

Factors Contributing To Effective Classroom Management by Agriculture Teachers at Secondary Schools in Eswatini

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Abstract: *Effectiveness on classroom depends on several factors. Unfortunately, paucity of studies has been conducted on classroom management by agriculture teachers. Therefore, the study sought to determine factors that contribute to effective classroom management by secondary schools agriculture teachers in Eswatini. A predictive research design was used. The target population was agriculture teachers in Eswatini. A simple random sampling was used to draw 180 respondents for the study. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire validated by four lecturers in the Department of Agricultural Education and extension. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was $r=.83$. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and multiple regression. The findings revealed that factors for effective classroom management by agriculture teachers were setting rules, lesson planning, class size, teaching methods, among others. The findings further revealed that effective classroom management can be predicted from discipline, learner activities, lesson preparation and reinforcement. Therefore, the study concluded that effective classroom management rests mainly on setting classroom rules and student discipline. Thus, recommendation was that every teacher must be equipped with rules and disciplinary measures to be effective in classroom management. Further studies should be conducted on the rules and procedures needed in the teaching and learning of agriculture for effective classroom management.*

Keywords: Agriculture Teacher, Classroom Management, Factors, Secondary School

Introduction

Classroom management is the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organised, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive. It's about developing a proactive ways to prevent problems from occurring in the first place while creating a positive learning environment (Emmer & Evertson, 2017). Weinstein and Evertson (2013) defined classroom management as the actions teachers take to create a supportive environment for the academic and social-emotional learning of students. The purpose of classroom management strategies is to maintain a learning environment that promotes positive interaction, access to learning, and enhanced students achievement, while also sustaining control over student's problematic behavior (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). Classroom management creates an environment which generates necessary and positive conditions for learning. Teachers need to plan rationally for their lessons, prepare teaching and learning materials more judiciously, organise the content, and establish daily routines. Classroom management aims to encourage students towards learning and to promote their positive behaviours (Oliver, et al., 2011). It contributes to enhanced academic achievements of students, increased teacher efficacy, improved students' behaviour and teachers' teaching (Lane *et al.*, 2015). It evokes student's cooperation, minimize student's misconduct, facilitate interventions when misconduct occurs, facilitate academic activities and maximize students' engagement (Emmer & Evertson, 2017).

Emmer and Evertson (2017) stated that teachers should also encourage student's engagement in academic tasks, which can be done by using group management methods. Weinstein and Evertson (2013) further

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indicated that teachers must also promote the development of students' social skills and self-regulation; and should be able to intervene to assist students with behavioral problems, thus, increasing academic performance. Emmer and Evertson further indicated that there are guidelines which a teacher must follow to manage a classroom. Weinstein and Evertson revealed that in order to attain a high quality of classroom management, teachers must first develop caring, have supportive relationships with students and among students, and organise and implement instruction in ways that optimize student's access to learning. Weinstein and Evertson also stated that teachers should encourage students' engagement in academic tasks by using group management methods, promoting the development of student's social skills and self-regulation, and intervening to assist students with behavioural problems.

Effective classroom management requires that the teacher should have a plan (also known as classroom management contract) (Wang & Shen, 2009). The teacher creates a contract with the students focusing on providing for their needs in the classroom and a commitment to help students learn without interference and disturbances. The classroom management plan is where clear rules are set, class norms are developed, expectations are stated, and consequences are defined (Wang & Shen, 2009). The rules express standards of behavior for which individual students need to take responsibility. Establishing procedures and routines involves specific ways of doing common, repeated classroom tasks or activities (Emmer & Evertson, 2017). Emmer and Evertson further alluded that classroom management may include class norms and consequences hand-written on a piece of flip chart. It may include checking daily attendance, dealing with students who arrive late, allowing students to use the bathroom during class, and also arranging classroom space. It is an arrangement that will help students to focus on learning tasks as much as possible and minimise the chances of distraction. Teachers need to plan rationally for their lessons, prepare teaching and learning materials more judiciously, organise the content, and establish daily routines (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010).

The ability of teachers to organise classrooms and manage the behavior of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes (King, 2014). According to Oliver, et al. (2011) the inability of teachers to effectively manage classroom behavior often contributes to the low achievement of at-risk students and to their excessive referrals for special education. Reupert and Woodcock (2010) further stated that the effects of classroom management are exacerbated by current pattern of teacher distribution, which reveals a disproportionate assignment of less qualified teachers and less experienced teachers to classrooms. Emmer and Evertson (2017) reported that factors contributing to effective classroom management include: teaching method, lesson planning and preparation, interpersonal relationship, and student motivation.

Emmer and Evertson (2017) attested that classroom management also depends on teacher's personality, teaching style, preparedness, and number of students in the classroom. Similarly, O'Neill and Stephenson, (2014) found that the variation in classroom management relies on different teachers' beliefs and attitudes in analysing and understanding their student behaviour. It depends on the teachers' ability to utilize fully the involvement of students by stimulating, directing, and guiding their classroom activities (Marstul & Kaberl, 2017).

Effective classroom management focuses on the preventive rather than reactive procedures and establishes positive classroom environment in which the teacher focuses on the student who behaves appropriately (Simonsen *et al.*, 2020). Oliver *et al.* (2011) stated that effective classroom manage can be determined by teacher qualification, teachers experience, instructional methods used and the methods of assessments. Darling-Hammond (2010) viewed teacher qualification indicators as; the teachers' academic ability, teacher's certification status, teacher's instructional practice in the classroom, teacher's subject matter expertise, and teacher's experience. Kini and Podolsky (2016) also found that there is a positive relationship between the number of teaching years and academic achievement.

Clearly positive teacher-student relationship also contributes to students learning (Roorda, *et al.*, 2011). Educators, parents and students together understand that problematic relationships can be detrimental to the attainment of students' outcomes and development (King, 2014). Thus, Pianta, *et al.* (2012) asserted that

productive learning environments are characterised by supportive and warm interactions throughout the class: teacher-student and student –student.

Oliver and Reschly (2007) stated that highly effective teachers structure the classroom environment so that it decreases the likelihood of inappropriate students' behavior, increase desirable student's interaction, and set up students for success. Oliver and Reschly also highlighted that effective classroom structuring requires attention to the following features: creating a physical arrangement that ease traffic flow, minimises distractions and provides teacher with access to students in order to respond to their questions and better control behaviour. Students need consistent expectations to aid in positive behavioral performance and well-developed classroom rules system provides students with clear expectations (Lane, 2015).

In Eswatini, Manyatsi (2009) reported that effective classroom management results from advanced planning which aims at preventing delays, distractions and disruptions. If planning has been done effectively, no or very little time will be wasted trying to deal with disciplinary problems. A study by Gina (2016) on perceived problems of classroom management on teachers' perception regarding classroom management in Secondary Schools in the Hhohho Region showed that teachers understand the concept of classroom management. The study further revealed that the teachers use authoritative classroom management style which is characterised by behavioural principles and high expectations of appropriate behaviour; thus, they face classroom management problems. Mazibuko (2001) also stated that instructional practices are important in the achievement of instructional objectives and the teacher is considered to be the main facilitator in the achievement of those objectives. Classroom management determines the effectiveness of the teacher's ability to manage classes (Marzano, 2008). Despite a growing body of literature on general classroom management, there is a notable gap in empirical studies focusing specifically on the factors that contribute to effective classroom management among agriculture teachers in Eswatini's secondary schools, a context characterized by practical-based learning and varying classroom dynamics. Thus, this study sought to address this gap by identifying and predicting key factors that contribute to effective classroom management among these educators.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the study was to factors contributing to effective classroom management by agriculture teachers at secondary schools in Eswatini. The objectives of the study included were to:

1. describe the respondents by their demographic characteristics and background information of secondary schools agriculture teachers in Eswatini.
2. determine factors that contributes to effective classroom management by secondary schools agriculture teachers in Eswatini.
3. Compare the factors contributing to classroom management used by secondary schools agriculture teachers by their selected demographic characteristics and background in information
4. identify predictor and explanatory variables for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini

Hypotheses

The hypothesis of the study covered discipline, learning activities, lesson preparation, and reinforcement.

Hypothesis 1 - Disciplinary practice

Null Hypothesis (H_0) - Disciplinary practice is not the determinant for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini.

Alternative Hypothesis - Disciplinary practice is the determinant for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini

Hypothesis 2 - Learning activities

Null Hypothesis (H_0) - Learning activities, is not the determinant for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini.

Alternative Hypothesis - learning activities is the determinant for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini

Hypothesis 3 - Lesson preparation

Null Hypothesis (H_0) - Lesson preparation is not the determinant for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini.

Alternative Hypothesis - Lesson preparation is the determinant for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini

Hypothesis 4 - Reinforcement

Null Hypothesis (H_0) - Reinforcement is not the determinant for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini.

Alternative Hypothesis - Reinforcement is the determinant for effective classroom management by secondary agriculture teacher in Eswatini

Theoretical framework

The study was framed by the integration of the Learner-directed Learning Theory (also known as Positive Classroom Management" Model) and the Choice Theory.

Learner -directed Learning: The Jones Model

Frederick Jones (1979) argued that nearly 50% of instructional time is lost due to student misbehavior. About 80% of this time involves off-task behaviors like talking too much in class. Jones pointed out that teachers can recover valuable instructional time by using four key classroom management techniques: setting limits, using effective body language, implementing incentive systems, and providing helpful assistance. Setting limits means clearly defining expectations and acceptable behaviors for different classroom situations. This includes routine tasks like sharpening pencils and more significant situations like dealing with student illness. By creating these boundaries, students can make better decisions on their own, which reduces disruptions and helps create a more orderly classroom. Effective body language is another important tool in Jones' approach. Non-verbal cues, such as eye contact or standing close to a student, can often stop misbehavior without interrupting the teaching process. This method supports a calm classroom atmosphere while keeping students engaged. Incentive systems aim to encourage positive behavior and discourage misbehavior by connecting behavior to real consequences. Regina, et. (2007) noted that these systems are based on behaviorist principles, where removing privileges or rewards helps decrease unwanted behaviors. This model is relevant to the current study because it highlights how teacher-student collaboration is essential for helping students develop self-regulation and responsibility. It also fits with learner-centered teaching methods that promote shared classroom management. In this approach, students work together to maintain discipline and a good learning environment instead of relying only on the teacher's authority.

Choice theory: The Glasser Model

Choice Theory, as proposed by William Glasser in 1997, offers a useful perspective on effective classroom management. The core idea is that all behavior is chosen and influenced by five basic human needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. In schools, Glasser stresses that teachers should act as facilitators or helpers instead of authoritarian figures. Their job is to create a learning environment and curriculum that address students' psychological needs, especially the need for belonging and empowerment. The importance of the Glasser Model to this study lies in its focus on student responsibility and self-regulation. Glasser argues that setting and consistently enforcing classroom rules are key strategies for encouraging students to take ownership of their behavior. Instead of using traditional rewards and punishments, Choice Theory encourages open conversation, reflection, and restorative practices. These methods build intrinsic motivation and help students make positive behavioral choices. By emphasizing need-satisfying environments and meaningful relationships, the Glasser Model supports the goals of effective classroom management. It promotes proactive strategies that not only manage behavior but also aid the overall growth of learners.

Methodology

The study employed predictive research design targeting agriculture teacher (N=363) at high schools in Eswatini. A simple random sampling was used to draw a sample of 180 agriculture teachers guided by the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table. A closed-ended questionnaire developed from literature was used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely: Factors for effective classroom management [22 items] and Demographic characteristics and background information [8 items – gender, level of education, designation, and marital status]. A six-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the factors for effective classroom management by agriculture teachers in Eswatini [Section A]. In Section B which is related to the demographic characteristics and background information, the respondents were required to circle or fill in the blanks. The questionnaire was given to three experts from the Department of Agricultural Education and Extension at the University of Eswatini to ensure content validity. The comments from the experts were helpful to improve the questionnaire before it was used for data collection. An appropriate picture was put by the researchers on the cover page to address issues related to face validity. The questionnaire was pilot tested using 32 agriculture teachers from 10 high schools in the Shiselweni region who did not participate in this study. The inter-item reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS version 20 and the overall reliability coefficient was $\alpha = .83$ which means the questionnaire was 83% reliable. The self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from January to March 2020. The respondents were given two weeks to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires were delivered personally by the researchers to the agriculture teachers. Reminders were made two days before the questionnaires were collected after the two weeks. Letters seeking permission to conduct the study were written to the Director of Education in the Ministry of Education and Training, school principals and the respondents and permission was granted. The respondents were asked to complete a consent form. To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaire was formulated such that respondents' names were concealed. The questionnaires were only accessible to the researchers. Descriptive statistics [Frequencies, Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations] and inferential statistics [Independent t-test and, multiple regression in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, were used for analysing the data. The items for each domain in the questionnaire were collapsed in order to establish the predictor variables for effective classroom management strategies by the agriculture teachers in Eswatini.

Results

The findings were presented guided by the objectives of the study.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents (n=102, 56.7%) were male teachers and 78 respondents were female teachers (43.3%). There was a slight difference between the number of respondents who were single (n=91, 52.9%) and those married (n=81, 47.1%). A majority of the respondents were aged between 30-39 years (n=102, 56.7%) and most of them had a Bachelor's degree (n=152, 84.4%). There was a fair distribution of the classes that were taught by the agriculture teachers in the following manner: Form 1 (n=66, 36.7%); Form 2 (n=65, 36.1%); and Form 3 (n=49, 27.2%). Finally, an overwhelming majority of the respondents were classroom teachers (n=154, 85.6%)

Table 1: Demographic characteristics and background information (n=180)

Characteristic	f	%
Gender		
Male	102	56.7
Female	78	43.3
Marital status		
Single	91	52.9
Married	81	47.1
Age		
20-29	49	27.2
30-39	102	56.7
40-49	23	12.8
50-59	6	3.3

Level of education		
Masters	12	6.7
B.Sc. Degree	152	84.4
Diploma	16	8.9
Class		
Form 1	66	36.7
Form 2	65	36.1
Form 3	49	27.2
Designation		
Teacher	154	85.6
HOD	24	13.3
Deputy	2	1.1

Factors Contributing to Effective Classroom Management

Table 2 presents factors that contribute to effective classroom management by agriculture teachers in Eswatini. All the factors identified were found to be contributing to the effective classroom management by agriculture teachers in Eswatini. The overall contribution of the factors was huge ($M=5.01$, $SD=1.14$). On top of the list of the factors contributing to the effective classroom management by agriculture teachers was setting rules ($M=5.60$ $SD=4.60$). Amongst the leading factors for effective classroom management were: lesson planning ($M=5.34$ $SD=0.97$); class size ($M=5.33$, $SD=0.83$); teaching methods ($M=5.30$, $SD=0.71$); classroom management skills ($M=5.23$, $SD=0.74$); communication ($M=5.21$, $SD=0.72$); classroom management style ($M=5.20$, $SD=0.87$); implementing rules ($M=5.18$, $SD=0.79$); classroom environment ($M=5.09$, $SD=0.87$); teaching experience ($M=5.09$, $SD=1.00$); feedback on appropriate behavior ($M=5.04$, $SD=0.86$); student behavior ($M=5.03$, $SD=0.99$); interpersonal relationships ($M=5.00$, $SD=0.91$); and so on. Even though corporal punishment ($M=4.08$ $SD=1.59$) was considered a factor for effective classroom management respondent; however, it received the lowest rating amongst the factors.

Table 2: Factors that contribute to effective classroom management (n=180)

Factor	M	SD
Setting rules	5.60	0.98
Lesson Planning	5.34	0.97
Class size	5.33	0.83
Student motivation	5.31	0.71
Teaching methods	5.30	0.71
Classroom management skills	5.23	0.74
Communication	5.21	0.72
Classroom management style	5.20	0.87
Implementing rules	5.18	0.79
Classroom environment	5.09	0.87
Teaching experience	5.09	1.00
Feedback on appropriate behavior	5.04	0.86
Students behavior	5.03	0.99
Interpersonal relationships	5.00	0.91
Learning capabilities	4.89	0.94
Classroom setup/design	4.80	0.94
Positive discipline	4.64	1.37
Student maturity	4.71	1.14
Family condition	4.51	1.34
Teacher's qualification	4.44	1.29
Corporal punishment	4.08	1.59
Average	5.01	1.14

Rating scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2= Slightly disagree, 3= Disagree, 4= Slightly agree, 5= Agree, 6= Strongly agree.

Comparison of the factors contributing to classroom management strategies by their selected demographic characteristics and background in information

Table 3 presents the comparison of the factors contributing to classroom management strategies by their selected demographic characteristics and background in information. Independent t-test and Analysis of Variance were used where appropriate. Findings reveal that the difference on factors contributing to effective classroom management by agriculture teachers existed amongst the regions ($F=2.549$, $p=.05$). Otherwise, there was no significant difference existed on factors contributing to strategies for classroom management strategies and the following demographic characteristics and background in information: sex ($t=-1.099$, $p=.27$); marital status ($t=-1.453$, $p=.14$); age ($F=.369$, $p=.77$); level of education ($F=.201$, $p=.81$); class ($F=.936$, $p=.39$); and $F=.181$, $p=.83$). Post-hoc analysis using Duncan for the difference that existed among the regions revealed that the factors contributing to effective classroom management from Lubombo region were different from Hhohho and Manzini region.

Table 3: Comparison of the classroom management strategies used by agriculture teachers by their demographic characteristics and background in information

Variables	n	M	SD	value	p
Sex					
Male	102	4.96	.45	$t=-1.099$.27
Female	78	5.05	.58		
Marital status					
Single	91	4.94	.56	$t=-1.453$.14
Married	89	5.06	.45		
Age					
20-29 years	49	5.03	.49	$F=.369$.77
30-39 years	102	5.01	.54		
40-49 years	23	4.90	.48		
50-59 years	6	4.98	.29		
Level of Education					
Masters	12	5.12	.51	$F=.201$.81
B.Sc. degree	152	5.02	.51		
Diploma	16	4.73	.48		
Region					
Shiselweni	35	4.93	.48	$F=2.549$.05
Manzini	57	5.09	.62		
Lubombo	42	4.84	.46		
Hhohho	46	5.08	.39		
Class					
Form 1	66	5.06	.41	$F=.936$.39
Form 2	65	4.98	.46		
Form 3	49	4.93	.67		
Designation					
Teacher	154	4.98	.52	$F=.181$.83
Head of department	24	5.13	.44		
Deputy	2	4.68	.77		

Predictor and explanatory variables for effective classroom management by agriculture teachers

Multiple regression was used to identify explanatory and predatory variables for effective classroom management by agriculture teachers in Eswatini. Table 4 indicates that effective classroom management for agriculture teachers was determined by discipline ($t=8.045$, $p=.00$); learner activity ($t=6.463$, $p=.00$); lesson preparation ($t=3.576$, $p=.00$) and reinforcement ($t=2.467$, $p=.01$). The model explained 45.3% of the variance on the effective classroom management. Disciplinary practice employed by the agriculture teachers explained most of the variance (27.6%). The other predictors explained the variance on the effective classroom management in the following order: learner activity (14.0%); lesson preparation (4.0%)

and reinforcement (1.9%) on the effective classroom management by agriculture teachers in Eswatini. Therefore, all the research hypotheses in the study that the effectiveness of classroom management strategies of agriculture teachers were determined by discipline practices, learning activities, lesson preparation, and reinforcement.

Table 4: Explanatory and predictor variable for factors that contribute to effective classroom management

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ² <i>Change</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Discipline	.516	.267	.267	.276	.516	8.045	.00
Learning activities	.638	.407	.140	.570	.381	6.463	.00
Lesson Preparation	.668	.447	.040	.238	.213	3.576	.00
Reinforcement	.682	.465	.019	.193	.153	2.467	.01
Constant = 1.390	Adjusted R ² = .453			Standard Error = .331			

Apriori (α) ≤ .01

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study show that agriculture teachers' effective classroom management relies on several strategies, including discipline, learner activity, lesson preparation, and reinforcement. These findings match the ideas presented in Jones' Learner-Directed Learning Theory and Glasser's Choice Theory. Together, these theories offer a solid framework for understanding and improving classroom dynamics. Discipline is a key strategy for managing the classroom. Recent studies support that having clear rules and routines helps maintain order and reduce disruptions, which increases learning time (Emmer & Evertson, 2017). Similarly, lesson preparation is essential for creating a productive classroom atmosphere. Well-planned lessons engage students and minimize behavioural issues (Stronge, 2018). Reinforcement, both positive and corrective, is also crucial for encouraging proper student behaviour (Simonsen et al., 2020). In terms of learner activity, effective classroom management places greater importance on student engagement and active learning. This aligns with the idea that structured routines and procedures foster independence and motivation (Weinstein & Romano, 2018).

The study also points out other factors that contribute to effective classroom management, such as class size, teaching methods, teacher communication, relationships, teacher experience, and feedback on behaviour. These factors reflect Jones' model, particularly using incentive systems, body language, and setting limits. All of these elements help reduce off-task behaviour and increase time spent on tasks (Jones & Jones, 2015). Such strategies empower students to manage themselves and share a sense of responsibility for the classroom. In line with Glasser's Choice Theory, the study highlights the importance of addressing students' psychological needs, belonging, freedom, power, fun, and survival. When teachers create a positive environment that meets these needs, students are more likely to take responsibility for their actions and stay engaged (Glasser, 1998; Erwin, 2020). For example, using student-centred teaching methods, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, and implementing restorative practices supports intrinsic motivation. This motivation is vital for long-term behaviour management.

The findings confirm that effective classroom management requires a careful balance between teacher-directed discipline and student independence. Teachers who combine structured behavioural expectations (Jones) with methods that address psychological needs (Glasser) are more successful in creating learning environments where students feel safe, respected, and motivated. This approach not only cuts down classroom disruptions but also boosts student engagement and academic outcomes (Reupert & Woodcock, 2019).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that effective classroom rests on setting classroom rules and discipline. Lesson preparations, learner activities, reinforcement, student motivation, class size and method of teaching are among the top factors for effective classroom management by agriculture teachers in Eswatini. Therefore, the researchers from the findings and conclusions of the study recommended that every teacher need to establish rules and procedures that govern the class. The teachers should be equipped with such rules and procedures during pre-service at the teacher training institutions. In-service training

should be provided by the Ministry of Education and Training for agriculture teachers already in the field. Further should also be focused on the rules need for effective classroom management. Teacher need to be equipped with disciplinary practices that lead to effective classroom management. The Ministry of Education and training need to keep class size small to enhance classroom management. Agriculture teachers need to faithfully discharge the duties such as lesson planning, choosing teaching methods that will keep learner engage throughout the lesson, and motivating and reinforcing good student's behavior so that they are effectively managing their classrooms.

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