

# THE ROLE OF CREATIVITY AS MODERATOR ON TEACHERS' CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT ABILITIES AND STUDENTS' AUTONOMY

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## ABSTRACT

The study aimed to look into the moderating effect of creativity on the interaction between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy. In this study, the researcher selected the 189 elementary school teachers in Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal as the respondents of the study. Stratified random sampling technique was utilized in the selection of the respondents. Non-experimental using quantitative research design descriptive-correlational method was employed. The data collected subjected on the following statistical tools: Mean, Partial Correlation and Regression Analysis. Findings revealed that teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy were described as moderately extensive, while, creativity of teachers was rated as extensive. Further, partial correlation analysis demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy in Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal when moderated by creativity. Evidently, regression analysis proved that creativity is a significant moderator on the interaction between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy in Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal. Teachers should implement student-centered teaching strategies that empower students to take ownership of their learning process. The study, therefore, conducted for further utilization of findings through publication in reputable research journal.

**Keywords:** Educational management, teachers' classroom management abilities, students' autonomy, creativity, regression analysis, Philippines

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom management and student autonomy are two critical components that influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning in educational settings worldwide. The role of the teacher in fostering an environment where students can develop autonomy while maintaining structure is essential for enhancing student learning outcomes. However, in contemporary classrooms, the challenge remains to strike a balance between providing autonomy and ensuring effective management. An increasingly significant factor that moderates this balance is creativity in teaching practices. Understanding how creativity moderates the interaction between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy is vital for improving educational outcomes, particularly in diverse and resource-limited settings like Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal.

Globally, education systems face several pressing issues that highlight the need for a focus on classroom management and student autonomy. First, the digital divide exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for classroom management, as teachers struggle to maintain student engagement and autonomy in remote or hybrid learning environments (UNESCO, 2020). Second, the global shift towards 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, requires students to develop higher levels of autonomy, yet many educational systems remain focused on traditional, teacher-centered approaches (OECD, 2021). Lastly, the rise of inclusive education has necessitated differentiated management strategies to cater to diverse student needs, further complicating teachers' roles in promoting autonomy while managing varied classroom behaviors (World Bank, 2021).

At the national level in the Philippines, three critical issues emerge. First, there is a growing concern over the quality of teacher training, particularly in classroom management techniques and fostering student autonomy, which are critical for improving educational outcomes (Philippine Department of Education, 2021). Second, the ongoing resource constraints in public schools, including inadequate classroom space and large student-to-teacher ratios, present challenges for effective classroom management (Reyes, 2020). Third, the implementation of the K-12 curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning and autonomy, has highlighted gaps in teachers' abilities to balance these new demands with traditional classroom management practices (De Guzman & Ocampo, 2020).

At the local level in Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal, additional issues complicate classroom management and the promotion of student autonomy. First, limited access to professional development opportunities restricts teachers' abilities to adopt creative classroom management techniques and student-centered approaches (Santos, 2021). Second, cultural norm in rural communities often prioritize respect for authority, which can hinder the promotion of autonomy in the classroom (Villanueva, 2021). Lastly, the district faces resource limitations, such as overcrowded

classrooms and insufficient instructional materials, which challenge teachers' abilities to manage classrooms effectively while fostering student autonomy (Nguyen, 2021).

This study aims to address these global, national, and local challenges by exploring the moderating role of creativity in the relationship between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether teachers' creativity enhances their ability to manage classrooms while promoting autonomy among students. By investigating this relationship, the study hopes to provide insights that can inform educational policy and teacher training programs, particularly in resource-constrained environments like Babak District.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews existing research on classroom management, student autonomy, and creativity, drawing from studies conducted in the ASEAN, European, African, and Australian contexts. The review also identifies gaps in current knowledge and discusses how this study aims to address these gaps.

**Classroom Management and Student Autonomy.** Classroom management refers to the techniques and strategies that teachers use to maintain order, ensure student engagement, and create an environment conducive to learning. Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasize that effective classroom management is essential for student achievement, as it minimizes disruptions and maximizes instructional time. In contrast, student autonomy involves giving students control over their learning processes, allowing them to make decisions and take responsibility for their learning (Deci & Ryan, 2020).

In the ASEAN context, Nguyen and Pham (2020) explored the impact of classroom management on student autonomy in Vietnam, finding that teachers who adopted student-centered management techniques were more successful in fostering autonomy. Similarly, Lim and Tan (2021) in Singapore demonstrated that flexible management strategies, which allowed students to exercise choice and control, resulted in higher engagement and academic performance. However, both studies noted that many teachers struggle to balance autonomy with maintaining classroom discipline, particularly in large, overcrowded classrooms.

In Europe, Kershner and McGregor (2020) examined the role of classroom management in promoting autonomy in British schools. Their study found that when teachers implemented structured, yet flexible, management strategies, students exhibited greater independence and motivation. However, they also noted that many teachers were hesitant to relinquish control, fearing that increased autonomy would lead to chaos.

African studies, such as Ochieng and Abwao (2020) in Kenya, have highlighted the challenges of fostering autonomy in resource-limited settings. They found that large class sizes, limited materials, and strict hierarchical relationships between teachers and students often impeded efforts to promote student autonomy. Similarly, Wamuyu (2019) in Nigeria reported that teachers often prioritized maintaining order over encouraging autonomy due to cultural expectations of teacher authority.

In Australia, Grattan and Burke (2021) explored the relationship between classroom management and student autonomy in rural schools, finding that creative management strategies were essential for fostering autonomy in classrooms with limited resources. They noted that teachers who employed flexible, student-centered management techniques saw higher levels of student engagement and autonomy, even in resource-constrained environments.

### **Creativity as a Moderator**

Creativity in teaching refers to the use of innovative and flexible approaches to engage students and adapt to their diverse needs. Research suggests that creative teaching practices can enhance both classroom management and student autonomy by making learning more engaging and relevant to students' interests (Sawyer, 2021). In this study, creativity is considered as a potential moderator in the relationship between classroom management abilities and student autonomy.

In the ASEAN region, Nguyen et al. (2021) found that creative teaching strategies, such as the use of technology and interactive activities, improved classroom management and increased student autonomy in Vietnamese schools. Similarly, Ramos and Cruz (2020) in the Philippines reported that teachers who incorporated creative methods, such as project-based learning and collaborative activities, were better able to manage their classrooms while fostering autonomy.

In Europe, Ziegler and Peters (2022) highlighted the role of creativity in enhancing classroom management and student autonomy in German schools. They found that teachers who employed creative teaching strategies, such as role-playing and open-ended projects, were more successful in promoting student autonomy while maintaining classroom discipline. However, they also noted that many teachers were hesitant to adopt creative strategies due to time constraints and the pressure to cover the curriculum.

In African schools, Ogunniyi and Olamide (2020) found that creativity in classroom management was often constrained by resource limitations. However, in schools where teachers were able to employ creative strategies, such as using

locally available materials for hands-on learning, student autonomy improved significantly. Similarly, Mokoena (2020) in South Africa reported that creative management techniques, such as peer teaching and group work, helped teachers manage large classes more effectively while promoting autonomy.

In Australia, Hattie et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of creativity in promoting student autonomy in rural schools. Their study found that teachers who used creative approaches, such as integrating technology and fostering collaboration, were better able to manage classrooms and encourage student independence. They concluded that creativity was particularly important in resource-constrained environments, where traditional management strategies were often less effective.

**Gaps in Current Knowledge.** While existing research highlights the importance of classroom management and student autonomy, several gaps remain. First, few studies have explored the moderating role of creativity in the relationship between classroom management and autonomy, particularly in resource-constrained environments like Babak District. Second, most studies have focused on urban schools, leaving a gap in understanding how these dynamics play out in rural settings (Nguyen et al., 2021; Grattan & Burke, 2021). This study aims to address these gaps by investigating how creativity moderates the interaction between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy in a rural context.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a non-experimental quantitative research design using a descriptive-correlational approach to examine the moderating effect of creativity on the relationship between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy. This design was selected because it allows for the examination of relationships between variables and the role of creativity as a moderator without manipulation of any variables, ensuring objectivity and reliability in the results (Creswell, 2020).

**Research Design.** The descriptive-correlational design was used to determine whether there is a relationship between classroom management abilities, student autonomy, and creativity, and to what extent creativity moderates the interaction between the other two variables. This method allows the study to identify both the correlation and the potential moderation effect, providing insights into how creativity influences this relationship (Pallant, 2020).

**Participants and Sampling.** The participants of the study were 189 elementary school teachers from Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure that teachers from different grade levels and subject areas were adequately represented. This technique was chosen to reduce sampling bias and to enhance the generalizability of the findings to the wider teacher population (Fowler, 2020). The sample size of 189 was deemed sufficient based on G\*Power analysis, which ensured the study had enough statistical power to detect significant effects (Cohen, 2019).

**Data Collection Instruments.** Data were collected using a validated survey questionnaire, which was divided into three sections:

Focused on teachers' classroom management abilities, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items assessed classroom management in terms of maintaining discipline, organizing the learning environment, and fostering student engagement (Wang et al., 2021).

Measured students' autonomy, including their ability to take control of their learning, make decisions, and participate in self-directed activities. These items were also rated on a Likert scale.

Assessed teachers' creativity, focusing on their use of innovative and flexible teaching methods to manage classrooms and encourage student autonomy. Items were developed based on the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Runco & Acar, 2020).

The survey was distributed both in printed form and electronically through Google Forms to accommodate teachers with varying levels of digital access. A pilot study involving 30 teachers was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the instrument, with Cronbach's alpha values for all sections exceeding 0.80, indicating high internal consistency (Pallant, 2020).

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and the following statistical methods:

Mean and Standard Deviation were used to describe the levels of classroom management abilities, student autonomy, and creativity among teachers.

Partial Correlation was performed to determine the relationship between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy, controlling for creativity as a moderating variable (Field, 2022).

Regression Analysis (specifically, moderated regression analysis) was used to test the moderating effect of creativity on the relationship between classroom management and student autonomy. The interaction term between creativity and classroom management was included in the regression model to assess whether creativity significantly moderates the relationship (Hair et al., 2021).

The significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$ , and all assumptions for correlation and regression analyses, such as normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity, were checked to ensure the validity of the results (Pallant, 2020).

## 5. RESULTS

The results section presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from 189 elementary school teachers. The data are presented in a factual and objective manner, with tables and charts used to support the findings.

### Descriptive Statistics

**Teachers' Classroom Management Abilities:** The mean score for classroom management abilities was 3.8 (SD = 0.65), indicating that teachers in Babak District generally perceived themselves as effective in maintaining classroom discipline and engagement.

**Students' Autonomy:** The mean score for student autonomy was 3.6 (SD = 0.70), suggesting that students exhibited moderate levels of autonomy in their learning, taking responsibility for some aspects of their educational process.

**Teachers' Creativity:** Creativity was rated the highest, with a mean score of 4.1 (SD = 0.60), indicating that teachers frequently employed creative methods in their classroom management strategies.

### Partial Correlation Analysis

The partial correlation analysis demonstrated that there was a significant positive relationship between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) when controlling for creativity. This finding suggests that teachers who manage their classrooms effectively tend to foster higher levels of autonomy among their students. When creativity was introduced as a moderating factor, the correlation strengthened, indicating that creativity plays a role in enhancing this relationship.

### Moderated Regression Analysis

The regression analysis confirmed that creativity significantly moderates the relationship between classroom management abilities and student autonomy. The overall model was significant  $F(3, 185) = 26.74$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , with an  $R^2$  value of 0.48, indicating that 48% of the variance in student autonomy can be explained by classroom management abilities and creativity.

**Classroom Management Abilities:**  $\beta = 0.45$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that classroom management abilities have a significant positive effect on students' autonomy.

**Creativity:**  $\beta = 0.30$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that creativity independently contributes to fostering student autonomy.

**Interaction Term (Creativity x Classroom Management):**  $\beta = 0.35$  ( $p < 0.01$ ), confirming that creativity significantly moderates the relationship between classroom management abilities and student autonomy.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that creativity plays in moderating the relationship between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy. The positive correlation between classroom management abilities and students' autonomy suggests that effective classroom management is a key contributor to fostering autonomy in students, aligning with previous research (Wang et al., 2021). However, this relationship was notably enhanced when creativity was introduced as a moderating variable, indicating that creativity strengthens the link between management and autonomy.

The regression analysis demonstrated that creativity has both a direct effect on student autonomy and moderates the relationship between classroom management and autonomy. Teachers who utilize creative strategies—such as interactive activities, project-based learning, and flexible teaching methods—are more successful in promoting student autonomy. These findings are consistent with the work of Sawyer (2021), who highlighted the importance of creativity in enabling teachers to engage students more effectively, making learning more personalized and autonomous.

Moreover, this study confirms the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework, particularly in how teachers' perceived ease of use and usefulness of creative teaching methods influence classroom dynamics (Davis, 1989). When teachers feel confident in implementing creative strategies, they can foster a classroom environment that supports student independence. This is also reflected in studies by Grattan and Burke (2021) and Nguyen et al. (2021), which found that creativity in teaching led to higher student engagement and motivation in both rural and urban educational contexts.



The findings are particularly relevant in the context of Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal, where resource constraints often limit traditional approaches to classroom management. Creativity offers a flexible and low-cost alternative for enhancing teaching practices. However, one of the limitations of this study is its reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce biases such as over-reporting of creative strategies or under-reporting of management challenges (Fowler, 2020). Additionally, the study was conducted in a rural setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to more urbanized regions with different classroom dynamics.

Future research could benefit from expanding the study to include urban districts, which may face different challenges in terms of classroom management and creativity. Qualitative research, such as interviews with teachers and students, could also provide deeper insights into how creative strategies are implemented in diverse educational settings.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the moderating effect of creativity on the relationship between teachers' classroom management abilities and students' autonomy in the context of Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal. The findings reveal that creativity not only enhances teachers' management skills but also fosters a learning environment where students can develop autonomy. The positive relationship between classroom management and student autonomy is amplified when teachers use creative strategies, demonstrating the critical role of innovation in the classroom.

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on the importance of creativity in education, particularly in resource-constrained environments. It provides evidence that encouraging creativity in teaching practices can lead to better management outcomes and promote student independence, aligning with the goals of modern educational reforms aimed at fostering 21st-century skills.

Future research should further investigate the long-term impact of creative teaching strategies on student outcomes, including academic performance and social-emotional development. Additionally, exploring the role of school infrastructure, teacher training, and support systems in facilitating creative classroom management could provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators.

## 8. RECOMMENDATION

Department of Education. The Department of Education should prioritize the development of professional development programs that equip teachers with creative classroom management strategies. These programs should focus on integrating creativity into everyday teaching practices, particularly in resource-constrained settings such as rural areas. The Department should also provide resources and support to schools to foster a culture of innovation, enabling teachers to experiment with creative teaching methods that promote student autonomy.

School Heads. School heads should encourage teachers to adopt creative strategies by facilitating peer learning opportunities, workshops, and collaboration between teachers. They should provide an environment where creativity is valued and recognized as an essential component of classroom management. Additionally, school heads can implement policies that encourage teachers to take ownership of their professional development and adopt innovative approaches to managing classrooms and promoting student autonomy.

Teachers. Teachers should actively seek out and implement creative classroom management strategies that engage students and promote autonomy. This includes using flexible, student-centered approaches such as project-based learning, collaborative activities, and differentiated instruction. Teachers should also collaborate with their peers to share best practices and innovative strategies that have been effective in fostering student independence.

## 9. FUTURE RESEARCHERS

Future researchers should explore the long-term impact of creative classroom management strategies on various student outcomes, such as academic achievement, motivation, and social-emotional development. They should also investigate how factors like teacher training, school infrastructure, and student demographics influence the effectiveness of creative management techniques. Moreover, expanding this research to urban areas and different educational contexts can provide a broader understanding of how creativity influences classroom dynamics.

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