

Using Henry Fayol's Principles for Better Classroom Management

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Abstract

Classroom is a place surrounded by four walls and a roof which is used by the teacher to impart knowledge to the students. It is a shelter for educational activities; an environment for acquiring knowledge in a formal manner. It provides a context for learning and includes not only the physical space and furnishings, but also the inherent atmosphere, learners' emotions and the social dynamics attached to learning. Management of the classroom environment hence, becomes an important aspect in this backdrop. The objective of effective teaching is often achieved through proper classroom management, i.e., by incorporating predetermined and predefined goals and engaging students through group-activities to achieve them. Classroom management being an important element of teaching thus, necessitates the absence of disruptions and disturbances, providing room for better learnable outcomes. It is an understandable fact, however, that the classroom conflicts cannot be eliminated completely; but minimized. Author in this paper has implemented Fayol's principles in an attempt to manage the classroom more efficiently by minimizing conflict situations and thereby creating more comfortable educational environments. It is argued that these principles can be of a great help to the students in coping with the classroom difficulties arising chiefly out of peer-competition and other extraneous pressures.

Keywords: classroom, management, disruptive behaviour and classroom management.

Introduction

The room where a group of students having same age, equal physical, mental, psychological qualities, doing similar activities, having different teachers for different subjects study, together constitutes a classroom or schoolroom. It is a place where students are grouped together, as a homogeneous group, for the purpose of collective instruction safe and uninterrupted by any external distractions. It hence, falls upon the shoulders of the teacher to manage the classroom environment accordingly. (Imogie, 1998 cited in Mezieobi, Nzokurum & Mezieobi, 2014).

The term 'management' denotes the act of 'planning, organising and directing those elements which are essential for the accomplishment of specific goals'. According to Waples & Tyler as cited by Parvez (2010), "management provides the stage, the settings and the properties necessary for the satisfactory performance of learning and teaching activities." Thus, classroom management would mean creating and maintaining such type of situations that facilitate effective teaching-learning process. In the opinion of Wong (n.d.), the term classroom management refers to all the things that a teacher does to organise students, space, time, and materials so that learning can take place in an efficient and effective manner. This includes fostering student involvement and cooperation in all classroom activities and establishing a productive and constructive working environment. Brown (1995) as cited by Adeyemo (2012) defines it as a "process involving the organisation of certain academic tasks which are essential for effective teaching-learning in a specific set up."

Classroom management is the process of ensuring that classroom activities run smoothly despite disruptive behaviour by the students and also implies the prevention of such disruptive behaviour. It is one of the most difficult aspects of teaching, especially for novice teachers. The problems created by ill-managed classroom disrupt the teaching-learning process, thereby causing some of the best minds to leave the teaching profession. In a way, classroom management provides a mechanism which a teacher uses to establish and maintain certain specific conditions. These conditions help in creating a congenial atmosphere for the learners to achieve instructional objectives. Effective classroom management, hence, is the process of creating a positive social and emotional climate in the classroom for achieving the predefined objectives of teaching. It also means implementing strategies that create a safe, fair, congenial, and learning enriched environment for the students to flourish and prosper to their maximum potential. It hence serves as the Central Nervous System (CNS) of teaching-learning process in a school setting.

The question is what constitutes a well managed classroom? A well organised classroom is a place where a teacher knows how to make effective use of the room and other available resources. It is for this reason that some of the teaching objectives focus on academic behaviours, appropriate use of materials, and cooperation with peers. In such a setting teacher plays an important role in the creation of a conducive environment and students actively participate by understanding their individual roles and learning how to work effectively within groups. Hence, all actions taken by a teacher should be focused on minimising disruptions and disturbances and

in fostering an environment equipping the students to learn with ease. Classroom management **sometimes therefore, refers to a teacher's technique to create and maintain an orderly, conducive, disciplined learning environment. It is a means for a teacher to arrive at answers to students' misbehaviour which is often connected to motivation, discipline and respect in the classroom.**

Literature Review

A well-managed classroom is a task oriented, positive environment providing an exciting and dynamic experience for the teacher and the taught where the students know what is expected from them and how to succeed. Conducive classroom environment reduces the number of low achievers in class. Research shows that, in a well-managed class, a majority of students will attain well (Brophy, 1979). However, it has been shown that new teachers feel unprepared when it comes to classroom management skills (Duck, 2007; Freiberg, 2002; Meister & Melnick, 2003; Merrett & Wheldall, 1993; Stoughton, 2007). Their success depends much on their ability to develop positive classroom learning environments through the implementation of classroom management practices (Brown 2004). The research findings also lay emphasis on the fact that teachers who approach classroom management as a process of establishing and maintaining effective learning environments are more successful than those who place more emphasis on their role as authority figures or disciplinarians (Brophy, 1988).

Classroom management is concerned with behaviour, and can also be defined as planning, organising and controlling the learners, learning processes, and classroom environment to create and maintain an effective learning experience (Krause, Bouchner & Duchesne, 2003). It relates to the ability of teachers in the creation of an atmosphere which can lead to student self-discipline, productive learning environment, minimised behaviour problems and other disruptions on the part of students; and sets the tone for a more effective teaching. It includes all the things a teacher must do to foster student involvement and co-operation in classroom activities (Sanford, Emmer & Clements, 1983, Doyle, 1986; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Woolfolk, 1995, Freiberg, 1999; Penner, 2005, Brophy, 2006, Milner, 2006 as cited in Rany, 2007, Emmer & Stough, 2001).

An effective classroom management helps in maintaining students' interest, motivation, and involvement, thereby creating positive, productive, constructive, and facilitative learning environment. Creating an environment conducive for learning is more important than having attractive buildings, good ventilation, beautiful gardens and availability of ample amount of latest gadgets, etc. It is more important to create a place where all are at ease and feel comfortable, a place where the surroundings are neat, clean and orderly and where there is mutual respect in a stress-free, friendly atmosphere where all can bloom and prosper.

It has been found that effective classroom management is the main deciding factor in gauging the effectiveness of teachers and students learning (Al - Zu'bi, 2013) where the ultimate goal of classroom management is to provide all students with equitable opportunities for learning. Weinstein, Curran & Tomlinson-Clarke (2003). Adeyemo (2012) through his studies concludes that effective classroom management techniques have strong, positive influence on students' achievement. It is a significant part of the teaching and learning process in establishing a productive environment, and contributes significantly in students' learning (Roelofs & Veenman, 1994; Ormrod, 2003; Vitto, 2003; cited in Shohani, et al., 2014, and Ritter & Hancock, 2007). Likewise, the classroom management is the single variable with the largest impact on student achievement (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Jones & Jones (1990) reveal that effective classroom management is essential to maintain order in the class. Similarly, Brown (2003) observes that teachers using strategies like demonstrating care for students, acting with authority and using communication patterns to reach to every student can establish a productive learning environment. Torff & Sessions (2005) observe that good rapport with the students is essential for teacher effectiveness. To achieve these varied targets, especially related to preventing and managing classroom discipline problems, Zuckerman (2007) has identified three strategies - first, setting the classroom climate; second, managing student behaviour; third, managing instruction, which are components of classroom management. A teacher, therefore, must be able to manage students effectively, as the relationship of effective classroom management to other effective teaching behaviours is a closed one (Rany, 2007). Student behaviours disrupt learning climate (Kounin, 1970) can be a major cause of teacher burnout (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Unfortunately, in the present scenario, students are facing several academic problems where their own behaviour is often an obstacle for the smooth process of learning.

The literature review enabled the investigator to have extensive information on the classroom management and the various approaches taken for making the classroom environment more effective. Fayol's principles of management have never been used by any investigator for classroom management. The present work is a humble attempt to fill in this research gap.

Objectives of the Study

1. To outline Henry Fayol's principles of management.
2. To implement Henry Fayol's principles for effective classroom management
3. To suggest some measures for developing a better teacher-taught relationship.

Methodology

This is descriptive and exploratory study in which content analysis was done for the purposes of which ten experts having at least ten years of teaching experience were consulted. An opinion was taken regarding the use of all fourteen principles. The sampled experts seemed satisfied on nine principles which have been used in the present study for making classroom a better place for study.

Analysis and Discussion

A principle refers to a fundamental truth. It establishes cause and effect relationship between two or more variables. In fact, they serve as a guide to thought and actions. Management principles are the statements of fundamental truth based on some logic providing guidelines for managerial decisions and actions. These principles are derived on the basis of continuous keen observation, analysis and practical experiences of managers by conducting experimental studies.

Since unfavourable classroom situations related with discipline has been the most troublesome problem for teachers, in the past researchers have tried many approaches and strategies to combat the problem. But, currently, no overwhelming evidence indicates which approach is best suitable for our educational settings. There is hence, a need to identify some successful strategies for teachers, including novice teachers, in order to prevent or manage a classroom discipline problem. It is also imperative to develop innovative ways of managing classroom and student behaviour. The author has tried to use Fayol's Principles to cater to demands.

Henri Fayol's Principles of Management

Henri Fayol (1841- 1925) developed a general theory of business administration. He was one of the significant contributors to today's prevalent modern concepts of management and is often referred to as the true father of strategic management or the real father of modern management theory (Kontz & Wehrich 2010). He conceived fourteen principles that he thought to be essential to effective management (Duening & Ivancevich, 2009) and believed that these can be applied to all organisational situations (Robbins, Coulter & Vohra, 2010). Fayol's work has stood the test of time and are still found relevant in contemporary management studies. The fourteen principles of management that he identified are:

1. Division of work
2. Authority
3. Discipline
4. Unity of command
5. Unity of direction
6. Subordination of individual interests to the general interests
7. Remuneration
8. Centralization
9. Scalar chain
10. Order
11. Equity
12. Stability of tenure of personnel
13. Initiative
14. Esprit de corps

All the fourteen principles given by Fayol are equally important. There is nothing like more or less important principle. However, the author would use a few of them like division of work, parity of authority and responsibility, unity of direction, equity, order, discipline, initiative, sub-ordination of individual interest to general interest, and esprit de' corps (union is strength) for managing classrooms in a better way.

1. Division of work

Henry Fayol has stressed on the specialisation of jobs and recommended that work of all kinds must be divided & subdivided and allotted to various persons according to their expertise in a particular area. This principle can be used in classroom management by dividing the classroom work among the teacher and the taught. This subdivision of labour would make work simpler and would result in greater efficiency. It will help the students in acquiring speed along with accuracy in their performance. Specialisation will lead to efficiency and economy in the spheres of learning things.

2. Parity of Authority and Responsibility

Authority without responsibility leads to irresponsible and unacceptable behaviour, whereas responsibility without authority makes the person ineffective and helpless. Since responsibility involves being accountable, it is a natural associate of authority. Authority & responsibility, similarly, co-exist in the classroom too. Among the group of students it would refer to the right of one student to get exactness from his classmates; responsibility would entail obligation for the performance of job assigned. In classroom, this authority-responsibility

continuum can be properly maintained by appointing the Class Representatives (CR) and giving him responsibility of maintaining congenial classroom environment in the absence of the teacher. If authority is given to a student he should always be made responsible for exercising such authority. This would lead to a better management of classroom resulting in slim chances of conflicts.

3. Unity of Direction

Fayol advocates one plan for a group of activities having similar objectives. It means related activities should be grouped together and there should be one plan of action for them and all the activities should be under the charge of a particular manager. Efforts of all the members of the organisation should be directed towards a common goal. Without unity of direction, unity of action cannot be achieved. Similarly, unity of command is not possible without unity of direction. This principle can be used for better classroom management - it should be made clear to all the students that teaching-learning process is a combined effort for the achievement of common goal, and all the efforts of teacher and taught are for the betterment of students, for better achievements by the students and for their overall development.

4. Equity

Equity means combination of fairness, kindness, & justice. Fayol argues that employees should be treated with kindness & equity if devotion is expected of them. It implies that managers should be fair and impartial while dealing with the subordinates. They should give similar treatment to people of similar position and should not discriminate with respect to age, caste, gender, religion, relation, etc. Equity is essential to create and maintain cordial relations between the managers and sub-ordinate but does not always mean total absence of harshness. Fayol was of the opinion that at times force and harshness become necessary for the sake of equity. Applying Fayol's logic there should not be any kind of discrimination by the teacher on the basis of age, caste, gender, and religion, etc in the classroom. Discrimination free environment would create cordial relations between teacher and taught. However, this relationship should always contain some elements of harshness and toughness on the part of teacher which is necessary for improving and bringing notable positive changes in the behaviour of students.

5. Order

This principle is concerned with proper and systematic arrangement of things and people. Arrangement of things is called material order and placement of people is called social order. Material order means there should be safe, appropriate, and specific place for every article and every place to be effectively used for specific activity. Social order means selection and appointment of most suitable person. There should be a specific place for everyone so that they can easily be contacted whenever need arises. Likewise order must be maintained in the classroom. There should be safe, appropriate, and specific place for every article which is needed while teaching and every place has to be effectively and optimally used for teaching. Social order should be maintained with the appointments of the most deserving and suitable teachers for teaching students.

6. Discipline

According to Fayol, "discipline means sincerity, obedience, respect of authority, & observance of rules and regulations of the enterprise". Subordinate should respect their superiors and obey their order. This can help in better classroom management, as discipline is a necessary prerequisite for the maintenance of a teaching-learning atmosphere in the classroom. There should be sincerity, obedience, respect of authority & observance of rules and regulations of the institution. From the very first day of teaching, clear cut guidelines should be spelt out regarding what constitutes discipline and what is indiscipline in order to control students' behaviour in the longer run.

7. Initiative

Initiative means eagerness to initiate actions without being asked to do so. The employees should be encouraged to take initiative in the work assigned to them. Fayol advised that management should provide opportunity to its employees to suggest new ideas, experiences & new method of work. It helps in developing an atmosphere of trust and understanding and adds to their zeal and energy; people then enjoy working in the organisation. Likewise in classroom, all the students should be encouraged and motivated to take initiative in the classroom activities. Teachers should provide opportunities to students to suggest new ideas, experiences and innovative methods of teaching. It helps in developing an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust in the classroom. With the help of positive reinforcement techniques used then by the teacher, students would enjoy the learning process thereby feeling motivated and encouraged.

8. Sub-Ordination of Individual Interest to General Interest

An organisation is much bigger than the individual. It constitutes interest of the organisation that must prevail in all circumstances. As far as possible, reconciliation should be achieved between individual and group interests. But in case of conflict, individual must sacrifice for bigger interests. In order to achieve this attitude in the classroom situation, it is essential that students should be honest and sincere towards their school. They should be taught that the interest of the school is more important than their personal interests. They should be made ready to sacrifice their personal interest for the good of the institution in times of need. A teacher can create this

attitude only when he is enjoying a permanent position in the institution; ad hocism allows a teacher to think only about himself and not the institution (Shakir & Zia, 2014). Krishna Kumar (2014) has rightly observed that people who are working as 'ad hoc' or 'temporary' or 'contractual' teachers and waiting for permanent vacancies to be advertised are deprived of dignity.

9. Espirit de' Corps (Union is Strength)

It refers to team spirit, i.e., harmony in the work groups, mutual understanding among the members. The principle of Spirit de' Corps inspires workers to work harder, promoting team spirit which gives the organisation a sense of unity (Stoner, Freeman, & Gilbert, 2009). In the classroom situation students should be encouraged to develop informal relations among themselves and efforts should be made to create enthusiasm and keenness, so that they can work to their maximum potential. The teacher should infuse team spirit and belongingness. Highly effective students should be rewarded and those who are not up to the mark should be given a chance to improve performance. Students should be made conscious that whatever they are doing is of great importance to the society. Then only they would enjoy studying in the school. There will be proper co-ordination of work in the class which would be a great step in the better classroom management.

Findings

The present paper focussed on Henry Fayol's principles to bring out better classroom management in school teaching. The author relied on some of the important principles of management developed by Henry Fayol and tried to apply them to the classroom environment to get the best out of the students.

Conclusion

Classroom is a place fenced by the four walls and a roof used by a teacher to impart knowledge to the learners. It is the environment for acquiring knowledge in a formal way and comprises of teacher, taught, learning equipments and the most important, learning atmosphere, providing context for learning experience. Management is the process of creating such type of environment wherein people work in groups for the purpose of achieving pre-conceived, pre-set, and pre-defined goals. Teachers and taught cannot teach and learn in a classroom environment full of disruptions and conflicts. Therefore, classroom management can be regarded as management of situation for making it a better place for teaching-learning. It is one of the most important teaching skills which help in solving various complex problems chiefly arising out of disruptive behaviour and conflicts among students in the classroom.

This is true that we cannot completely eliminate conflicts and disruptions from our classrooms, but, we can always reduce and manage it. There are numerous ways in which strategies can be build up to help the students in handling and coping with such situations. This paper has used a few of Fayol's principles for better handling of such type of situations. These principles, author believe, are a great help to the students in coping with the problems chiefly arising out of peer-competition, and other extraneous pressure, thereby creating comfortable educational environments resulting in a better classroom management.

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