

TEACHERS' EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES AND CLASSROOM CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE DIVISION OF COTABATO

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between teachers' emotion regulation and classroom conflict management in the Division of Cotabato using a convergent mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 377 elementary teachers, while qualitative insights were obtained from 25 participants through in-depth interviews. Findings revealed that teachers often practiced emotion regulation strategies, with integrating and compromising approaches being the most frequently used, while avoiding was the least utilized. Classroom conflict management practices, including preventive management, constructive communication, mediation and problem-solving, and restorative approaches, were consistently rated as always practiced. Statistical analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between emotion regulation and classroom conflict management ($r = .531, p < .01$). Regression analysis further showed that integrating and compromising strategies significantly predicted effective conflict management. Qualitative findings supported these results, highlighting themes such as intentional emotional self-regulation, cognitive reframing, professional presence, and relationship-building. The study concludes that effective emotion regulation enhances teachers' ability to manage classroom conflicts constructively and recommends strengthening professional development programs focused on emotional competence and collaborative conflict resolution strategies.

Keyword: *emotion regulation, classroom conflict management, elementary teachers*

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is inherently emotional, as teachers constantly navigate complex interactions with students, colleagues, and the learning environment. Emotional experiences play a central role in classroom dynamics, influencing both teacher behavior and student outcomes. Teachers frequently encounter challenging situations such as student misbehavior, disengagement, and interpersonal conflicts, which require effective emotional control to maintain a productive learning environment.

Emotion regulation is essential in helping teachers manage their responses to such situations. It involves the ability to monitor, control, and adjust emotional reactions to align with professional expectations. When teachers effectively regulate their emotions, they are better equipped to handle classroom conflicts, maintain composure, and foster positive relationships with students. Conversely, poor emotional regulation may lead to

ineffective conflict management, strained relationships, and disruptions in the learning process.

Classroom conflict management is another critical aspect of teaching, involving strategies that prevent, address, and resolve conflicts among students. Effective conflict management contributes to a safe and supportive classroom environment, promotes student engagement, and enhances overall instructional effectiveness. However, managing conflicts requires not only knowledge of strategies but also emotional competence.

Despite the growing body of research on emotion regulation, there remains limited focus on how it directly influences classroom conflict management, particularly among elementary teachers in the Philippine context. This study addresses this gap by examining how different emotion regulation strategies relate to conflict management practices and how these contribute

to effective classroom environments in the Division of Cotabato.

2. METHODS

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' emotion regulation and classroom conflict management. The quantitative component utilized a descriptive-correlational design to determine levels, relationships, and predictive influences among variables, while the qualitative component adopted a phenomenological approach to explore teachers' lived experiences.

A total of 377 elementary teachers from three congressional districts in the Division of Cotabato participated in the quantitative phase, selected through stratified sampling. For the qualitative phase, 25 teachers were purposively chosen based on specific criteria, including teaching experience and assignment within the division.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on emotion regulation and classroom conflict management frameworks, measured through a five-point Likert scale. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather in-depth insights into teachers' experiences and strategies.

Quantitative data were analyzed using mean, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis to determine relationships and significant predictors. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly observed.

3. RESULTS

The findings revealed that teachers frequently practiced emotion regulation strategies, with an overall mean of 3.95, interpreted as often. Among the strategies, integrating was the most consistently used (4.52), followed by compromising (4.20), while avoiding was the least practiced (3.36). This indicates that teachers generally prefer collaborative and balanced approaches when managing emotions in classroom situations.

In terms of classroom conflict management, all dimensions were rated as always practiced, with

an overall mean of 4.60. Preventive management (4.63), constructive communication (4.60), mediation and problem-solving (4.57), and restorative approaches (4.61) were consistently applied, suggesting that teachers prioritize proactive and relationship-based strategies in managing classroom conflicts.

Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between emotion regulation and classroom conflict management ($r = .531, p < .01$). This indicates that higher levels of emotion regulation are associated with more effective conflict management practices. Among the strategies, integrating ($r = .723$) and compromising ($r = .599$) showed the strongest relationships with conflict management.

Regression analysis further indicated that emotion regulation significantly predicts classroom conflict management, explaining 56.2% of its variance. Specifically, integrating ($\beta = .573, p < .001$) emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by compromising ($\beta = .268, p < .001$). In contrast, avoiding, dominating, and obliging did not show significant influence.

Qualitative findings supported these results, revealing key themes such as intentional emotional self-regulation, cognitive reframing, behavioral self-control, and professional identity. Teachers emphasized the importance of staying calm, reframing student behavior, maintaining professional presence, and fostering positive relationships to effectively manage classroom conflicts.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of the study highlight the critical role of emotion regulation in effective classroom conflict management. Teachers who employ adaptive strategies, particularly integrating and compromising, are more capable of addressing conflicts constructively and maintaining positive classroom environments.

The strong influence of integrating strategies suggests that collaborative approaches, which involve open communication, empathy, and shared problem-solving, are highly effective in managing classroom conflicts. This aligns with existing theories that emphasize the importance of emotional competence in fostering positive

interpersonal relationships and promoting a supportive learning environment.

The findings also indicate that while strategies such as avoiding, dominating, and obliging may be used in certain situations, they are not significant predictors of effective conflict management. This suggests that these approaches may be less effective or context-dependent, highlighting the need for teachers to adopt more balanced and collaborative strategies.

The qualitative findings further reinforce the importance of emotional awareness and intentional regulation. Teachers who consciously manage their emotions, reframe challenging situations, and maintain a professional demeanor are better able to prevent conflict escalation and promote a positive classroom climate.

Overall, the study supports the idea that emotion regulation is not merely a personal skill but a professional competency that directly influences teaching effectiveness and classroom management outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teachers' emotion regulation significantly influences classroom conflict management. Effective emotion regulation, particularly through integrating and compromising strategies, enhances teachers' ability to manage conflicts constructively and maintain a positive learning environment.

The study recommends that educational institutions implement professional development programs that focus on emotional competence, collaborative conflict resolution, and reflective teaching practices. Providing support systems such as mentoring, training, and peer collaboration can further strengthen teachers' capacity to regulate emotions and manage classroom conflicts effectively.

Future research may explore additional factors influencing classroom conflict management and examine the long-term impact of emotion regulation training on teacher performance and student outcomes.