DIFFERENCES IN TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS BETWEEN TEACHERS WITH DIFFERENT WORK EXPERIENCE LEVELS IN CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Teachers education practices have a significant impact on the behavior of students by directly influencing teacher-student relationship, the kind of learning activities that they use, and the collaboration with the parents, the colleagues and the leader. Research in this field have enabled an understanding of the factors influencing the practices of teachers about classroom management issues and specifically on addressing the difficult behavior of the students. This study aimed to explore how they differ experienced teachers to those with less experience in classroom management problems. Stress experience, and the factors that they see as the reason of problem management in the classroom and the methods they use to manage their classes, are considered the similarities and differences between groups. To answer the research questions, qualitative study was conducted. This approach was intended to receive in depth description from the teachers about their experience and perspectives on the classroom behavior management. Given the qualitative approach of this study the sample was intentional with a small number of cases (n = 30) in order to reach a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. The study was attended by 30 teachers from Shkodra, where 15 teachers had 2-5 years work experience and 15 others had 5-10 years work experience. The results show that there is a large difference on the efficiency at work between experienced teachers and those with less work experience towards personal teaching and external influences. However, teachers with less experience and those with more experience have many differences from one another when it comes to classroom management. Possible reasons behind these findings can be linked not only by the amount of experience of teachers but also by the expectations of the teachers. Teachers with more work experience are more likely to improve over the years their self-efficacy beliefs levels. The study also showed that teachers with less experience and those with more experience face both classroom management problems. From the interviews, teachers revealed that they believe that teachers with more experience cope better with classroom management problems.

Keywords: *differences, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, work experience, classroom, behavior management*

1. Introduction

Teacher educational practices have a significant impact on student behaviour directly affecting teacher-student relationship, the types of learning activities that they use, and also the collaborations with parents, colleagues and the school director. Research in this field has enabled an understanding of the factors influencing the practices of teachers related to classroom management issues and specifically addressing the problematic student behaviour.

Teachers should be very prepared in order to work effectively with students that show behavioural issues. Research in this area confirms the importance of the addressing of these

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school environmental issues at the earliest opportunities in order for the behaviour not to deteriorate because of rebellion, aggression, and social isolation. (Dishion and Patterson, 2006, Keenan, 2003).

Hamre and Pianta (2005) found that students in first grade who were considered to be "at risk" in the kindergarden, but that received in the first grade a hospitable environment, a well-structured welcoming environment, exceeded everyone's expectations in academic as well as in social spheres. Other researches has also shown that a positive environment in the classroom and the presence of a teacher who is skilled and caring were accompanied by positive feedback from the students which deal with behavioural issues. (Myers and Pianta, 2008; Skinner, Zimmer-Gembeck, Connell, Eccles and Welborn, 1998). On the other hand conflicts between teachers and children tend to predict the development of behavioral problems in later years (Hamre and Pianta, 2001).

Thus, the early years of primary school are very important in promoting the development of positive behavior in the classroom and teachers can positively influence the behavior of students who are considered to be at risk of developing behavioural problems. (Myer and Pianta, 2008).

2. **Self-efficacy construct**

According to the social-cognitive theory, self-efficacy is defined as the individual's belief in their abilities to achieve a specific purpose based on their actions. (Bandura, 2007). So, self-efficacy is based on a person's belief and expectations about the desired results.

According to Bandura (1997), the effectiveness of teachers has to do with "the results of the cognitive process in which people build their beliefs about their ability to perform at a certain level of competence."

The concept of teachers efficacy is also handled by Armor (1976), Ashton and Webb (1986), Gibson and Dembo (1984), Berman, Bass etc. According to Bandura (2003), teachers efficacy is a combination of the overall teaching efficacy and the personal teaching efficacy. Overall teaching efficacy is referred to the broad concept that teaching leads students to success regardless of family influences, socio-economic status and environmental factors. Personal teaching efficacy refers to the teachers' belief in their abilities.

These individual skills occur in a context that influences personal and general beliefs of teaching efficacy. Ashton (1984) found out that the development of the collective efficacy of teaching (that has to do with the collective work that a lot of teachers can do with their colleagues to promote learning despite context barriers) suffers regression when teachers feel isolated and helpless , and when they perceive the lack of support from their colleagues. Thus, it is more likely that classroom management and the ability to address difficult behavior to be influenced by the level of support and work with colleagues in the school environment.

Research has shown that there is a relationship between beliefs of the teacher efficacy, education practices and student achievements. The relationship between teachers' perceptions of students with difficult behavior and the beliefs of their efficacy are also studied.

Some studies have reported that teachers with low personal efficacy spend more time in extra-curricular activities, are more critical to the difficulties that their students present and are more likely to manage their classrooms through behavioral control and punishment (Woolfolk and Hoy, 1990; Woolfolk, 1990). According to Gordon (2001), a strong sense of personal efficacy of teaching helps teachers to manage their emotions and behavior better. Teachers with higher personal teaching efficacy have better emotional control, stress management, and as a result they are more unlikely to use punishment as a way to manage difficult behavior in the classroom.

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Regarding beliefs of self-efficacy and cooperation, the more teachers feel supported, the more flexible they are in choosing strategies and in the management of a variety of difficulties in behavior (Baker, 2005; Gibson and Dembo , 1984 ; Treder , Morse and Ferron , 2000).

3. **Classroom menagement: Behavioral difficulties**

Sanford and Evertson (1981) have argued both similarly that classroom management is a big difficulty " for teachers and leaders in primary schools ".

Classrooms, if managed by teachers, can become places of learning freedom and can obtain security for students. Some researchers support theories that personal efficacy of teaching affects the behavior of teachers, as much as beliefs and results (Morris - Rothschild and Brassard , 2006). Criticism of students' failures and showing intolerance to the problems is found to be connected to a low personal efficacy of teaching. (Gibson and Dembo, 1984).

Ashton and Webb (1986) found similar results that teachers that have a lower personal efficacy of teaching are unable to manage behavior problems. They suggested that teachers' beliefs were associated with strict punishment procedures, such as the use of authority and verbal abuse and throwing students out of the classroom during class time. Woolfolk Hoy, Rosoff, and Hoy (1990) concluded that "the sense of personal efficacy relates to beliefs about control only after some years of experience in the classroom."

Guskey and Passaro (1994) reported "instructive effectiveness", also Morris - Rothschild and Brassard (2006) reported some referrals to special education from a teacher with high personal efficacy. Cheung (2008) reported that being able to help the formation of interpersonal relationships between pupils was confidence of the teachers with high personal efficacy. As a result, when teachers possess a strong sense of personal efficacy, such teachers are more likely to obtain encouraging results in the classroom (Morris-Rothschild and Brassard, 2006).

4. **The study aims to answer this research question:**

How do teachers with little experience differ in self-efficacy beliefs to those with more experience in managing behavior in the classroom?

To answer the research question, a qualitative study of the topic was conducted. This approach was intended to receive indepth description of the teachers about their experiences and perspectives on managing student behavior in the classroom.

The method

Given this qualitative approach of this study, the sampling was intentionally with a small number of cases (N = 30) in order to reach a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. The study was attended by 30 teachers from middle school in Shkodër, where 15 teachers have less work experience and 15 others have a longer work experience. The difference between the experience gap was made referring to Freeman (2001), which states that teachers with less years of experience are those that have less than three years of work and those with a large experience are those who have more than five years of work.

To explore the experience of teachers in relation to the management of student behavior was used the interview method. Interviews were semi-structured and were adapted to ensure that the most important issues and the goals of the study will stand out and to ensure consistency in the context of the research during the participants' interview.

All interviews were conducted individually with the participant and are recorded and later transcribed.

In interviews, teachers responded worries about how they see the problems of classroom management, how often they face such a problem, and how they feel about these

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issues. A similiarity in responses is found between teachers with less experience and those with experience in terms of class management efficacy and external influences. None of the teachers (experienced or unexperienced) consider classroom management problems as a major source of the class's difficulties, which can be seen as associated with high efficacy for classroom management. Despite none of the teachers confirmed having serious problems in managing the problems in classroom, two teachers with less work experience and two teachers with more than ten years of experience added that they often experience problems in the form of problematic behavior with some classes.

 Below are the claims of those teachers with less experience and more experience.

Teachers 10, 5, 15 and 16. In the following assertions the most important part of teachers' answers are written in bold.

(Teacher 5) "Managing the classroom **is not the major problem** that I have, although, I often face problematic behaviour. Frequently, such a behaviour performed by one or multiple students, can ruin the teaching process."

(Teacher 10) "Managing the classroom is not a big deal if the number of students per class is low. Normally, our classes have 37 students and doing real class management **becomes challenging".**

(Teacher 16) "I believe that **I face difficulties on class managing** due to the incomplete formation that we have received at the university. However, experience can somehow help fill in the gaps.

(Teacher 17) "In my opinion, years ago, this issue was not a problem but in the last decade, due to social changes and the massification of internet, I can say that **it has become a major problem."**

(Teacher 18) "**I do not think that it is an actual problem to me** since I am constantly reading and exploring the internet and also seeking advice from the school's psychologist for problems that I may encounter on the classroom or students' problematic behavior cases that I hear or read about."

The problems that teachers face indicate the severity of the situation, as well as shed light on teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management. The question that was raised in the second part of the interview was directed to this goal. Among the examples that teachers gave about the problems in the management of the class were students that speak with each other, teasing that they to each other via mobile or facebook, bullying , hostile behavior to teachers or ignoring teachers, interrupting one another's speech during the lesson, not preparing for classes, coming late to school, frequent absences and coming to school without the basic materials.

Referrin Burden's rates (1995) for difficult behavior, the types of problems that teachers said they face range from the difficult, good and moderate behaviors. This can be treated as evidence for teachers that said that the problems they go through, in general are serious.

Discussing the types of problems encountered in managing the class, participants spoke mainly about lack of motivation, which leads to problems in classroom management and resistance to activities, tasks and subjects by students (T15). Despite the number of teachers with less experience who discussed about these types of problems was higher than the number of teachers with more experience, the teachers of both groups mentioned such problems. Teachers 2 and 3 highlighted the difficulties faced in motivating students, but

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teacher 2 also explained that this difficulty has to do with the workload. Teacher 2 and 18 highlighted the connection with the students' level of motivation and academic background.

Teacher (2) "I teach the subject of XXX, XXX class. Students in this class are neither motivated nor interested in learning, **so my biggest problem in the classroom has to do with motivation. It is very difficult to imagine the realization of the curriculum** but also on the other hand to motivate students."

Teacher (3) "The main problem for me is **to keep students focused on learning and be active participants."**

Teacher (5) "Very often they **are not interested in the topics addressed in the lesson,** or do not like the subject we develop. This very often creates problems in classroom management."

Teacher (17) "Students coming from other schools XXX, usually are very problematic. Given that they are **children who come from the Roma community or rural areas it is almost impossible to integrate them in learning** despite the great desire that their parents have to send them to a better school. I try to adjust my requirements in accordance with their skills, make classes more interesting and attractive but I have noticed that it does not work. In the classroom, during class time they do not misbehave, but have no interest, which makes me feel unsatisfied with the work that I try to do as good as possible.

Teachers 6 and 8 explained how the problems of motivation cause problems in certain subjects:

Teacher (6) "I often find it **hard to tell them to write a composition.** They have no desire and if I insist and give explanations why they should do it, they seek to postpone the task for the next time.

Teacher (8) "I face problems when I tell students to do something. When **I ask them to do an exercise on the blackboard** or present in front of the class a research that they have previously made on internet, **I notice a lack of desire and hesitation from many students.**

Teachers' answers about the causes of the classroom management problems show not only that teachers with less work experience but also very the experienced ones encounter external factors, which constitute the major problems they face in managing behavior in the classroom. The teacher 13 claimed that teachers and their professionalism should not be judged always when it comes to effective classroom management. This teacher who has many years of experience in work believes that if there are difficulties for teachers to cope with difficult behavior in the classroom, the reason may be the specific problem posed by that student. He notes that the problem may not be in the abilities of teachers in classroom management in general, but specifically in the management of individual students' problems.

Teacher (1) made a list of factors related to classroom management. This teacher with little work experience not only discusses about students' personalities or their backgrounds but also for the family environment, the impact of peers as well as for the factors that are beyond the student's control such as the lack of facilitating structures. This teacher also talks about how to manage problems when they are encountered in the classroom.

Teacher (1) "Factors that are encountered in classroom management are: the student's background, family relations that he/she has, the type of character, personality or special

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traits that he/she may have. Therefore, the teacher must be very careful to know all these, but also know not to hurt the student. Another factor is the lack of facilities such: small classes, the large number of students in class, lack of heating conditions, the possibility of using projector during teaching process to make learning more interactive, etc.

Teachers also expressed the importance of the implementation of rules to be followed by the students in the class. Teacheras 6 and 18 stated that:

Teacher (6) "I think that if the teacher makes the rules clear from the beginning, students will understand him/her better. In this way you can avoid many problems in classroom management.

Teacher (18) "I think that the most important thing to start an academic year properly is to explain the students the annual subject programm. In this way, the student can trust the teacher. When the rules are set and get accepted by the students is unlikely to face major problems during the class management.

When the teachers were asked about the consequences that breaking the rules could have, teacher 16 confirmed that there would be no consequences for students. However, teachers 9 and 13 teachers answered affirmatively, explaining that:

Teacher (9) "I think the students should be aware that **if they break the rules set out in class. they will be punished.** Penalty in this case has to do with the warning that I make.

Teacher (13) "I set my rules and explain the consequences of breaking those rules. When it comes to breaking rules of important behaviour such as physical harassment that can advance in violence between each other, **punishing varies from calling for parents to the one week suspension from school etc.**

None of the four teachers discusses the rules with students before deciding. However, the teacher 9 expressed his/her flexibility on the rules that are made clear at the beginning of the academic year. Teacher 11 explained that it is important to establish these rules even when students have contradictory opinions about them.

During the interview, four teachers highlighted the role that experience plays in classroom management despite no question was made about it. Teachers believe that the classroom management problems would reduce if they had more experience because experience teaches you to cope with problems better.

During the interview, teachers were also asked whether they experience stress due to classroom management problems. Teachers said they experience stress but it remains at normal levels. They added that stress can be related to nervousness caused when students create situations of humor in class, harassment related to one another through cellular phones, or direct harassment against teachers.

All participants were asked about the methods they use to manage problems in the classroom. At first they stressed that they establish a social relationship, explain the reasons behind what the teacher is doing or what the teacher asked students to do, let them talk to each other, change methodology, bring interesting material. If students continue to misbehave, teachers say that express dissatisfaction with the facial expression, raise the voice or talk about this misbehavior.

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From the interviews emerged a common element among teachers, ignoring behavior that has little importance, in order to continue teaching.

Conclusions

This study aimed to explore how experienced teachers differ to non-experienced or little experienced teachers on class problems management. The amount of stress that they have, and factors that they consider to be the cause of the class problems management, and the methods they use to manage their classes are considered aspects of similarities and differences between groups.

The results show that there is not a great difference between the efficacy of the teachers with little working experience and those with more experience on personal teaching and external influences.

However, teachers with less experience and those with more experience have many differences from one another when it comes to classroom management. Results support the statement that levels of self-efficacy depend on tasks (Bandura, 1997).

Possible reasons behind these findings can be linked not only by the amount of experience of teachers but also by their expectations. Teachers with more experience are more likely to have improved over the years their self-efficacy levels.

Results of this study showed that both the teachers with less experience and those with more experience face classroom management problems. From the interviews, teachers indicated that they believe that teachers with more experience cope with problems better.

Teachers who show the highest self-efficacy on classroom management feel more able to cope successfully with problems in the classroom. However, in the study, teachers who admitted experiencing stress, albeit not very high for problematic behaviours, were teachers who expressed low self-efficacy but also teachers who showed high self-efficacy.

Factors that teachers see as a cause of difficult behavior are: the character, the personality of students, family environment, the environment in the classroom and teachers' classroom practices. Teachers believe the impact that these factors have on classroom management problems, but they also ask students about the reasons for their inappropriate behavior which is one of the methods to deal with the problems. While teachers with less experience stated that they prefer not to intervene verbally, teachers with experience told how they warn their students and tell them to bring an end to such behavior. The practice of teachers with experience using verbal intervention does not correspond to their level of self-efficacy as literature in this field highlights (Bandura, 1997; Henson, 2001). The reason behind the sensitive approach of teachers with less experience to students may be the fact that they have read about classroom management or trained more than teachers with more experience.

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