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A reflection on the phenomenon of reflecting teachers' personal values in class management; Phenomenology of teachers' attitudes and lived experiences

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Abstract

This research has been conducted with the aim of analyzing the lived experience of reflecting teachers' personal values in classroom management at elementary schools. The present research, given its nature and propositions, was applied in terms of purpose and qualitative in terms of the type of collected data, based on a descriptive phenomenological approach. The participant population of the research included all elementary school teachers in Arak city during the academic year 2023–2024, totaling 5972 individuals. Among these individuals, teachers who had sufficient knowledge of the research topic were selected based on predetermined criteria such as authorship of books and related scientific and research activities, using purposive sampling with an emphasis on theoretical data saturation, and 24 individuals were chosen. The data collection instrument was semi-structured interviews. For data analysis in this research, thematic analysis was employed. In the process of coding and data analysis regarding the important values of teachers in the classroom, four categories were identified: psychological values, social and humanistic values, educational and professional values, and values related to the use of technology in teaching. Concerning how and under what conditions teachers' personal values are incorporated into the classroom, five categories were extracted: individual and social characteristics, ethical considerations in classroom interactions, managerial and organizational considerations in the classroom, teamwork and collaboration in the educational environment, and attention to educational technologies. These findings indicate the importance of paying attention to teachers' personal values in improving classroom management and the teaching process.

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Expanded Abstract

Introduction

Teachers' personal values constitute one of the most influential yet often overlooked dimensions of effective classroom management. Beyond instructional knowledge and pedagogical competence, teachers' beliefs, ethical commitments, interpersonal attitudes, and professional values significantly influence the quality of classroom interactions, students' motivation, and the overall learning environment. Classroom management is not merely concerned with maintaining discipline; rather, it reflects teachers' deeper value systems through their daily decisions, communication patterns, instructional practices, and relationships with students. As educational systems increasingly emphasize student-centered learning, emotional well-being, and inclusive education, understanding how teachers' personal values are reflected in classroom management has become an important area of educational research. Despite growing attention to teachers' professional competencies, relatively little qualitative research has explored teachers' lived experiences regarding the manifestation of their personal values in classroom practice. Therefore, the present study sought to explore elementary school teachers' lived experiences of integrating their personal values into classroom management and to identify the conditions that facilitate the realization of these values in educational settings.

Method

This study adopted a qualitative research design grounded in descriptive phenomenology to explore teachers' subjective experiences and perceptions. The study population consisted of 5,972 elementary school teachers employed in Arak during the 2024–2025 academic year. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on predefined inclusion criteria designed to identify teachers with extensive professional knowledge and experience related to the research topic. These criteria included demonstrated professional achievements, authorship of educational books, participation in educational research activities, and recognized expertise in teaching practice. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, resulting in interviews with 24 experienced teachers.Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method, allowing participants to describe their personal experiences of expressing their values in classroom management while maintaining sufficient flexibility for deeper exploration of emerging issues. The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis involving repeated reading of the data, identification of meaning units, initial coding, development of categories, refinement of themes, and continuous comparison across participants to ensure conceptual consistency and interpretive credibility.

Results

The findings revealed that teachers' personal values are reflected through four interconnected dimensions that collectively shape classroom management practices. The first dimension comprised **psychological values**, including self-confidence, optimism, emotional stability, cheerfulness, and the ability to create a psychologically safe and motivating learning environment. Teachers emphasized that their emotional disposition directly influenced students' motivation, classroom participation, and willingness to learn.

The second dimension consisted of **social and human values**, including respect for students' dignity and rights, empathetic communication, appreciation of individual differences, sensitivity to students' emotional and educational needs, and maintaining respectful interpersonal relationships. Participants viewed these values as essential for establishing trust and promoting positive classroom interactions. The third dimension involved **educational and professional values**, including commitment to effective teaching, continuous professional development, adherence to ethical standards, fairness in assessment, professional responsibility, and dedication

to improving students' learning experiences. Teachers described these values as the foundation of professional integrity and instructional effectiveness. The fourth dimension related to **technology-oriented values**, particularly the meaningful integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning. Participants emphasized that educational technologies should support meaningful learning while remaining consistent with broader educational and ethical values. The study further identified several contextual conditions facilitating the expression of teachers' personal values in classroom management. These included teachers' personal and interpersonal characteristics, ethical principles governing classroom interactions, organizational and managerial support, collaborative relationships among teachers, school leaders, and parents, and effective integration of educational technologies into instructional practice. Participants consistently emphasized that these contextual factors interact dynamically rather than independently, collectively influencing the extent to which teachers can successfully enact their personal values in everyday classroom practice.

Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that effective classroom management extends beyond behavioral control and instructional organization to encompass the expression of teachers' underlying psychological, ethical, social, and professional values. Teachers' personal values significantly contribute to establishing supportive learning environments characterized by trust, respect, collaboration, and meaningful engagement. The study also highlights that successful integration of these values depends not only on teachers' individual characteristics but also on organizational culture, leadership support, collaborative professional relationships, and the appropriate use of educational technologies. The findings suggest important implications for teacher education and professional development. Teacher preparation programs should place greater emphasis on value-oriented professional identity, ethical decision-making, reflective practice, emotional competence, and value-based classroom leadership alongside pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills. Furthermore, educational policymakers and school leaders should develop supportive institutional environments that enable teachers to consciously integrate their personal values into classroom management. Strengthening teachers' awareness of their personal values and facilitating their practical application can enhance classroom effectiveness, improve students' academic and socio-emotional development, and contribute to the creation of more inclusive, ethical, and learner-centered educational environments.

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Ethical Approval: This study was approved under registration No. ۳۳۲۴۱۱۲۲ dated ۲۰۲۳/۱۱/۱۳ as part of the M.A. thesis of F. Moradian at Payame Noor University. All procedures were performed in accordance with ethical research standards.