

An Investigation of Cultural Sensitivity and Teachers' Classroom Management

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ABSTRACT: *The variety of cultures in educational institutions is expanding quickly. As a result, instructors' understanding of cultural background becomes a useful asset in how they run their classroom. This study sought to determine how instructors' classroom management relates to their cultural sensitivity. A correlational research design was used in the study. It is a quantitative study that also included interviews. A total of 30 participants who taught at three universities in Oman; namely A' Sharqiyah University, Sohar University and the University of Technology and Applied Sciences during the academic year 2022–2023 were included in the study. Three (3) of the educators were chosen at random for an interview. Questionnaires were used to collect the necessary data following the survey method and teacher interviews were selected at random. Frequency count and percentage were used to examine the data. The study's findings showed that teachers exhibit a high level of cultural awareness. They made extensive use of optimal classroom management. A moderately significant association between cultural sensitivity and classroom management was also revealed by the research. According to the results, instructors' cultural sensitivity affects how they manage their classrooms. The study suggests teacher capacity-building initiatives, such as seminar-workshops on multicultural educational approaches and culturally sensitive classroom management techniques, to help teachers expand their expertise.*

KEY WORDS: cultural sensitivity, classroom management, educational institutions

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are becoming more culturally diverse, and progressively growing big (Serdyukov, 2017). One of the worries of instructors today is how to manage a classroom with a variety of demographics. As diversity plays a major role in teaching and learning process, teachers are now on the alert for diversity in the classrooms as it is approaching the point of leaving the ineffective regular classroom management tactics to increase responsiveness tactics that embrace variety in the classroom and the teacher-

learning process effectively. Uddin and Johnson (2018) claim that adverse effects on students' learning can happen if there is a lack of diversity in the classroom management approaches.

Additionally, there is diversity in the educational institutions in Oman. There are classes with students from a variety of countries and cultural backgrounds. The country is well known for being a multicultural one. As a result, teachers are forced to complete mind-boggling assignments on how to meet the demands of the culturally varied students they are teaching. They adjust their management techniques based on their own experiences and cultural expertise in an effort to manage their classes sensitively given the shifting demographics in the classroom.

Sherman (2014) described cultural sensitivity as a set of abilities that allow one to understand and interact with people from different backgrounds. The ability of instructors to handle this variety may be greatly influenced by their cultural sensitivity. One of the main responsibilities is to be conscious of how his or her students feel and how much they know about them. Teachers need to be culturally sensitive and knowledgeable in order to prevent issues with culturally insensitive classroom management strategies (Gabriel et al., 2011). Lack of multicultural intelligence, according to Weinstein, Tomlison-Clarke, and Curran (2004), may make it harder for teachers to maintain control of their classes. Thus, teachers' cultural sensitivity may be a factor in classroom management.

According to the theory behind culturally relevant education, students can learn the most if they are placed in a classroom setting that is sensitive to their requirements, including their cultural background (Ladson-Billing, 1995). For example, Postholm (2013) on the social system, Erdogan et al. (2010) on classroom discipline, Mansor et al. (2020) on a classroom management case study, and Erdogan and Kurt (2015) on a classroom management literature review are just a few of the numerous resources that are currently available on how to deal with behavior problems. However, very few research have examined how cultural sensitivity affects classroom management. Few studies have looked into its impact on classroom management, which is crucial, especially in lower grades when students are more likely to lose interest in their academics (Anderman, 2013).

Teachers must be prepared to use culturally sensitive management techniques in their interactions with pupils given the expanding diversity of college populations. As teachers deal with more culturally diverse classes, it is necessary to assess and research the aspects that influence how they manage their classrooms, including cultural sensitivity (Cortez et al., 2020). With the help of this study, educational administrators and instructors will be able to design effective interventions and capacity-building strategies to best meet the requirements of their pupils. Determining the relationship between cultural sensitivity and classroom management in the context of the three Omani universities is the goal of this study.

Statement of The Problem

The purpose of this study was to link instructors' cultural sensitivity and classroom management. It attempted to respond to the following questions in particular:

1. How sensitive to cultural differences are the teachers?
2. How much do the teachers use classroom management techniques?
3. Is there a strong link between teachers' classroom management and their cultural sensitivity?

Conceptual Framework

The inclusive approach to learning and teaching that seeks to meet the specific learning requirements of each individual student and sees those needs as an opportunity rather than a problem served as the foundation for this study (UNESCO, 2005). The study made the case, using Diversity Pedagogy Theory (DPT) as a frame of reference, that for teachers to be effective in managing their classrooms, they must recognize and comprehend the crucial role that students' cultures play in the teaching-learning process. According to the Diversity Pedagogy Theory (DPT), culture and cognition are inextricably linked (Hernandez, 2009). For the purposes of this study, the particular correlation of the teacher's cultural sensitivity on classroom management was investigated.

The claim made in this study is supported by Ladson-Billings' (1995) framework for culturally responsive education, which noted that providing students with the right resources helps them learn management techniques after carefully examining their cultural heritage. This design demonstrates the significance of letting knowing their cultural references will help them study in many areas where knowledge, abilities, and attitudes can contribute (Tamayao, 2013).

The theory is also reinforced by Albert Bandura's (1997) Social Learning Theory, which Smith and Berge (2009) mention. This approach emphasized that people pick up knowledge from their interactions. in a social setting with others. Similar actions may also be developed from the study of how other people behave. This idea is a need since the teacher must accept or adapt to the cultural others to remove obstacles from one another, which can result in increased cultural awareness.

The research paradigm is depicted in Figure 1. Cultural sensitivity is the study's independent variable, and classroom management is its dependent variable. The arrow also denotes the link between the dependent and independent variables.

Independent variable

Dependent variable

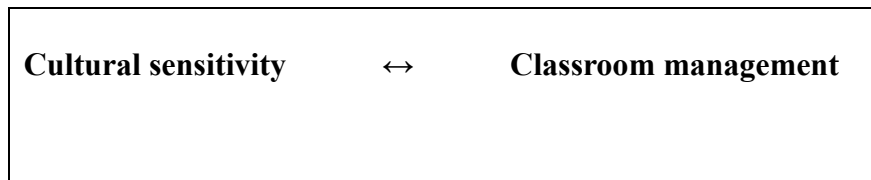


Figure1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This was a quantitative study that employed a correlational research methodology to determine the relationship between instructors' classroom management and cultural sensitivity. Each variable's data collecting tool consisted of a survey questionnaire that had its content evaluated by specialists and undergone a pilot test to assure its dependability. Additionally, the narratives created from the one-on-one interviews with approachable teachers added context to the quantitative data.

The thirty (30) available respondents who were working with officially enrolled, culturally diverse students at three Omani universities, during the academic year 2022-2023, provided data for this study's analysis. The information was gathered using questionnaires that the teachers completed using paper and pencil. Three (3) Teachers were also surveyed to confirm this data's quantitative findings.

The two self-reported questionnaires were also employed to gather the information required for this investigation. These are Fritz, Molenberg, and Chen (2002) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale modifications. and Sugai and Colvin-adapted Classroom Management Scale (2004). The researcher created a handbook to complement the quantitative data. Performed assessments for cultural sensitivity and classroom management based on the gathered facts.

RESULTS

The current study increases understanding of the cultural sensitivity of educational institutions teachers. Table (1.1) displays the frequencies and percentages for the independent variable and Table (1.2) displays the average percentage of each indicator for the independent variable.

The teachers' level of cultural sensitivity is shown in Table (1.1). Table (1.2) shows the average percentage of each indicator of the teachers' cultural sensitivity. Obviously, the participants show delight in connecting with their students (44.17% for strongly agree and 45.83% for agree); participants show respect for the cultural practices of their diverse

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students (36% for strongly agree and 45.33% for agree); participants are confident of their diverse students (32.77% for strongly agree and 41.67% for agree); participants enjoy interaction with their diverse students (36% for strongly agree and 40.67% for agree). Additionally, teachers listen attentively to their students' differing points of view from other cultures (44.66% for strongly agree and 44% for agree). The average percentage of not sure, disagree and strongly disagree for all indicators ranges between 10% and 25%.

Indicator	S. Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		S. Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Interaction engagement										
1. I enjoy communicating with my international students.	15	50	13	43.33	2	6.6	0	0	0	0
2. I am open-minded to students from various cultural backgrounds.	12	40	14	46.67	3	10	1	3.33	0	0
3. I set aside time to speak with my students from different cultural backgrounds.	12	40	12	40	4	13.33	2	6.67	0	0
4. I frequently use verbal or nonverbal indicators to demonstrate to my students from diverse cultural backgrounds that I understand their way of life.	14	46.67	16	53.33	0	0	0	0	0	0
Respect for Cultural Differences										

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5. I like the differences between me and my students from different ethnic backgrounds.	8	26.67	12	40	6	20	3	10	1	3.33
6. I believe that my international students are tolerant.	9	30	11	36.67	7	23.33	2	6.67	1	3.33
7. I appreciate my students' ideals, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.	10	33.33	12	40	5	16.67	2	6.67	1	3.33
8. I respect the cultural differences among my students.	14	46.67	16	53.33	0	0	0	0	0	0
9. I respect the views of my students from various cultural backgrounds.	13	43.33	17	56.67	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interaction confidence										
10. I believe that my culture and that of my students are equal.	8	26.66	11	36.66	6	20	3	10	2	6.66
11. I am conscious of my students' cultural upbringing.	13	43.33	16	53.33	1	3.34	0	0	0	0
12. I have no trouble conversing with students from other cultures.	7	23.34	17	56.66	5	16.66	1	3.34	0	0
13. Whenever I connect with students from diverse cultures, I	11	36.67	11	36.67	7	23.33	1	3.33	0	0

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always know what to say.										
14. When meeting with students from various cultures, I socialize well.	10	33.34	10	33.34	5	16.66	3	10	2	6.66
15. I'm at ease conversing with students from other cultures.	10	33.33	10	33.34	4	13.33	3	10	3	10
Interaction enjoyment										
16. I enjoy communicating with students from various cultures.	12	40	11	36.67	6	20	1	3.33	0	0
17. When I am around my students from other cultures, I frequently feel inspired.	12	40	12	40	5	16.67	1	3.33	0	0
18. When dealing with my students from various cultures, I frequently feel useful.	11	36.67	13	43.33	6	20	0	0	0	0
19. I like learning about the cultural variances of my students.	10	33.33	11	36.67	7	23.33	2	6.67	0	0
20. I am passionate about meeting the needs of my international students.	9	30	14	46.67	6	20	1	3.33	0	0
Interaction attentiveness										
21. When interacting with	14	46.67	16	53.33	0	0	0	0	0	0

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students from other cultures, I pay close attention.										
22. When connecting with students from diverse cultures, I take the time to learn as much as I can about them.	12	40	14	46.67	4	13.33	0	0	0	0
23. During our interactions, I pay attention to how my students from different cultural backgrounds feel and see things.	11	36.67	11	36.67	6	20	1	3.33	1	3.33
24. I pay close attention to how my students behave when they are around classmates from other cultures.	13	43.33	12	40	5	16.67	0	0	0	0
25. I pay attention to my students' various points of view from various cultures.	17	56.67	13	43.33	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1. 1: Cultural sensitivity of teachers (Adapted from: Fritz, Molenberg, and Chen (2002) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale)

Factor/Indicator	Average % of S. Agree	Average % of Agree	Average % of Not Sure	Average % of Disagree	Average % of S. disagree
Interaction engagement	44.17	45.83	7.5	2.5	0
Respect for Cultural Differences	36	45.33	12	4.67	2
Interaction confidence	32.77	41.67	15.56	6.11	3.89
Interaction enjoyment	36	40.67	20	3.33	0
Interaction attentiveness	44.66	44	10	.67	.67

Table 1.2 Average percentage of each indicator for independent variable

The outcome supports the interview's finding that teachers enjoy interaction with their diverse students; engage confidently with their students; listen attentively to their views and respect students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In one interview, the participant claimed that by enabling her students to express their ideas, she demonstrated her open-mindedness to them. In general, the instructors' level of cultural sensitivity is high (88.66%), showing participants with (strongly agree and agree)

Indicator	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. I create and clearly explain student procedures	9	30	18	60	3	10	0	0	0	0
2. I set up my classroom to avoid crowding and distractions and to increase (teacher - student) proximity.	13	43.33	17	56.67	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. I exercise active supervision (I move, interact, and reinforce).	12	40	15	50	3	10	0	0	0	0
4. I use "do's" rather than "nos" or "don'ts" when stating my regulations	11	36.67	13	43.33	5	16.67	1	3.33	0	0

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5. I actively involve the students in creating the rules for the classroom.	8	26.67	9	30	7	23.33	6	20	0	0
6. Within the context of routines, I openly educate and go through expectations or "rules" for the classroom.	9	30	11	36.67	7	23.33	3	10	0	0
7. I shift between tasks with ease and effectiveness	12	40	14	46.67	4	13.33	0	0	0	0
8. I am ready for lessons and activities (I have filler activities ready, my materials are organized, I speak well, etc.).	11	36.67	15	50	4	13.33	0	0	0	0
9. I will clearly explain the results and objectives.	13	43.33	16	53.34	1	3.33	0	0	0	0
10. I provide detailed feedback at the end of lessons or activities.	16	53.33	14	46.67	0	0	0	0	0	0
11. Throughout my lecture, I give each student as many and different opportunities to reply as possible.	11	36.67	12	40	7	23.33	0	0	0	0
12. During teacher-directed instruction, I actively include my students (e.g., using answer cards, choral responding, votes, and other techniques).	9	30	10	33.33	11	36.67	0	0	0	0
13. I assess pupils' comprehension using a variety of techniques.	12	40	16	53.33	2	6.67	0	0	0	0
14. I can count the number of pupils who	9	30	9	30	10	33.33	2	6.67	0	0

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completed the task at the end of the exercise.										
15. To help struggling students, I offer persistent coaching.	14	46.67	16	53.33	0	0	0	0	0	0
16. I consider and make note of any modifications that the lesson needs for the future.	8	26.67	11	36.67	11	36.67	0	0	0	0
17. I make sure that the academic environment is stimulating and engaging.	10	33.33	13	43.34	7	23.33	0	0	0	0
18. I consistently have a 4:1 ratio of favorable interactions.	10	33.33	10	33.33	8	26.67	2	6.67	0	0
19. On average, I have pleasant interactions with each student at least 2-3 times each hour.	7	23.33	9	30	6	20	5	16.67	3	10
20. After addressing rule infractions, I encourage rule compliance with acknowledgement and praise.	10	33.33	12	40	6	20	2	6.67	0	0
21. I offer precise and prompt contingent	13	43.33	15	50	2	6.67	0	0	0	0
22. I also employ a variety of mechanisms (teacher reactions, group contingencies, behavior contracts, or token systems) to recognize proper behavior.	9	30	12	40	7	23.33	2	6.67	0	0
23. To deal with problematic behavior, I employ several reinforcement techniques.	13	43.33	16	53.34	1	3.33	0	0	0	0

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24. For academic and social mistakes, I offer precise, contingent, and succinct error remedies (outlining required behavior).	10	33.33	13	43.33	5	16.67	2	6.67	0	0
25. In addition, I employ the least restrictive processes (non-verbal, closeness, teacher reaction, reteaching, etc.) to deter incorrect behavior and only resort to more rigorous procedures when necessary.	13	43.33	17	56.67	0	0	0	0	0	0
26. I react to unacceptable behavior in a composed, emotionally detached, and professional way.	8	26.67	16	53.33	6	20	0	0	0	0
27. By the conclusion of week two, I am familiar with and employ student names	7	23.34	13	43.33	7	23.33	3	10	0	0
28. To find out more about students, I do explicit activities.	6	20	11	36.66	5	16.67	5	16.67	3	10
29. I often send letters or newsletters to parents to encourage parental involvement.	9	30	10	33.33	8	26.67	3	10	0	0
30. Even when correcting students, I treat them with respect and dignity.	11	36.66	14	46.67	5	16.67	0	0	0	0
31. To foster a sense of responsibility among my students, I use routine	9	30	12	40	6	20	3	10	0	0

classroom processes and student jobs.										
32. I teach students self-control and self-monitoring techniques	7	23.33	16	53.33	5	16.67	2	6.67	0	0
33. I teach social skills and problem-solving techniques.	8	26.67	15	50	6	20	1	3.33	0	0
34. I provide students particular opportunities to interact with one another and work together to solve difficulties.	10	33.33	14	46.67	4	13.33	2	6.67	0	0
		34		44.1		17.3		4.1		.5

Table 2. Classroom Management of Teachers (Adapted from Sugai and Colvin Classroom Management Scale (2004)).

The classroom management of the instructors at A' Sharqiyah University, Sohar University and the University of Technology and Applied Sciences is shown in Table 2. Participants responded to classroom management indicators with always and often (78.1%) and responded with sometimes, rarely and never (21.9%). Obviously, teachers treat their students with respect and dignity and provide them detailed instructions; give activities that help students connect with one another and work through issues jointly; set up the space to enhance teacher-student proximity and reduce crowding and distractions; prepare lessons and activities, such as filler exercises and prepared materials. Teachers clear instructions and apply a variety of techniques; examine student comprehension; apply general classroom processes and assignments for students to increase their accountability; teach students self-control and self-monitoring techniques. To sum up, teachers' use of classroom management techniques shows high percentage.

By comparing the outcome of the cultural sensitivity survey (88.66%, for agree and strongly agree) and the outcome of the classroom management survey (78.1%, for always and often), it's concluded that the two are correlated and are both significant.

DISCUSSION

The goal of the current study was to evaluate teachers' cultural sensitivity and classroom management skills. In general, the results showed that the teachers have a good degree of evaluation and assessment skills to understand how a teacher should properly approach the students and interact with them appropriately. The produced data suggests that teachers are

attempting to comprehend and try to assimilate to the new culture they have been daily encountering in the lecture hall. This finding adds to the research that teachers possess a high level of proficiency across cultures, behavioral adaptability, identity management, multicultural management, and relationship building (Panuncillo, 2016).

The outcome also supports the idea that a good cross-cultural communicator should be able to adapt to "new social conventions and behavior demands," as well as understand his or her own culture and how it affects personal interactions and behavior. In relation to this, a survey revealed that teachers were open-minded, and provided beneficial interactions with people from other cultures (Jantawej & Inada, 2011).

The findings of certain studies using dimensions related to cultural sensitivity, such as emotional intelligence and social intelligence, are strengthened by this conclusion. Specialists like Cherbosque, Garden Swartz and Rowe (2008) claimed that understanding the effects of a significant component of emotional development is how culture shapes conduct. Cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence are, therefore, connected to one another. Dong, Koper, and Collaco (2008) also argued that social intelligence can be the basis for intercultural sensitivity.

In general, the research's findings imply that there are still other elements influencing how teachers manage their classrooms. Manalata (2011) outlined six elements, including good teaching, setting, and applying regulations, controlling intervention, and providing feedback on appropriate actions, and the setting in the classroom.

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This study has provided information on instructors' classroom management and cultural sensitivity. The findings of this study demonstrated that the teachers are highly skilled and sensitive to cultural differences; to evaluate and consider various cultures. Regarding the classroom management, educators have carried out initiatives that foster a healthy learning environment; classroom environment that supports good teaching and mostly learning occur. This paper did in fact demonstrate that cultural sensitivity has a major impact on how the teacher runs the lesson.

A culturally sensitive teacher can help improve the performance of students and enhance interactions with students' families by utilizing their cultural competency. As such, students can be empowered in return, and student performance is one of the indicators of teacher performance.

CONCLUSION

Cultural differences and classroom management go together in awareness. Knowing the cultures of students--their backgrounds, home experiences and prior schooling--plays directly into the many options educators have for managing their behavior in classrooms. To be most effective in classroom management, teachers must know and understand the cultural differences among their students.

Therefore, the study suggests that teachers try to start intercultural conversations with students and parents and lead seminars and workshops on multicultural educational techniques and culture-sensitive classroom management techniques.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study is aware of its limitations due to the small sample size used, it still took the necessary safety measures to achieve its objectives. It is not meant to generalize the findings, but rather quantify the classroom's cultural awareness and sensitivity administration of teachers and evaluation of their association. Last but not least, even though this study concentrated on a multicultural setting, future studies with larger sample sizes should be used to conduct these factors in order to further comprehend the classroom management and cultural sensitivity of educators at all levels. In addition, pursuing this study using several variables is, also, recommended to reveal the other things that may have an impact on how you manage your classes and teachers.

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