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Classroom management practice by excellent Islamic education teacher at secondary school in Malaysia

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss classroom management practice by Excellent Islamic Education Teacher (EIET) through a case study. The case study was conducted in eight secondary schools in Malaysia by utilizing in-depth interviews and observation with EIET, teachers' colleagues, students, and principals or senior assistants of the schools. Interview transcripts were later compiled and organised in NVivo version 7 to produce themes and matrix related to classroom management practice by EIET in schools. Findings showed four aspects of classroom management which were used by EIET in their teaching and learning. These aspects were arrangement of students, recording and taking of action on students who were tardy and playing truant, black or white board management as well as beautification and cleanliness of the classroom.

Keywords: classroom, classroom management, education teacher

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1. Introduction

Teaching is a task or an activity that is collaboratively performed by teachers and students. Without any one of them, teaching will not occur whilst learning is an interaction process between students and teachers so that the process of obtaining knowledge and skills or moulding the attitude and beliefs of the students can materialise (Nawi, 2011). Creative and innovative teachers must be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills in teaching and learning, including linking all these aspects in his delivery of knowledge (Jasmi & Tamuri, 2011).

This article will describe some aspects of classroom management that were used by Excellent Islamic Education Teachers (EIET) in terms of their most effective practice during the teaching and learning process. Excellent teachers in this study refer to teachers who have superior knowledge, skills and expertise in the subject matter, particularly in pedagogy. Excellent teachers are also always dedicated and motivated in performing their tasks and responsibilities excellently and continuously. (Excellent Teacher, Ministry of Education Malaysia [MOE] 2011)

2. Background of the Problem

According to Moskowitz and Hayman (1976), once a teacher loses control of the classroom, it will be difficult to gain control of it again. There are studies which show that a period of time taken by a teacher to correct learners' behaviour was due to weak classroom management (Berliner, 1986; Brophy & Good, 1986). A study by Reese (2007) stated that a successful and effective classroom management can be achieved through the practise of these four elements – commendation, communication, consistency and content while in the classroom.

3. Objectives and Research Question

This study aims to identify classroom management practice among Excellent Islamic Education Teachers in secondary schools in Malaysia. It also seeks to observe pattern of practice in classroom management by Excellent Islamic Education Teachers. The research question is 'What are the types of effective classroom practices among Excellent Islamic Education Teachers in Malaysian secondary schools?'

4. Literature Review

Moore (1989) explains that the fundamental aspects in classroom management are leadership and efficiency in creating conducive classroom climate for learning. Teachers who are efficient in classroom management do not only disseminate knowledge to students but they are also capable in influencing their students to learn effectively by using any of their own teaching and learning tools, creating conducive environment for learning as well as able to control learners' behaviour in the classroom (Akhiar & Shamsina, 2013; James, 2007). According to Akhiar & Shamsina (2013), classroom management is a terminology used by teachers to explain the process of ensuring smooth teaching and learning in the classroom.

Apart from that, Allison and Kerry (2007) claimed that centralised learning in the classroom is fun and it offers many experiences to learners. Teachers must be smart in planning and managing their classroom so that active learning can take place among learners. Linda (2007) in her research stated that teachers' preparation before starting their lessons in the classroom influenced learners' level of achievement. She mentioned that teachers who were 40 years and above made more preparation for classroom teaching compared to teachers who were 30 years old.

5. Research Methodology

This research employed qualitative paradigm in the form of case study. Mohd Majid (2005) and Creswell (2012) state that the main advantage of using a case study is that it can probe further on the information about a case. To be precise, this study is *multicase studies* or better known as *multisite studies*. Multisite studies by Merriam (1998) involved multiple research sites and the data obtained increased the external validity or generalisation of research findings. Research approach by Hamzah (2006) was used as a guide in this research with minor adaptation. This study employed interview method for Excellent Islamic Education Teachers, two colleagues, two students and Principals or Senior Assistants as the primary data. Observation of research samples and document analysis were later used to support the interview data.

Jasmi et al (2011) explains that interview is a very practical method in obtaining accurate information in a small population while observation is suitable in order to see changes and development of teacher's behaviour during the teaching and learning process.

Selection of samples in this study was based on purposive sampling, that is a cluster of respondents which represents identified population and every individual is selected as samples. The researchers identified eight schools with Excellent Islamic Education Teachers that were listed by Malaysian Excellent Teacher Council (2007)

In this study, the researchers conducted face validity and reliability that were suggested by Bogdan & Biklen (2003), that is validation of semi-structured questions by supervisor and field experts, pilot test, triangulation of data, field notes, diary, validation of experts on theme construction, and calculation of Cohenn Kappa on expert agreement of themes.

Table 1: Cohen Kappa Level of Agreement Indicator

Indicator	Cohen Kappa Value
Very High	0.90<
High	0.89-0.70
Moderate	0.69-0.30
Low	0.30>

Source: Wiersma (1991)

Table 2: List of Expert Panels on Analysis of Theme Agreement of Qualitative Data

No	Name	Representation	Position and Qualification	Expertise	Level (Cohen Kappa)
1.	Expert A	Institute of Education, IIUM	Assistant Professor, Dr.	Islamic Education	0.94
2.	Expert B	Dep. Of Education Foundation and Humanities, FP, UM	Senior Lecturer, Head of Department	Teacher Education and Islamic Education	0.92
3.	Expert C	Faculty of Education, UPM	Senior Lecturer, Head of Department, Dr.	Islamic Education, Values and Pedagogy Studies	0.92

Source : Form of Islamic Education expert agreement on qualitative data theme (2009)

6. Findings

The main purpose of discussion in this article is to refer to effective classroom management that was practised by Excellent Islamic Education Teachers while they were executing the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Findings from the study, based on in-depth interview and observation on Excellent Islamic Education Teachers, showed four practices by these excellent Islamic education teachers. These practices were on cleanliness and beautification of the classroom, recording and taking of action on students who were tardy and played truant, management of blackboard and arrangement of student in the classroom.

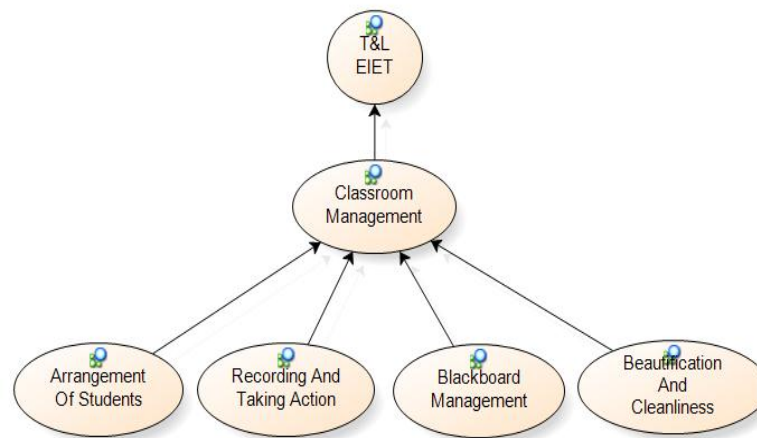


Figure 1: Eiet Classroom Management Practice

Based on Figure 1 above, Excellent Islamic Education Teachers practised classroom management in terms of the beautification and cleanliness of the classroom. They would not proceed with the lesson if they found that the classrooms were not clean and neat. As evidence, (Eiet15/S5) elaborated:

(Eiet:PP/PBD) “Later, want the class to be nice and beautiful and always when I come in, I pay attention to rubbish, when I come in and there is rubbish I will not teach, I will ask the students to sweep first. Sometimes, I ask them to sweep it at that moment, that is my principle”

This excerpt explains that the teacher will not start the teaching and learning session if the classroom is not clean. In fact, he will request the students to clean the class first. Excellent Islamic Education Teachers have always been consistent with this practice. According to Akhiar & Shamsina (2013), inconsistency in action resulted in ineffective classroom management.

Second finding is related to recording and taking of action on students who came in late to class or played truant. Excellent Islamic Education Teachers would record and ask other students if there were students who came in late to class or played truant.

Third finding pertains to blackboard management. Effective use of blackboard will give positive effects to students’ learning in the classroom. This finding is consistent with studies by Pamela (2004) and Baker (2007) who claimed that effective use of blackboard would give positive effects during the teaching and learning process.

Fourth finding is on arrangement of students in the classroom. This finding corroborated with the opinion of Akhiar & Shamsina (2013) who claimed that good student arrangement would create a good learning environment.

7. Conclusion

Through this study, researchers had discussed the objectives, methodology, findings and discussions on a case study of classroom management practice. Findings revealed four main aspects of effective classroom management by Excellent Islamic Education Teachers while they were in the classroom which were related to beautification and cleanliness aspects, recording and disciplining students, arrangement of students and blackboard use.

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