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**PERCEIVED PROBLEMS OF BEGINNING
TEACHERS - A STUDY AMONG BEGINNING
TEACHERS IN KUALA TERENGGANU DISTRICT**

BY

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**A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT**

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ABSTRACT

A problem of beginning teachers is not a new phenomenon. Every body faces it in teaching profession especially those who are in their first year of teaching. Problems related to classroom management, curriculum and evaluation, and stress are major problems encountered by beginning teachers in their first year of teaching. Beginning teachers often become discouraged by the problems they encountered in their first year of teaching. Due to this, special attention must be paid to teachers at the beginning of their career since the initial positions they will hold and the tasks they will perform will have a decisive effect on the remainder of their career. This study attempts to examine what are the most frequent problems faced by beginning teachers as perceived by them. The problems are grouped into three namely classroom management, curriculum and evaluation, and stress. A field survey study was carried out and 67 beginning teachers from randomly selected schools both primary and secondary responded to the survey. The data collected were factor analyzed to test for validity and reliability. Three hypotheses were developed to see whether beginning teachers do face problems in classroom management, curriculum and evaluation, and also stress. Statistical methods of frequencies and descriptive statistics were used to report the findings. These problems are ranked according to their most frequent problems faced by the respondents based on the mean scores obtained. Based on the findings, it was proven that classroom management is the most frequent problems faced by the beginning teachers.

APPROVAL PAGE

**TITLE OF THE PROJECT PAPER: PERCEIVED PROBLEMS OF
BEGINNING TEACHERS
A STUDY AMONG BEGINNING
TEACHERS IN KUALA
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by reference notes and a bibliography is appended.

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Name: NOOR MALA BINTI M.YUNUS

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DEDICATION

This Study is dedicated to:

*My father and my mother who had always instilled
in me the importance of education and a quest for
knowledge.*

My husband, Zubir Bin Awang

My kids, Shamsul Irwan and Shamsul Hafiz

I love you all so much.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Within research on the professional training and development of teachers, emphasis has been given in the last two decades in particular to the point of entry to teaching, and to the first year of service (Taylor and Dale, 1971; Tisher and Fyfield, 1978, 1979; Murdoch, 1978; and DES, 1982, 1988). This is a vital phase in which the beginning teacher emerging from the status of student learner, must become a teacher responsible for promoting learning in others. It is a time of transition, usually of varying duration depending on individuals and their circumstances, which involves acquisition and strengthening of knowledge skills. Personal growth and development in teachers are also likely to be involved, as are changes in their attitudes and behaviors.

Research indicates that as teaching become more complex and challenging, the first experience of new teachers seem often to be more of a test of survival than a time of personal growth and development (Houston and Felder, 1982). Teachers have to face the reality of their new teaching situation, and for many beginners this requires considerable adjustment.

1.2 Need for the Study

Studies of the problems of the new teachers, especially as they perceive them, reveal that several are invariably prominent. Although variation exists according to factors such as the education system, type of school, subject taught, the age of the children or the policies of schools on of children for teaching purposes. The most common problems include classroom discipline, control, and management; motivating students; dealing with individual differences amongst students (mixed ability groups, slow learners, gifted children). Other problems include identifying appropriate levels at which to teach; evaluating one's own teaching; assessing student's work and progress; relations with school authorities and colleagues; and relation with parents (Veenman, 1984).

Broadly, research suggests that beginning teachers have problems because they are under-prepared since, despite various arrangements for teaching practice, their training is general, and is only sufficiently directed towards specific jobs and contexts; they have to face too rapid a transition to full responsibilities and they receive inadequate help and support.

Major studies of beginning teachers in several countries have investigated what support is needed and should be available to them and their view about it (Taylor and Dale, 1978-1979; Grant and Zeichner, 1981; McDonald, 1982; Vonk, 1983; Veenman, 1984; Henry, 1986; Cooke and Pang, 1987).

Most studies reported that few formal induction policies and practices, were systematically planned and implemented. Where provision was made it was normally irregular, fortuitous, and informal. Yet, as researches indicated, such were the challenges and problems faced by beginning teachers which called for the development of planned support for them by means of a variety of induction arrangements and activities. These induction programs and activities should be provided on a systematic and comprehensive basis, by schools, education authorities, and other agencies. Based on these findings we can find ways to support beginning teachers in their first years in teaching and minimized their problems as new comers in this field of profession.

1.3 Statement of Problem

The need to attract able individuals into teaching is an old-age problem. The calling certainly has its benefits, yet many people of talent remain skeptical. Today, as in the past, the teacher's role is critical to the future prosperity of and well being of our society. However, even with the recent upturn in the number of young and older adults training for education, there are still not enough well qualified teachers in the pipeline.

Many of our finest students who are contemplating teaching in elementary and secondary schools are ambivalent if not conflicted. While altruistic and eager to make a difference, these individuals are also troubled

about the sacrifices they must make to devote their lives to helping educate and nurture the next generations.

It is very important to focus on those qualified and educated individuals who are beginning their career as teachers. This is because many difficulties emerge where new teachers are caught off guard. Actually, doing teaching, moment by moment is different than they had expected. Having been in school those many years and having seen so many different teachers in so many different situations, many beginners think they know what it is like to do teaching. These are beginning teachers' expectations. But what really happen is out of their expectations. There are hidden demand and subtleties, which are quite unexpected.

1.4 Purpose of the study

While there have been many studies of beginning teachers, few, if any, have focussed in depth on the teachers from colleges and universities who pursue career in teaching.

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding the most frequent problems faced by them in teaching. How do they perceive, adapt to, and manage their new role as classroom teachers? What is the life for them in schools? What problems, dilemmas, triumphs, and opportunities do they confront as they learn to teach and as they forge their professional identities as classroom instructors? Moreover,

given that most of these educated teachers have minimum of coursework in the field of education, how do they perceive their initial full-time teaching experience? In what ways are they prepared for the rigor and challenge of classroom teaching? What do they think is good teaching and what specifically are their criteria of good practice?

This study is also meant to highlight what are the areas that need improvement and that would have facilitated their transition from pre-service to in service teaching. Beginning teachers have graduated from teacher education institutions, it is commonly believed they will fully prepared to begin teaching. However, there were some researches, which indicated that this group of teachers experience difficulties in their initial year in the classroom (Taylor and Dale, 1971).

Finally this study will suggest ways of overcoming the problems and difficulties encountered by these beginning teachers in their first year of teaching.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Perceived: This term is defined as something when it is understood, viewed or interpreted in a certain way or a situation where someone is to be or become aware of something by using your senses; notice, observe; or to come to understand, grasp or to interpret something in a certain way (Word Power Dictionary, 1996).

Perception: A consciousness or awareness about what are recognizable sensations or impressions received by the mind through the senses that result in insight or knowledge gained about something, the problems taught to affect their teaching profession (Robbins, 1997).

Problem: This term is defined as a difficulty; a matter that is difficult to understand or deal with; a situation which is difficult to decide what to do; or a doubtful or questionable situation (Word Power Dictionary, 1996).

Beginning teacher: This term is defined as a teacher new to the profession, with no experience, the teacher is a full time professional and certified graduate from either the teacher training colleges or universities. The teacher is teaching in primary and secondary government school and in the first, second, and third year.

1.6 Organization of the Project Paper

The contents of the research consist of five chapters. The first chapter which has been put forward earlier introduced the background of the study, the need for the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and also the definition of terms.

The second chapter consists of the review of the related literature, which describes classroom management as the most frequent problems faced

by beginning teachers, followed by the curriculum and evaluation issues, and also stress.

The third chapter consists of the methodology and data analysis for the study, which describes ways the study was carried out. The chapter consists of research design, research instrument, sample, and procedures in data gathering, and analytical techniques. Analytical techniques deal with the ranking of problems, investigation of relationship between different problems and also hypothesis testing.

The fourth chapter describes the results of the questionnaires distributed to teachers in primary and secondary schools in Kuala Terengganu district. This chapter will also give the descriptive and statistical analysis from the questionnaires of the research and will discuss further the findings of the research.

The final chapter will conclude the research by focussing on the discussions of the results and its implications. The chapter will also give suggestions and recommendations on how to overcome the problems of the beginning teachers in teaching profession.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

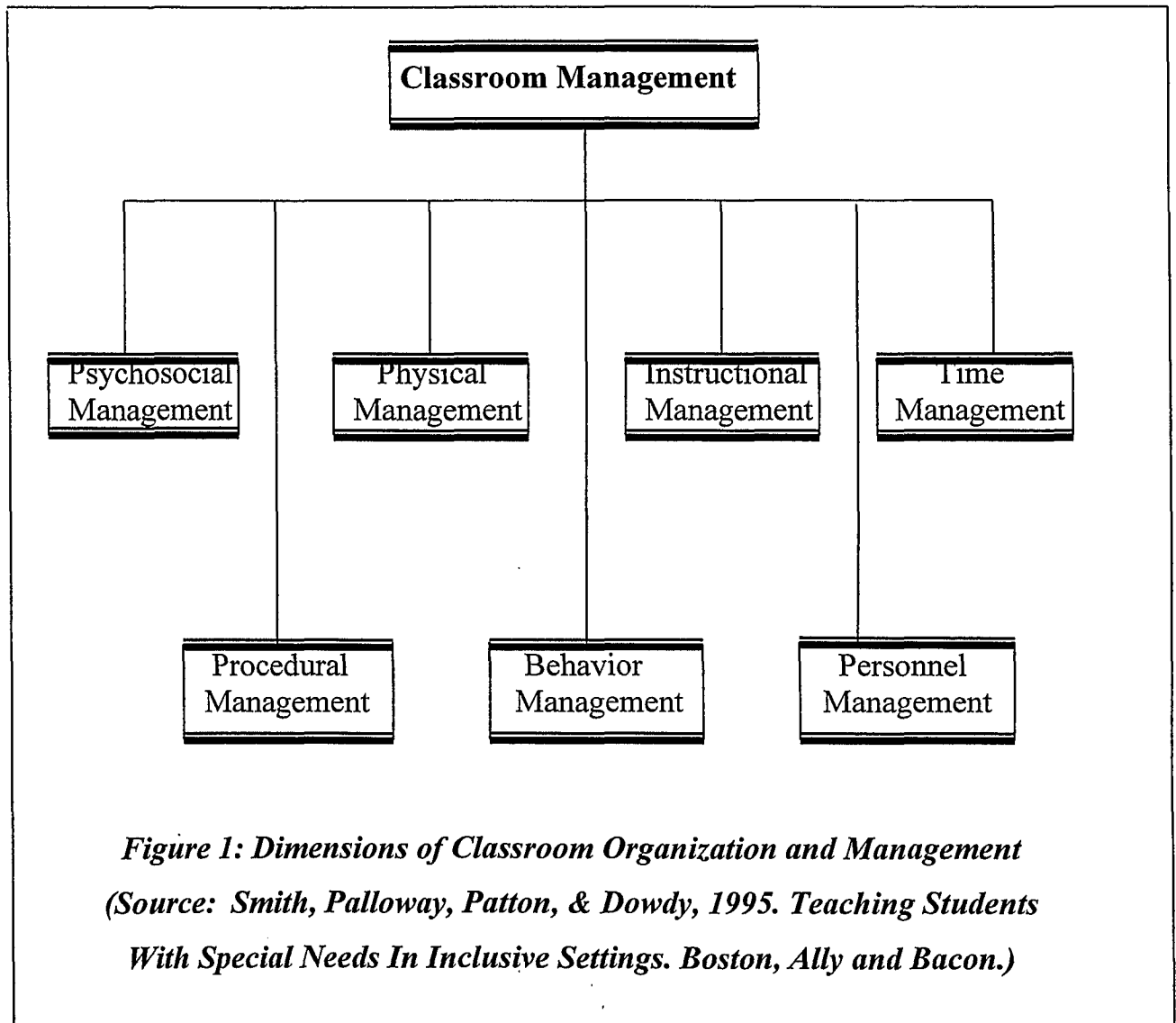
2.1 Introduction

Armed with their crisp diplomas, new teachers come to the labor market full of enthusiasm and ambition. Perhaps they feel a certain apprehension, of not being able to rise to the challenge of this fine but demanding profession. The real situation they meet with, however, is very different from what they expect, and as a result they often end up confused and disappointed. This chapter discusses the major problems and dilemmas beginning teachers encounter in their everyday teaching.

2.2 Problems of Classroom Management

Beginning teachers' perceptions of discipline and classroom management is an area of concern that has been greatly neglected. Regardless of the approach used to deal with troubling behavior, it is important to recognize that in any classroom, many dimensions interact at the same time. Figure 1 illustrated a representational model of some of the variables that impact student behavior in classroom organization and management (Smith, Palloway, Patton, and Dowdy, 1995). The variables

consist of psychosocial management, physical management, instructional management, and also time management.



For any given student, there will likely be many factors influencing his or her behavior. There will also be many different approaches to solving behavior problems. It is sometimes difficult to identify causes of problems and their solutions because the relationships among variables in the classroom are complicated and overlapping. In addition, there are some variables, like interpersonal characteristics that are beyond control of the

teacher. When students come to school without adequate nourishment or feeling angry because of an argument with a parent, their behavior in school may suffer. The teacher though, may have no effective response for these problems. Only a close relationship with a student, which can foster trust and understanding, may serve as short term prevention of an emotional outburst.

It may be impossible though, to provide long term solutions to students' personal problems within the typical service delivery system of a public school. Nevertheless, examining the interrelationships in the classroom may suggest some approaches that have nothing to do with the behavior itself, but rather the way that another variable is designed and implemented

Garmon (1993), stated that a frequently mentioned inadequacy of the first year of a preparation program was insufficient instruction in classroom management. Beginning teachers felt that classroom management was the area in which they needed to learn most and the area about which they perceived as the most apprehension. Beginning teachers reported they received little, if any, guidance in how to manage a classroom. Garmon also concluded by saying that:

.....*"If classroom management is known to be a major area of difficulty for novice teachers, why classroom management is accorded such little attention to teacher education courses is something that is difficult to understand".*

Kindsvatter and Levine (1990), stated that teachers have confronted distressing situations in their classrooms over the years, and their first instinct is to find an immediate solution. Teachers want immediate solutions to discipline problems in their classrooms. They insist that students are quiet, attentive, cooperative, and polite, however they must proceed with the needs they feel. Many students cannot accomplish both within the constraints of the classroom. Consequently, misbehavior continues.

Barret (1995), stated that the most important factor in determining a teacher's potential to handle a discipline problem is their personality. Effective classroom discipline grows out of the teacher's leadership qualities, group process skills, and the mutual respect that exists in the classroom.

Veenman (1984), compiled the results of eighty-three studies conducted since 1960, fifty-five completed in the United States, seven in the West Indies, six in the United Kingdom, five in Netherlands, four in Australia, two in Canada and one each in Switzerland and Finland. He said that eight most frequently perceived problems as stated by beginning teachers are as follows in rank order: (a) class room discipline; (b) motivating students; (c) dealing with individual differences; (d) assessing students' work; (e) relationships with parents; (f) organization of class work; (g) insufficient materials and supplies; and (h) dealing with problems of individual students. Classroom discipline was the most serious problem.

Martin and Baldwin (1992), studied the differences between the beliefs of experienced teachers and beginning teachers regarding classroom management. They defined classroom management as a multi-faceted process that included three broad dimensions: (a) the person dimension (what teachers believe about students as persons); (b) the instructional dimension; and (c) the discipline component.

The novice teacher encounters a variety of new experiences in the classroom. Their beliefs regarding these experiences and the manner in which they approach them work together to create a unique and individual style of classroom management. Efficient lesson planning and effective classroom management are both necessary in order for learning to take place.

Drummond (1991) in the study on work performance and preparation of beginning teachers, conducted on 400 beginning teachers who graduated from the University of North Florida USA, found a majority of respondents faced major problems with their teaching skill category. They identified classroom management as their primary weakness. The next most mentioned problem was preparation of suitable learning materials for the teaching and learning process. The other areas which beginning teachers find difficult are subjects' knowledge, computer knowledge, questioning skills, planning, motivating students, and handling paperwork.

Gibson (1995) stated that novice teachers had mixed feeling about how well their college had prepared them for the tasks facing them in the