



Research Article

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN THE MODERN ERA: THE ROLES OF INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENT LEADERS

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ABSTRACT

The developing higher education environment complicates classroom management; therefore, instructors and university heads must work together more effectively to improve classroom management. This study examined the multiple responsibilities that student leaders and instructors undertake to create effective teaching environments. A qualitative research design was employed to collect data through 20 semi-structured interviews with 10 instructors and 10 student leaders, with additional data gathered from questionnaires administered to 50 students. Two main approaches have emerged among the strategies employed for classroom management: defining clear expectations for students and developing positive relationships with them. Student leaders actively supported learning environments by acting as bridge builders, along with their role as team members, and inspirational examples for students. The results confirm that cooperative activities are vital factors that encourage student involvement and sustain educational quality standards. This study helps academics better grasp the mutual responsibilities in classrooms while demonstrating approaches for improving official systems that support classroom leadership.

Keywords: classroom management; collaborative learning; higher education; student leaders; university instructors

1. Introduction

The educational system is undergoing an increasingly rapid transformation due to changes in technology, population, and innovation. While all these changes persist, a key factor in developing classroom management to improve teaching and learning processes and increase classroom achievement cannot be overemphasized. This study aims to unveil the multifaceted roles of instructors and student leaders as they work towards managing the complexities of modern classroom management.

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The role of an instructor in modern society has undergone significant changes, as each new era has its own unique characteristics. Few professions have such a tremendous direct impact on students, their learning environment, and their personal development during a course as classroom teachers. First, Chen (2017) describes that today's instructor is a teacher, not only a transmitter of knowledge but also an enabler of critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Graham (2018) elaborated on the role of instructors as tutors in facilitating student development to achieve their academic goals. They offer one session for students to assist them in addressing issues related to study methods, research, and career planning. As a result, they help maintain a positive climate characterized by students' academic standards, cooperation, and co-curricular activities. Subsequently, Campbell (2019) makes another point that the relationship between instructors and student leaders is symbiotic, which affords them the responsibility of cultivating a vibrant learning environment. In addition, student leaders can reveal students' viewpoints, experiences, and problems, as well as potential interests, thus helping instructors decide on suitable strategies and materials to use in the course. Smith (2020) also reaffirms the need for instructors and student leaders professional learning to effectively perform their responsibilities. This encompasses staff development in areas such as handling large classes, management of student behavior, and use of language, negotiation, and understanding cultural differences. This is particularly true for the role of instructors, who should be knowledgeable about issues related to learning, teaching, and guiding learners.

College student leaders also play a significant role in supporting instructors and enhancing the overall classroom experience. In short, instructors and student leaders can complement each other to cultivate an engaging and positive learning environment that promotes student success.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research questions

Two research questions for this study are

- 1) *What are the most effective classroom management strategies employed by university instructors in the modern era to foster a positive and productive learning environment for diverse student populations?*
- 2) *What are the perceived roles and responsibilities of student leaders toward effective classroom management in the modern era?*

2.2. Research approach

This research used a qualitative research method to obtain rich information on the roles of instructors and student leaders in classroom management in modern society through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research makes it easier to explore social phenomena that are difficult to understand because they are complicated, and it provides more data, which

can include the personal views of the participants in focus (Creswell, 2018). In addition, 50 representative samples of university students were selected to participate in the survey.

2.3. Data collection

To obtain a wide and exhaustive set of data for this study, purposive sampling was used to select informants for the semi-structured interviews. There were 20 participants: ten university instructors and ten student leaders. These teachers were intentionally selected because of their roles as contributors to classroom management and their willingness to participate in the research. Students were from different study programs and years to add variety to the discussion. Interviews were conducted in person or online, according to the preference of each participant. The sessions ranged from 45 to 60 minutes in length and were audio recorded (with the patients' consent) for transcription and analysis.

The table below provides a summary of the interview participants, including assigned codes, roles, disciplines, and year levels for student leaders.

Table 1. Summary of interview participants

Code	Role	Discipline	Year (for students)
I01–I10	Instructor	Various (e.g., education, business, engineering)	
HS01–HS10	Student leader	Various (e.g., social sciences, economics, languages)	2nd to 4th year

This table supports the transparent tracking of interview data while maintaining anonymity and confidentiality.

2.4. Survey instrument

Interviews were supplemented with a self-administered survey that collected quantitative information and measured the students' perceptions. The survey was administered to a sample of 50 university students randomly selected from various faculties and academic years. These students did not hold student leader positions but were regular learners in their programs.

A survey instrument was adapted from the literature reviewed on classroom management and the leadership roles of instructors and students to assess the perceptions related to three focal points.

Classroom Management: The questions in this section examined the extent to which students were knowledgeable about, understood, or had personal experience with the prevalence of the classroom management strategies used by the faculty.

Instructor Support: Content items to assess student views on the forms and efficacy of faculty support in managing in-class environments and supporting learning.

Contributions of Student Leaders: This section of the survey aimed to reveal students' perceptions of what student leaders do in terms of mediating, collaborating, and peer influence in the classroom.

The instrument used a 5-point Likert rating scale (1: Strongly Disagree–5: Strongly Agree) and contained both closed-ended and a few open-ended questions to allow room for discussion. The survey was pilot-tested among 10 students for clarity and reliability prior to widespread distribution. Survey results were obtained through Google Forms or hard copies, according to the preference and accessibility of the participants.

2.5. Interview protocol

To enhance the organization and structure of the data collection process, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed. The protocol included a set of open-ended questions aimed at revealing participants' opinions about the roles of instructors and student leaders in classroom management, as well as the necessary and appropriate challenges and opportunities regarding this problem. The protocol also allowed for flexibility to explore new topics that may appear as the participants responded to questions.

2.6. Data analysis

This research adopted a mixed-method approach, applying qualitative and quantitative methodologies to explore the roles of teachers and student leaders in classroom control. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the responses in the 20 semi-structured interviews, which included 10 university teachers and 10 student leaders, following the model developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). No software was used to compile the text data. Data analysis began by developing a transcription of the interviews and rereading it several times to become familiar with the data. Generate Initial Codes, Search for Themes, and Review Themes. Codes were then generated, themes were identified and refined, and the findings were ultimately interpreted in the context of classroom management practices and leadership phenomena within higher education. Concurrently, the numerical responses to the survey (from 50 university students) were analyzed using statistical packages such as SPSS or similar.

2.7. Ethical considerations

This study ensured the ethical standards of consent, anonymity, and confidentiality of the subjects. Participants were provided with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and confidentiality measures. Participants were informed of the contents of the study before the interviews and gave their consent. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission, and transcripts were anonymized to protect their identities.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Results

Research question 1. *What are the most effective classroom management strategies employed by university instructors in the modern era to foster a positive and productive learning environment for diverse student populations?*

Semi-structured interviews with 10 instructors and 10 student leaders, lasting 45-60 minutes, discussed classroom management strategies with clear expectations and positive relationships.

This study aimed to identify and describe various classroom management practices used by university teachers to enhance a positive and productive learning environment for diverse student populations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 instructors and 10 student leaders. The findings highlighted two primary themes: establishing clear expectations and building positive relationships.

Table 2. Themes of classroom management strategies

Theme	Subthemes	Illustrative quotes
Classroom management strategies	Clear expectations	"It's crucial to outline what is expected from students right from the start."
	Positive relationships	"Building rapport with students is essential for a positive learning environment."

In the first theme, it was clear that teachers and student leaders emphasized setting expectations for academic and behavioral standards for students. This emerged as a critical aspect of effective classroom management. As a single instructor (I03) stated, *"I let my students know what is expected of them, both academically and behaviorally. If they understand the boundaries, it reduces most misunderstandings."* Another teacher (I07) said, *"I always spend the first session explaining the course outline and class rules. This helps create a structured environment and holds students accountable."* In the same way, a student leader (HS02) commented, *"When the expectations are made clear by both the teacher and the class leadership, students are less likely to cross the line."* These attitudes also affirm the idea that well-communicated expectations are central to an orderly and focused classroom atmosphere.

This approach was highly congruent with the best classroom management practices. Both instructors and student leaders stressed the importance of building trust, demonstrating care, and making learners feel like they belong. Teacher I05 explained, *"When students feel that I care about them not just as learners but as people, they are more likely to engage and less likely to misbehave."* Another participant (I09) observed, *"It's not about being their friend, but about showing respect and understanding. That sets the tone for mutual respect."* The student leaders agreed with this. One (HS06) said, *"We try to be close enough so that classmates feel comfortable talking to us but still responsible enough to support the instructor when there's an issue."* Another student leader (HS08) shared, *"Sometimes a simple check-in before or after class helps people feel included. That emotional connection is important."*

These quotations suggest that when respect, concern, and openness are promoted, effective classroom control is more likely to occur. When teachers and student leaders put in

the effort to build these relationships, they make the learning environment a place where students know they are heard, respected, and motivated to participate. This, in turn, leads to increased student ownership of the learning process and decreased disruption.

Table 3. Matrix table for comparisons

Strategy	Instructors	Student leader
Clear expectations	High	Medium
Positive relationships	High	Low

The above matrix displays how instructors and student leaders compare and contrast in their perceptions and practices of implementing two major classroom management strategies: setting clear expectations and fostering positive relationships. Although both groups recognized the value of such approaches, they expressed different degrees of interest in their use.

A few teachers expressed that clarity at the outset of the course is a means to avoid disciplinary problems and to regulate behavior to learning aims. As Instructor I04 put it, for instance, *“If students do not know what is acceptable or expected, they tend to test boundaries. I set the rules clearly in the first class.”* Another instructor, I01, commented, *“An organized syllabus and rule sheet is my first line of defense against chaos.”* These types of responses suggest to instructors that well-articulated policies could be used proactively to reduce classroom disruptions and enhance academic focus.

In contrast, as student leader HS03 offered, *“We help remind classmates about the rules, but it’s the teacher who defines them.”* HS09 said, *“We sometimes step in when things get unclear, but we don’t set the rules.”* These comments suggest that (although student leaders have a role in reinforcing expectations) they tend to perceive themselves as being in a supporting—not leading—position in this regard.

Concerning positive relationships, both categories rated this strategy highly, but with marked differences concerning whose responsibility and impact it was. Instructors emphasized the need to establish rapport with students, as it was necessary for creating an emotionally safe and productive learning environment. Instructor I08 reflected, *“If you want students to respect you and the class, you need to respect them first. That connection builds discipline naturally.”* That connection builds discipline naturally.” Another (I06) stated, *“I always try to learn their names, check in about their workload, and listen when they have concerns. It makes a difference.”*

In contrast, student leaders rated relationship building to a lesser degree, not because they discounted the importance of the factor, but rather because they did not believe that they could develop strong relationships with all students. HS05 added, *“We try to be friendly and supportive, but it’s hard to connect with everyone in large classes.”* HS07 said, *“Sometimes classmates see us more as monitors than friends, so we maintain a respectful distance.”*

These responses may indicate that student leaders recognize the importance of good peer-to-peer interaction, but that structural and social constraints limit the potential for their impact.

Overall, the matrix is grounded in evidence from interviews demonstrating that the teachers have a stronger and more central position regarding the definition of expectations and the construction of rapport with students. Student leaders contribute in a more indirect way, such as enforcing rules and mediating conflicts, but they do not see themselves as the main generators of classroom climate all the time. The difference in how their roles and influence are perceived reflects their different institutional roles and levels of power.

Table 4. Frequency table of themes

Themes	Instructors	Student leader	Total
Clear expectations	18	2	20
Positive relationships	17	3	20

By contrast, 18 of the 20 references for this theme were made by instructors, who described how it was essential to establish rules of engagement, academic expectations, and desired behaviors from the very beginning of the course. I02 commented, *“If the classroom is a system, expectations are the operating rules—we can’t function without them.”* I06 added, *“Clarity is not optional. When we fail to explain what we expect, we invite confusion and chaos.”*

In contrast, the theme was not mentioned often by the student leaders (N=2). This difference is inconsistent with previous results (see Table 2) and suggests that although student leaders are aware of the influence of expectations, many consider that their role is that of enforcers or communicators of instructor-dictated rules, but not initiators themselves. As one student leader (HS04) explained, *“We help support the rules, but the expectations come from the teacher. We just help remind or report when something goes off.”*

The second prominent theme—positive relationships—was also more commonly cited by instructors, with 17 of the 20 references coming from them. Instructors had strong opinions regarding the importance of trust, rapport, and empathy in establishing an inclusive and safe classroom climate. Instructor I09 said, *“A student who trusts you will engage, speak up, and respect the learning space. That’s more powerful than any rule.”* Instructor I05 emphasized, *“Sometimes just showing that you remember a student’s name or follow up on their concern is enough to build a connection that changes their attitude in class.”*

Although less commonly cited among student leaders (only three references), relationship building was considered relevant. HS01 reported, *“When I get along well with classmates, they listen to me more—even when I’m reminding them of something official.”* This indicates that while student leaders may not privilege relationship building as much as teachers, they are aware of the contribution this makes to cooperation and classroom climate.

In summary, the results in Table 3 suggest that clear expectations and positive relationships are the central characteristics of effective classroom management, and that

teachers play a key role in both. The qualitative evidence reinforces that not only are these themes commonly cited, but they are also deeply integrated into the practices and beliefs of practitioners. Student leaders have a supportive role, mainly in upholding standards of conduct and facilitating peer communication, but they play a lesser role. These findings indicate a need to examine other classroom strategies and roles used by institutions, both formal and peer-based, that can work collectively to improve classroom environments across a variety of student groups.

Research Question 2. *What are the perceived roles and responsibilities of the student leader toward effective classroom management in the modern era?*

Student leaders with the following themes from my interviews: role as a mediator, responsibility for reporting issues, involvement in classroom activities, and collaboration with instructors.

Table 5. *Frequency table of themes*

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Role as a mediator	32	64%
Responsibility for reporting issues	25	50%
Involvement in classroom activities	28	56%
Collaboration with instructors	30	60%

A survey of 50 university students was conducted to understand their perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of student leaders in the classroom management. The findings revealed four primary roles:

Role as a Mediator

The most utilized role, which received the highest attention from respondents, was that of a mediator. Approximately 64% of the respondents reported that they wanted to think of themselves as mediators between students and instructors and to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings between the two sides. This suggests that student leaders perceive their role as crucial in ensuring a harmonious classroom.

Responsibility for Reporting Issues

Half of the respondents (50%) highlighted that they must report any problems occurring in class to the appropriate authorities. This means that student leaders understand that they are supposed to respond to issues that may hinder learning and prevent them.

Involvement in Classroom Activities

Respondents' comments showed that a high percentage (56%) of them noted that they engaged in classroom-related activities as part of classroom management. This means that student leaders have ownership of themselves and the classroom and believe that they can create a positive learning environment.

Collaboration with Instructors

Sixty percent (60%) of respondents said that coordinating with instructors was critical to their work. This shows that friendly relationships between student leaders and faculty are important in determining the adequate management of courses and lessons.

The findings show that student leaders have diverse perceptions of their roles, including acting as mediators, reporters of issues, participants, and collaborators with instructors. These roles are crucial for creating a good learning atmosphere. More studies should be conducted to explain how student leaders discharge these roles, as well as the effects of arriving at the outcomes of classroom management.

3.2. Discussion

This study aimed to establish the roles of instructors and student leaders in classroom management within the current setting. Therefore, this study aimed to provide insight into the potential factors affecting the positive management of learners and their perceived roles by observing the classroom management skills of teachers and the perception that student leaders have of their roles in class.

The study suggests that class management cannot effectively occur if expectations are not well defined and/or if the teachers and the students do not share a positive relationship. Teachers who managed to provide a positive classroom climate stressed the importance of having clear rules and classical lessons, as well as relationships with children. In accordance with past studies, these elements are consistent with the literature on effective learning environments (Nguyen, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d; Nguyen, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d).

The study also showed the complexity of the participation of student leaders in classroom management and discipline. Student leaders mentioned that they saw themselves as conflict solvers who helped maintain a positive classroom climate. They also included reporting problems and ownership of class affairs, as well as engaging in course-related activities and interacting with the tutors. These findings reaffirm the possibility of student leaders serving as beneficial resources for improving class interactivity (Nguyen, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Nguyen, 2021; Nguyen, 2022).

It is therefore important to note some limitations of this study as follows, despite having the following implications in the current study. The number of participants was quite low, and conducting only semi-structured interviews might have reduced the scope of the study's external validity. Future research should involve a larger number of participants and use quantitative methods in addition to qualitative ones. Future research could extend the understanding of the phenomenon by examining how different academic disciplines, institutional contexts, and student demographics affect classroom management practices.

4. Conclusion and suggestions

To this end, this research examines the delicate dynamics of the interactions that exist between instructors and student leaders in the development of modern classroom

management. Through issues of instructional approach and perceived student leaders' roles, this research aimed to expand knowledge of the factors that lead to a conducive learning atmosphere.

Student leaders were involved in the regulation of behavior in the classroom and performed more than mere learner roles. From the study, the student leaders said that they respected themselves as mediators, problem solvers, and peer representatives. Through reporting issues, engaging in class activities, and working with instructors, learners' contributions point towards the potential of enormously impacting classroom environments.

However, this study has a few limitations that need to be acknowledged. As such, the number of participants included in the study was limited, and this is probably because the study used only semi-structured interviews during the data collection phase. The present study may be improved in the future by using a larger number of participants and supplementing the qualitative analysis with quantitative data. In addition, broadening the studies with a focus on the various impacts of academic disciplines, institutional settings, and students on the practices of classroom management would contribute to the enhancement of the understanding of the phenomenon under discussion.

Moreover, the study mainly targeted the views of instructors and student leaders. This result implies that incorporating students' perspectives would offer a more comprehensive view of the classroom experience, challenges, and possibilities. Studying the behaviors that student leaders use to accomplish their responsibilities and the consequences of such actions would also enhance the comprehension of their possible effects on classroom environments.

In general, this study highlights the interconnected roles of instructors and student leaders in creating effective classroom environments. By emphasizing clear expectations, cultivating strong working partnerships, and ensuring required cooperation between workers in both groups, student learning experiences can be enriched. Further research should follow this study by investigating other antecedents related to classroom management and studying the best practices of effective techniques in various learning environments.

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QUẢN LÝ LỚP HỌC TRONG THỜI ĐẠI HIỆN ĐẠI: VAI TRÒ CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN VÀ LÃNH ĐẠO SINH VIÊN

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TÓM TẮT

Sự phát triển không ngừng của môi trường giáo dục đại học đã khiến công tác quản lý lớp học trở nên ngày càng phức tạp, từ đó đặt ra yêu cầu cấp thiết về sự hợp tác hiệu quả giữa giảng viên và sinh viên. Nghiên cứu này tập trung khảo sát các trách nhiệm đa dạng mà hai đối tượng này thể hiện trong quá trình xây dựng một không gian giảng dạy hiệu quả. Thiết kế nghiên cứu định tính được áp dụng nhằm thu thập dữ liệu thông qua 20 cuộc phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc với 10 giảng viên và 10 lãnh đạo sinh viên, đồng thời kết hợp với dữ liệu bổ sung từ bảng hỏi dành cho 50 sinh viên. Trong số các chiến lược quản lý lớp học được giảng viên sử dụng, hai phương pháp nổi bật gồm xác định kỳ vọng rõ ràng đối với sinh viên và xây dựng mối quan hệ tích cực với người học. Về phía lãnh đạo sinh viên, họ đóng vai trò tích cực trong việc hỗ trợ môi trường học tập thông qua việc làm cầu nối giữa giảng viên và sinh viên, đồng thời là thành viên tích cực trong tập thể và tấm gương truyền cảm hứng cho bạn bè đồng trang lứa. Kết quả nghiên cứu xác nhận rằng các hoạt động mang tính hợp tác chính là yếu tố then chốt thúc đẩy sự tham gia của sinh viên và góp phần duy trì các chuẩn mực chất lượng trong giáo dục đại học. Nghiên cứu này không chỉ giúp giới học thuật hiểu rõ hơn về trách nhiệm chung trong lớp học mà còn gợi mở những hướng đi thiết thực nhằm cải thiện hệ thống hỗ trợ công tác lãnh đạo lớp học hiện nay.

Từ khóa: quản lý lớp học; học tập hợp tác; giáo dục đại học; lãnh đạo sinh viên; giảng viên đại học