

# Creating A Positive Learning Environment: A Closer Look At Classroom Management In Kindergarten

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**Abstract:-** This study explored strategies used by kindergarten teachers to create a positive learning environment in the classroom. Teacher narratives provided insight into both effective strategies and challenges faced in establishing a positive environment. Eight kindergarten teachers from Compostela East District in Davao de Oro province participated in the study. Data collection involved in-depth interviews with participants via virtual conference and limited face-to-face meetings, while strictly following health and safety protocols. Thematic analysis revealed the following key strategies employed by teachers: Positive student-teacher relationships and positive reinforcement. Regarding challenges faced, themes that emerged included: Disruptive Behavior and Overcrowded classroom. Insights gained from analyzing strategies and challenges suggested building strong parent-teacher partnerships and allocating additional funding for schools. From the outset, this study aimed to provide useful perspectives of kindergarten teachers working to create a positive learning environment in the classroom. The new knowledge derived here has implications for enhancing education quality in schools.

**Keywords:-** Positive Learning Environment, Classroom Management, Kindergarten.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In classroom management, one of the tasks of teachers is to create a positive classroom environment. A positive learning environment in the classroom provides opportunity for the learners to explore knowledge without hesitation. When there is trust and rapport among students and participatory classroom environment, it presupposes positive learning outcome of learners. In the context of kindergarten classroom, learning will be fun, exciting and productive when the learning environment is positive and supportive.

On positive classroom environment, Sandilos, Rimm, & Cohen (2017) describe it as one where children feel both physically and psychologically safe. Such an environment allows children to perform at higher levels academically and socially. Ensuring physical safety in the classroom is straightforward; it involves removing unnecessary clutter and hazards from the environment, such as chemicals, broken

glass, or other potential dangers. When free from such risks, students can focus fully on learning.

Meanwhile, to clarify misconceptions about what constitutes a positive learning environment, Hawthorne (2022) elucidated that such an environment is not defined by well-decorated displays with meticulously trimmed borders or meticulously labeled desk accessories. A positive learning environment is also more than a space created during summer holidays in preparation for the next academic year. As Hawthorne explained, a learning environment encompasses significantly more than its mere visual aspects.

Similarly, Verma (2019) noted that a positive nurturing environment is an indispensable part of learning. Students are more likely to feel comfortable in a positive environment where healthy relationships with peers and teachers can thrive. When the environment is positive, the process of learning becomes something students can easily adapt to and look forward to engaging with. For a positive learning environment to happen, the classroom management skills of teachers play a very important role.

Marzano et al. (2003) state that well-run classrooms promote students' participation in academic work. Instructors might use group management techniques including creating norms and procedures for the classroom. Teachers also need to support their students' development of social skills and self-control. Students are now accountable for their own actions. Lastly, educators need to be ready to step in when necessary and support any students who are having behavioral issues.

Thus, good classroom management that fosters a learning atmosphere has a positive effect on the students. According to Verma (2019), a positive classroom atmosphere is crucial because it empowers students to be inquisitive, exploratory, and real leaders of their own learning. A positive setting is one in which kids can collaborate with one another, recognize and appreciate each other's successes, and grow from failures. In the true meaning of learning things on their own, it improves pupils' capacity for learning and productivity.

Yussif (2022) further argues that a positive classroom environment, which cultivates a safe and supportive space for students, is more likely to foster constructive conduct and demonstrate high levels of academic achievement. A positive environment encourages students to take ownership of their learning by motivating them to independently explore new topics and participate actively in class discussions. When students feel psychologically safe and supported, they may feel more willing to engage with their studies in a creative, autonomous manner unconstrained by fears of judgment or ridicule from their peers or instructors. An atmosphere characterized by trust and care for students' wellbeing and growth empowers learners to push the boundaries of their understanding, interact with classmates to deepen their knowledge through respectful dialog, and reach their fullest potential.

Unfortunately, Classroom management faces challenges from disruption, particularly learner misbehavior. As Araújo (2005) explained, disruptive behaviors present a problem not just due to their immediate effects on classroom processes, but because they can also interfere with developing cooperation and prosocial attitudes, which are important objectives for education systems in most countries. Disruptive behaviors in the classroom are one of the problems that teachers need to deal with, according to Almog and Shechtman (2007).

Disruptive behaviors of learners do not only affect the class but also the teachers themselves. As Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo (2009) found, dealing with student disruptions can take the joy out of teaching and cause stress, anxiety and frustration for instructors. Their research demonstrated that student misbehavior has been cited as a reason some teachers depart from the profession prematurely. When learners engage in disruptive actions, it makes it difficult for teachers to focus on instruction and meet the needs of all students in the classroom. Additionally, consistently addressing behavioral issues takes an emotional toll on educators over time. For an effective learning environment to exist, both teachers and students must work together in a cooperative manner with mutual respect.

In summary, it is impossible to create a favorable learning environment in poorly managed classrooms. Instructors need to be well-versed in controlling student conduct and classroom learning engagement. Teachers have faced challenges in managing disruptive behavior and fostering a healthy learning environment in kindergarten classrooms. The present study is designed to investigate the approaches employed by kindergarten educators in fostering an inviting environment for learning through efficient classroom management. It is very significant since addressing the gap in fostering positive environment in the kindergarten classroom denotes better learning and holistic personal development of learners.

## II. METHOD

This research aims to analyze the approaches and challenges faced by kindergarten educators in cultivating a constructive learning environment within their classrooms. The study explores the disparities that inhibit instructors from fostering a supportive atmosphere for their students. A qualitative phenomenological methodology was employed for this research. This method involves acquiring and assessing non-quantitative data to comprehensively understand the topic being examined. As Farber (2006) notes, as cited in Buhl (2010), qualitative research endeavors to gain a thorough perspective of the individuals, settings, programs, occurrences, or any other phenomena under investigation through closely engaging with the relevant subjects.

This qualitative phenomenological study utilized non-numerical data collection techniques to closely examine kindergarten teachers' experiences with and perspectives on cultivating a positive classroom environment for early childhood education. The research sought to identify specific strategies employed by instructors as well as barriers that hindered their ability to facilitate a supportive learning atmosphere for students. By directly engaging with kindergarten educators through open-ended discussions and interviews, the study aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced and approaches utilized in order to ultimately analyze how to best promote constructive classroom environments at the kindergarten level going forward.

For a phenomenological study, the participants engaged in discussions regarding their observations and experiences related to the phenomenon being examined. The researcher primarily used in-depth interviews to collect information. Individuals provided both subjective and objective observations and opinions based on their personal experiences. When analyzing the compiled data, the researcher focused on identifying common experiences and concepts raised by the individuals. As noted by Smith et al. (2009) as cited in Alase (2017), the main goal of conducting interviews in phenomenological research is to enable an interaction that allows individuals to articulate their personal stories in their own words.

This study involved eight (8) participants who are kindergarten teachers from Compostela East District in the Division of Davao de Oro. The participants were selected through a purposive sampling method. As outlined by Palinkas, et al. (2015), purposive sampling is a commonly employed and well-regarded approach in qualitative studies for distinguishing and choosing information-rich cases relevant to the phenomenon under examination. This methodology is especially applicable when inspecting a specific familial context with specialists. Consequently, the selection of participants is critical for this work since

individuals are consistently sought for their specialized knowledge and perceptiveness.

This phenomenological study involved conducting in-depth interviews with participants after obtaining their informed consent. Clear and unambiguous communication was established at the outset to ensure participants understood their ability to seek clarification on any aspect of the research study and their involvement. Prior written permission to audio record conversations was obtained, and participants were assured that all information collected would be handled with the utmost confidentiality and solely used for academic purposes related to this research. The study was conducted in strict adherence to core ethical principles encompassing respect for individuals, beneficence toward participants, justice and fairness in the treatment of research subjects, obtaining voluntary and informed consent, and maintaining participant confidentiality.

As the principal investigator, it was my responsibility to ensure robust, high-quality research outcomes. This involved formulating pertinent research questions, conducting in-depth interviews with key informants, and carefully analyzing and transcribing the collected data. A thematic analysis approach was utilized to methodically extrapolate overarching categories, codes, and themes from the transcriptions. A comprehensive examination and synthesis of the identified themes served to illuminate key findings and insights relevant to the research objectives.

Effective analysis of qualitative data requires a structured, systematic approach. As Alase (2017) explained, upon initially reviewing the interview transcripts, the first step is to carefully read through each response to identify frequently repeated words or phrases. This allows the researcher to begin condensing the content by recognizing common themes inherent to participants' perspectives. The researcher must look for such recurrent elements to start categorizing the data. Upon an initial review, tentative themes can start to emerge.

Rigorous validation then requires repeatedly re-reading each transcript while cross-referencing any recording devices to ensure clarity and accuracy. Only after thoroughly reviewing the data multiple times can the researcher reliably identify and define the predominant themes. Further examination and refinement of the themes continues until a coherent narrative and a set of evidence-based findings and conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. Proper execution of these steps helps ensure the integrity and credibility of any qualitative research.

The process of categorizing significant statements of participants, as evidenced in verbal transcriptions, is a pivotal aspect of data analysis. Consequently, it necessitates the researcher's proficiency in interpreting and analyzing the data with precision. To ensure data accuracy, participants were

involved in reviewing the transcriptions of every interview session. As Patton (2002) noted, researchers are able to gain valuable insights by having study participants confirm findings and verify the accuracy of interview session summaries. This process of participant confirmation allows researchers to assess the precision, thoroughness, impartiality, and legitimacy of their data analysis. It also enables researchers to ensure they are asking the appropriate questions that will generate the most meaningful and applicable information. By taking these steps to validate interpretations with interviewees, analysts can feel confident that their conclusions and insights were derived from a reliable interpretation of participants' actual experiences and perspectives.

During the research process, observations and interview responses were compared with information obtained from questionnaires and insights shared by participants during interviews in order to assess consistency. Additionally, the study strictly adhered to ethical principles including respect for individuals, beneficence, justice, consent, and confidentiality. As the researcher, utmost dedication was given to the responsibility of generating dependable research findings.

In summary, this qualitative phenomenological study was conducted with the utmost care and methodological rigor. Data collection involved a thoughtful interview process where participants shared rich descriptions of their lived experiences. The subsequent analysis entailed a diligent and meticulous coding of the transcribed interviews. This allowed meaningful themes to emerge that accurately captured and condensed the essence of what the research participants conveyed. Overall, this study employed a well-executed qualitative phenomenological design and approach to derive important insights and conclusions regarding the phenomenon under investigation.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following section outlines the key findings that emerged from a thematic analysis of the data collected. Through a close examination of participants' responses, several prominent themes were identified relating to the difficulties and coping methods encountered by kindergarten teachers in creating positive learning environment in the classroom. The themes highlighted below discussed these experiences of kindergarten teachers.

#### ➤ *Positive Student-Teacher Relationships*

The participants observed that a positive student-teacher relationship is essential for creating a positive learning environment. This perspective is supported by Cristine et.al (2022), who found the student-teacher relationship in the classroom involves developing trust and respect between teacher and student. This relationship includes getting to know students better, providing choices, and motivating students

daily. Respect, valuing individuality, and politeness are shown. A positive relationship helps students succeed and makes the classroom a safe, welcoming space.

Moreover, Rimm-Kaufman and Sandilos's (2023) research indicates that enhancing students' relationships with educators has considerable beneficial and enduring implications for learners' academic and social growth. Focusing solely on improving students' relationships with their teachers will not independently result in achievement gains. However, students who cultivate close, positive and supportive relationships with their teachers will achieve at higher levels than students whose relationships involve greater conflict.

#### ➤ *Positive Reinforcement.*

Positive reinforcement is a key theme emerging from kindergarten teachers on creating a positive learning environment. This aspect was commonly mentioned by study participants. Teacher observations show positive reinforcement promotes a positive environment. Williams (2021) assert that positive reinforcement is widely regarded as one of the most effective strategies for achieving measurable and sustainable changes to behavior. Positive reinforcement is highly efficient and impactful partly because it can be incorporated into all classroom activities like instruction, other behavior management systems, transitions and beyond.

Meanwhile, the difficulties of kindergarten teachers in creating positive learning environment in their classrooms are likewise outlined in this study. The themes developed from the thematic analysis of the participants' narrations are as follows:

#### ➤ *Disruptive Behavior.*

Based on participant accounts, one challenge in establishing a positive learning environment within classrooms is disruptive learner behavior. Evidently, the participants experienced disruptive student behaviors as creating distraction in the teaching and learning process. As cited by Granero-Gallegos et al. (2019), school underperformance is related to the success or failure of the education system and cannot be addressed today without considering academic issues. Of these, disruptive classroom behaviors stand out due to teacher concerns regarding coexistence and classroom climate.

Students that engage in disruptive behavior are individuals who impair learning, sour personal relationships, and alter the dynamics of the classroom. These actions not only have an impact on the offending student but also on the other students and teachers who must deal with the fallout. According to Wangdi and Namgyel (2022), one of the most frequently mentioned issues among educators and school officials is disruptive behavior in the classroom.

#### ➤ *Overcrowded Classroom.*

The overcrowded classroom presented another difficulty for the participants in establishing a supportive learning environment in the classes. For Chavez (2023), overcrowded classrooms had consequences beyond the direct learning environment. The pressure on teachers and lack of individual focus correlated with decreased attendance rates among students. When students felt unseen and unheard, they were less inclined to participate actively in class.

Consequently, this study has developed insights that may help support kindergarten teachers in fostering a positive learning environment. The insights are based on strategies and challenges shared by participating teachers regarding the creation of a positive classroom setting. Specifically, this study highlights the importance of Building a strong parent and teacher partnership and additional funding for schools.

Building a strong parent-teacher partnership can provide key benefits for students according to Clanbeat Education (2021). They assert that when parents and teachers collaborate effectively as partners, it creates the ideal support system for children's education and development. With both parties invested and cooperating closely, students are able to feel confident and secure knowing they have such a solid team backing their learning and progress. Forming cooperative relationships between home and school can thus positively impact student outcomes.

According to Clanbeat Education (2021), a strong relationship between parents and teachers creates an ideal support system for students. When parents and teachers collaborate as partners, students experience confidence and security knowing they have the backing of such a positive team.

In summary, kindergarten teachers can create a positive learning environment in the classroom by focusing on two key strategies: developing positive student-teacher relationships and providing positive reinforcement. These approaches are supported by research that has confirmed their importance in establishing a positive learning environment. However, according to the participants, they faced challenges such as disruptive behavior and overcrowded classrooms that hindered achieving the objective of cultivating a positive learning environment.

Disruptive behaviors in the classroom can impede learning and negatively impact relationships. These inappropriate actions affect not just the offending student, but others students and teachers who must address the consequences. Such behaviors interfere with tasks and activities in the learning environment, making it difficult to complete work. The propositions focus on: Strengthening partnerships between parents and teachers, as well as providing additional financial resources for schools. This



study posits that properly implementing these proposals can help address current deficiencies and work to create a more positive learning environment in the classroom.

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