in discipline. Without mental incline, there can be little to be learnt and little to be observed under the frame of school rules and regulations. Learning will proceed best if motivated (Anderson). The problem of motivation is central both to the education and to the classroom process (Harris). Motivation is the central factor in the efficient management of the process of learning (Kelly). Motivation as a psychological technique as often thought to be an aid towards goals in education but it can also be materialized to culture the students in terms of behaviour as well. The aspects of motivation in the academic arena are theoretically important (Ames1919). Learning oriented students (a) engage in more attended behaviour be used deeper learning and studying strategies.(b) put in more quality and quantity of effort(c) feel better about themselves as better learners(Nolen1988).

Maintaining discipline and effective management is conditioned with psychological need of the student. Ridicule and

sarcasm is the bottle neck in getting the psychological techniques implemented. An attempt to embarrass or humiliate a child in the company of his colleague's results in disorders and aggression and the child is forced to react negatively and contributes towards the misbehavior. Such a treatment produces hesitation, frustration, uncertainty and loss of self-respect. They force a child to give up school activity and fabricate negative attitude against rules and regulation as a reaction. To nurture such an act, the best possible treatment available is to motivate a child towards goals so that the responsibility of learning and maintaining behaviour is shouldered by the child himself.

Motivation energizes and directs behaviour. Motivation is a combination of different factors such as needs, curiosity and interest. We can further subcategorize motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the natural tendency to seek and conquer challenges as we pursue personal interests and exercises capabilities (Deci & Ryan 1985, Reeve 1996). When a child is intrinsically motivated, he doesn't care for the rewards and punishments because the learning itself becomes rewarding. The child also maintains discipline in order to avail himself of the opportunity and doesn't deviates from the path. Teachers must encourage and nurture intrinsic motivation (Brophy 1988,Deci & Ryan 1996). On the other hand, if a student does something to gain a grade, to please someone, to avoid humiliation, he is experiencing extrinsic motivation. He is not really interested in the activity; he only cares about the gains. In one way or the other, motivation always contributes towards learning and classroom discipline. Jones (1979) says" Discipline most simply stated is the business of enforcing simple classroom rules that facilitate learning and minimize disruption". Students who create disturbance often exhibit down turn in motivation resulting in negative attitude, uselessness and lack of interest in the classroom.

Madsen, Becker and Thomas (1968) claim that teacher can improve student's behaviour by ignoring rule-breaking and praising students who are following the rules, liberally praising the students with good behaviour while ignoring mistakes and misbehaviour. Classroom management is not wholly governed by this praise and ignore approach, but it adds to better behaviour a lot. Disruptive behaviour persists when teachers use positive consequences (mostly praise) as their classroom management strategy (McGoey & DuPual 2000;Pfiffner & O`Leary,1987). The praise rewarded to the students must reinforce behaviour and must be a sincere effort to back up students in order to gain positive results. Some psychologists have emphasized the fact that the use of praise tends to focus students on learning to win approvals rather than learning for its own sake. Student develops a special relationship with their teachers and they need to be appreciated and praised. Reinforcement is one of the best psychological techniques used to maintain discipline in classroom as well as better learning.

Procedures for desired behaviour include motivation, reinforcement, programmed instruction, praise and approval and self-specification. Reinforcement is sometimes limited in its effects on the students and it may ignore the threats of misbehaviour. However, reinforcement is productive when it is directly applied to the target students for better results. It can bring about academic performance and desired behaviour as well.

Teachers also draw a formal contact with the students specifying the performance standards that must be attained. This 'Contingency contracting' is utilized to get desired behaviour in conduct and in academic performance as well. This psychological technique sketches out a link between the teacher and the student and asserts self-control and self-management. Poorly motivated students can be contracted easily for the desired results. Self-control skills are also one of the tools for behaviour modification. (Meichenbanm1977). He called these

skills as 'Cognitive Behaviour Modification'. He describes five stages of this approach.

- an adult models a task while reading aloud
- Child performs the task while verbalizing self-instruction aloud.
- Child performs under the model-instruction.
- The child whispers self-instruction while doing the task.
- The child performs the task under self-guidance via speech.

This approach offers isolated learners to work with their peers, students to be more creative and helps students in controlling aggression.

The 'Turtle' technique of Robin, Schneider and Dolnick(1976) offers teachers to inculcate aggressive students to assume a turtle position when upset. They learnt to place their heads on the desk with closed eyes and clench fists. This activity disarms them to delay inappropriate behaviour and enables them to think about the problem constructively. The turtle position is not essential; the theme is to delay impulses and responses. Similarly, the 'Think Aloud' programme of Kamp & Dash (1981) is also designed to teach children to materialize cognitive development to direct their social behaviour and to overcome problems. These cognitive skills of self-control are very promising, both as instructional technique and remedy for students with emotional or behaviour problems (McLaughlin 1976, O`Leary & Dubey 1979).

Dreikurs (1968) attributes acts of behaviour problems as defensive reactions by the students who are discouraged or marginalized. He asserts that students who couldn't make good try to protect self-esteem. He also suggest that how teacher can analyse the purpose of disturbance created by the students and how to meet their psychological needs. Most of the psychologists argue about the cause and effect relation between the acts of disobedience, misbehaviour and the causes.

Conclusion

By peer checking it has been clear that Classroom management has been an important area in effective learning and behavioural problems decelerate the teaching learning process. Being authoritative and using severe punishment claim more harm than good. The best possible way to achieve required results is to manage the classroom using psychological techniques such as effective learning environment, supporting attitude of teachers, motivation, shaping desired behavior and individual analysis. All such techniques claim interdependent success in classroom management. These include respect for student's individuality, ability to understand and meet their needs, reliance on instruction rather than power-assertion and humanistic values generally.

Psychological techniques are systematic, organized mechanism that can contribute a lot in discipline and instructor can get desired result if they apply those techniques in a systematic way to motivate the their learners.

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