

MANAGEMENT IN CLASSROOM: WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how elementary teachers experience and implement Classroom Management and how such practices influence students' behavior and learning. It aimed to understand teachers' lived experiences, the perceived impacts of classroom structure, and their recommendations for improving management practices in elementary education. The study utilized a qualitative narrative research design to explore the real-life experiences of educators in handling classroom challenges and applying management strategies. A total of 17 teacher participants from different schools in the Municipality of Makilala were selected through purposive sampling. Ten teachers participated in in-depth interviews, while seven teachers joined a focus group discussion to collectively reflect on common classroom management experiences. Findings revealed that teachers value structured routines in organizing classroom processes, yet they also face challenges in maintaining consistency and balancing structure with flexibility to address diverse learner needs. Teachers observed that clear expectations and predictable routines enhanced student participation, improved behavior, and created a sense of stability and security in the learning environment, eventually leading students to internalize classroom norms. Participants further emphasized the importance of professional support, flexible routines, and student involvement in establishing classroom procedures. This study recommended strengthening teacher training, promoting collaborative support systems, and encouraging student participation in developing classroom routines to improve classroom management practices.

Keywords: *Education, classroom management, structured routines, teacher experiences, qualitative research, Municipality of Makilala, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Effective classroom management remains a global challenge, directly affecting teacher retention and student learning. Disruptive behaviors such as noise, disorder, inattention, and inappropriate technology use are major sources of stress for educators, with PISA (2018) reporting that 43% of students experience noise and disorder in most or every class (OECD, 2019). This difficulty contributes to teacher attrition, as 55% of educators considered leaving the profession in 2022 (Walker, 2022). Additionally, excessive workload, high job intensity, and poor school leadership often worsened by classroom disruptions further drive teacher turnover worldwide (Arnold & Rahimi, 2024).

Meanwhile, classroom management continues to pose challenges for teachers in the Philippines, especially in public schools. Impuesto (2024) reported that 72% of 328 teachers in Pasig City faced frequent disruptions such as noise, inattention, and misuse of technology. In the Visayas, Barredo (2025) found that 68% of elementary education student-teachers struggled with managing classroom behavior due to limited preparation and support. Likewise, Teves (2024) noted that 61.5% of preschool teachers rated their classroom management as "very high," showing strong discipline practices despite persistent difficulties.

Several interrelated factors contribute to classroom management becoming a persistent issue in the Philippine educational system. Teacher burnout and perceived self-efficacy are significant predictors: Pilos, Cañete, Calugas et al. (2024) found that high levels of burnout among high school teachers in Mawab, Davao de Oro, dramatically reduce effectiveness in classroom management. Likewise, the heavy workload and role overload are major stressors Magtalas & Eduvala (2024) reported that teachers' work/role overload is strongly associated with burnout, which undermines their ability to maintain order and consistency in classroom practices. Another factor is classroom size and professional development: Sayman, Basoc, & Ricaforte (2025) observed that larger class sizes negatively affect teaching effectiveness, especially when professional development is insufficient to equip teachers with strategies to manage diverse behaviors.

Although research on classroom management in the Philippines has expanded, most studies emphasize quantitative disruptions, teacher training, or novice experiences rather than the deeper lived realities of teachers. For instance, Mayanay and Sumalinog (2024) examined novice English teachers in Cebu City and revealed emotional and instructional struggles, while Caramay, Maningas, Yazon, Manaig, and Tesoro (2023) focused on English Literature teachers in digitalized classrooms, stressing technology adaptation but not the broader classroom management spectrum in traditional face-to-face settings. These works highlight important aspects but leave a gap in understanding how challenges differ across teacher experience levels, contexts, and modalities. Hence, there is a need for research that captures teachers' lived experiences more holistically to guide context-specific strategies and policies.

This study holds significant value for the educational system as it provides deeper insights into how teachers navigate classroom management challenges and the strategies they employ to maintain productive learning environments. By amplifying teachers' voices and lived experiences, the findings can guide school leaders and policymakers in designing more effective support systems, such as targeted professional development, workload management, and context-sensitive interventions. In addition, it contributes to the academic field by bridging gaps in existing literature, offering a more nuanced understanding of classroom realities across different contexts. Ultimately, the study can inform sustainable reforms that enhance teaching practices, strengthen teacher retention, and improve student engagement and achievement.

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative narrative research design to explore the real-life experiences of educators in handling classroom challenges and applying management strategies. This design focused on collecting detailed stories that revealed how teachers interpreted and responded to various situations in their teaching practice. Instead of emphasizing numbers or measurements, it valued the meaning and context of experiences, allowing a deeper understanding of the personal and professional factors that influenced teachers' approaches to maintaining effective classroom environments.

The study employed a narrative research design because it enabled an in-depth exploration of teachers' lived experiences through their own stories. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2020), narrative inquiry helps researchers understand experiences across social, temporal, and contextual dimensions. This design was appropriate because it highlighted authentic teacher perspectives, providing valuable insights into how teachers developed and adapted strategies for managing classroom challenges.

Participants

This study involved a total of 17 teacher participants from different schools within the Municipality of Makilala, selected through purposive sampling. Out of these, 10 teachers participated in in-depth interviews to share their detailed personal experiences, while 7 teachers joined a focus group discussion to collectively reflect on common challenges and strategies in classroom management. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposive sampling is effective in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to select information-rich cases that offer depth of understanding rather than breadth of generalization.

The inclusion criteria for this study consisted of teachers who were currently employed in public or private secondary schools within the Municipality of Makilala, had at least one year of teaching experience, and were willing to

participate in the interview process. Those who did not meet the minimum teaching experience, were currently on leave, or were not assigned to classroom teaching were excluded from the study.

Data Collection Tools

This study employed semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussion (FGD) protocols as the primary data collection tools. The semi-structured interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit teachers' detailed experiences, reflections, and strategies in managing classroom situations. Meanwhile, the FGD protocol encouraged collaborative discussion among participants to identify shared themes and differing perspectives regarding classroom management practices. Both tools were validated by experts in education and research to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Audio recordings and field notes were also used to accurately capture participants' responses for later transcription and analysis.

Procedures

The research began with the identification and selection of qualified teacher participants through purposive sampling from various schools within the Municipality of Makilala. After obtaining informed consent, the researcher scheduled individual interviews with ten teachers and a focus group discussion with seven participants. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes, while the FGD ran for about an hour. The sessions were conducted in a comfortable and confidential setting to promote openness and authenticity. All data-gathering activities were recorded, with participants' permission, and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality and voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the process.

Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data were analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological method of data analysis. The process began with familiarization with the transcripts through repeated reading to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' narratives. Significant statements relevant to the research questions were identified and extracted, after which meanings were formulated from these statements. The formulated meanings were then organized into clusters of themes, which represented the common patterns found in teachers' experiences of classroom management. These themes were integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon to capture the essence of the participants' experiences. Finally, the findings were validated through member checking to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected the teachers' perspectives and lived experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Lived Experiences in Implementing Classroom Management

This section presents the lived experiences of teachers in implementing Classroom Management in elementary education. The table summarizes the themes derived from the participants' responses gathered through in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD). Four major themes emerged from the analysis: Value of structure in organizing classroom processes, Demands and challenges of sustaining structured management, Negotiating between rigidity and flexibility, and Gradual student adaptation and growing responsibility. These themes illustrate how teachers experience both the benefits and complexities of implementing structured management systems in the classroom. The table shows the issues explored, corresponding codes, significant statements, themes, and the meanings derived from the participants' experiences.

Table 1. Lived Experiences in Implementing Classroom Management

Issues Probe	Codes / Category	Significant Statements	Themes	Meanings
Organizing classroom routines	IDI 1; IDI 2; IDI 4; IDI 5; FGD 2	clear class rules; structured seating; organized lessons; clear procedures; reduced confusion	Value of structure in organizing classroom processes	Structure organizes teaching
Challenges in maintaining structure	IDI 1; IDI 2; IDI 6; IDI 7; FGD 1	consistency difficulty; large class size; time management issues; unexpected disruptions; limited parental support	Demands and challenges of sustaining structured management	Maintaining structure difficult
Balancing structure and learner needs	IDI 3; IDI 4; IDI 5; IDI 8; FGD 5	visual schedules; motivation challenge; diverse learner needs; discipline flexibility balance; varying student needs	Negotiating between rigidity and flexibility	Balance structure flexibility
Student adjustment to routines	IDI 1; IDI 3; IDI 6; IDI 7; FGD 7	initial routine resistance; smooth task transitions; student independence; peer reminders rules; independent rule following	Gradual student adaptation and growing responsibility	Students adapt gradually

Theme 1: Value of Structure in Organizing Classroom Processes

This theme highlights how Classroom Management systems help teachers organize daily classroom activities and instructional processes. Participants emphasized that establishing clear routines, procedures, seating arrangements, and rules contributes to an orderly learning environment where expectations are clearly communicated. Structure allows teachers to maintain focus during lessons while minimizing confusion among students. Within the context of the study on Structural Management in Classroom: What Works, What Doesn't in Elementary Education, this theme illustrates that structured management works effectively when routines and expectations are consistently implemented. Teachers perceive structured systems as a practical tool that promotes organization, facilitates lesson flow, and supports classroom control, although continuous reinforcement and preparation are required to maintain their effectiveness.

"From my experience teaching in elementary classes, structured routines like clear rules and daily schedules helped maintain order, although adjustments were needed depending on learner behavior and contextual classroom situations." (IDI 1)

"In my classroom, using structured seating arrangements and time-bound activities created a more focused learning environment, though it required continuous monitoring to ensure all learners followed expectations and stayed engaged during lessons." (IDI 2)

"Applying structured management strategies helped me organize lessons effectively, especially through consistent routines and behavioral expectations, though it required constant reinforcement to ensure that all students remained aligned with classroom rules." (IDI 4)

"In practice, Classroom Management provided clarity for both teaching and learning processes, especially through clear rules and procedures, although it demanded consistency and preparation to implement effectively across different subjects and activities." (IDI 5)

"I mentioned that structured seating and routines improved my class, and others agreed, saying that clear expectations helped reduce confusion, making

students more focused and allowing lessons to proceed more smoothly overall.” (FGD 2)

The findings are supported by existing literature emphasizing the importance of structured classroom environments in improving instructional organization and student engagement. Research by Patall et al. (2023) highlights that providing clear classroom structure enhances students' academic competence beliefs, engagement, and learning outcomes because predictable routines allow learners to focus more on learning tasks rather than behavioral expectations. Similarly, Richardson et al. (2023) explain that well-established classroom procedures contribute to safe and supportive learning environments where students clearly understand behavioral boundaries and academic expectations.

In addition, Ahmed and Du Plessis (2024) found that teachers who consistently apply structured management strategies experience improved classroom order and greater instructional efficiency, particularly in elementary classrooms where students require clear guidance and organization. Supporting this perspective, Gunersel et al. (2023) reported that structured routines, rules, and procedures enable teachers to maintain smoother instructional flow and minimize behavioral disruptions during classroom activities. Furthermore, Putra (2025) concluded through a meta-analysis that Classroom Management strategies significantly contribute to improved student achievement and classroom stability because consistent organization helps learners develop self-regulation and responsible learning behaviors.

Theme 2: Demands and Challenges of Sustaining Structured Management

This theme describes the practical difficulties teachers encounter when trying to maintain Classroom Management consistently. While structured systems provide organization, participants explained that sustaining them requires constant effort due to factors such as large class sizes, diverse student backgrounds, time constraints, and unexpected disruptions. These challenges demonstrate that although structured management can be effective, maintaining it is not always straightforward. Within the context of the study, this theme represents what **does not always work easily** in structural classroom management specifically, the difficulty of sustaining consistency across varying classroom realities. Teachers must continuously adapt their strategies to maintain structure while addressing external and contextual challenges affecting classroom dynamics.

“One difficulty encountered was consistency, especially when students came from varied home environments, making it hard to reinforce rules daily, and sometimes limited parental support affected how well structured systems were followed.” (IDI 1)

“A major challenge involved managing large class sizes, where maintaining structure became difficult, and some students tended to disrupt routines, requiring additional interventions and patience to sustain consistency across different learning abilities.” (IDI 2)

“One challenge was time management, as implementing structured routines sometimes consumed instructional time, especially when students needed repeated reminders or guidance to follow procedures correctly during the early stages of implementation.” (IDI 6)

“I found it difficult to maintain strict routines when unexpected situations arose, such as absenteeism or varied student moods, which sometimes disrupted the consistency needed for structured management to be fully effective.” (IDI 7)

“As we shared, I agreed with others that maintaining consistency is difficult, especially when students come from different backgrounds, and some mentioned that lack of parental support makes structured routines harder to sustain.” (FGD 1)

Scholarly literature acknowledges that implementing Classroom Management involves numerous contextual challenges. Lawson et al. (2022) explain that teachers often face barriers when implementing behavioral classroom interventions, including limited resources, inconsistent student support systems, and varying classroom conditions that complicate consistent management practices. Similarly, Gülmez and Ordu (2022) reported that teachers frequently struggle with maintaining classroom order after the pandemic due to changes in student behavior and learning habits, which require additional effort to reestablish structured routines. In another study, Impuesto (2024) emphasized that teachers' work conditions including class size, workload, and available support significantly influence their ability to implement effective classroom management strategies.

Furthermore, Barredo (2025) found that student teachers commonly experience difficulty sustaining classroom structure due to limited experience in managing disruptions and maintaining behavioral expectations across diverse learners. Likewise, Glover, Hamel, and Hubbard (2025) noted that early-career teachers often describe classroom management as overwhelming because they must simultaneously manage instruction, behavior, and environmental demands,

making the consistent application of structured systems challenging in real classroom settings.

Theme 3: Negotiating Between Rigidity and Flexibility

This theme reflects the teachers' experiences in balancing structured classroom systems with the diverse needs of learners. Participants explained that while structure is necessary for maintaining order, overly rigid systems may limit creativity, motivation, and responsiveness to individual student differences. Teachers therefore need to negotiate between maintaining structure and adapting strategies to accommodate varying learning styles and behavioral needs. In relation to the study, this theme highlights that effective structural classroom management requires flexible implementation, demonstrating that what works is not simply strict structure but rather the thoughtful adjustment of structured systems to address diverse classroom situations.

“Classroom Management in my teaching involved clear instructions and visual schedules, which supported learners in understanding expectations, though flexibility was sometimes necessary when unexpected behaviors or interruptions occurred during daily lessons.” (IDI 3)

“The biggest challenge was maintaining student motivation within structured systems, as some learners felt restricted, requiring creative approaches to balance structure with engagement and ensure that routines did not become monotonous or overly rigid.” (IDI 4)

“A common difficulty was addressing diverse learner needs within a structured system, as some students required flexibility, making it challenging to apply uniform rules without adjusting approaches for varying academic and behavioral levels.” (IDI 5)

“One challenge I encountered was balancing discipline and flexibility, as overly strict routines sometimes limited creativity, requiring adjustments to ensure that students remained engaged while still maintaining an organized classroom environment.” (IDI 8)

“I agreed with others that addressing different learner needs is challenging, as some students require flexibility,

and participants added that applying the same structure to all learners does not always work effectively.” (FGD 5)

Research literature supports the importance of balancing structure with flexibility in classroom management practices. Rahadian and Budiningsih (2023) emphasized that effective classroom management should consider individual learning styles, as rigid systems may fail to accommodate diverse student needs. Similarly, He et al. (2024) demonstrated that teachers' behavior management strategies significantly influence students' learning behaviors, highlighting the importance of adapting management approaches to support engagement and motivation. In another study, Wedde et al. (2023) found that teachers who develop strong professional vision in classroom management are better able to adjust structured strategies based on classroom contexts and student responses. Furthermore, Woodcock (2024) reported that early-career teachers often learn to balance structured expectations with adaptive teaching approaches in order to maintain both discipline and student engagement. Supporting these findings, Korpershoek (2024) explained that while Classroom Management positively affects student outcomes, its effectiveness increases when teachers integrate flexibility and responsiveness to student needs within the structured system.

Theme 4: Gradual Student Adaptation and Growing Responsibility

This theme highlights how students gradually adjust to structured classroom routines over time. Teachers observed that while learners initially resist structured systems, consistent implementation eventually leads to improved responsibility, independence, and collaboration among students. As routines become familiar, learners begin to follow rules independently, assist classmates, and transition smoothly between tasks. Within the context of the study, this theme demonstrates that Classroom Management works effectively in the long term because consistent routines promote student self-regulation and accountability. The experiences of teachers suggest that the success of structural management often emerges gradually as students internalize expectations and become active participants in maintaining classroom order.

“There was a time students initially resisted strict routines, but over weeks, they became more organized, participated actively, and even reminded peers about rules, showing gradual acceptance and improved responsibility within classroom tasks.” (IDI 1)

“I noticed that after consistent implementation, students began transitioning smoothly between tasks, showed less confusion, and demonstrated better independence, especially when routines became

familiar and predictable in our daily classroom activities.” (IDI 3)

“Students initially struggled with routines, but eventually became more independent, managing their materials and time effectively, which resulted in smoother class transitions and a more productive overall learning environment.” (IDI 6)

“Eventually, students became more responsible, following routines with less prompting, and even assisting classmates, showing that consistent structure encouraged collaboration and accountability within the classroom setting.” (IDI 7)

“I shared that students became more responsible, and others agreed, noting that with consistent routines, learners begin to follow rules independently and even support their classmates in maintaining classroom order.” (FGD 7)

Empirical research emphasizes that consistent classroom routines gradually shape students' behavioral patterns and learning habits. Major (2024) found that Classroom Management programs significantly improve children's behavior and engagement because consistent expectations allow students to develop self-regulation and positive learning habits. Similarly, Wilkins et al. (2022) reported that classroom management approaches that emphasize consistent routines and supportive teacher guidance promote stronger school connectedness and improved student participation. In another study, Deeba, Ahmad, and Rehman (2022) highlighted that structured classroom environments encourage responsible behavior and smoother transitions between activities as students internalize classroom expectations over time. Additionally, Tekir (2025) noted that empirical classroom management studies consistently demonstrate that predictable routines contribute to improved classroom climate and long-term behavioral adjustment among students. Finally, Ki (2025) found that teachers' classroom management efficacy positively influences students' interest and engagement, particularly when routines are consistently reinforced, enabling students to develop independence and responsibility within structured learning environments.

Impacts of Classroom Management Approach

The table below presents the meanings and impacts of Classroom Management on student behavior and learning in elementary education. It highlights how teachers perceive the influence of structured routines,

expectations, and classroom systems on students' participation, behavior, and engagement. Four major themes emerged from the qualitative analysis: Enhanced participation through clarity and predictability, Positive behavioral transformation, Source of security and stability, and Ownership of classroom norms. The table shows the issues probed, the corresponding codes or categories derived from interviews and focus group discussions, significant participant statements, the identified themes, and the interpreted meanings.

Table 2. Impacts of Classroom Management Approach

Issues Probe	Codes / Category	Significant Statements	Themes	Meanings
Participation under structured routines	IDI 1; IDI 2; IDI 3; IDI 4; FGD 1	clear expectations participation; confident quiet learners; step-by-step guidance; predictable routines engagement; organized class participation	Enhanced participation through clarity and predictability	Clarity increases participation
Behavior change through routines	IDI 1; IDI 2; IDI 4; IDI 9; FGD 1	attentive student change; reduced disruptive behavior; improved rule following; better classroom discipline; responsible student behavior	Positive behavioral transformation	Structure improves behavior
Sense of stability in learning	IDI 3; IDI 6; IDI 9; IDI 10; FGD 4	classroom stability routines; reduced learning confusion; predictable environment; confident learner participation; secure classroom expectations	Source of security and stability	Structure provides security
Student acceptance of rules	IDI 1; IDI 2; IDI 7; IDI 9; FGD 1	questioning routines initially; gradual student cooperation; peer encouragement routines; familiar classroom rules; acceptance classroom system	Ownership of classroom norms	Students internalize norms

Theme 1: Enhanced participation through clarity and predictability

This theme highlights how structured classroom routines and clearly communicated expectations contribute to increased student participation. Teachers observed that when procedures and learning tasks were organized and predictable, learners especially those who were typically quiet or hesitant felt more confident contributing to classroom discussions and activities. Structured guidance allowed students to understand when and how to participate, reducing uncertainty and encouraging active engagement. Within the context of the study on structural management in elementary classrooms, the findings demonstrate that clarity in routines and instructions serves as a mechanism for inclusive participation. By providing a predictable learning environment, teachers enable students to focus on learning tasks rather than navigating unclear expectations, ultimately strengthening engagement and collaborative classroom interaction.

"In my class, structured routines encouraged more students to participate because expectations were clear, and even quieter learners felt more confident contributing during discussions and activities since they understood what was expected." (IDI 1)

"Participation improved in my classroom because structured strategies helped students feel secure, especially when tasks were clearly outlined, allowing them to focus more on learning rather than guessing what they were supposed to do." (IDI 2)

"When I applied structured management, I noticed that participation became more consistent, as students were guided step by step, making them more willing to engage, especially during group activities where roles were clearly defined." (IDI 3)

"My strategies helped increase participation because students knew when and how to contribute, reducing confusion, and even those who were usually passive started engaging more actively when routines became familiar and predictable." (IDI 4)

"In my class, participation increased with clear routines, and others here experience the same, especially when expectations are consistent, because even shy students

feel more confident and understand what to do.” (FGD 1)

Research literature supports the idea that structured classroom environments significantly enhance student participation and engagement. Studies emphasize that when teachers establish clear routines, expectations, and organized learning procedures, students demonstrate greater willingness to participate because the classroom environment becomes predictable and supportive. For instance, Patall et al. (2023) found through a meta-analysis that teacher-provided classroom structure positively influences students' academic competence beliefs and engagement, as clear expectations reduce ambiguity and foster confidence in learning tasks. Similarly, Richardson et al. (2023) highlighted that structured classroom practices, including explicit instructions and predictable routines, contribute to a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable participating and expressing ideas. In addition, He et al. (2024) reported that well-organized behavioral management strategies enhance student engagement by guiding learners' actions and clarifying expected behaviors during academic activities. From a teacher perspective, Ahmed and Du Plessis (2024) also noted that effective classroom management practices improve learner participation and academic outcomes because students understand the structure within which learning occurs. Furthermore, Putra (2025), in a meta-analytic review of classroom management strategies, concluded that structured instructional environments consistently lead to improved student engagement and active participation, as organized routines provide learners with cognitive and behavioral guidance necessary for effective classroom interaction.

Theme 2: Positive behavioral transformation

This theme illustrates how consistent implementation of classroom routines and rules contributes to observable improvements in student behavior. Teachers reported that students who previously displayed disruptive or inattentive behaviors gradually became more disciplined when expectations and consequences were consistently applied. Structured management provided a framework for reinforcing appropriate behaviors while discouraging disruptive actions. Within the study on structural classroom management, the findings suggest that consistency in routines and rules allows students to understand behavioral expectations and adapt their conduct accordingly. Over time, learners develop better self-regulation and responsibility, leading to improved classroom discipline and a more productive learning environment.

“There was a learner before who rarely followed instructions, but when I consistently applied structured routines and clear consequences, the student gradually

became more attentive and started completing tasks without constant reminders.” (IDI 1)

“I remember one student who was often disruptive, but after implementing consistent seating arrangements and clear rules, the student began to settle down, follow instructions better, and participate more appropriately during class activities.” (IDI 2)

“I had a student who often ignored instructions, but after I consistently reinforced rules and routines, the student began following directions and even volunteered during activities, showing noticeable behavioral improvement.” (IDI 4)

“I remember a student who frequently broke rules, but after consistent implementation of structured management, the student began to follow instructions more carefully and showed improved behavior during lessons.” (IDI 9)

“I experienced a student improving behavior after consistent routines, and others here had similar cases, where clear expectations helped learners become more attentive, responsible, and actively involved during classroom activities.” (FGD 1)

Existing literature widely recognizes the role of Classroom Management in shaping positive student behavior. Research indicates that consistent routines, clear behavioral expectations, and systematic reinforcement of rules help students develop self-discipline and behavioral regulation. According to Aldabbagh et al. (2022), teacher interventions that incorporate consistent classroom management strategies significantly reduce disruptive behaviors and improve student conduct across educational settings. Likewise, Lawson et al. (2022) identified that effective behavioral classroom interventions depend largely on the clarity and consistency of rules and routines, which guide students toward appropriate behavior while minimizing confusion about expectations.

In a similar vein, Major (2024) reported that structured teacher management programs positively influence children's behavioral outcomes by reinforcing positive conduct and providing consistent consequences for inappropriate actions. Empirical evidence from Catayas and Hussien (2024) further demonstrates that well-implemented classroom management practices correlate with improved discipline and academic engagement among elementary learners. Moreover, Lundahl (2025) concluded that evidence-based

classroom management strategies significantly contribute to behavioral improvement and academic performance because structured environments encourage accountability, responsibility, and adherence to classroom norms among students.

Theme 3: Source of security and stability

This theme reflects how structured classroom routines create a sense of security and stability for learners. Teachers observed that predictable routines reduced confusion and uncertainty among students, enabling them to approach learning activities with greater confidence. As routines became familiar, students felt more comfortable participating in classroom discussions and completing tasks. Within the framework of structural classroom management, these findings highlight the importance of stability in supporting learners' emotional and academic engagement. When students perceive the classroom as an organized and predictable environment, they are more likely to feel safe, prepared, and motivated to participate in the learning process.

"Most students responded positively after some time, as routines provided a sense of stability, and they eventually followed rules with minimal reminders, showing improved discipline and engagement in classroom activities." (IDI 3)

"Student participation improved as structured routines minimized confusion, allowing learners to focus on tasks, and even those with lower confidence began contributing more when they became familiar with classroom expectations and procedures." (IDI 6)

"Participation became more consistent in my class because structured routines reduced uncertainty, helping students feel more prepared, which encouraged them to take part in discussions and complete activities with greater confidence." (IDI 9)

"Structured strategies positively influenced participation because students clearly understood expectations, and even reluctant learners became more engaged when routines provided a predictable learning environment that supported their involvement in activities." (IDI 10)

"I noticed that clear routines encourage participation, and others agreed, especially when students feel secure and confident with consistent expectations, which helps them

engage more actively during lessons and classroom activities.” (FGD 4)

Scholarly literature highlights the role of structured classroom environments in promoting psychological security and academic engagement among learners. Research indicates that predictable routines and consistent instructional procedures provide students with a stable learning environment that reduces anxiety and uncertainty. Wilkins et al. (2022) emphasize that Classroom Management practices promote school connectedness and emotional safety by helping students understand expectations and feel supported within the learning environment. Similarly, Wedde et al. (2023) explain that effective classroom management frameworks improve learning outcomes because structured instructional contexts allow students to focus cognitive resources on learning tasks rather than on interpreting unclear procedures.

From a teacher perspective, Woodcock (2024) found that well-structured classroom environments enhance students' confidence and willingness to engage because learners feel secure within predictable routines. Furthermore, Depuydt (2024) observed that structured classroom practices strengthen student engagement by establishing a reliable environment where expectations remain consistent across activities and lessons. Supporting this perspective, Tekir (2025) concluded that contemporary classroom management research consistently demonstrates that structured routines and predictable learning systems are essential in creating supportive learning environments that promote student confidence, engagement, and overall academic success.

Theme 4: Ownership of classroom norms

This theme describes the process through which students gradually transition from initial resistance to eventual acceptance and ownership of classroom routines and expectations. Teachers reported that some learners initially questioned structured systems or found routines difficult to follow. However, as consistency was maintained, students began to adapt to the classroom structure and eventually embraced the established norms. In some cases, students even reminded their peers about expected behaviors, demonstrating internalization of classroom rules. Within the context of structural classroom management in elementary education, this theme highlights the importance of persistence and consistency in implementing routines. Over time, structured systems encourage students to develop responsibility for maintaining classroom order and contributing positively to the learning environment.

“At first, some students questioned the routines, but as consistency was maintained, they became more comfortable, followed rules more willingly, and even reminded classmates, showing acceptance and understanding of the classroom system.” (IDI 1)

“Students initially reacted with hesitation, especially those not used to routines, but over time, they became more cooperative, and I observed that they followed classroom expectations more naturally and with less resistance.” (IDI 2)

“Initially, students showed some resistance, but over time, they adapted, and I noticed that they followed routines more consistently and even encouraged their peers to do the same.” (IDI 7)

“At first, students found routines challenging, but as they became familiar, they followed rules more easily and demonstrated improved behavior and cooperation in classroom activities.” (IDI 9)

“At first, students resisted routines, and others noticed the same, but over time they became more accepting, followed rules consistently, and even reminded classmates about expected behaviors during classroom activities.” (FGD 1)

Literature on classroom management supports the gradual internalization of classroom norms when consistent routines and expectations are implemented. Studies indicate that although students may initially resist structured systems, sustained and consistent implementation helps learners adapt and eventually internalize classroom rules. Karasova et al. (2021) explain that novice teachers who consistently enforce classroom routines observe gradual behavioral adjustment among students as learners become accustomed to the established expectations.

Similarly, Mayanay and Sumalinog (2024) found that when teachers maintain consistent classroom management strategies, students gradually develop self-discipline and cooperative behaviors as they understand the purpose of classroom norms. From a behavioral perspective, Leeder (2022) emphasizes that repeated reinforcement of expected behaviors strengthens behavioral patterns, enabling students to internalize rules and demonstrate self-regulation over time. Supporting this perspective, Nawi (2025) highlights that behaviorist learning principles emphasize consistent reinforcement and structured guidance as mechanisms for shaping learner behavior and promoting responsibility. Moreover, Horvath (2025) noted that effective classroom management systems eventually lead students to assume shared responsibility for maintaining order and supporting positive classroom culture, as learners begin to value and uphold the norms that structure their learning environment.

Recommendations for Improving Classroom Management

The table presents the recommendations of teachers for improving Classroom Management in elementary education based on the participants' lived experiences. The data reveal four major themes that reflect practical insights from teachers regarding how classroom structure can be strengthened and sustained in real classroom contexts. These themes include: (1) Need for classroom management, (2) the need for sustained professional and institutional support, (3) Need to promote student voice and ownership of routines, and (4) Need for novice teachers. The table shows the issues raised by participants, their coded responses, significant statements, and the meanings derived from these experiences. Overall, the responses demonstrate that effective structural management in classrooms does not rely solely on rigid rules but rather on adaptable systems, professional support, student participation, and continuous teacher learning.

Table 3. Recommendations for Improving Classroom Management

Issues Probe	Codes / Category	Significant Statements	Themes	Meanings
Improving structure and engagement	IDI 1; IDI 3; IDI 5; IDI 7; FGD 3	flexible structured routines; balance structure engagement; adaptable management routines; responsive student needs; balance flexibility structure teacher training support; mentoring programs teachers; administrative leadership support; instructional resource access; professional collaboration sharing student feedback routines; student routine involvement; shared classroom decisions; responsible learner participation; student-created routines	Need for classroom management	Flexibility improves structure
Teacher support and resources	IDI 1; IDI 2; IDI 3; IDI 4; FGD 1	flexible structured routines; balance structure engagement; adaptable management routines; responsive student needs; balance flexibility structure teacher training support; mentoring programs teachers; administrative leadership support; instructional resource access; professional collaboration sharing student feedback routines; student routine involvement; shared classroom decisions; responsible learner participation; student-created routines	Need for sustained professional and institutional support	Support strengthens practice
Student participation in routines	IDI 2; IDI 6; IDI 10; FGD 2; FGD 6	flexible structured routines; balance structure engagement; adaptable management routines; responsive student needs; balance flexibility structure teacher training support; mentoring programs teachers; administrative leadership support; instructional resource access; professional collaboration sharing student feedback routines; student routine involvement; shared classroom decisions; responsible learner participation; student-created routines	Need to promote student voice and ownership of routines	Student ownership improves behavior

Issues Probe	Codes / Category	Significant Statements	Themes	Meanings
Advice for beginning teachers	IDI 1; IDI 2; IDI 3; IDI 4; FGD 2	start simple routines; establish clear rules; observe student responses; patient consistent teaching; build student relationships	Need for novice teachers	Guidance supports beginners

Theme 1: Need for classroom management

This theme emphasizes that effective Classroom Management in elementary education requires a balance between consistency and adaptability. Teachers indicated that while structured routines are necessary to maintain order and clarity in the classroom, these routines should not be overly rigid. Instead, they should allow flexibility to respond to students' diverse learning needs, classroom dynamics, and engagement levels. Participants highlighted that structured systems work best when teachers can modify routines, pacing, and instructional strategies based on real-time classroom situations. In relation to the study on structural management in classrooms, this theme demonstrates that successful classroom management depends not only on establishing rules but also on implementing them in ways that support student engagement and responsiveness. Flexible structures help teachers maintain discipline while simultaneously promoting active participation and motivation among learners.

“Improving classroom management requires more flexibility within structured systems, allowing teachers to adjust routines based on student needs, while still maintaining consistency to ensure that expectations remain clear and effective for learners.” (IDI 1)

“To improve classroom management, there should be a balance between structure and student-centered approaches, allowing flexibility in teaching methods while still maintaining clear routines that guide student behavior and classroom organization.” (IDI 3)

“One important change is to make structured management more adaptable, allowing teachers to modify routines based on class dynamics while maintaining consistency, ensuring that both discipline and engagement are effectively balanced in the classroom.” (IDI 5)

"I suggest making classroom management more responsive to student needs by allowing some flexibility within structured routines, ensuring that while order is maintained, students remain engaged and motivated throughout learning activities." (IDI 7)

"In my case, balancing structure and flexibility works best, and others also mentioned that strict routines sometimes do not work for all students, especially those who need more guidance and adjustments." (FGD 3)

The importance of balancing structured routines with adaptability is widely supported in contemporary classroom management research. Studies indicate that structured classroom environments contribute significantly to students' academic engagement and behavioral regulation, particularly when teachers provide clear expectations and organized routines (Patall et al., 2023). However, effective classroom management also requires responsiveness to individual student needs and classroom dynamics, allowing teachers to adjust strategies to maintain engagement and learning effectiveness (Gülmez & Ordu, 2022). Research further suggests that flexible instructional approaches help teachers sustain positive learning environments, especially in elementary settings where students have varying behavioral and learning needs (Rahadian & Budiningsih, 2023). Similarly, evidence from teacher experiences demonstrates that adaptive management strategies enable educators to maintain both discipline and student participation simultaneously (Gee, 2023). Moreover, studies highlight that when classroom structures are implemented with a degree of flexibility, they promote higher levels of student motivation and learning engagement, strengthening the overall effectiveness of classroom management systems (Putra, 2025).

Theme 2: Need for Sustained Professional and Institutional Support

This theme highlights the importance of continuous professional development, administrative support, and collaborative opportunities in strengthening teachers' capacity to implement Classroom Management. Participants emphasized that effective classroom management is not solely dependent on individual teacher efforts but also requires institutional support systems. Teachers expressed the need for regular training, mentoring programs, instructional resources, and supportive leadership to enhance their classroom management strategies. In the context of the study, this theme illustrates that Classroom Management becomes more effective when schools provide consistent professional support that enables teachers to refine their practices, share strategies with colleagues, and address classroom challenges more confidently.

“Teachers would benefit from regular training, access to updated teaching materials, and administrative support, as well as opportunities to share strategies with colleagues to improve their ability to implement structured management effectively.” (IDI 1)

“Support such as professional development workshops, mentoring programs, and accessible instructional resources would greatly help teachers strengthen their management strategies and adapt them effectively to different classroom situations and learner needs.” (IDI 2)

“Having access to mentoring from experienced teachers, sufficient classroom materials, and strong administrative guidance would support teachers in applying structured management strategies more effectively and confidently in their daily teaching practices.” (IDI 3)

“Teachers need continuous training, collaborative planning opportunities, and support from school leaders, as well as access to instructional tools that can help reinforce structured management practices effectively in diverse classroom settings.” (IDI 4)

“From what we discussed, regular training and sharing of strategies really help, especially when teachers learn from each other’s experiences and receive support from school heads in implementing structured approaches effectively.” (FGD 1)

Scholarly literature consistently emphasizes the role of institutional and professional support in strengthening classroom management practices. Research indicates that ongoing professional development significantly improves teachers’ ability to implement effective behavioral and instructional management strategies in classrooms (Obbe et al., 2022). Furthermore, collaborative professional learning communities provide teachers with opportunities to exchange practical experiences, reflect on classroom challenges, and develop more effective management approaches (Richardson et al., 2023). Evidence also suggests that administrative support and access to adequate teaching resources enhance teachers’ confidence and effectiveness in maintaining structured classroom environments (Impuesto, 2024). In addition, mentoring programs for teachers have been shown to help educators develop

stronger classroom management competencies through guided practice and reflective learning (Du Plessis, 2025). Moreover, studies indicate that teachers who receive sustained institutional support demonstrate improved classroom organization, greater instructional efficiency, and stronger student engagement outcomes (Sayman et al., 2025).

Theme 3: Need to promote student voice and ownership of routines

This theme reflects the importance of involving students in establishing and maintaining classroom routines. Teachers reported that when students are given opportunities to contribute to classroom rules, routines, and decision-making processes, they develop a stronger sense of responsibility and accountability. Participants observed that student participation in routine development promotes positive behavior and greater engagement in classroom activities. In relation to the study, this theme highlights that Classroom Management is more effective when it integrates student voice and shared responsibility. Rather than imposing rules solely from the teacher's authority, collaborative routines foster mutual respect and encourage students to take ownership of their learning environment.

"I believe classroom management can improve by incorporating student feedback into routines, allowing them to feel involved, while still maintaining structure to ensure that classroom expectations are clear and consistently followed." (IDI 2)

"Improving classroom management involves providing more opportunities for student involvement in setting routines, which can increase their sense of responsibility while still maintaining structure that guides behavior and learning processes effectively." (IDI 6)

"I believe classroom management can improve by incorporating student feedback into routines, allowing them to feel involved, while still maintaining structure to ensure that classroom expectations are clear and consistently followed." (IDI 10)

"I noticed that when students are involved in setting routines, they follow rules better, and others here seem to experience that too, especially when learners feel included and responsible in classroom decisions." (FGD 2)

"I also noticed that involving students in creating routines improves behavior, and others agreed that when students

feel responsible, they are more likely to follow rules and stay engaged in classroom activities.” (FGD 6)

Research supports the idea that student participation in classroom decision-making contributes significantly to positive behavioral and academic outcomes. Studies show that when learners feel a sense of ownership over classroom rules and routines, they are more likely to comply with expectations and demonstrate responsible behavior (Wilkins et al., 2022). Furthermore, participatory classroom management practices encourage student autonomy and strengthen their sense of belonging within the learning environment (Moskowitz, 2023). Evidence also indicates that collaborative rule-setting fosters mutual respect between teachers and students, creating more supportive classroom climates (He et al., 2024). Additionally, research highlights that involving students in establishing routines can enhance their engagement and motivation, particularly in elementary education where participatory learning environments are highly influential (Tekir, 2025). Finally, findings suggest that shared classroom decision-making processes promote behavioral self-regulation and strengthen students' commitment to maintaining a positive learning environment (Major, 2024).

Theme 4: Need for novice teachers

This theme presents practical advice from experienced teachers for beginning educators who are developing their classroom management practices. Participants emphasized the importance of establishing clear rules, maintaining consistent routines, observing student responses, and building strong teacher–student relationships. Teachers highlighted that novice educators should begin with simple structures and gradually refine their strategies as they gain experience and understand their students better. Within the context of the study, this theme demonstrates that effective structural classroom management evolves through practice, reflection, and relationship-building. For new teachers, developing consistent routines and maintaining patience are key strategies that support the creation of stable and productive classroom environments.

“For new teachers, I would suggest starting with simple routines and being consistent, while gradually introducing more structure, ensuring that students understand expectations clearly and that patience is practiced during the adjustment period.” (IDI 1)

“I would advise new teachers to establish clear rules early, remain consistent in implementing them, and build positive relationships with students, as this combination supports effective Classroom Management over time.” (IDI 2)

“My advice would be to stay consistent with routines, observe student responses carefully, and be willing to adjust strategies when needed, as flexibility and reflection are important in maintaining effective classroom management.” (IDI 3)

“I would tell new teachers to be patient and consistent, clearly explain expectations, and gradually build routines, as students need time to adjust and understand the structure being implemented in the classroom.” (IDI 4)

“From our shared experiences, it really helps to establish clear rules early and stay consistent, while also building good relationships with students so they feel guided rather than controlled in class.” (FGD 2)

Literature strongly supports the importance of structured guidance for novice teachers as they develop classroom management competencies. Research indicates that beginning teachers often struggle with classroom management due to limited experience in establishing routines and responding to behavioral challenges (Woodcock, 2024). Studies also highlight that clear expectations, consistent rule implementation, and positive teacher–student relationships are essential foundations for effective classroom environments (Ahmed & Du Plessis, 2024). Additionally, research suggests that novice teachers benefit significantly from reflective practices and observation of student responses, allowing them to adapt their management strategies over time (Karasova et al., 2021). Evidence further demonstrates that early career teachers who establish structured routines and supportive relationships experience fewer behavioral disruptions and greater instructional effectiveness (Mayanay & Sumalinog, 2024). Moreover, findings indicate that gradual development of classroom management skills through experience, mentorship, and reflective practice helps new teachers build confidence and competence in managing diverse classroom situations (Glover et al., 2025).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study provide important insights for improving classroom management practices, teacher preparation, and institutional support in elementary education.

1. The findings from the first research question revealed that teachers value structure for organizing classroom routines and processes, yet they also experience challenges such as maintaining consistency, managing large

classes, and addressing diverse learner needs. These experiences imply that classroom management should not be implemented as rigid control but rather as a flexible system that allows teachers to adjust routines and expectations based on classroom realities. Schools and educational leaders may therefore encourage teachers to design clear classroom procedures while also providing room for instructional adjustments that respond to students' behavioral and learning needs.

2. The results related to the second research question demonstrated that classroom management contributes to improved student participation, positive behavioral changes, and a more stable classroom environment. When routines and expectations are clearly communicated, students tend to become more engaged, responsible, and confident in participating in learning activities. This implies that Classroom Management practices can serve as an important strategy for promoting both academic engagement and behavioral development among elementary learners.
3. The findings addressing the third research question indicate that teachers recommend institutional support systems such as training programs, mentoring, access to resources, and professional collaboration in order to strengthen classroom management practices. In addition, the results highlight the importance of involving students in the development of classroom routines and expectations. These findings imply that successful classroom management is not solely dependent on individual teacher efforts but also requires supportive school structures and opportunities for student voice and shared responsibility within the classroom.

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