

**NOVICE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
SKILL DEVELOPMENT DURING TEACHING PRACTICE PROGRAMMES
IN PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KISUMU
CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
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RESEARCH**

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

This thesis “Novice Teachers’ Experiences of Classroom Management Skills Development During Teaching Practice Programmes in Public Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu Central Sub-County, Kenya” is entirely original with no submissions to other universities for credit toward a degree. This thesis should not be duplicated in any form without the author's and/or Moi University's prior written consent.

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Declaration by the Supervisors

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, friends and God.

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This scholarly work could not be accomplished without input from several individuals and institutions. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the following: Moi University for the opportunity to further my studies, my supervisors: Dr. Stellah Keter (Moi University) and Prof. Curwyn Mapaling (North West University) for their constructive feedback and patience to shaping the quality of this thesis, The East and South Africa-German Center of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA) project journey, Prof. Susan Kurgat (Co-Ordinator) and Dr. Malve v. Möllendorff (Project Coordinator) for the constant support that was provided to me during my proposal development and this scholarship funded by DAAD. And most importantly, the participants who took part in this study.

ABSTRACT

Classroom management is a critical component of professional teacher competence and is strongly emphasised in Kenya's competency-based teacher education framework. Teaching Practice Programmes (TPPs) serve as a key opportunity for novice teachers, those who have taught for up to 3 years after completing their teacher education course at the university, to build these skills. However, many novice teachers report struggling to maintain classroom discipline, organise instruction, and engage learners effectively in their career. This study therefore sought to explore novice teachers' experiences of developing classroom management skills during TPPs in public junior secondary schools in Kisumu Central Sub-County. The objectives of the study were: to explore how novice teachers understand classroom management during TPP; to establish novice teachers' experiences constructing classroom management competencies during TPP; and to illuminate the conditions that enable or constrain their skill development. Guided by Marzano's classroom management framework and Kolb's experiential learning theory, the study adopted a phenomenological design within an interpretivist paradigm. 15 novice teachers from 13 public junior secondary schools in Kisumu Central Sub-County were purposively sampled and data were collected through semi-structured interviews and semi-structured FGDs. Data were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-phase approach. The findings showed that novice teachers initially understood classroom management mainly as discipline and control, but their understanding broadened during TPPs to include instructional organisation, learner engagement, teacher-student relationships, emotional regulation, and reflective practice. Experiences of skill development were uneven, shaped by both supportive mentorship and constraining conditions such as large classes, limited resources, and inadequate guidance. Classroom management development was also closely connected to emerging teacher identity, with some novices experiencing confidence gains while others struggled with identity uncertainty, including challenges linked to linguistic and migration-related backgrounds. The study concludes that TPPs are central to the development of classroom management and professional identity among novice teachers and highlights the need for strengthened mentorship, realistic TPPs conditions, and structured reflective support, as well as further attention to identity-related and migration-informed experiences within career preparation programmes.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBC-	Competency Based Curriculum
CBE-	Competency Based Education
CUE -	Commission for University Education
ECM-	Effective Classroom Management
ITALIS -	Teaching and Learning International Survey
NFER -	National Foundation for Educational Research
TPD -	Teacher Professional Development
TPPs -	Teaching Practice Programmes

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study. It begins with background information on teacher professional competence and classroom management, and then articulates the research problem. The chapter presents the study's purpose, objectives, and research questions, and explains the study's justification, scope, and limitations. Key concepts and terms are defined, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding the research are described.

1.2 Background to the Study

Teacher professional competence is widely recognised as a key factor in educational quality (Sukma, 2023). Siri et al. (2020) define professional competence as skills, knowledge, attitudes, and motivation that novice teachers need to master their role and support student learning. Novice teachers, as regarded by Isha and Sukor (2021), are new teachers who have been teaching in their careers for up to 3 years after completing their teacher education course at the university. In addition, early career is also a period of steep professional growth; research shows that much of the improvement in teachers' overall effectiveness during the first years is driven by gains in fundamental professional skills like classroom management (Breen, 2025).

Therefore, highly competent novice teachers can adapt their teaching, provide effective classroom support, and give clear instruction, improving student achievement and holistic development (Jentsch & König, 2022). UNESCO (2021) reports that teacher competency is a significant school-related influence on student outcomes. Siri et al. (2020) further identify essential 21st-century teaching competencies, including classroom management, instructional practice, assessment, and technological skills.

Classroom management is critical because it directly affects instructional time and student conduct (Ngounhort et al., 2024).

Robert Marzano developed the ECM model in 2003, which conceptualised effective classroom management (ECM) activities. According to Marzano's (2003) model, ECM entails a teacher's actions to establish and maintain an effective learning environment through setting clear rules and procedures, implementing fair discipline, and fostering positive teacher-student relationships. In other words, classroom management in the Marzano model is everything a teacher does to create a classroom atmosphere that supports academic learning and appropriate student behaviour. In other words, Marzano (2003) explains that first, teachers must set and consistently enforce clear rules and routines, which help create a structured and predictable learning environment. Second, disciplinary interventions should be fair and balanced, combining consequences for misbehaviour with positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate conduct. Lastly, building strong teacher-student relationships is essential; when teachers are supportive, respectful, and assertive, students are more likely to follow rules and stay engaged.

Teachers, especially novices, build these classroom management skills through practice. They learn to design clear academic tasks, establish and rehearse classroom routines, manage instructional time effectively, and keep activities flowing. Such competencies are developed through practical experience in teaching practice programmes (TPPs), where student teachers implement routines, respond to disruptions, and adjust instruction in real-time skills that align with Doyle's emphasis on activity momentum and task clarity (Hastie, 1994; Postholm, 2013).

Many countries have introduced reforms to strengthen teachers' classroom management skills through practical training. Fitzsimons et al. (2024) highlight that pre-service

teachers significantly improve their classroom management, planning, and inclusive teaching through teaching TPP experiences. For example, UNESCO's Teacher Task Force has promoted including classroom management and building an inclusive climate in teacher education curricula (UNESCO, 2021). Singapore's Teacher Education 21 model emphasises creating a positive classroom culture as a critical competency (Wong et al., 2012). In Ghana, the Ministry of Education (2018) revised teacher education programmes to include more practical training, requiring student teachers to engage in peer teaching and extending the duration of school TPP.

In Kenya, similar changes have been made. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and universities have introduced a new competency-based teacher education framework aligned with the country's Competency-Based Curriculum. This framework emphasises creating a positive learning environment, stipulating that the teacher education curriculum should cover classroom management techniques and strategies for managing student behaviour (Musango, 2023). Additionally, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) now requires that all beginning teachers undergo a one-year induction programme, including guidance on classroom management and discipline policies (TSC, 2019).

Notwithstanding these reforms, classroom management is still reported as one of the most significant challenges for teachers worldwide, especially novices (Baker, 2005; Emmer & Sabornie, 2015; Vukovic, 2021). For instance, the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (ITALIS) found that novice teachers generally have low confidence in their teaching abilities, particularly classroom management. For example, in the United States, classroom management difficulties are frequently cited as a primary reason why early-career teachers struggle or leave the profession (Sparks, 2025). A 2025 report by the UK's National Foundation for Educational Research

(NFER) in England found that worsening pupil behaviour is a significant factor cited by teachers who quit, alongside workload and pay (Adams, 2025). In Pakistan, a quantitative study by Ahmed and Din (2024) found that new teachers struggle with overcrowded classes, limited resources, such as lab materials, and frequent disruptive behaviour, all hindering their performance. In Ghana, Adarkwah et al. (2022) report that novice teachers commonly face student indiscipline, lack of teaching resources, time-management problems, and oversized classes, reducing their effectiveness. In Tanzania and Rwanda, the rapid expansion of secondary education has meant that many inexperienced teachers enter classrooms with minimal mentoring, facing challenges in controlling large, diverse groups of students (Amanj, 2025).

In Kenya, classroom management problems also have serious consequences. Multiple school strikes and indiscipline cases have been attributed to poor teaching strategies (Makau, 2015; Machakos DEO Report, 2015). New teachers typically enter the profession with strong subject knowledge but relatively little practical training in behaviour management and learner engagement strategies (Gichunge, 2017). Many novice secondary teachers begin their careers in schools with limited facilities and prevalent discipline issues (Yegon et al., 2019). Reports from Kisumu County illustrate these challenges locally. For example, Odiero (2024) describes a workshop in Nyando sub-county training teachers in positive discipline to handle rising abuse and violence in schools, reflecting concern about teachers' ability to manage student behaviour. Supporting this, a study of Kisumu secondary teachers found that novice teachers initially lack confidence in classroom management; as one participant noted, older, more experienced teachers know how to manage pupils more effectively than younger teachers (Odiero, 2024). These sources highlight that classroom management is a pressing challenge for Kisumu's secondary teachers, especially those early in their

careers (Odiero, 2024; Odanga & Aloka, 2024). It follows that understanding and addressing the classroom management difficulties of novice teachers is essential, bringing into focus the importance of TPPs.

These TPPs are regarded as critical in building teachers' classroom management competence. The EI/UNESCO Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards (2019) recognises classroom management skills as a core standard for teaching competency and emphasises TPPs as crucial components of teacher education for developing this competency in real classrooms. Fitzsimons et al. (2024) show that pre-service teachers significantly improve their classroom management, instructional planning, and inclusive teaching through TPP experiences, underscoring the value of hands-on learning. Aglazor (2017) defines teaching practice as a well-structured higher-education programme that allows one to evaluate and develop aspiring teachers' competencies in actual classrooms.

In Kenya, teacher trainees are typically sent to teach for three months in secondary schools (Koross, 2016). This experience allows them to practise essential competencies, including lesson planning, instructional delivery, and classroom management in a supervised, reflective environment (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). Research suggests that when student teachers receive effective mentorship and ample opportunity to practise classroom management, they are better prepared to create positive learning environments in their first teaching posts (Echaune & Maiyo, 2023). Indeed, the TSC and the Commission for University Education (CUE) state that by the end of the TPP, a student teacher should be able to plan and deliver lessons while simultaneously managing learner behaviour in line with national standards (TSC, 2016; CUE, 2012).

However, the extent to which teaching practice adequately equips novice teachers with classroom management skills can vary widely. In some contexts, student teachers report that their TPP was too short or that cooperating teachers gave little responsibility or specific feedback on teaching techniques. For example, in the United States, Norway, and Finland, TPP placements face challenges such as a disconnect between student teachers and practice schools and low engagement from the host schools (Jenset et al., 2018). It has been shown in Norway that the TPP does not always provide the required practical skills due to low stakeholder engagement (Tavakoli & Gamlem, 2024). In Indonesia, Sari et al. (2022) report that some student teachers found their school principals unsupportive of their TPP experience, lacking professional support. In Pakistan, Aljafar (2020) identifies inadequate support from school staff and supervisors as a significant challenge: student teachers there often feel like guests rather than members of the school, face management issues in the classroom, have limited curriculum support, and encounter other instructional and supervisory challenges. In South Africa, Abongdia et al. (2015) found that student teachers experienced overload, neglect of their personal needs, and uncooperative school personnel during TPP. Mwang'ombe (2021) adds that low mentor involvement is a significant problem in Kenyan TPPs. Njui (2017) similarly reports low stakeholder engagement in Kenya's TPP: university supervisors and schools failed to maintain clear communication and coordination, leading to delayed supervision of trainees and disruption of the TPP schedule and objectives.

These discrepancies raise essential questions about how novice teachers in Kenyan secondary schools perceive the development of their classroom management skills during their TPP. Exploring these experiences in Kisumu County will shed light on the strengths and limitations of current teacher preparation approaches in this context. By

examining novice teachers' perspectives on how the TPP influenced their classroom management, the study aims to inform improvements in teacher education and support systems. Ultimately, better-prepared novice teachers are expected to create more orderly and engaging learning environments, benefiting learners' achievement.

1.3 Problem Statement

Effective Classroom Management (ECM) has been widely recognised as a foundation of quality education, providing an orderly, supportive environment for meaningful learning (Aibinuomo & Kennedy, 2021). When teachers have inadequate classroom management skills, the learning process is disrupted and student achievement is hindered (Aibinuomo & Kennedy, 2021). Opiyo (2024) adds that ineffective classroom management leads to less teaching time and reduced learner engagement, hindering the achievement of learning objectives. Therefore, managing student behavior, student-teacher relationships, and classroom routines underpins teachers' ECM and high-quality education (Marzano, 2003; Sparks, 2025). Consequently, TPPs need to prioritise the development of ECM competencies.

Kulu et al. (2024) and Mboko and Mutunga (2023) confirmed that TPPs are a critical component of pre-service teacher education, providing student teachers with supervised, real-time classroom experience to apply pedagogical theory and practice, managing classrooms first-hand. In Kenya, educational policymakers emphasise the need for stronger classroom management training in teacher preparation. For example, the KICD (2017) designates ECM as a core competency for teacher trainees, and the TSC (2024) requires that classroom management skills be developed during TPPs. These national standards establish a clear expectation that teacher graduates can create and maintain productive learning environments.

However, despite these emphases on classroom management development and TPPs, classroom management in Kenyan public secondary schools remains challenging. Mboko and Mutunga (2023) report that classroom management skills are often neglected in Kenyan secondary schools. Kulu et al. (2024) agreed that classroom management is one of the most significant challenges that secondary teachers, particularly novices, face. They give examples of these challenges from public secondary schools in Kenya: disorganised lessons, lack of student motivation when unmonitored, poor classroom seating arrangements that reduce attention, limited preparation time for teachers, inadequate subject mastery, and disruptive student behaviour due to weak discipline approaches. Breen (2025) and Sparks (2025) show the implications of ineffective classroom management skills; Novice teachers who struggle with discipline face high stress and are more likely to leave the profession early. Adarkwah et al. (2022) also add that ineffective classroom control leads to less teaching time and reduced learner engagement, hindering the achievement of learning objectives.

Limited research has examined how novice teachers in Kenyan public junior secondary schools perceive the contribution of their TPP experiences to the development of classroom management skills. While some studies have explored pre-service TPPs' experiences (Karani et al., 2023; Mutende, 2025), there remains a notable gap in research that follows graduates into their first years of teaching to assess how specific elements of the TPP translate into real-world classroom management practices (Opiyo et al., 2025). In particular, there is limited phenomenological research capturing the lived experiences of novice teachers as they reflect on the influence of their TPP on their ability to manage a diverse and dynamic classroom environment (Clark-Davis, 2024). This study sought to fill that gap by exploring the experiences of novice teachers

in Kenya and how their TPP experiences supported or hindered the development of their classroom management competencies. It also identified the specific conditions and stakeholder interactions that influenced their growth. The findings aimed to inform improvements in pre-service training so that future educators would be better prepared to manage diverse classrooms effectively.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore novice teachers' experiences with classroom management skills development during TPPs.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore how novice teachers understand classroom management during TPP in Public Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu-Central Sub-County, Kenya.
2. To establish novice teachers' experiences constructing classroom management skills during TPPs in Public Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu-Central Sub-County, Kenya.
3. To explore the conditions that novice teachers experience as enabling or constraining their classroom management skill development during TPPs in Public Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu-Central Sub-County, Kenya.

1.6 Research Questions

1. How do novice teachers understand classroom management during TPP in Public Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu-Central Sub-County, Kenya?
2. What are the novice teachers' experiences constructing classroom management skills during TPPs in Public Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu-Central Sub-County, Kenya?

3. What conditions do novice teachers experience that enable or constrain their classroom management skill development during TPPs in Public Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu-Central Sub-County, Kenya?

1.7 Justification of the Study

Globally, classroom management is recognised as one of the most significant challenges for teachers, particularly novices (Baker, 2005; Emmer & Sabornie, 2015; Vukovic, 2020). To address this need, international teaching standards such as the EI/UNESCO Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards emphasise the importance of supervised TPP experiences for developing ECM skills (EI/UNESCO, 2019). In Kenya, recent competency-based reforms have similarly prioritised classroom management techniques in teacher training (Musango, 2023; TSC, 2024). Nevertheless, many novice teachers in Kenya start their careers with strong subject knowledge but limited practical training in behaviour management (Gichunge, 2017; Yegon et al., 2019). Even when TPPs are available, studies note issues such as inadequate mentorship and limited school support that may impede skill development (Njui, 2017; Mwang'ombe, 2021).

In Kisumu County, education reports indicate that novice secondary teachers often lack confidence in managing classroom behaviour (Odiero, 2024; Odanga & Aloka, 2024), highlighting a pressing need to improve support for new teachers. However, little is known about how participation in teaching practice programmes (TPPs) affects the development of these skills in this region. Understanding these experiences is critical, as it will identify the strengths and weaknesses of current TPP approaches. Furthermore, ECM has been shown to underpin student achievement (Aibinuomo & Kennedy, 2021; Sparks, 2025). The study's findings are expected to guide teacher educators and policymakers in enhancing TPP design and mentorship for classroom management.

Ultimately, better-prepared novice teachers should create more orderly, engaging learning environments that benefit both teachers and learners.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Novice teachers are expected to benefit by gaining reflective insights and practical recommendations for improving their classroom management strategies, enhancing their confidence and effectiveness in early teaching roles.

The findings are expected to benefit the learners through structured and engaging classroom environments as teachers apply improved management practices, leading to better student behaviour and learning outcomes.

Education policymakers and teacher educators are expected to gain evidence to strengthen teacher training curricula and induction programmes, including TPPs requirements, ensuring that classroom management skills are effectively emphasised and supported.

Teaching practice coordinators and mentors are expected to use the findings to refine TPP design and support, providing targeted mentorship and feedback to help student teachers develop strong classroom management skills.

Secondary schools are hoped to benefit from having better-prepared novice teachers, potentially reducing disciplinary issues and creating more positive, effective learning environments school-wide.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

- i. Novice teachers are willing and able to articulate their experiences in developing their classroom management during their TPPs.
- ii. Novice teachers perceive classroom management as a significant component of their teacher professional competence.

- iii. Novice teachers experienced high stakeholder involvement in the development of their classroom management.
- iv. TPP played a significant role in developing classroom management skills.
- v. Novice teachers can identify and suggest strategies for enhancing classroom management skills.

1.10 Scope of the Study

This study was bound by its content, geographical location, and time. The central concept of this study is the position of TPPs in developing teachers' competence in classroom management skills. The aim is to explore novice teachers' perspectives on how teaching practice programmes developed their classroom management skills.

This study was conducted in Kisumu-Central Sub-County, Kenya, and nearby secondary schools. This sub-county and public junior secondary schools served as representative samples for the larger Country of Kenya. The study was conducted between January and August 2025.

1.11 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are potential weaknesses that are typically beyond my control regarding the study's trustworthiness (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). The following limitations were noted in this study.

First, although the cross-sectional design helped obtain a moment-in-time population snapshot, there were inherent limitations. This design may have missed some changes over time, making it more challenging to understand temporal trends or patterns of the phenomenon, as there was no follow-up of the teachers over time. Furthermore, cross-sectional studies are susceptible to sampling bias (Wang & Cheng, 2020), often needing to select a sample from a large and heterogeneous study population.

Second, using interviews for data generation was also subject to bias. Interviews relied on the subjective experiences and perceptions of the participants, which may have affected the results. Additionally, interviewer influence may have occurred, with participants possibly providing answers based on their perceptions of the interviewer. According to Wang and Cheng (2020), interviews are more expensive and time-consuming than questionnaires, potentially limiting the sample size. The scope of questions may also have been limited due to the time-consuming nature of interviews. Using focus groups may also have presented setbacks such as a lack of anonymity, non-representative samples, and less control over collected data (Santhosh et al., 2021).

Third, since this study depended on participants' cooperation, it might have faced limitations. Some participants may not have cooperated due to fear of a breach of confidentiality. Participants' attitudes might have impacted the reliability of the responses, which were beyond my control. Additionally, participants might have provided socially acceptable but dishonest responses to avoid upsetting me.

Lastly, the generalisability of this qualitative study's findings may have been limited (Leung, 2015). This study focused on a specific county in Kenya and novice teachers from nearby secondary schools, so the results may not apply to other contexts or regions. This limitation was considered when interpreting the study's findings and broader implications.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Classroom Management Theory by Robert Marzano (2003), which conceptualises ECM activities, and Experiential Learning Theory by David Kolb (1984), which emphasises the significance of TPPs in the development of teachers' classroom management skills and how the skill can be developed during these TPPs.

Marzano's Classroom Management Theory (CMT) recognises the significant role direct experiences play in developing classroom skills and the significance of classroom management in fostering learner achievement. He also identifies key components that foster classroom management (Teske and Schweigert, n.d.). First, Marzano emphasises the importance of direct experiences, such as prospective teachers observing school mentors during their TPPs to develop and foster their classroom management skills and reflecting on these experiences (Marzano and Marzano, 2003).

Second, components of classroom management include fostering teacher-student relationships, providing consequences for student behaviour management, and establishing clear rules and procedures for instructional organisation (Marzano and Marzano, 2003). In other words, CMT provides essential elements of classroom management (see Table 1), which guide the research questions of this study and a structure to explore classroom management competencies.

Table 1: *Key Components of Classroom Management*

Components of Classroom Management	Activities
Behaviour Management	Reinforcement of the desired behaviours among students through rewards and consequences.
Instructional Organisation	Planning and pacing instruction, developing a clear physical and temporal classroom structure through clear rules and procedures.
Teacher-student Relations	Teachers in these relationships show concern for their students' welfare and have high standards for their academic performance.

Note. Developed by the researcher (2024)

Marzano's theory was utilised by several studies that focused on classroom management, general interventions such as Gage et al. (2018) and Jihan (2023). They classified the roles of classroom management into student-teacher established rules or

procedures, management of student behaviour, and building teacher-student relationships. The findings show that the teacher students could implement Marzano's classroom management theory to a decent level during their TPPs.

Next, Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) emphasises the importance of practical learning for teachers to develop classroom management skills. According to Kolb (1984), learning is a cyclical process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). A significant concept of ELT is that learning is grounded in experience (Kolb, 1984). Fitzgibbon (1987) states that ELT upholds that knowledge is created when learning from experience and not just receiving instruction. In other words, novice teachers learn by experiencing teaching in TPPs, reflecting on the TTP experiences, forming generalizations or principles from them, and then applying those principles to their classroom management situations as teachers in their career. Therefore, TPPs provide concrete experiences for teachers in real classrooms during their teacher education programmes, which they can then reflect upon with the help of mentors and supervisors. Fitzgibbon (1987) states that ELT suggests an effective TPP emphasises practical experience and feedback from mentors and supervisors for student reflection.

Another major concept of this theory is that learning involves transactions between the person and the environment (Kolb, 1984). This concept suggests that individuals do not absorb information passively but actively through engaging with their surroundings. This guided this study by stating the importance of preservice teachers getting opportunities to engage with their learners, school mentors, supervisors, and the broader school community. Several studies have utilised this theory while researching on TPPs, such as Kabrina (2015) and Mai (2025), and classroom management through micro teaching by Dai and Takumi (2024). These studies confirmed that experiential learning

is a significant opportunity for teachers in developing their classroom management skills.

1.13 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guided this research, helping the me bring all study aspects together (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). In this study, the conceptual framework shows teachers involved, effective teaching practice, and the components of classroom management.

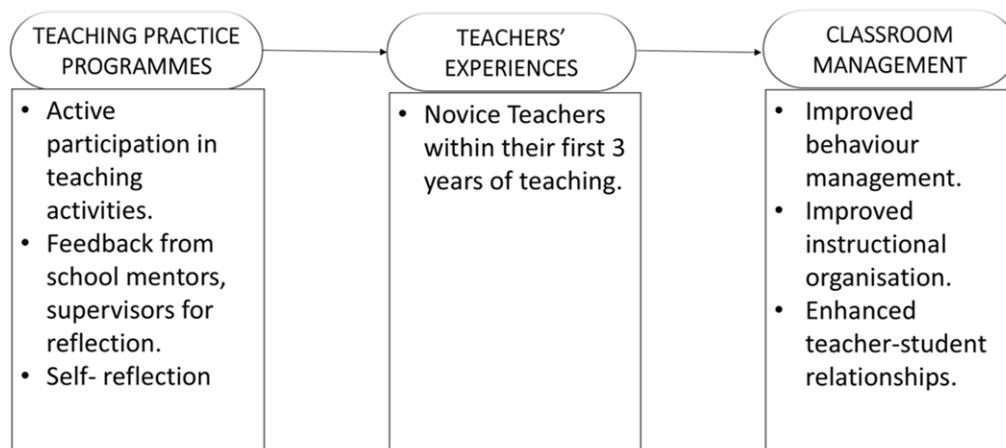


Figure 1: *A Conceptual Framework*

Note. A Conceptual framework showing how the experiences and perceptions of novice teachers during their TPPs significantly play a part in their classroom management

1.14 Operational Definition of Terms

Behaviour Management: This refers to the strategies and techniques teachers use to reinforce positive student behaviour and discourage negative actions in the classroom. It includes setting clear expectations, praising and rewarding, and applying fair consequences. This study treats behavior management as one of the key components of classroom management based on Marzano's theory.

Classroom Management: Classroom management entails the actions a teacher takes to establish and maintain an effective learning environment through setting clear rules and procedures, implementing fair discipline, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, and sustaining a mindful, proactive mental attitude.

Instructional Organisation: Instructional organisation involves the structuring of classroom procedures, routines, physical layout, and lesson pacing to promote a smooth and efficient learning environment. As used in this study, it reflects how novice teachers plan, organise, and manage learning activities and time during teaching practice.

Mental Set: Mental set is the teacher's internal disposition and awareness during classroom instruction. It includes their readiness to monitor the classroom, emotional objectivity, and ability to remain calm and proactive. This study describes the psychological preparedness of novice teachers to manage classrooms effectively during TPPs.

Novice Teachers: Teachers who have completed their teacher education and TPP within the last three years and have recently begun teaching independently.

Rules and Procedures: The agreed-upon classroom norms guide student behaviour and daily routines. In Marzano's model, regulations and procedures help create a predictable learning environment. This study uses the term to explore how novice teachers establish, teach, and reinforce classroom expectations during their TPP

Teacher-Student Relationships: This term refers to the professional and interpersonal interactions between teachers and their learners. In Marzano's framework, ECM is supported by respectful, supportive, and equitable relationships that foster student cooperation and engagement. This study highlights how novice teachers build trust and maintain positive connections with students.

Teaching Practice Programmes (TPPs): They refer to the structured, hands-on teaching experiences, usually lasting several months, in which student teachers apply pedagogical theory in actual classrooms. TPPs are intended to develop aspiring teachers' professional competencies, including classroom management.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on teacher professional competence and classroom management in the context of teaching practice. It begins by defining teacher professional competence and its importance in education in order to show how classroom management is critical to teachers and their education. It then examines the concepts and components of classroom management, including common challenges, especially for novice teachers to get more understanding of the construct. Finally, the chapter explores teaching practice programmes, their purpose, structure, challenges, and how they relate to teacher development to show the information available about the construct. Then the chapter looks into the literature review for each research objective to clearly bring out the gaps that exist within previous studies. This review identifies gaps in the existing research, justifying the present study's focus on novice TPP experiences.

2.2 Teacher Professional Competence

Teacher professional competency comprises personal traits, pedagogical skills, subject-matter mastery, classroom management skills, and reflective practices that allow for successful performance in various teaching circumstances (Sazideh et al., 2019). Cognitive underpinnings of teacher competency include mastery of the subject matter and appropriate pedagogical strategies. Practical dimensions include ECM, learning assessment, and teaching adaptation to meet the requirements of a wide range of students (Amin & Wahyudi, 2024).

Empirical research shows that student achievement and holistic development correlate closely with professional teacher ability. Higher competency teachers provide more

adaptable teaching, more classroom support, and clearer instruction, all of which improve student achievement, according to Jentsch and König (2022). Similarly, one of the most important school-related elements influencing student outcomes is teacher competency, according to UNESCO (2021).

Further large-scale assessments, such as PIRLS (2016) show mixed findings by emphasizing how classroom management and teacher-student relationships influence students' attitudes and academic performance (UNESCO, 2021). According to Ngounhort et al. (2024), Hattie's meta-analyses also identify classroom management and explicit instruction as among the most effective strategies associated with student performance.

Classroom management is one of the most essential competencies because it directly affects instructional time and student conduct (Ngounhort et al., 2024). Fitzsimons et al. (2024) show that pre-service teachers significantly improve their classroom management, instructional planning, and inclusive teaching through TPP experiences, highlighting the importance of experiential learning in fostering classroom management competencies.

2.3 Classroom Management

2.3.1 Conceptualising Classroom Management

Several scholars have defined the construct of “classroom management” as fitting for this proposed study. Robert Marzano’s classroom management theory provides an influential, research-based definition of managing a classroom. In *Classroom Management That Works* (2003), Marzano defines classroom management as the confluence of teacher actions in four distinct areas: establishing and enforcing rules and procedures, carrying out disciplinary actions, maintaining effective teacher and student

relationships, and maintaining an appropriate mental set for management. This definition emphasises that ECM is multi-faceted, requiring teachers to be proactive and consistent across several domains. Marzano's theoretical framework reinforces these core areas as the foundation of effective management, underlining their importance for teachers at all experience levels.

In support of Marzano's definition, Doyle (1986) defines classroom management as organising and maintaining a productive learning environment by coordinating lesson tasks, establishing clear routines, and handling transitions smoothly. This process relies on positive student-teacher relationships to promote engagement, cooperation, and behavioural order. Doyle also conceptualises classrooms as complex systems of academic, procedural, and behavioural tasks interacting within a social environment. Effective management, therefore, involves not only maintaining discipline but also designing engaging, well-structured activities. Key management practices include efficient time use, consistent routines, and smooth transitions to maintain momentum and minimise disruptions. Doyle argues that classroom order arises from proactive planning and shared expectations, rather than authoritarian control, making management an integral part of teaching (Doyle, 1986; Postholm, 2013; Hastie, 1994).

2.3.2 Components of Classroom Management

According to Marzano's framework, the major theoretical framework guiding this study, classroom management can be divided into several categories: behaviour management, instructional organisation, and teacher-student relationships (Marzano, 2003; Oliver et al., 2011).

Behaviour Management

The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework defines classroom behavior management as systematic and tailored strategies teachers use to boost student participation and reduce disruptive behavior in the classroom (He et al., 2024). In other words, teachers essentially develop and carry out rules, procedures, and consequences that encourage good behaviour and discourage bad behaviour. Oliver et al. (2011) point out the importance of classroom management by stating that it is widely acknowledged as essential for facilitating teaching and learning; ineffective behavior management interferes with instruction and raises teacher stress and burnout.

Next, effective behaviour management is proactive and reactive, including pre-planned efforts to prevent misbehavior and on-the-spot responses to address it (Martin & Sass, 2010). For instance, class rules and expectations are frequently co-created by teachers, who then clearly communicate these expectations to students: For example, a teacher might, in the first week of class, teach students a question-asking technique, such as raising hands, to make sure everyone understands. (Evertson & Emmer, 2017). Therefore, teachers establish a predictable and consistent environment where students understand what is expected of them by communicating and developing expected behaviours (He et al., 2024). Evertson and Emmer (2017) highlight the importance of communicating expected behaviours in the classroom by stating that a predictable and constant climate is formed in the classroom if teachers communicate and ensure students practice the expected behaviour, since students will know what is already expected of them.

To shed more light on behaviour management, the major principle of behaviour management is reinforcement of the desired behaviours among students, for instance, the provision of praise or rewards to increase positive behaviours and reduce negative

behaviours through consistent and fair consequences (CESE, 2020; Marzano, 2003). Therefore, to foster a supportive classroom climate while holding pupils accountable, effective instructors maintain a high ratio of positive feedback to corrections (Bennett, 2020). While unpredictable or too harsh responses might worsen misbehavior, research shows that gentle, regular corrections help students refocus with less disruptive behaviours (Oliver et al., 2011; Cook et al., 2018).

Lastly, effective behaviour management is frequently preventative, as evidenced by foundational studies by Kounin (1970): Teachers who demonstrated withitness or a keen awareness of every aspect of the classroom and skillfully handled transitions experienced significantly fewer disruptions (Marzano, 2003). For instance, proactive strategies such as moving around the room to monitor student activities, employing prompt redirections, and having well-timed transitions are linked to less off-task behaviour (Evertson & Emmer, 2017; Simonsen et al., 2008). Thus, an effective classroom manager responds to misbehaviors and anticipates and prevents them.

Instructional Organisation

According to Marzano (2003) and Archer and Hughes (2011), instructional organisation entails the procedural and structural elements, such as setting up the physical space, organising lessons and transitions, managing time and resources, and creating routines that help the classroom function smoothly. In addition, effective classroom managers pay close attention to instructional organisation because they view it as a crucial component of classroom management and behavior control (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Martin & Sass, 2010). Therefore, a clear physical and temporal structure is a foundation of instructional organisation. According to Hepburn and Beamish (2020), a well-organised classroom layout that facilitates simple traffic flow and easy access to materials can improve student focus and decrease disruptive behaviour.

Next, managing instructional time is another foundation of instructional organisation. Archer & Hughes (2011) confirm that effective teachers easily manage administrative duties, start class on time, and employ effective transitions between activities to minimise downtime. (Archer & Hughes, 2011) further introduces the concept of routine by stating that well-taught routines ease the daily class flow, reducing confusion and lost time. Routines are “sequences of recurring tasks or actions... designed and taught by the teacher and practised by students to become automatic” (Lemov, 2021, p. 144).

Another major foundation of instructional organisation is planning and pacing instruction. Emmer and Evertson (2017) support this by stating that teachers who prepare lessons carefully are most likely to maintain students' engagement, leaving few opportunities for disruptive behaviour. In addition, maintaining focus and order in the classroom is facilitated by keeping classes moving forward and avoiding long breaks or dead time (Kounin, 1970; Chaffee et al., 2017). Research shows that class-wide management interventions that enhance instructional organisation significantly increase students' on-task behavior, such as clear routines and engaging instructional formats (Chaffee et al., 2017; Marzano and Marzano, 2003). In conclusion, when effective instructional organization is in place, students experience the classroom as a well-run “learning machine” where expectations are clear, support is provided, and little time or energy is wasted on logistics or uncertainty (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Aydin & Karabay, 2020).

Teacher-student Relationships

Relationships are primarily defined in closeness (warmth) versus conflict: Positive teacher-student relationships are commonly identified as relationships in which students feel supported, understood, and fairly treated by the teacher (Pianta, 2001). Good teacher-student relationships are characterised by a high level of support and a

low level of conflict; teachers in these relationships show concern for their students' welfare and have high standards for their academic performance (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). Therefore, developing positive relationships is considered an integral part of classroom management because a foundation of mutual respect and trust encourages students to cooperate with rules and fully engage in learning (Marzano and Marzano, 2003; McDonald, 2019). As educational psychologist Robert Pianta noted, the affective bond between teacher and student can serve a similar role to the parent-child bond in early years: it provides a secure base that helps children thrive in the school environment (Roisman et al., 2024).

Next, positive teacher-student relationships have been linked to several beneficial outcomes, including higher academic motivation, better classroom behaviour, and greater student engagement across grade levels (Roorda et al., 2011; Quin, 2017). For instance, a meta-analysis by Roorda et al. (2011) found that students who reported having supportive, low-conflict relationships with teachers showed significantly higher engagement and achievement. In contrast, negative, conflictual relationships predicted disaffection from school.

Positive teacher-student relationships are built through demonstrating care and respect for students. As stated by McDonald (2019) and Bennett (2020), teachers who are effective relationship-builders show interest in students' lives and opinions, listen actively to student concerns, and treat students with fairness and empathy. A recent experimental study showed that this simple routine improved the teacher-student relationship and increased academic engagement by 20% and decreased disruptive behavior by 9% in the classroom (Cook et al., 2018). In conclusion, teachers should strive to maintain positive relationships with each student for ECM.

2.3.3 Concept of Novice Teachers

Novice teachers were the focus of this study. Novice teachers are generally defined as early-career in-service teachers in the initial years of their profession, as opposed to pre-service teachers still in training (Akcan, 2016). The specific cutoff for those considered “novices” varies across studies. Like many other empirical studies, this proposed study classifies novice teachers as those with fewer than three years of teaching experience (Akcan, 2016; Isha and Sukor, 2021).

Classroom management consistently emerges as one of the most significant challenges for novice teachers, who often feel underprepared to handle student misbehavior due to insufficient prior training (Pierson, 2023). Difficulties with managing classrooms have serious consequences for this group: novice teachers who struggle with classroom discipline tend to experience high stress and are significantly more likely to leave the profession early (Breen, 2025). Conversely, rapid development of strong management skills has been linked to better teaching effectiveness and improved retention among new teachers (Sparks, 2025). Early career is also a period of steep professional growth; research shows that the improvement in teachers’ overall effectiveness during the first years is driven by gains in fundamental skills like classroom management (Breen, 2025).

Therefore, focusing on novice teachers was valuable for studying classroom management development because it targets educators at a formative stage when these skills and the related support needs are still developing. By examining novices’ specific vulnerabilities and needs in maintaining classroom order, I will inform targeted interventions, from enhanced pre-service preparation to mentoring and induction support, that help new teachers build a solid foundation in classroom management,

thereby boosting their confidence, reducing early burnout, and ultimately improving their likelihood of long-term success in the profession (Breen, 2025).

2.3.4 Challenges Faced in Classroom Management

Classroom management is consistently reported as one of the most significant challenges for teachers worldwide, especially for novice teachers in secondary schools (Baker, 2005; Emmer & Sabornie, 2015). Research across different regions indicates that new teachers often feel underprepared in this component, which can undermine their overall professional competency and effectiveness. For instance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) international TALIS survey found that novice teachers feel less confident in their teaching abilities, particularly in classroom management skills (Vukovic, 2021).

The lack of confidence in classroom management among teachers affects the development of teachers' professional performance. For instance, Adarkwah et al. (2022) confirm that teachers struggling to control their classes often experience reduced instructional time and lower student engagement, hindering their ability to meet learning objectives. Furthermore, poor classroom management contributes to teacher stress and burnout, limiting professional longevity and competence development (Sparks, 2025). Challenges faced in classroom management have been experienced globally.

2.3.5 Efforts to Improve Classroom Management in TPPs

Given the critical impact of classroom management on teaching success, many countries have taken steps to integrate classroom management training into TPPs. Internationally, there is a consensus that effective TPPs must prepare teacher candidates in content and pedagogy and classroom management strategies (Darling-Hammond et

al., 2017). Scholars have argued the importance of training teachers in classroom management. For instance, Oliver et al. (2011) state that there is no evidence to support the assumption that new teachers will just ‘pick up’ classroom management skills given time and experience” (p. 5). UNESCO’s Teacher Task Force has also promoted the inclusion of classroom management and inclusive climate training in teacher education curricula (UNESCO, 2021).

In the United States, integrating classroom management into teacher preparation has been a significant focus in recent decades. NCTQ (2020) confirms that the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) has evaluated U.S. teacher prep programs on their classroom management training, and its 2020 review noted a positive trend: since 2013, there was a 26% increase in programmes requiring practice in evidence-based classroom management strategies. In Canada, the provinces have embedded “classroom environment” competencies in teacher education standards (Ontario College of Teachers, 2018). Similarly, in Chile, teacher standards explicitly include classroom management, and universities have incorporated modules on youth psychology and conflict resolution to help teacher trainees manage student behavior constructively (Avalos, 2016).

Singapore introduced the Teacher Education Model for the 21st Century (TE21), which underlines the importance of creating a positive classroom culture as a critical skill. Teacher candidates at the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore take courses in educational psychology and classroom management, and their TPP evaluation includes classroom management criteria (Wong et al., 2012). In Japan, formal TPPs include training on establishing routines, addressing misbehavior politely but firmly, and collaborating with senior teachers to maintain classroom discipline (Horita and Nagahama, 2023). In China, teacher education has traditionally been

theory-heavy. Still, new standards (e.g., China's Teacher Education Curriculum Standards, 2011) require practical competencies, including managing classrooms and using class time effectively.

Ghana's Ministry of Education (2018) revised teacher education curricula to include more practical training, requiring student-teachers to engage in on-campus peer teaching sessions where they practice managing a class and extending the duration of the TPP in schools. Similarly, in Nigeria, teacher education programmes have introduced modules on classroom organisation; some colleges use micro-teaching TPP where trainees demonstrate lessons while peers act as students and create typical classroom disruptions for the teacher to manage (Olaitan, 2017). South Africa has built classroom management into pre-service and in-service training (Govender, 2020).

In Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and universities have collaborated on a new competency-based teacher education framework aligned with the country's shift to a competency-based curriculum (CBC) in schools. This new framework puts a strong emphasis on creating a positive learning environment: it stipulates that teacher education curriculum should cover classroom management techniques and give future teachers tips on controlling students' behaviour and creating an effective learning environment (Musango, 2023)

2.4 Teaching Practice Programme

2.4.1 The Structure of Teaching Practice Programme

TPP is central to teacher education programmes since it exposes the student-teachers to the real-life classroom where they can translate the educational theories into practice; teaching practice is, therefore, a programme in higher education institutions that is well-

structured, which provides an opportunity to evaluate and develop the competencies of aspiring teachers in actual classrooms (Aglazor, 2017).

TPPs are designed and implemented differently in different regions. For instance, in Pakistan, teaching practice is compulsory in teacher education courses, apart from the Master of Education (Gujjar & Naoreen, 2009). Yadav (2011) continues that the maximum number of days allowed for this activity was 90 days, and the teaching practice period is 4 to 8 weeks, or 60 to 75 lessons. Due to the limited time allocated for school experience, student-teachers only focus on teaching in the classroom and ignore other educational activities outside of it. In addition to learning how to handle classroom management situations, student teachers also learn how to introduce lessons and supervise students (Gujjar & Naoreen, 2009). This explanation is merely meant to highlight how limited the experiences of the trainee teachers are while they are in the classroom. Similarly, in Pakistan, student teachers participate in TPP four times during their education courses' second, third, seventh, and eighth semesters (Aljafar et al., 2020).

Yadav (2011) conducted a comparative study in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka and found that the duration and place of teaching practice differ depending on the country. For instance, in Trinidad and Tobago, student-teachers receive two years of training before college-based courses. In contrast, in India, teaching practice is done for one and a half years in public, demonstration, and private schools (Yadav, 2011). On the other hand, in Bangladesh, teaching practice is practised only in private schools, while in Pakistan, teaching practice is carried out in demonstration schools (Yadav, 2011). Furthermore, the intensity of teaching practice is different in different countries. For instance, in India, student teachers teach 24 lessons across two subjects in 45 days, whereas in Bangladesh, 45 lessons are taught over 90 days. In Pakistan, thirty days are

used to conduct 11 lessons (Yadav, 2011). However, the minimum length of the school experience programme varies from 35 to 60 days in Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka, while the maximum duration for Pakistan is 90 days. In teaching practice, a minimum of five to six lessons should be given in Sri Lanka, while a maximum of 90 lessons is needed in Pakistan (Yadav, 2011).

In contrast to the Asian experience, in Zimbabwe, the teaching model 2-5-2 is utilised for primary student-teachers; this teaching mode entails two terms for in-campus theory, five terms for tutoring from qualified teachers, and the last two terms for teaching practice (Ngara et al., 2013). This teaching practice is longer than in Asian countries. However, the teaching practice programme has been criticised because of the different models used in Zimbabwe and inadequate proposer mentorship (Maphosa, 2007).

Teaching Practice in Libya takes place in the final year of the student teachers' education programme in the Faculty of Education. The programme lasts six months; five weeks are meant for teaching, while one week is for observation (Aldabbus, 2020). According to Aldabbus (2020), students can engage in microteaching with their college peers before beginning their official teaching practice in classrooms. Each student must present at least two lessons before the course instructor. After that, the instructor and their classmates provided constructive feedback based on their performance in the microteaching exercise. The next semester's teaching practice in schools is only open to those who pass the teaching strategies I and II courses. As a result, each student teacher must teach eight to ten lessons a week, lasting forty minutes each, for fifty class hours. Aldabbus (2020) continues to explain that two supervisors oversee and evaluate each student teacher. One supervisor is from the Education and Psychology Department, and one university supervisor is from the department to which the student-

teacher is affiliated. The university supervisor awards a final assessment mark of 50 out of 50, to which the supervisor of the Education Faculty adds 40 marks, and the TPP school headmaster adds ten more, for a total of 100 percent (Elmabruk, 2020).

Nonetheless, completion of the college's teaching TPP is a requirement for graduation.

In Kenya, a TPP is also a crucial component of teacher education since it equips educators for their future positions in the classroom. As part of their training, the trainee teachers are dispatched from the university to teach for three months in elementary, secondary, commercial, and technical schools (Koross, 2016). Koross (2016) further explains that in this TPP, student teachers attend the TPP in their third year of the education programme. During the TPP, they are observed and assessed by a designated supervisor in the specific region and a team of other lecturers who oversee the student teachers and the cooperating teacher. Drawing from these challenges, the government, through the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 and the Sessional Papers No. 1 of 2005 and No. 14 of 2012 policies, working with the Ministry of Education, recognises and supports professional competence through high-quality teacher training and development across all learning sectors (Odundo et al., 2018). Furthermore, a comprehensive framework for education and professional development is emphasised in the Basic Education Act of 2013 and Article 35(3) of the Constitution, aligning training and education with Vision 2030 to achieve national education goals (Odundo et al., 2018). All this support for quality teacher professional development encourages quality teacher training, such as TPPs.

In conclusion, a TPP programme is crucial in training student-teachers globally, so its quality improvement is crucial.

2.4.2 Quality of Teaching Practice Programmes

Several researchers have carried out studies differently to try to reduce this prevalence and have reported the state of TPP across the globe:

According to a quantitative study that focused on principles of TPPs, conducted in Canada by Korthagen (2006), for a long time, academia has regarded TPP such as teaching practice as a field of study with little significance, but in this new century, it is starting to get better recognition; as a valued object in academic research because of the constant complaints from graduates, parents, school administrators, and politicians about the irrelevance of the preparation of student-teachers for their everyday practice in schools, and recommendations to re-think about the structure of these teacher education programmes.

Quality is an issue in the U.S., Norway, and Finland because several challenges still exist, such as a disconnect between student-teachers and practice and low engagement efforts from the residence schools (Jenset et al., 2018). Additionally, it has been shown in Norway that TPP does not provide student-teachers with the required practical skills because of low engagement among stakeholders (Tavakoli & Gamlem, 2024). Due to this low-quality TPP in Norway, Christophersen et al. (2015) point out that teacher education programmes like TPP experience approximately 30% dropout rates, and one of the reasons is an inadequate mastery of practical teaching experiences from teaching programmes that offer practical experiences. Similarly, TPP is complicated in Finland because universities do not effectively integrate education's theoretical and practical aspects (Chennat, 2014). A proposed strategy to approach these challenges includes considering the recommendations to improve partnerships with residence schools that emphasise new teacher training (Jenset et al., 2018).

Next, in Australia, the quality of teaching practice is still a challenge despite the reforms put into place to improve the quality of the programme because the hosting schools are left with workloads from the university supervisors (Dan & Liu, 2021). Due to the hosting schools' continued burden from university supervisors, teaching practices in Australia should put more effort into implementing the reforms aimed at enhancing programme quality (Dan & Liu, 2021).

In Pakistan, Aljafar (2020) conducted a study investigating the quality of TPP in HEIs. The study's findings showed that the quality of TPPs in universities in Pakistan is low because it is still experiencing several challenges that influence its quality or effectiveness. Aljafar (2020) points out low engagement from school teachers and supervisors as the primary cause of the challenges student-teachers experience: the student-teachers experience challenges such as management issues of classrooms, challenges related to the environment where they do not feel like part of the school but guests, curriculum developmental challenges because of low support from school teachers, and instruction and supervisory challenges. Aljafar (2020), therefore, recommends increasing communication and engagement opportunities among residence schools, supervisors, and student teachers.

In South Africa, the quality of TPP is still a concern; for instance, a study by Abongdia et al. (2015) showed that student-teachers report experiencing several challenges during their teaching practice programme, such as student-teachers being overloaded with work, their personal life being disregarded, and uncooperative school teachers. These challenges affect the knowledge and skills they get from the programme, such as cooperation and decision-making skills (Abongdia et al., 2015). Still, another study's findings in South Africa reported that student teachers felt unwelcome and disturbed by

some school teachers delegated as their mentors and thus struggled to fit into the environment (Zondo & Adu, 2024).

Similarly, in Nigeria, universities have been critiqued for failing to develop TPPs that create student teachers with a solid foundation in pedagogy and content and the capacity to work professionally with others in a collaborative setting because the current TPPs do not offer student teachers an environment to engage with other stakeholders effectively (Adeosun, 2014).

In Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, it has been pointed out that the quality of TPPs is low because the programmes are highly institution-based and lecture-based, with little focus on the practical experience in teaching, therefore creating a huge gap between theory and practical competence of pre-service teachers (Hardman et al., 2011; McGinn & Schiefelbein, 2010). Mwang'ombe (2021) further adds that Kenyan universities face a significant challenge in TPPs. As a result, Njui (2017) reports a case of low stakeholder engagement in the TPP in Kenya where university supervisors and the school did not maintain clear communications and coordination, which led to late supervision of trainees, thus tampering with the TPP schedule and objectives.

2.5 Novice Teachers' Understanding of Classroom Management during TPPs

Marzano's (2003) model defines classroom management as a teacher's actions to establish and maintain an effective learning environment through setting clear rules and procedures, implementing fair discipline, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, and sustaining a mindful, proactive mental attitude. However, studies show that novice teachers often hold narrower or different understandings. Studies show that preservice and novice teachers focus on immediate behavioral control and order. New teachers commonly equate ECM with a quiet, orderly classroom where

students comply with rules during their TPPs (Blank & Shavit, 2016; Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). Terada (2021), summarising a 2021 study on novice versus expert teachers, notes that new teachers tended to view classroom management narrowly, as a way to respond directly to disciplinary problems, while expert teachers had a more comprehensive understanding of classroom management and its complexity. Indeed, studies of novice teachers' beliefs have found that they frequently emphasize authority, strict discipline, and not letting students get out of hand as their primary management goals (Kwok, 2019; Lacy, 2023).

Studies of novice teachers consistently report that novices define classroom management as controlling student behaviour and establishing order. In a survey of over 200 preservice teachers, Kwok (2021) found that early-stage trainees focus on behavioural components of classroom management, such as enforcing rules and addressing misbehavior. However, this emphasis decreases as they advance through their TPP. Many Kenyan teachers, novice and experienced, have historically relied on authoritative and sometimes coercive strategies to manage classes, partly due to large student numbers and entrenched school cultures (Mariapragasam, 2024).

At the same time, some studies suggest that novice teachers recognise the role of instruction organisation and classroom climate. Lacy (2024) reported that novice middle-school teachers described classroom management chiefly in establishing a healthy learning community and using consistent routines and procedures to guide class activities. In this view, management involves setting up clear daily routines such as entry and exit procedures, class rules, and lesson transitions, so that students know what to expect. Novice teachers in Lacy's (2024) study emphasised forming a positive classroom culture through predictable schedules and supportive relationships, implying that they see management as both environmental and communal. In other words, novice

teachers may talk about routines, procedures, and community building as key parts of classroom management even as they still focus heavily on student behavior.

Most existing studies on teacher classroom management beliefs have been conducted in Western countries or Asian contexts. Within Kenya, research has tended to examine general teacher disciplinary strategies or challenges, e.g., large class management, rather than an in-depth exploration of novices' understandings and beliefs (Mariapragasam, 2024). As a result, we have limited scholarly knowledge of what novice teachers in Kenya think classroom management means, and how their teacher education may have shaped that view. This study seeks to fill that gap by looking into how novice teachers in Kisumu County understand classroom management during TPP.

2.6 Novice Teachers' Experiences Constructing Classroom Management Skills during TPPs

Karasova and Nehyba (2025) report that classroom management is a persistent and often overwhelming challenge for beginning teachers, who face frequent disruptive behaviors that they struggle to resolve effectively. Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) report that in novices' first encounters with full classrooms, they frequently realise that actual classroom situations differ significantly from the theoretical scenarios discussed in teacher training to real-world TPPs. As a result, they often feel anxious, under-supported, and unsure how to respond to several issues. For example, a Kenyan study by Nkaissery et al. (2016) reports that beginning teachers during TPPs reported difficulty dealing with hostile student behavior and admitted they felt ill-equipped to address these behaviors. Novice teachers also grow and improve their classroom management skills during their TPPs. Ahmed and Din (2024) report that novice teachers typically develop management skills during TPPs by experimenting with various tools and strategies and learning from the outcomes of their actions.

Novice teachers attach different instances or aspects to the development of their classroom management skills during TPPs. For example, Mananay and Sumalinog (2024) in the Philippines reported that first-year secondary English teachers confronted real classroom management dilemmas during their TPP and coped by inventing interactive techniques. In interviews, novice teachers mentioned creating lively, student-centered lessons, such as through collaborative games and participatory activities, to counteract student disengagement and misbehavior. They also emphasised the importance of getting to know students by name and establishing a friendly rapport, which helped elicit compliance. These participants attributed their learning of classroom management to these practical teaching moments, such as managing urgent tasks, providing immediate feedback on behaviour, and giving positive rewards during the TPP, rather than to depend only on theoretical coursework (Mananay & Sumalinog, 2024). In short, novice teachers explicitly attached their class experiences, such as making lessons fun and personally knowing students, as core to developing their management skills.

Parks (2023) explored novice teachers' narratives about taking over full classroom responsibility during their TPP in Canada. A popular theme was the vital moment when the school mentors stepped back and let the student teacher assume control of teaching and classroom management. Novice teachers emphasised that a gradual handover was critical. In other cases, a sudden transfer of responsibility, with little support, left participants feeling anxious and underprepared. These stories suggest that novice teachers viewed the transition to independent management as a key learning event during their TPPs. When school mentors carefully took time to introduce novice teachers to routines and then slowly handed over authority, novices felt empowered to practice managing the class. Thus, participants identified supportive and incremental

autonomy as significant experiences during TPP that improved their ECMS development.

Pham et al. (2020) studied novice EFL teachers in Vietnam and found that classroom practices significantly improved key classroom management competencies. Novices reported enhanced ability to draw students' attention, encourage responses, and create a motivating learning environment during their TPP. Participants specifically described adopting new class routines and strategies, for example, they negotiated clear class rules with students, moved around the room to interact with learners, called on students randomly to maintain engagement, and used games or reward systems to motivate participation. These strategies illustrate how preservice teachers themselves identified concrete classroom activities such as game-based reviews, individual questioning, and rewards, during their TPP as significant in building classroom management skills (Pham et al., 2020).

In a UAE case study, Hojeij et al. (2023) explored Emirati novice teachers who conducted a whole virtual TPP. These novices reported no prior formal training in online classroom management and found themselves having to create their strategies. As a result, the necessity of teaching online forced them to invent student engagement strategies on the spot. For example, interviewees described using patience, child-centered discourse, and digital tools creatively to maintain order and focus. The study notes that novice teachers viewed the TPP as an opportunity to experiment and reflect on what strategies worked, such as using breakout rooms or interactive polls, even as they struggled with technology usage. Therefore, even in a virtual TPP, novices identified concrete teaching activities such as engagement methods, utilising peer feedback via video reviews, and reflecting on lesson pacing as necessary in their construction of ECM (Hojeij et al., 2023).

A study conducted in Bangladesh confirms that specific TPPs build ECMS. Hasan and Alam (2025) used reflective journaling of new English teachers and found that structured micro-teaching sessions were especially crucial. Novice teachers reported that rehearsing complete lessons combined with reflective lesson planning and mentor feedback significantly improved their classroom control techniques. In their reflections, participants emphasised how crafting clear lesson plans, designing engaging materials, and peer-reviewing each other's mini-lessons during TPPs improved their confidence in managing real classrooms. The study concludes that systematic incorporation of TPPs, with strong emphasis on micro-teaching, self-reflection, and peer coaching, prepared these novice teachers to handle diverse student behaviors (Hasan & Alam, 2025). Activities such as practicing lessons with peers and analysing one's teaching in journals were directly linked by the novices to gains in classroom management skills.

In South Africa, Adebola (2022) explored novice teachers during their TPPs. Participants described improvising their classroom management techniques in response to challenging situations. For instance, when no formal discipline system existed, they came up with their strategies, such as using gentle gestures, group work norms, or assigning classroom clean-up duties to minimise disruptions. These strategies, which are often not taught in university, were improvised in the moment. Adebola's study highlights that the experience of having to teach real classes pushed novices to learn classroom management by trial and error. During TPP, they learned what worked by doing it. Bertram (2023) similarly analysed South African novice teachers, in their first year, and found that classroom management and discipline were identified as their biggest challenges. Importantly, nearly all respondents agreed that the practical component rather than the educational theory of their teacher education programme was most beneficial for addressing these challenges. Therefore, novices valued time spent

in real classrooms because this is where they developed classroom management skills. Though Bertram's focus was broad, the implication is clear that TPPs were the context in which novice teachers learned to set rules, manage behavior, and maintain order. Many noted that only through learning by doing in the TPP could they begin to feel competent in dealing with student misbehavior.

Most existing studies highlight general challenges faced by novice teachers or emphasise the gap between theory and practice (Dias-Lacy and Guirguis, 2017). Still, few focus on how novices themselves describe and make sense of their classroom management skill development during TPPs. Notably, none of the reviewed studies specifically addresses Kenyan novice secondary teachers. A few Kenyan reports discuss mentoring or general TPP outcomes, but they do not capture novice teachers' perspectives on which TPP moments built their classroom management skills. For example, a longitudinal study by Muraya and Wairimu (2020) in Kwale County, Kenya, showed that sustained mentoring improved overall classroom practice, implying better classroom management. Still, it did not identify the specific activities that novice teachers themselves valued to develop their skills. This research gap mirrors the broader need, that, while most international literature suggests that active practice activities such as microteaching, reflection, mentoring feedback, and lesson experimentation develop classroom management skills, Kenyan literature has not empirically documented which exact TPP experiences novices perceive as pivotal. This research objective addresses that gap by examining the experiences of novice teachers in Kisumu County.

2.7 Enabling and Constraining Conditions for Developing Classroom Management Skills during TPP

Studies from diverse settings emphasise the critical role of structured support and practice in helping novice teachers learn classroom management during TPP. In a qualitative study of new teachers in California, Shank and Santiago (2022) found that novices repeatedly sought clear guidance in classroom management. These teachers reported feeling uncertainty with classroom management practices and requested clear expectations and additional support. The findings showed that active learning and gradually reduced support in training increased novices' autonomy in managing classrooms. In other words, novice teachers benefited most when university courses and mentors provided hands-on practice with constructive feedback that was slowly withdrawn as the teachers' skills grew. Shank and Santiago concluded that, in the U.S. context, novice teachers need practical, scaffolded experiences such as micro-teaching, role-play, and co-teaching to translate theory into ECMS. Without this structured support, beginning teachers felt unprepared for real classroom challenges (Shank & Santiago, 2022).

In South Africa, Jita and Munje (2022) examined novice teachers' mentorship experiences and found that consistent mentor support was crucial for novices' professional growth. They report that when mentors provided regular feedback and debriefing sessions, novice teachers felt empowered and better able to manage their classrooms. Positive TPP experiences are attainable when preservice teachers receive quality guidance that empowers them. The study notes that access to relevant feedback instils confidence and motivation in novice teachers. During TPPs, the South African novices described mentors who set aside time to observe lessons and discuss classroom management challenges as key enablers.

A qualitative study in California by Shank (2023) found that many novice teachers felt unprepared to handle real classroom behavior issues due to inadequate pre-service training. These new teachers reported lacking knowledge of preventative, evidence-based classroom management strategies, leaving them struggling with student misbehavior. The novices themselves called for additional support and training in practical management techniques, highlighting that stronger preparation and ongoing guidance would enable them to create positive learning environments.

Similarly, a U.S. professional development study by Stewart and Jansky (2022) noted that new teachers struggled to reconcile theory with practice in rigid school settings and had difficulty managing relationships with veteran colleagues, suggesting that a gap between TPPs and on-the-ground realities was a significant constraint. Stewart and Jansky (2022) argue that understanding these challenges is vital so TPPs can provide targeted mentoring and reflective dialogue, which are key enablers to help novices embrace and overcome their classroom management struggles.

In Pakistan, a survey of novice elementary teachers in Islamabad by Ahmed and Din (2024) revealed that challenging classroom conditions were a significant barrier to effective management. New teachers commonly faced overcrowded classrooms, limited physical space and furniture, and inadequate teaching resources such as science lab materials, which hindered their ability to maintain order and engage students. They also reported frequent discipline problems and difficulties addressing diverse student needs, from varying ability levels to behavioral issues. The study concluded that strong administrative and mentor support can enable better classroom management development for first-year teachers. In other words, supportive mentorship and leadership act as enablers to counterbalance the constraints of large classes and resource shortages.

In Kenya, Ouma et al. (2021) noted that schools have inadequate teaching materials and large class sizes, significantly hindering novice teachers' effectiveness in managing classrooms during their TPPs. New teachers reported struggling to maintain control and implement engaging lessons when basic resources such as textbooks are scarce and when they must handle overcrowded classes. These contextual challenges, prevalent in many Kenyan public schools, make it difficult for novices to practice the management techniques learned during TPPs.

A Kenyan study on novice teachers in Bungoma highlighted the critical enablers that support novices' classroom management growth during teaching practice, that is, systematic induction in key areas of the classroom, such as setting routines, handling discipline, and engaging learners, to bridge the gap between university TPPs and real classrooms. However, at the time of the study, most novices had little formal orientation or guidance once they started teaching. The researchers recommended regular induction seminars and ongoing mentoring by experienced teachers as solutions. This demonstrates that while contextual barriers such as overcrowding and poor resources constrain novice teachers, strong induction programmes, mentorship, and feedback are enabling factors that can help new teachers build confident classroom management skills during their TPPs.

While international and Kenyan studies have identified enablers such as mentorship and induction programmes, and constraints like overcrowding and lack of resources (Ahmed & Din, 2024; Ouma et al., 2021), little research has explored how novice teachers in Kenya perceive and navigate these factors during TPPs. Existing literature rarely combines both the supportive and hindering conditions in one in-depth analysis, especially within the context of junior secondary schools under the Competency-Based Curriculum. This study fills that gap by providing context-specific qualitative evidence

on the interplay of enabling and constraining factors as experienced by novices in Kisumu County.

2.8 Empirical Studies Review

This shows previous studies and mentions clearly the gaps found in these studies that motivated the conduction of this study. A study conducted in Germany by Baier-Mosch and Kunter (2024) focused on how pre-service teachers draw on knowledge from their university training versus their own schooling experiences in developing their classroom management skills. Through the use of an experimental design, this study included 93 pre-service teachers. The researcher aimed to determine if the teacher training improved classroom management. The findings of this study show that teacher training had no significant effect on teachers' classroom management skills. The study also reports that pre-service teachers' experiences led them to rely heavily on simple, reactive management strategies, in contrast to the more proactive strategies emphasised in university modules. While this study highlights weaknesses in pre-service teachers' use of training knowledge, it focuses entirely on teacher trainees before they enter the classroom. It does not explore how novice teachers later perceive their experiences and the link between their training programmes and real classroom management practices, especially not in an African context like Kisumu County.

Another study was conducted in the United Arab Emirates by Hojeij et al. (2023). It is a qualitative case study that aimed to explore the experiences of 18 female preservice teachers during a virtual teaching TPP during COVID-19 towards online classroom management development. This study identified major themes: challenges, opportunities, performance factors, and suggestions for improvement in fostering online classroom management. The findings show that the interns have inadequate training in online classroom management and were forced to develop their techniques

on the spot. Even though this study centers on the development of classroom management during teacher training TPP, it is limited to pre-service teachers in a virtual environment and not novice in-service teachers in physical classrooms. Therefore, this proposed study will include how novice teachers later reflect on the connection between their TPP experiences and managing physical classrooms in Kisumu County.

Shank & Santiago (2022) conducted a qualitative case study in the United States (U.S) which focused on exploring experiences of novice teachers in classroom management. Eight novice teachers (within 3 years of experience) were interviewed to understand why new teachers feel unprepared for classroom management. The study analysed interview transcripts and teacher education course documents. The findings showed that these novice teachers reported inadequate practical training during their teacher preparation in handling real behavioral issues and noted that their training provided minimal exposure to evidence-based management strategies. The study suggests actionable solutions like more hands-on practice and mentorship to scaffold new teachers' management skills. Even though this study clearly connects teacher preparation to novice teachers' struggles, it was conducted in the U.S. It does not include the specifics of a teaching practice program (TPP) in shaping classroom management. This proposed study will fill this gap by exploring those novice experiences in the Kisumu County context, which features different educational conditions and TPP structure.

Opiyo et al. (2024) conducted a quantitative study in Siaya County, Kenya, focusing on practicing teachers in Kenya. This quantitative study examined whether using evidence-based classroom management practices correlates with students' academic performance. Using surveys and document analysis, the researchers collected data from 336 secondary teachers and 112 deputy principals across 112 schools in Siaya County.

They measured implementation of key management components such as structured routines, clear expectations, active engagement, and behavior response strategies, and linked it to each school's exam results. The findings show that only one component, that is, actively engaging students, had a significant positive impact on academic outcomes ($r = 0.314$, $p = .002$), and this accounts for about 9% of the performance variation. Other management components, such as enforcing rules or responding to misbehaviour, showed weak or no significant influence on student scores. This study by Opiyo et al. (2024) emphasises the outcomes of classroom management, but does not focus on how teaching practice programs affected classroom management implementation. This leaves a clear gap for this proposed study, which will qualitatively explore novice teachers' experiences in the development of their classroom management skills during their TPP in Kisumu County.

2.9 Summary

This is a table summary of the research gaps from the previous similar studies discussed above.

Table 2: *Summary of Empirical Review and Gaps in Knowledge Identified*

Authors	Topic	Methodology	Findings	Knowledge Gaps
Baier-Mosch and Kunter (2024)	Pre-service teachers' knowledge about classroom management from university studies and their own schooling experiences, and the effects of their activation	Quantitative, experimental design which focused on 93 pre-service teachers	Teacher trainings had no significant effect on teachers' classroom management skills. The study also reports that pre-service teachers' experiences led them to rely heavily on simple, reactive management strategies, in contrast to the more proactive strategies emphasised in university modules.	While this study highlights weaknesses in pre-service teachers' use of training knowledge, it focuses entirely on teacher trainees before they enter the classroom. It does not explore how novice teachers later perceive their experiences and the link between their training programmes and real classroom management practices, especially not in an African context like Kisumu County.
Hojeij et al. (2023)	Preservice teachers' experiences with classroom management in the virtual class: a case study approach	A qualitative study that utilised interviews.	The findings show that the interns have inadequate training in online classroom management and were forced to develop their techniques on the spot.	Even though this study centers on the development of classroom management during teacher training TPP, it is limited to pre-service teachers in a virtual environment and not novice in-service teachers in physical classrooms. Therefore, this proposed study will include how novice teachers later reflect on the connection between their TPP experiences and managing physical classrooms in Kisumu County.

Shank & Santiago (2022)	Classroom Management Needs of Novice Teachers	Qualitative Study with interviews. Eight novice teachers (within 3 years of experience) were interviewed to understand why new teachers feel unprepared for classroom management. The study analysed interview transcripts and teacher education course documents.	The findings showed that these novice teachers reported inadequate practical training during their teacher preparation in handling real behavioral issues and noted that their training provided minimal exposure to evidence-based management strategies. The study suggests actionable solutions like more hands-on practice and mentorship to scaffold new teachers' management skills.	Even though this study clearly connects teacher preparation to novice teachers' struggles, it was conducted in the U.S. and does not include the specifics of a teaching practice program (TPP) in shaping classroom management. This proposed study will fill this gap by exploring those novice perceptions in the Kisumu County context, which features different educational conditions and TPP structure.
Opiyo et al. (2024)	Influence of Classroom Management Practices on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Siaya County, Kenya	In a quantitative study using surveys and document analysis, the researchers collected data from 336 secondary teachers and 112 deputy principals across 112 schools in Siaya County.	The findings show that only one component, that is, actively engaging students, had a significant positive impact on academic outcomes ($r = 0.314$, $p = .002$), and this accounts for about 9% of the performance variation. Other management components, such as enforcing rules or responding to misbehaviour, showed weak or no significant influence on student scores. This study by Opiyo et al. (2024) emphasises the outcomes of classroom management, but does not focus on how teaching practice programs affected classroom management implementation.	This study by Opiyo et al. (2024) emphasises the outcomes of classroom management, but does not focus on how teaching practice programs affected classroom management implementation. This leaves a clear gap for this proposed study, which will qualitatively explore novice teachers' experiences in the development of their classroom management skills during their TPP in Kisumu County.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study to explore novice teachers' experiences in developing their classroom management skills during teaching practice programs. It provides a comprehensive explanation of the procedures and techniques employed in data generation. Key elements covered in this chapter include the research paradigm, approach, design, population, sampling strategies, data generation methods, trustworthiness, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The study adopts a qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm, utilising phenomenology to achieve the research objectives and address the research questions.

3.2 Research Paradigm

This study adopted an interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm assumes that reality is socially constructed and that meaning arises through individual and collective interpretations (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2018). This study adopted the interpretivist paradigm because Kivunja and Kuyini (2020) explain that this paradigm allows me to access participants' thoughts and perceptions by exploring their lived experiences. This study aimed to explore novice teachers' experiences with classroom management skills development during TPPs.

The paradigm is grounded in several philosophical assumptions: relativist ontology, subjectivist epistemology, naturalistic methodology, and balanced axiology. A relativist ontology asserts that multiple realities exist, and these can be understood through the meanings participants ascribe to their experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). A subjectivist epistemology means that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction between the me and the participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2020). In this study, the me

interpreted teachers' narratives about classroom management through direct engagement with them.

3.3 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach within the interpretivist paradigm. A research approach refers to the general procedures and steps I, as the researcher, used to conduct a study, including the philosophical assumptions, methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This study adopted this approach because a qualitative research approach is characterised by an emphasis on understanding people's experiences within their natural contexts (Nowell et al., 2022). It enables me to make sense of how participants interpret their lived experiences and the meanings they assign to them (Saldana & Omasta, 2022). As Braun and Clarke (2022) note, qualitative designs are particularly useful when the aim is to gather deep, rich, and detailed information about a phenomenon. In this study, a qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of how novice teachers make sense of and develop classroom management skills during teaching practice in junior secondary schools in Kisumu County.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), qualitative research positions the I as the main instrument of data collection. It allows for the use of multiple data sources, focuses on participants' meanings, and encourages reflexivity. Similarly, Tobi and Kampen (2021) assert that qualitative research enables me to become immersed in the data they collect, often through narrative interviews and observations. In this study, the I collected detailed accounts from participants through semi-structured interviews and FGDs. These accounts were used to generate narrative summaries and draw out common themes. This approach aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, which underpinned the design of this study.

A naturalistic methodology involves gathering data in the field using tools such as interviews, reflective discussions, and observations (Lincoln et al., 2018). In this study, participants' experiences were collected in their natural school settings, with the me acting as a participant-listener. My interpretive role was central to capturing and making meaning from these accounts. A balanced axiology recognises that the my values play a role in the research process. The aim is not to remove bias entirely, but to reflect transparently and present participants' voices as faithfully as possible (Nowell et al., 2022). This ethical awareness supported the trustworthiness of the study findings.

Qualitative research is valuable in helping social science me better understand people's experiences, values, and beliefs, especially within complex social contexts (Taber, 2024). However, one of the challenges of this approach is the potential for dissemination bias, where findings are context-specific and may lack transferability to other settings (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019). To minimise this, the researcher provided thick descriptions and maintained transparency in analysis.

In this study, the qualitative approach allowed the me to gather deep insights into how novice teachers developed classroom management skills. The approach was chosen because the research focused on understanding a lived phenomenon from teachers' perspectives. Through interviews and focus groups, the study was able to answer questions about how these teachers experienced classroom management and what supported or constrained their development during teaching practice.

3.4 Research Design

The qualitative research design used for this study was interpretive phenomenology. A research design is the overall strategy chosen to integrate the different components of a study coherently and effectively (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). It outlines the process

for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in line with the research questions and philosophical assumptions of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In qualitative research, the design is often flexible and emergent, allowing the me to engage deeply with participants and the meaning they assign to their experiences (Nowell et al., 2022).

Interpretive phenomenology focuses on exploring how individuals make sense of their lived experiences within specific contexts (Smith et al., 2022). It goes beyond mere description to examine how people interpret events in relation to their lives. Van Manen (2021) explains that interpretive phenomenology, rooted in hermeneutic traditions, combines reflection and interpretation to uncover the essence of a phenomenon as lived by individuals. This approach is particularly suited to education research where individual perceptions and meaning-making play a key role (Dowling & Cooney, 2021). This study allowed the me to explore how novice teachers understand and develop classroom management skills during their teaching practice in real-world school environments.

Smith et al. (2022) emphasise that interpretive phenomenology is concerned with the relationship between people and their world, as it is experienced and interpreted by them. It is not limited to factual reporting but involves thoughtful reflection on the meanings embedded in experiences. This approach is grounded in the belief that lived experiences are always interpreted through the individual's historical, social, and personal lens. It seeks to uncover how people make meaning of the world rather than describing events in isolation. This emphasis on interpretation was essential to understanding how novice teachers navigate classroom challenges and develop management strategies.

Interpretive phenomenology also values reflexivity. As Van Manen (2021) states, I am not a distant observer but an active participant in the interpretive process. My background, values, and preconceptions are recognised as influencing the research. However, through careful reflection and transparent methods, interpretive rigour is maintained. This method allowed me in this study to engage empathetically with participants and co-construct insights into their lived realities as new educators.

One of the strengths of interpretive phenomenology is that it gives direct access to participants' voices and perspectives, offering depth and richness that quantitative methods may overlook (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Through open-ended interviews and iterative analysis, the approach enables the identification of patterns, themes, and meaning structures. In this study, these advantages helped uncover how novice teachers experienced their practice, what shaped their classroom management strategies, and how they interpreted these experiences.

However, like other qualitative approaches, interpretive phenomenology can be time-consuming. It requires careful planning, detailed analysis, and a deep engagement with data to preserve participants' voices without distorting meaning (Smith et al., 2022). Additionally, the subjective nature of interpretation may lead to concerns about bias or generalisability. These challenges were addressed through methodological transparency, reflective journaling, and triangulation of data sources where possible.

The interpretive phenomenological design was therefore most appropriate for this study because it allowed me to deeply explore and interpret the lived experiences of novice teachers developing classroom management competencies. The aim was not to generalise findings but to understand the meaning-making processes of individual teachers within their real teaching contexts in Kisumu Central Sub-County.

3.5 Research Area

The location of a study refers to the physical setting or environment where the research takes place. It includes the geographical, social, and institutional context in which participants are situated and where data collection is carried out (Mohajan, 2020). The research setting often plays a crucial role in shaping the interactions between the I and participants, as well as influencing how data is interpreted (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study was conducted in Kisumu Central Sub-County, which is one of the seven sub-counties in Kisumu County. Kisumu County lies in the western region of Kenya, bordering Lake Victoria, and serves as a key urban and educational hub. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2020), Kisumu County has a population of approximately 1,155,574 people, with Kisumu Central being one of the sub-counties with the highest concentration of educational institutions and urban infrastructure.

Studies by Odanga & Aloba (2024) demonstrate that novice teachers in Kisumu County continue to face persistent classroom management challenges, indicating systemic gaps in preparedness. In addition, research such as Opiyo et al. (2025) and Odiero (2024) has examined issues related to induction programmes and the mental health of novice teachers, showing emerging scholarly interest in how early-career teachers cope with classroom management demands in Kisumu East and West sub-counties. However, while these studies highlight challenges and support mechanisms, none specifically investigate how classroom management competencies are developed during Teaching Practice Programmes (TPPs). In Kisumu Central Sub-county in particular, there is a complete absence of studies examining how TPP experiences shape novice teachers' classroom management skills. This gap justified the need to conduct the present study in Kisumu Central Sub-county.

The selection of Kisumu Central Sub-County was also based on its diverse population, 86 public junior secondary school teachers (TSC, 2024), and accessibility for the me. It has a mix of urban and semi-urban schools, providing a rich and varied context in which novice teachers undergo TPP (TSC, 2024).

Kisumu Central Sub-County has 28 public junior secondary schools and several teacher training institutions that place pre-service teachers for TPP (Study in Kenya, 2024). These institutions were instrumental in identifying and accessing the novice teachers who participated in this study. The location was therefore considered appropriate and relevant for exploring the lived experiences of novice teachers managing real classroom settings during their TPP placements.

3.6 Target Population

A target group is the group of people or study participants that make up the study population in a given study, and those who are similar in one or more ways. Asiamah (2017) states that the target population is determined using selection criteria that uncover the most eligible potential participants. The target population for this study was novice teachers in public Junior Secondary Schools in Kisumu County, Kenya. These teachers were in their first three years of teaching in their early careers.

Like many other empirical studies, this study defined novice teachers as those with less than three years of teaching experience (Akcan, 2016; Isha & Sukor, 2021). Managing classrooms is a critical challenge for this group, as difficulties in maintaining discipline often lead to high stress and increase the likelihood of leaving the profession early (Breen, 2025). On the other hand, when novice teachers quickly develop strong classroom management skills, they not only become more effective in their teaching but are also more likely to remain in the profession (Sparks, 2025). For this reason,

focusing on novice teachers provides valuable insight into classroom management development, since it focuses on educators at an early stage of their careers when these skills and support systems are still being shaped.

3.7 Sample Size Population

The sample entailed one type of participant. The participants were required to be working at public junior schools and to have been in the teaching environment for 1 to 3 years. The participants were chosen based on their availability. They underwent in-depth FGDs to respond to the research questions. Lastly, interviews were also used to produce more information on specific areas of interest to the research.

According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), small sample sizes are typical in qualitative research to enable the in-depth case-oriented analysis central to such investigations. Vasileiou et al. (2018) further recommend that the minimum sample size should be at least 12 until data saturation is reached, while Subedi (2021) recommends not more than 50. The accessible population was less than the anticipated number from the target population when the study was conducted in the field. Therefore, 15 secondary school teachers from 13 junior public secondary schools were studied, as shown in Table 1.3 below.

Table 3: *Sample Size*

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling Technique
Public Junior Schools	28	13	Convenience
Public Junior School Teachers	86	15	Purposive

Note. Developed by, I, the researcher

3.8 Sampling Procedure of the Study

This study adopted a purposive sampling design. According to Campbell et al. (2020), purposive sampling and a modest sample size may be utilised in qualitative research to

enhance the depth of comprehension rather than its scope. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants likely to provide pertinent and valuable information, serving as a method for efficiently identifying and choosing cases that optimise limited research resources. Ames et al. (2019) add that adopting a purposive strategy is justified by the presumption that, considering the study's aim and research questions, specific individuals may have significant and different opinions regarding the concepts and problems under investigation, necessitating their inclusion in the sample.

Campbell et al. (2020) define purposive sampling as a technique where the I specify the characteristics of the population of interest and locates individuals with those characteristics. Therefore, teachers who taught in public secondary schools and had around 1 to 3 years of teaching experience were selected because they had essential views about the ideas and issues related to the research questions. Isha and Sukor (2021) define novice teachers as those within the first three years of their teaching careers after graduation. Khalid and Husnin (2019) confirm that teachers who are in their first to third year of teaching show a high commitment to their profession. The participants were allowed to withdraw from the study without any penalty. Although the generalisability of the study was limited, the findings provided insights into novice teachers' experiences that went beyond the specific sample. Purposive sampling was used to select particular individuals who represented characteristics that were needed in order to understand this specific group.

The schools were selected through convenience sampling because all Public Junior Secondary Schools in Kisumu Central Sub-county naturally met the characteristics required for the study. Since the study focused on novice teachers' classroom management development within the Public Junior Secondary Schools context, every Public Junior Secondary Schools in the sub-county provided an appropriate and

relevant setting. Convenience sampling therefore enabled access to participants who were information-rich, available, and situated within the exact environment that aligned with the study's purpose.

3.9 Research Instruments

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following data generation methods were used: Semi-structured focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

3.9.1 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) Guides

Yayeh (2021) defines FGDs as a method that requires me to assemble a group of six to ten individuals to discuss a particular topic, aiming to draw complex perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes through moderated interaction. Morgan (2019) further explains that a single focus group is a type of FGD that is an interactive conversation about a subject held in one location with one group of participants and a team of facilitators.

Therefore, this qualitative study was conducted with two separate FGDs with separate participants of six and seven novice teachers using a semi-structured FGD guide (See Appendix III). Conducting more than one FGD with different participants helped to capture a broader range of views and enhance the credibility of the findings (Nyumba et al., 2018). Additionally, Dzino-Silajdzic (2022) states that 80 percent of insights are likely to be captured by 2 to 3 FGDs of the same characteristics; thus, the study utilised 2 FGDs. The main goal of using this method was to gather more robust information about participants' experiences of their classroom management development throughout their TPPs. Prompts were used during discussions to enable members to hold meaningful discussions concerning the research questions. Gundumogula (2020) encourages using FGDs in qualitative studies by stating that focus groups are used to gather qualitative information expressed by the group members themselves. The

moderator facilitated group discussions by asking open-ended questions and served as a group process facilitator.

Scheelbeek et al. (2020) outline challenges faced when conducting FGDs, such as having large numbers of participants in one FGD, by stating that the FGDs' efficacy was hampered by the number of participants and the repetition of content, which made the sessions excessively drawn out and occasionally frustrating for the participants. Even though the exercises were enjoyable, participants frequently expressed a desire to leave the FGDs towards the end. Therefore, in this study, the FGD did not take too much time, and it did not involve more than seven members, to give them enough time to open up about their experiences and perceptions (Scheelbeek et al., 2020).

3.9.2 Interview Guides

Interviews entailed interview guides, and this study utilised semi-structured interviews. According to Burke and Christensen (2009), choosing this method is beneficial because it works well for getting information that needs more time and in-depth explanations while ensuring specific topics or questions of interest are discussed. An interview guide lists topics or questions the interviewer hopes to cover. Martin (2016) defines an interview guide as a list prepared with questions to help the interviewee and interviewer gather information on a particular subject. An interview guide was used to collect qualitative data in this study. In qualitative research, developing the interview guide is often fairly straightforward. According to Rutledge and Hogg (2020), the steps for guide development include selecting the topic, formulating initial questions, determining the kind of questions, determining the logical order of questions, preparing the introduction and conclusion, and preparing the interview technical instructions.

In-depth interviews are a qualitative data generation method involving one-on-one conversations that allows me to explore participants' experiences and perspectives in great detail. They are typically semi-structured, using open-ended questions and probes to encourage participants to share rich, in-depth information in their own words (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020; DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This method is especially valuable for understanding personal narratives and sensitive issues because the privacy of an interview setting helps respondents feel comfortable discussing confidential or emotionally charged topics (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

An in-depth interview method was used to gather more data for this study after the conduction of 2 FGDs. 6 novice secondary school teachers were interviewed to generate first-hand information about their experiences in developing their classroom management skills during TPPs. English and Swahili were used for clarity during the interviews. The interviewees were purposively chosen from the FGDs for more in-depth discussion on specific and relevant topics that they mentioned during the FGDs. The interviewees participated voluntarily, and I utilised probes to encourage elaboration. Boaz et al. (2018) outline the steps of carrying out an interview process; these include the planning stage, which involves identifying stakeholders who will be involved. According to Boaz et al. (2018), the major stakeholders of a research study include participants, the research team, and the community. The stakeholders of this study consisted of the novice secondary school teachers and the research team. The instrument for the interview process was an interview guide (See Appendix II and III). Thirdly, training a generation team was also an essential step. Boaz et al. (2018) confirm several training contents; for instance, an introduction to the evaluation objectives and a review of data generation techniques should be considered during training, as well as a thorough review of the data generation instruments and practice

in using the instruments. Lastly, collecting, analysing, and disseminating data ultimately followed.

3.10 Trustworthiness of the Study

To demonstrate trustworthiness in a qualitative study, Nowell et al. (2017) state that thematic data analysis must be conducted in a consistent, precise, and exhaustive manner by recording and transparently disclosing enough details of the analysis methods used so that the reader can determine if the process is credible. Therefore, the trustworthiness concept was refined by looking into the credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These are procedures for fulfilling the trustworthiness of a study, as discussed below.

First, Stahl and King (2020) explain that the credibility of a study is the accuracy of the study findings. It can be addressed by data generation triangulation, member checking to test findings, and peer debriefing to provide an external check on the research process. In order to ensure the credibility of this study, data generation was undertaken in different ways: first, different data generation methods were utilised, that is, in-depth interviews and FGDs. Second, multiple theories were utilised to understand the research questions and interpret data findings. Additionally, a peer reviewed and critiqued the research process and its findings. Lastly, member checking was a significant part of the credibility process, where feedback was sought from participants regarding the accuracy of interpretations of the data they provided.

Second, transferability is the generalisability of the study findings to other contexts or groups. Nowell et al. (2017) point out that this can be addressed by providing thick descriptions of the context, participants, and methods used so that future readers or

researchers can decide if it is relevant to transfer to another specific case study. This study provided detailed descriptions of the context, participants, and methods utilised.

Third, dependability is the consistency and stability of the research process over time (Stahl & King, 2020). In order to enhance dependability, this study ensured processes were conducted systematically and made available an audit trail of the research decisions, changes, and processes used during the study. Keeping a self-critical account of the research process encouraged researcher reflexivity and ensured I was aware of my role, assumptions, and biases during the study. Peer debriefing also assisted in identifying inconsistencies that might have impacted the study's dependability.

Fourth, confirmability is defined by Stahl and King (2020) as getting as close to objective reality as a qualitative researcher can get. Therefore, this study's findings were shaped by the participants' data rather than the my bias (Stahl & King, 2020). This was addressed through data generation triangulation, reflexivity, and maintaining a record of research processes.

Lastly researcher reflexivity. At the design phase, I acknowledged that my background as a trained teacher and my awareness of classroom management challenges could shape the way I framed the research questions and selected participants. I therefore deliberately designed broad, open-ended phenomenological questions that allowed participants to define their own experiences rather than confirm my expectations. This early reflexive awareness ensured that the study began with openness to participants' meanings.

During sampling, I recognised that selecting novice teachers colleagues of my profession might lead to assumptions about shared experiences. To counter this, I clarified inclusion criteria objectively and bracketed my expectations, reminding

myself that their experiences of TPPs might differ from mine. This ensured transparency in selecting information-rich participants rather than those who mirrored my assumptions.

During data collection, reflexivity helped me remain aware of how my behaviour, tone, familiarity with teaching language, and empathic reactions could influence participants' disclosures. For instance, when participants described experiences of feeling 'undermined,' 'dismissed,' or 'scared' by students, I recognised personal resonance because I had experienced similar issues. I documented these reactions in my reflexive journal to prevent my emotions from shaping follow-up questions. I used probes that kept the focus on their meaning rather than validating my experiences.

In transcribing interviews and FGDs, reflexivity involved carefully keeping participants' pauses, hesitations, and emotional expressions rather than smoothing them reminding myself that these were part of their lived experience. My reflexive memos noted where I felt tempted to 'tidy' their words due to my teacher training background, and I refrained from doing so to preserve authenticity.

During coding, reflexivity guided me to constantly check whether the codes I was generating reflected participants' words or my own assumptions. For example, when coding excerpts about 'feeling inferior' or 'shock,' I reflexively noted in my journal that I also felt similar emotions during my own practice years. This allowed me to consciously step back and ensure the codes came from their descriptions, not my memories. Peer debriefing with a colleague helped verify that my codes were grounded in data, not my preconceptions.

While developing themes, I used reflexive memos to examine how my teaching background might influence grouping of codes especially around themes like student-

teacher relationships and teacher identity. I continuously asked myself: “Is this categorisation emerging from their words or from my own understanding as a teacher?”

This self-questioning ensured that themes like Initial Shock, Feelings of Inferiority, and Boundary Issues were derived from participants’ narratives.

In interpretation, reflexivity helped me recognise how my insider position could lead me to empathize strongly with participants’ struggles. Instead of suppressing this, I acknowledged it explicitly in my reflexive journal and used it as an interpretive resource not to impose meaning, but to sensitize me to nuances of fear, identity tension, growth, and boundary negotiation that might be overlooked by an outsider. I ensured interpretations were always tied to direct quotations, keeping participants’ lived meanings central.

3.11 Piloting of the Research Instruments

Revision of the semi-structured interview and FGD guides was conducted in January 2025 at a public junior secondary school in Kisumu County that was not part of the main study sample. These trial sessions is essential in qualitative research to evaluate whether instruments are understandable, context-appropriate, and capable of providing rich narratives (Majid et al., 2017). The trial sessions involved two interviews and one FGD with six novice teachers, which enabled assessment of the clarity and sequencing of guide questions. This process ensured that the tools adequately captured participants’ lived experiences of classroom management during TPPs.

Results from these sessions led to specific refinements. For instance, the FGD guide was revised to explicitly highlight classroom management skills and integrate dimensions of support and gaps, as pilot participants had initially provided narrow responses from the more structured questions that were in the previous FGD guide.

Such adjustments enhanced the instruments' sensitivity to context and improved their capacity to generate comprehensive and meaningful data, consistent with best practices in developing semi-structured guides for phenomenological inquiry (Kallio et al., 2016).

Similarly, the primary interview prompt was expanded to open-ended, giving participants the freedom to narrate more about their encounters and emotions they mentioned during their FGDs. At the same time, a probing strategy was introduced by a guided framework of key issues to verify understanding and encourage in-depth explanations from the participants. Kallio et al. (2016) support this choice by stating that the balance between structure, that is, predetermined guiding questions, and flexibility, that is, allowing new themes to emerge, is precisely what defines semi-structured interviewing.

3.12 Data Generation Procedure

Data generation was done qualitatively to ensure a deep understanding of the research phenomenon. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the data generation instruments were viable. In (2017) concurs that for this reason, evaluating the research proposal's viability before conducting the primary research can be highly advantageous: The initial phase of any research protocol is usually a pilot study, which is a smaller-scale investigation that helps with the planning and adjustment of the larger study, and they were not part of the actual study.

The data generation procedure started with getting approval during my proposal defense at school. The next step was to get clearance from the Educational Management and Policy Studies Department at Moi University to conduct the proposed research. I reviewed the interview protocol and FGDs to ensure a deeper understanding of the

instruments and roles. The researcher also received help from one well-trained research assistant and visited public junior schools where the target populations were located. I avoided selecting participants with whom she had relationships to avoid perceived coercion. FGD and interviews were conducted in conducive and available spaces. Before responding to the interview questions and participating in the interviews, participants were requested to keenly go through the consent form and sign it voluntarily (See Appendices II and III).

The data collected was ensured to be safe after generation for analysis. For instance, guidelines were provided to ensure secure data management. These included consent forms, data storage, sharing, and destruction (Tankala, 2022). This study ensured the provision of consent forms that explained what data was collected and how it would be used. Data was stored in computer files protected by strong passwords. Participant data was also shared in coded formats to maintain participant anonymity. Lastly, data was destroyed when the study was complete, by burning written documents in a fireplace and overwriting all the information in the specific hard drive that was used to store participants' data.

3.13 Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, data were analysed using thematic analysis, following established guidelines. Data analysis in qualitative research involves preparing and organising the raw data, reducing it into meaningful units, codes, and themes, and finally representing the findings in an interpretable form. This aligns with Creswell's (2007) description of qualitative analysis as a process of preparing and organising the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through coding, and finally representing the data and discussion. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2011) note that making sense of qualitative data requires identifying themes, patterns, and categories in participants' responses.

Thematic analysis was chosen as the method to identify patterns in the interview and focus group transcripts systematically. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a process of organising, reducing, and putting qualitative data into categories to create meanings, ultimately yielding themes that capture essential aspects of the data. In practice, this meant transcribing all FGDs and interviews and thoroughly reading them to become familiar with the content. Transcripts were the basis for coding: segments of text were bracketed and annotated with labels or codes representing units of meaning. These codes were then grouped into categories and broader themes, as recommended by Braun & Clarke (2022), to construct a rich description of the phenomena under study. Throughout this coding process, I and an assistant reviewed transcripts to ensure accuracy and consistent interpretation of participant comments.

Importantly, the study employed a theoretical thematic analysis (top-down), meaning the coding and theme development were driven by the specific research questions, a deductive approach, rather than purely emerging from the data, an inductive approach. Therefore, the research questions provided a guiding framework for looking at the data. This approach is justified by Braun & Clarke (2006), who note that in theoretical thematic analysis, the analyst starts with predetermined research questions or areas of interest.

Next, open coding was used without a pre-set codebook, allowing codes to develop and evolve as the analysis proceeded. As Maguire and Delahunt (2017) explain, even in deductive analysis, one typically does not impose rigid predefined codes, but rather lets codes arise from the data while focusing on the aspects relevant to the research questions. This ensured that while the analysis stayed aligned with our questions, it remained flexible enough to capture unexpected insights.

The data analysis followed the six-step framework by Braun & Clarke (2006), which is also outlined by Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, for rigor and transparency. The steps were: Familiarisation which entailed reading transcripts repeatedly to immerse in the data; Generating initial codes which entailed systematically labeling important features of the data across the entire dataset; Searching for themes which entailed collecting codes into potential themes that answer the research questions; Reviewing themes which entailed refining the themes by checking against the data, ensuring each theme is coherent and distinct; Defining and naming themes which entailed articulating the essence of each theme and its scope; and Writing up which entailed integrating the themes and evidence into a compelling narrative in the findings and discussions section. Throughout this process, care was taken to reduce the huge raw data into a manageable form without losing meaning. As Patton (2015) observes, extensive qualitative data such as interview and FGDs transcripts must be organised into readable narrative descriptions with major themes, categories, and illustrative examples extracted, so that the patterns and insights that emerge are clear. Following these guidelines ensured the analysis was systematic and credible, yielding well-defined themes related to each research objective.

To maintain clarity and coherence, the results are presented objective by objective in chapter 4. Table 3.2 below illustrates how the data analysis and results were mapped for each research objective in this study

Table 4: *Summary of Data Analysis and Presentation for Each Research Objective*

Research Objective	Data and Analysis	Presentation
To explore how novice teachers understand classroom management during TPP	Data from two FGDs and six interviews, targeting how participants define or conceptualize classroom management. Thematic analysis focusing on participants' descriptions. Open coding of transcripts was done to capture related concepts as guided by research question 1 (RQ1). Codes were then grouped into categories and broader themes.	Two major themes emerged- Maintaining Control in the Classroom and Engaging Learners through Interactive Management- and there are several categories under each theme. These findings were presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1, with a diagram (Figure 4.1) and narrative explanations supported by quotes.
To explore novice teachers' lived experiences in constructing classroom management skills during TPP	Data from the same two FGDs and six interviews, focusing on personal experiences in managing classrooms during TPP. Thematic analysis with open coding, guided by RQ2. Transcripts were reviewed to identify any mention of experiences. Codes were then grouped into broader themes.	Five themes were generated: Behaviour Management, Instructional Organisation, Student-teacher Relationships, Emerging Teacher Identity, and Self-Reflection, and several categories under each theme. Findings were presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2, Figure 4.2, and narrative with direct quotes illustrating each theme.
To examine the conditions that enable or constrain novice teachers' development of classroom management skills during TPP	Data from the two FGDs and six interviews focused on contextual factors or conditions mentioned by participants. Thematic analysis targeted mentions of helpful factors as enablers and challenges as constraints in developing classroom management. Open coding of transcripts was done to capture related concepts as guided by RQ3. Codes were then grouped into categories and broader themes.	Two major themes emerged- Constraints and Enablers- and there were several categories under each theme. These findings were organised in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3, with a diagram (Figure 4.3) and with participant examples.

Note. Developed by the researcher

3.14 Ethics in Research

When conducting research, specific ethical considerations need to be made. Following ethical guidelines made it more likely that I would efficiently collect data. The following ethical concerns were taken into account in this study:

I sought ethical permission from the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) and ethical review committees from the University and Kisumu central sub-county. According to Tegegne et al. (2022), ethics committees and institutional review boards (IRBs) are essential in making sure that researchers take appropriate precautions to maintain confidentiality; the primary elements include examining and approving the confidentiality protocols for researchers before the start of the study and reviewing policies regularly to make sure confidentiality protections are still being followed. I therefore sought permission from the university and the secondary school under study. The boards confirmed that this study was more beneficial than harmful to the participants and society. Burke and Christensen (2009) state that in reviewing the research proposals, members of the IRB must make judgments regarding the ethical appropriateness of the proposed research and ensure that research protocols are explained to research participants. Any risks of harm must be reasonable concerning the hoped-for benefits. To make this judgment, IRB members must have sufficient information about the specifics of the proposed research study.

I then obtained permission from the participants through informed consent. The consent form outlined participants' protections and ethical guidelines that were followed during the research study, such as the voluntary nature of the study and participants' right to withdraw at any time without fear of punishment or consequence. I also laid out any physical or mental dangers that the members could experience and showed that members were not committed to finishing any piece of the investigation with which

they were not happy. According to Yip et al. (2016), treating research participants well is the most essential and fundamental issue researchers confront. Conducting research with humans has the potential to create physical and psychological harm. I also affirmed to participants that the responses given were only to be used for academic purposes.

Privacy and confidentiality were also crucial elements to which I adhered. Bos (2020) states that confidentiality must be upheld to foster trust with participants and guarantee their willingness to provide open, truthful information. Bos (2020) further explains that to make sure team members, collaborators, and outside parties involved in the research understand and respect confidentiality requirements, researchers frequently create confidentiality agreements with them. These entailed specifying in written agreements what was expected of data confidentiality and defining the penalties for violating confidentiality to highlight its importance. Therefore, if the participants stated that they wanted to remain anonymous, I used pseudonyms to enable them to remain anonymous.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the demographic details of the participants and presents the process of data analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the findings. The study explored novice teachers' experiences of developing classroom management skills during TPPs in public junior secondary schools in Kisumu, Kenya. Data was gathered through semi-structured FDGs and interviews. Semi-structured FDGs was used to obtain insights for discussion for all research questions while semi-structured interviews were used to enhance the data collected on all objectives. Thematic analysis was applied to analyse the data, as this was a qualitative study. The findings are discussed in relation to the existing literature reviewed in earlier chapters.

4.2 Demographic Information of the Participants

The study worked with 15 purposively selected novice teachers from 13 public junior secondary schools in Kisumu Central Sub-County who have been teaching up to 3 years. The participants entails both male and female teachers.

Table 5 : Descriptions of Participants

Pseudonym of the participant	Gender	Years/Month of working
Interview Participant 1/ FGD 1 Participant 3	Female	2 months
Interview Participant 2	Male	2 years
Interview Participant 3	Female	1 year
Interview Participant 4/ FGD 2 Participant 3	Female	3 years
Interview Participant 5/ FGD 2 Participant 5	Male	3 years
Interview Participant 6/ FGD 2 Participant 6	Male	1 year
FGD 1 Participant 1	Female	2 years
FGD 1 Participant 2	Male	3 years
FGD 1 Participant 4	Male	2 years
FGD 1 Participant 5	Male	2 years
FGD 1 Participant 6	Female	3 years
FGD 2 Participant 1	Female	2 years
FGD 2 Participant 2	Female	7 months
FGD 2 Participant 4	Male	3 years
FGD 2 Participant 7	Male	3 years

4.3 Data Interpretation, and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data that were generated in reference to the three research questions and the literature of the study. The table below shows a summary of the discussion.

Table 6: Summary of the Findings

Novice teachers' experiences of developing classroom management skills during teaching practice programmes in public junior secondary schools, Kisumu, Kenya	
1. How do novice teachers understand classroom management during TPP?	<p>Theme 1: Maintaining Control in the Classroom Management</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Managing Learner Behaviour and Discipline -Planning, Organisation and Resource Management <p>Theme 2: Engaging Learners through Interactive Management Strategies</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Varied and Learner-centered Teaching Methods -Proactive Motivation and Positive Discipline
2. What are the novice teachers' experiences of constructing classroom management skills during TPPs?	<p>Theme 1: Behaviour Management</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Confronting Extreme Misbehaviour -Establishing Authority and Respect <p>Theme 2: Instructional Organisation</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Coping with Large Classes and Resource Shortages -Time Management and Pacing Lessons -Adapting and Improvising Instruction <p>Theme 3: Student-Teacher Relationships</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Building Rapport and Trust -Maintaining Professional Distance for Safety -Navigating Boundary and Respect Issues <p>Theme 4: Emerging Teacher Identity</p> <p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Initial Shock and Reality Check

-Feelings of Incompetence and Inferiority

-Growing Confidence and Professional Growth

Theme 5: Self-Reflection

Categories:

-Lack of Reflection

-Deliberate Reflective Practice

-Reflecting Overtime

3. What are the conditions that novice teachers experience that enable or constrain their classroom management skill development during TPPs?

Theme 1: Enablers

Categories:

-Mentor Support and Feedback

-Preparation and Training

-Supportive School Environment and Resources

-Reflective Practice and Adaptation

Theme 2: Constraints

Categories:

-Overcrowded Classes and Resource Shortages

-Student Indiscipline and Disrespect

-Unsupportive Staff and Supervision

-Financial and Environmental Challenges

4.4 Discussion of Findings

4.4.1 Understanding of Classroom Management Skills

The first objective of this study was to identify how novice teachers understand and construct classroom management skills during their TPP. The research question, therefore, posed was “how do novice teachers understand classroom management skills during TPP?” 2 semi-structured FGDs of six and seven participants each, and semi-structured interviews with 6 participants were used to generate data for this research question. Figure 2.1 provides a summary of themes and their categories for this research question.

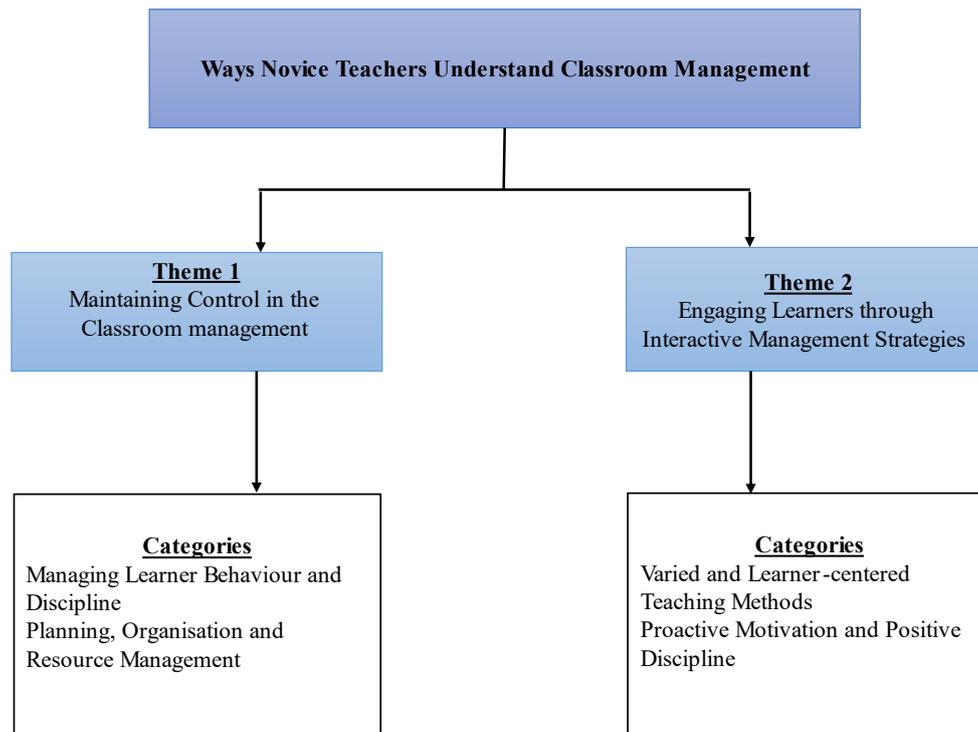


Figure 2: *Research Question 1 Themes*

Note. Diagrammatic representation of novice teachers' understanding of classroom management

4.4.1.1 Theme 1: Maintaining Control in the Classroom Management

The novice teachers described classroom management primarily in terms of maintaining control over the class. They often equated management of the classroom with regulating student behaviour and keeping order in the classroom. Therefore, under this theme, two categories emerged: (i) managing learner behaviour and discipline, and (ii) engaging learners through interactive management strategies.

4.4.1.1.1 Managing Learner Behaviour and Discipline

Participants consistently defined classroom management narrowly as controlling student behaviour and maintaining discipline, echoing novice teachers' common equation of management with keeping order (Blank & Shavit, 2016). For example, one novice simply stated that "*classroom management means how a teacher controls the*

class” (Interview, Participant 1, p. 10 line 10, {09-06-2025}). Others echoed this emphasis on order and discipline. Participant 3 described it as:

“Classroom management? I can say it's simply, it's a overall control of the class. It's just general class management, maybe to me in detail, it's a watch over of the learner's behaviour and handling it.” (Interview, Participant 3, p. 1 lines 9-11, {09-06-2025}).

“According to me, classroom management involves the aspect of bringing order to class and ensuring that the day goes well for the learners, both the learners and the teacher” (FGD1, Participant 2, p. 1 lines 13-14, {09-06-2025}).

“...my understanding is how you can, how you know when you are in class, you are the boss of the class. So, how you can use your authority in class, how you can handle the students, how you can just handle them when you are doing the teaching that is being on, that is they feel your authority, that you are the you are the one controlling the class” (Interview, Participant 4, p. 1 lines 13-17, {15-06-2025}).

This shows the teacher-centered view of classroom management. Novices viewed classroom management primarily as asserting authority to keep the class orderly and students on-task, an emphasis that aligns with research showing new teachers often prioritise strict discipline and control (Kwok, 2019; Lacy, 2023). They also understood that without authority, little learning occurs. One participant warned:

“you know, being a teaching practice teacher, sometimes your learners can joke with you to an extent that no learning is taking place in class. Learners can get excited, and maybe you are unable to control your class to an extent that even they are making a lot of noise, affecting learning in other rooms” (Interview, Participant 6, p.1 lines 16-19, {15-06-2025}).

Their TPP experiences taught participants that firm discipline is essential, reflecting Kolb’s notion that practical experience informs learning (Kolb, 1984). This understanding resonates with Marzano’s theory, which states that clear rules and procedures are significant towards ECM (Marzano, 2003). By enforcing rules and maintaining order, the novices are applying a key strategy for a structured environment. However, Marzano (2003) also emphasises that ECM requires positive teacher-student relationships and engaging instruction, aspects that the novices have not yet highlighted

here. They acknowledged that being in control must be balanced with earning students' respect, a balance they still struggled to achieve during TPP.

The novices constructed classroom management almost exclusively as controlling behaviour and enforcing discipline. Their repeated reference to 'control,' 'authority,' and being the 'boss' shows that they understood management through emotionally charged classroom encounters where disorder threatened their legitimacy as teachers. These meanings were formed experientially, not theoretically, consistent with Kolb's view that concrete experiences shape learning. Their narrow, authority-focused conception aligns with studies showing that new teachers often equate management with strict discipline (Blank & Shavit, 2016; Kwok, 2019; Lacy, 2023), but contrasts with Marzano's broader framework, which emphasises relationships and instructional organisation. This interpretation reveals that at the point of TPP, novices entered the profession with limited, discipline-centred understandings, setting the stage for later struggles with identity, relationships, and confidence."

4.4.1.1.2 Planning, Organisation and Resource Management

Participants noted that managing a classroom also requires thorough planning, organisation, and resource management. They emphasised careful lesson preparation, efficient use of time and materials, and maintaining a safe, supportive learning environment. Participant 1 emphasised the teacher's role as a manager of all classroom aspects, stating:

"...you are the manager, making sure everyone is okay physically, emotionally, socially and you have all resources... It involves lesson planning, making sure you have everything you need to have a successful day and the kids to be safe" (FGD 1, Participant 1, p. 1 lines 6-11 {09-06-2025}).

This holistic perspective extends classroom management beyond discipline to include thorough preparation and provision of resources. One participant characterised

classroom management as stewardship of the class, meaning all available resources must be managed well for learners' benefit. Novices also stressed adhering to schedules and lesson plans. One explained:

“Classroom management is basically stewardship of the class as a role, as our area of work, that is to say, ensuring that every single resource that is in that space is put into maximum use for the benefit of our learners. That includes the resources you can see physically, that is the books, the desks, the chinks, the pens, and also management of other resources that you cannot see, like time, so that you properly put it into its use, that the learner can benefit from all these things within that allotted time. So, it’s just stewardship of the class at his best. (FGD1, Participant 4, p. 1 lines 18-23, {09-06-2025}).

“Your timing should be correct, like if its 40 minutes, it should be 40 minutes you should not exceed it. Then you go with the lesson plan. You should follow the lesson plan, the introduction, the body and the completion” (Interview, Participant 1, p.1 lines 39-41, {09-06-2025}).

Emphasising planning and time management reflects an understanding that well-structured lessons help prevent chaos. Literature shows that proactive planning and clear routines minimise disruptions (Doyle, 1986). When lessons run on schedule and as planned, students are more likely to stay focused, and the teacher maintains control with less need for corrective discipline. The novices' focus on organisation aligns with Marzano's concept of instructional organisation, which encourages managing classroom procedures, time, and resources to facilitate learning (Marzano, 2003). Through their TPP experiences, they also realised that thorough preparation improves classroom order, exemplifying Kolb's experiential learning cycle in which concrete experience leads to refined strategies (Kolb, 1984). In summary, some novices after mentorship and reflections developed their view of classroom management not only as maintaining discipline but also as organising the classroom through careful planning, resource use, and creating a safe, orderly environment.

4.4.1.2 Theme 2. Engaging Learners through Interactive Management Strategies

Participants described approaching classroom management by actively involving and engaging students. Instead of relying solely on authority or strict rules, novice teachers found that making lessons interesting and interactive helped maintain order. When learners are actively participating and enjoying the lesson, they tend to self-regulate and stay on task, making the class easier to manage. Within this theme, two key strategies emerged: using varied, learner-centered teaching methods and using proactive motivation with positive discipline. The following sections detail how participants implemented these approaches during their TPP to build their classroom management skills by fostering student engagement.

4.4.1.2.1 Varied and Learner-centered Teaching Methods

Participants mentioned that diversifying their teaching methods helped them keep students interested and well-behaved. Participant 1 noted that to manage a class:

“You make the class to be fun, not just about teaching. You use different methods of teaching... You don't just use the lecture method today. They can discuss tomorrow. You can randomly give questions, yeah, use different methods of teaching so that they cannot get bored and get distracted” (Interview, Participant 1, p. 1 lines 27-34, {09-06-2025}).

This example illustrates a shift from teacher-centred lecturing to interactive activities to hold students' attention, highlighting that varied, engaging lessons can help maintain classroom order (Doyle, 1986; Burden, 2020). Likewise, Participant 3 emphasised giving learners an active role in lessons, explaining that you should:

“Engage the learners, for example, you avoid the chalk talk and let the session be learner oriented, like it's them having control of the lesson, like you can put them in groups and tell them to discuss over a certain subject and give them the feedbacks, after the feedbacks, they can have they can see the real thing. Giving them space to be free in their minds. For example, in the afternoon, there is boredom, so you can do an energizer and it will, set them alert, you can sing around, play, or role plays and there can be flow of ideas. There are students

who used to be notorious, we used to give them responsibilities like being the head of a group, bringing books to the teacher so they feel occupied. They feel noticed and appreciated by them. That's what we used to do” (Interview, Participant 3, p. 1 lines 27-35, {09-06-2025}).

This student-centred approach not only makes lessons more interesting but also shares control with them, a technique that can reduce behavioural issues by making students responsible for their learning (Burden, 2020). Participants noted using tactics like group work, class discussions, role-plays, and educational games to sustain engagement. Participant 3, for example, used an energiser in afternoon lessons, such as a quick song or game, to reduce boredom and keep students alert. Such activities helped maintain participation even when energy lagged. Some participants even leveraged personal talents; for instance, one participant used music in lessons:

“...so I'll bring my guitar just there, and play something that is common to everyone, like a song that everyone knows, okay, that is trending. Just try to think something, but based on the lesson that I'm trying to teach...” (Interview, Participant 2, p. 1 lines 43-45, {09-06-2025}).

Incorporating a popular song grabbed students' attention and created a fun atmosphere that facilitated learning. These examples illustrate how varied, creative teaching methods were integral to classroom management. By keeping lessons dynamic and student-focused, the novices believed they could reduce boredom and inattentiveness, thus avoiding many classroom management problems. This perspective aligns with the view that ECM involves proactively engaging students rather than just enforcing rules (Doyle, 1986; Marzano, 2003). It illustrates the novices' experiential learning process as they refined their management strategies through concrete classroom trials (Kolb, 1984).

Participants constructed variety and learner-centred methods as an active management strategy: by making lessons interactive, they reduced boredom, increased attention, and thus pre-empted behaviour problems. Their descriptions e.g. rotating methods instead

of “chalk talk,” using group work, role-plays, energizers, and even music, reveal an interpretive shift from viewing management as externally imposed control to seeing it as created through instructional design. Novices’ lived experience taught them that engagement is a means of order when learners are cognitively and emotionally involved, they self-regulate and require fewer corrective interventions.

4.4.1.2.2 Proactive Motivation and Positive Discipline

Some participants also explained classroom management as engaging learners through proactive and positive approaches to discipline, aiming to motivate students rather than punish them. A recurrent insight was that engaging students’ interests is key to preventing misbehaviour. Participant B observed that:

“... when learners love what you are doing... they pay attention, but when they don't love what you're doing, no matter what you do, no matter how what you say, they will not pay attention...if you try to use force, you are creating enemy... you are making things worse. So just to make them laugh and when they love it...because now you could find it was so hard to manage the classroom because they are not interested.” (Interview, Participant 2, p.2 lines 81-92, {09-06-2025}).

This exemplifies a preventative approach to discipline: designing engaging lessons reduces opportunities for disruption and fosters a cooperative classroom climate, echoing Kounin’s (1970) finding that keeping students interested helps avoid misbehaviour.

Another positive strategy reported by participants was to give students responsibility and recognition as a way of managing behaviour. Participant 3 shared that in his TPP:

“...there are students who used to be notorious, we used to give them responsibilities like being the head of a group, bringing books to the teacher so they feel occupied. They feel noticed and appreciated by them...” (Interview, Participant 3, p.1 lines 32-35, {09-06-2025}).

This strategy of empowering difficult students turned potential troublemakers into class helpers by constructively addressing their need for attention, marking a shift from

punitive discipline to positive reinforcement, encouraging good behaviour through trust and responsibility rather than fear. This reflects the classroom management principle of reinforcing desired behaviours instead of using punishment (Marzano, 2003; CESE, 2020). Many learners responded well when given such roles, as feeling noticed in a positive light improved their conduct.

In conclusion, novice teachers prioritised student engagement and motivation as key to maintaining order. Instead of relying on strict rules or punishment, they found it more effective to pre-empt problems with engaging lessons, personal rapport, and student roles. This mirrors Marzano's (2003) view that effective management is proactive and exemplifies Kolb's (1984) notion that experience and reflection refine teaching practice. By actively involving learners and fostering a supportive climate, they confirmed the belief that a class of engaged students is easier to manage (Burden, 2020).

Novices experienced that recognition, responsibility, and meaningful participation satisfy learners' needs for attention and belonging; this in turn transforms potential disruptors into cooperative contributors. This shows that behaviour is shaped by affective engagement and social position, and deliberately repairing the teacher-learner affective climate reduces the incidence of misbehaviour. From an experiential learning perspective, novices discovered during TPP that shifting to positive motivation produced observable changes in conduct, therefore motivation and responsibility are intentional management levers that transform classroom dynamics from uncooperative to cooperative.

4.4.2 Lived Experiences of Constructing Classroom Management During TPPs

The second objective sought to explore novice teachers' lived experiences of participating in classroom management during their TPPs. The research question, therefore, posed was "What are the novice teachers' lived experiences of constructing classroom management skills during TPPs?" Two in-depth FGDs of seven and six participants each and six semi-structured interviews were used to generate data for this research question. Figure 2.2 provides a summary of themes and their categories for this research question.

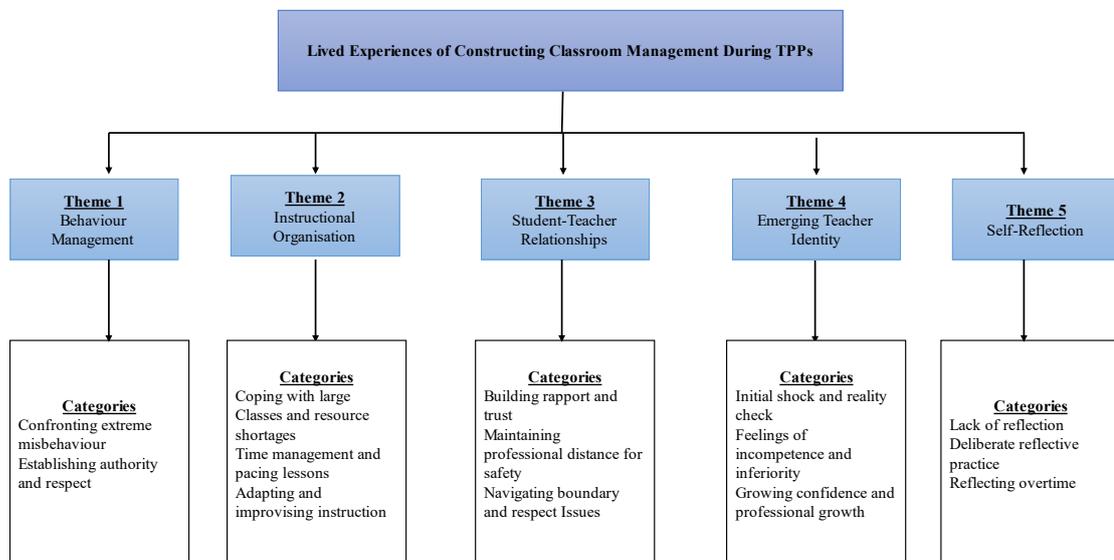


Figure 3: Research Question 2 Themes

Note. Diagrammatic representations of novice teachers' lived experiences of constructing classroom management during TPPs

4.4.2.1 Theme 1: Behaviour Management

Participants described a range of experiences in managing student behaviour and discipline. Consistent with Marzano's (2003) model, many attempted to construct

classroom management through establishing order and addressing misbehaviour through explicit rules and consequences.

4.4.2.1.1 Confronting Extreme Misbehaviour

Some participants recounted intense incidents that tested their authority. For example, one novice faced a physical confrontation while intervening in a discipline incident:

“...there was a scenario where a learner became so aggressive... he was about to manhandle the female teacher, and I had to bat him... the learner exchanged physical blows and I returned back physical blows” (FGD 1, Speaker 2, p. 2 lines 48-50, {09-06-2025}).

This alarming incident illustrates the emotional and physical intensity of classroom management novice teachers experiences during their TPPs. The participants response reflects a crisis learning where the teacher had to improve authority and control under stress. This therefore highlights the urgency for novice teachers to be mentored on handling aggression and emotional management. The situation was handled with a physical response that Marzano’s model would not endorse (Marzano, 2003). The participant justified these actions as self-defense: “we have different ways of dealing with such a situation... I’m in the fighting category” (FGD 1, Speaker 2, p. 2 line 72, {09-06-2025}). Such instinctive reactions reveal how unprepared novice teachers are for severe indiscipline. With the tone and body language used by this participant, it showed how he still believes in this approach. It also reveals the TPPs this participant was could have emphasised such response towards an aggression behaviour from students which was carried to the current place of work. Indeed, new teachers often enter with strong subject knowledge but little training in handling severe misbehaviour (Gichunge, 2017), underscoring the need for better training in conflict de-escalation (Odiero, 2024).

In conclusion, the meaning of this experience is not simply that misbehaviour occurred rather, it reveals how extreme incidents shape novices' understanding of themselves as teachers, exposing their fragility, testing their authority, and emphasising the urgent need for structured training in conflict management.

4.4.2.1.2 Establishing Authority and Respect

Many novices struggled with being taken seriously by students, as they were close in age to the learners and seen as “teachers in practice.” One participant noted that students often did not automatically respect TPP teachers:

“...learners may see those teachers as their peers or their brothers and sisters, or they may see them as less authoritative... that teacher will actually not have an easy time when it comes to class control... enforcing discipline” (FGD 2, Speaker 2, p.1 lines 25-28, {15-06-2025}).

This lack of automatic authority is common, as students may see trainees as peers rather than authority figures (Odanga & Aloka, 2024). Novices had to earn respect through their actions and rapport. This dynamic led some students to test boundaries or ignore instructions, since the novice was not seen as a permanent teacher. In response, some adopted a strict stance to assert authority, while others sought mentorship from experienced teachers.

Marzano (2003) emphasises establishing clear rules and consequences; indeed, participants who set and consistently enforced rules, checked homework, and were active in the conduct of students saw improved student behaviour, whereas those who wavered were frequently challenged. Effective behaviour management for these novices was a delicate balance of fairness, consistency, and firmness, learned primarily through trial and error over time in real classrooms, as supported by Oliver et al. (2011).

Participants' accounts show that the struggle to establish authority was not just a behavioural challenge it was a deeply identity-shaping experience. Because learners viewed them as "peers" rather than full teachers, novices experienced a threat to their legitimacy. This created a sense of being in-between: not fully students, yet not fully recognised as teachers. Within an interpretive phenomenological lens, this reflects a tension in the novices' emerging teacher identity, as they had to negotiate how they were seen and how they saw themselves.

The participants' descriptions reveal the emotional weight of this struggle feelings of being undermined, ignored, or tested contributed to insecurity and self-doubt. When students dismissed instructions or compared them to permanent teachers, the novices interpreted this as a signal that their authority was conditional, fragile, and dependent on constant proving. This aligns with literature showing that trainees lack "automatic authority" and must earn respect through their demeanour and consistency (Odanga & Aloka, 2024).

Their attempts to assert authority, through stricter rules, firmer tones, or close monitoring, show how novices learn classroom control primarily through trial, error, and reflective adjustment. Some turned to experienced teachers to make sense of these moments, highlighting the role of mentorship in interpreting such challenges. In phenomenological terms, these experiences reveal that authority is not a given but a lived, negotiated process, shaped by interactions, emotions, and situational context.

Ultimately, this category shows that establishing authority is experienced not as a technical task but as a core part of becoming a teacher, where novices confront their vulnerabilities and gradually construct a professional presence.

4.4.2.2 Theme 2: Instructional Organisation

This theme captures how novice teachers managed the practical aspects of teaching, such as planning lessons, using time and resources, and adjusting instruction, to maintain an orderly learning environment. Guided by both Marzano's focus on classroom structure and Kolb's notion of learning through experience, participants described their experiences of organising instruction in real classrooms during their TPPs.

4.4.2.2.1 Coping with Large Classes and Resource Shortages

Many participants were placed in overcrowded classrooms with insufficient materials, testing their organisational skills. One participant recalled the shock of handling a class with many students:

“a class of about 90 learners... to control that class, it's a bit challenging to a student teacher.” The participant found everyday tasks overwhelming: *“you are giving out a task... supposed to mark their books within 40 minutes... it becomes a tedious thing... Resources are not enough... textbooks... learning materials are not enough when the classroom is huge”* (FGD 2, Speaker 1, p.1 lines 7-14, {15-06-2025}).

This experience of large class sizes meant novices had to improvise, for example, by having students share textbooks or using creative group work to manage marking load. Another participant concurred that a lack of teaching resources in such environments hindered lesson delivery:

“you find when you want to deliver that content, it becomes a hindrance, because there are no resources... you will not deliver that content fully” (FGD 2, Speaker 4, p.2 lines 54-56 , {15-06-2025}).

These practical challenges forced novices to be flexible and resourceful, echoing reports that large classes and resource constraints hinder classroom management (Kulu et al., 2024). Many described writing their notes when textbooks were scarce or improvising teaching aids from locally available materials. Consistent with Marzano's

model (2003), which emphasises preparation and resource management, the participants realised that classroom management involves not only managing student behaviour but also ensuring all essential materials are in place for a smooth lesson.

Participants' experiences with extremely large classes and insufficient resources did not only challenge their organisational skills they also shaped how they interpreted what it means to manage a real classroom. Handling classes of up to 90 learners made novices feel overwhelmed and exposed the gap between university preparation and actual teaching conditions. Improvising teaching aids, sharing textbooks, and re-organising tasks were not just strategies but meaningful acts of adjusting to the lived reality of teaching. The novices interpreted these challenges as part of learning to "think on their feet," aligning with Kolb's view that competence grows through responding to real-life constraints. These accounts show novices learning that classroom management is inseparable from the structural realities of the school environment. The emotional tone, frustration, exhaustion, and pressure reveals how environmental constraints directly undermined their sense of competence. Rather than disciplining behaviour alone, they discovered that managing instruction, materials, and time becomes a core part of establishing classroom order

4.4.2.2.2 Time Management and Pacing Lessons

Another organisational challenge was learning to manage class time and keep students on task. Several participants admitted they initially struggled to cover the syllabus within the allotted time. As one noted: "*...managing time is a big issue... what you need to do within that 40 minutes is difficult for a teacher who is not so experienced*" (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.5 lines 217-218, {09-06-2025}).

Interruptions often made pacing even harder. Teachers found that if a disruption occurred, their lesson could derail:

“when an indiscipline case arises in class, you will stop teaching... deal with it first, then continue... you find that your lesson has not been smoothly delivered... you will not deliver it within the time given” (FGD 2, Speaker 4, p.2 lines 58-60, {15-06-2025}).

Participants realised they needed tight lesson plans and backup activities to manage time effectively (Archer & Hughes, 2011; Marzano, 2003). One interviewee emphasised following the 40-minute lesson timeframe to maintain order, noting *“if it’s 40 minutes, it should be 40 minutes... follow the lesson plan introduction, body and completion”* (Interview, Participant 1, p.1 lines 39-41, {15-06-2025}).

This disciplined approach to pacing helped prevent chaos, as a well-paced lesson leaves fewer opportunities for off-task behaviour (Evertson & Emmer, 2017). Over time, participants became more comfortable adjusting their pace, for example, speeding up or simplifying activities if time was short, or having an extra task ready for fast finishers, therefore improving their instructional organisation.

Participants’ struggles with pacing lessons reveal how novices interpreted classroom time not just as a technical requirement but as a core element of classroom control. Their accounts show that the pressure to fit content into a strict 40-minute window created anxiety and highlighted their limited experience. When disruptions occurred, novices felt their confidence weaken as the lesson structure fell apart, indicating how closely they linked smooth pacing with a sense of competence. These emotional reactions illustrate how time was experienced as both a constraint and a marker of professionalism.

Over time, novices began to view time management as a stabilising force that supported order in the classroom. Through trial and error, they interpreted tight lesson planning, backup tasks, and sticking to the lesson format as strategies that gave them authority and minimised opportunities for misbehaviour. This shift reflects the experiential nature of their learning: they discovered that well-paced lessons help keep learners focused and reduce disciplinary issues. In this way, they came to understand time management not simply as scheduling content, but as an essential tool for maintaining continuity and creating a predictable learning environment.

4.4.2.2.3 Adapting and Improvising Instruction

Importantly, real classroom conditions taught novices to adapt their teaching methods on the spot to manage the class. Participants discovered that learner diversity and unexpected challenges could be turned into learning opportunities. One participant reflected that encountering a range of learner abilities:

“built in me patience and that ability to do more research and understand these learners... I could now learn that we can tailor-make teaching methodologies based on their personalities and backgrounds. So, it was a very important resource” (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.5 lines 83-89, {09-06-2025}).

Instead of viewing slower learners or mixed abilities purely as a problem, this participant came to see differentiation as part of classroom management, an insight aligned with Kolb’s (1984) idea that concrete experiences, like teaching a very mixed-ability class, lead to new understanding and strategies.

Another challenge, which is the scarcity of standard teaching materials, likewise pushed novices to improvise. The same participant noted that having no laboratory or insufficient equipment:

“builds in me the ability to quickly improvise... so that learners do not miss out on a concept... you have to quickly think outside the box.

...Those are the kind of challenges I met that helped me develop my teaching style” (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.5 lines 90-94, {09-06-2025}).

This demonstrates experiential learning as described by Kolb (1984), that by facing real classroom constraints, participants developed creative problem-solving skills and grew more confident in adjusting lessons. In summary, experiences during TPPs taught participants that ECM is grounded in solid instructional organisation to support learning, which includes careful planning, time management, and adaptability (Marzano, 2003).

Participants’ experiences with learner diversity and resource shortages show how improvisation and flexibility became meaningful aspects of constructing classroom management. Instead of seeing mixed abilities as obstacles, novices gradually understood that adapting methods to different learner needs was central to maintaining order. Emotionally, this shift from frustration to patience and curiosity reveals a growing sense of professional maturity. Their reflections show that they interpreted adaptation as an important part of their identity formation, learning to tailor instruction based on learners’ personalities, backgrounds, and abilities.

Similarly, resource constraints pushed novices to reconceptualise improvisation as a creative and necessary part of effective teaching. When faced with missing equipment or absent materials, they learned to “think outside the box,” which built their confidence and strengthened their self-perception as capable, flexible teachers. These experiences confirm that classroom management is not limited to discipline but includes the broader organisational skill of sustaining learning despite limitations. Through improvisation, novices realised that instructional adaptability is a fundamental part of navigating real classroom environments.

4.4.2.3 Theme 3: Student-Teacher Relationships

The quality of relationships that novice teachers formed with their students emerged as a crucial theme. Marzano (2003) underscores that teacher-student relationships significantly impact classroom management, a point echoed strongly by participants' experiences.

4.4.2.3.1 Building Rapport and Trust

Many novices found that earning students' trust and showing care improved classroom atmosphere and cooperation. One participant made a deliberate effort to bond with her students, which paid off:

“I really... made a closeness with them, even became friends. They could even tell me, ‘Madam, come and stay with us on Saturday...So I became their favorite. Then everything just went on well’” (Interview, Participant 4, p.1 lines 183-186, {15-06-2025}).

By creating rapport and showing interest in students' lives, the participant gained their affection and respect, which in turn made classroom management smoother since students were more willing to follow her lead.

Other novices similarly found that taking time to talk with students, using humor, or participating in extracurricular activities helped students view them as mentors rather than outsiders. These positive relationships made students more receptive and made teaching more enjoyable for the novice. This aligns with the theoretical view that strong teacher-student relationships foster a conducive learning environment (Marzano, 2003).

Participants' descriptions show that rapport was not just a social preference but an emotionally meaningful strategy that shaped how novices understood classroom management. When one participant became “their favourite,” she interpreted students' warmth and invitations as signs of acceptance, belonging, and respect an affirmation of

her developing teacher identity. Her confidence grew because students willingly cooperated, allowing her to experience a classroom that felt safe, relationally secure, and manageable. This conveys that trust acted as an emotional foundation that allowed learning to happen with less resistance.

At a deeper interpretive level, these novices made sense of rapport as a proactive management tool: by building relationships, they reduced behavioural problems without relying on strict control. Their experiences show that ECM was not only about rules but about relational influence students behaved better for teachers they liked and respected. This reflects the interpretive idea that meaning is constructed through interaction: novices realised that students' positive responses shaped how they saw themselves as teachers and how effective they felt in managing learning.

4.4.2.3.2 Maintaining Professional Distance for Safety

On the other hand, some experiences warned that getting too close or familiar could not go well, especially given the small age gap. A few novice teachers, particularly young female teachers, felt the need to keep a distance to avoid disrespect or harassment. One teacher admitted:

“the situation forced me to stay away from the learners. You find yourself in tricky situations every time... By the end, I can tell you I don't know even one name of the learners... I don't have that relationship with the learners” (FGD 1, Speaker 1, p.6 lines 223-228, {09-06-2025}).

In some cases, particularly for young female teachers, incidents of students crossing boundaries or failing to take them seriously made novices retreat to the staffroom to preserve their authority and out of discomfort, which left no rapport with students, as also stated by Odiero (2024). This example illustrates the tension between being approachable and maintaining authority. While isolating oneself kept things safe, it also meant losing the benefits of connection; the teacher likely found it more challenging to

motivate a class she barely knew. Striking a balance was challenging; participants had to exercise judgment about how friendly to be, especially early on.

While some novices embraced closeness, others interpreted their experiences as warning signs that excessive familiarity could undermine safety and authority. The participant who avoided learning a single student's name expressed emotional withdrawal, fear, discomfort, and uncertainty shaped her meaning of "professional distance." In her view, stepping back became a protective mechanism and a way to conserve authority, revealing how vulnerable some novices felt when boundaries were threatened. Her distancing was not coldness but self-preservation, emotionally shaped by recurring "tricky situations."

This category shows how relational management is context-bound: gender, age, and school culture influenced how safe novices felt when interacting with learners. Their meaning-making highlights a central interpretive insight that classroom management is relational and cannot be separated from the teacher's identity, emotions, and perceived vulnerability. For some, safety meant distance, and this distancing altered their entire experience of classroom presence and confidence.

4.4.2.3.3 Navigating Boundary and Respect Issues

Unfortunately, a few participants recounted incidents where student-teacher boundaries were crossed, highlighting risks in the relational dynamic. One male participant in a mixed school was almost being sexually assaulted by a group of female students who cornered him under the pretense of consultation, forcing him to run away:

"It was mixed school ... I was almost being sexually assaulted...So a learner would be, like I'm coming for consultation...five learners...I had to struggle to run from that room and leave them there. So it was hard" (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.5 lines 194-198, {09-06-2025}).

A different participant observed that young male students sometimes harassed female novice teachers:

“I would see female teachers come and then it would get so ugly... before she knows, she is spanked and receiving funny comments from the boys. I think they were a big challenge” (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.5 lines 201-204, {09-06-2025}).

These troubling accounts show how students tested boundaries inappropriately, undermining the teacher’s authority and personal dignity. The novice teachers felt vulnerable and, in some cases, “scared” to be alone with certain students. Establishing professional distance and asserting firm behavioural expectations became essential in such cases to redraw boundaries. Moreover, participants noted that school administrations did not always have explicit provisions to protect teachers in practice, for instance, not pairing them with a colleague when needed, leaving novices to cope alone, as echoed by Sari et al. (2022).

Despite these challenges, some participants managed to build positive, respectful relationships without incidents. One teacher became students’ favourite yet still maintained her authority: students invited her to supervise their study discussions, indicating respect for her guidance and that rapport can coexist with discipline.

This theme shows that the social aspect of classroom management was critical in the participants’ experiences. ECM resulted from mutual respect and understanding, whereas problems with professional boundaries or lack of respect created severe difficulties for novice teachers in classrooms, as advised by Marzano (2003).

The narratives of boundary violations reveal how novices experienced classroom management as emotionally risky and personally threatening. Being almost sexually assaulted or witnessing female colleagues being harassed deeply shaped how participants interpreted what it means to be a teacher in certain contexts. These

incidents destabilised their sense of authority and personal dignity, creating fear that influenced how they moved, interacted, and taught. Such experiences highlight that classroom management here was not simply pedagogical, it was tied to physical safety and emotional survival.

These accounts also show how novice teachers constructed meaning around institutional gaps. They interpreted the lack of administrative protection and unclear guidelines as part of their vulnerability. With no structures to safeguard them, novices internalised the responsibility to redraw boundaries themselves, often through avoidance or hyper-vigilance. This shows that, managing a classroom includes navigating complex relational power dynamics. For some novice teachers, the experience reinforced the belief that safety and respect must be established before any form of instructional or behavioural management can be effective.

4.4.2.4 Theme 4: Emerging Teacher Identity

As they navigated TPPs, novice teachers underwent personal growth and encountered challenges that impacted their emerging professional identity. This theme captures how their self-perception as teachers evolved through the highs and lows of classroom experience. Kolb's theory suggests that reflective experience is integral to learning; indeed, participants' stories show them reflecting on who they are as teachers, building confidence in some areas while questioning their roles as teachers.

4.4.2.4.1 Initial Shock and Reality Check

Many novices entered teaching with idealistic expectations, only to face a reality shock.

One participant described it as:

“a shock, because you’ve been trained to deal with high-school students... but now I have to adjust to junior school learners... I had not trained for that” (FGD 1, Speaker 1, p.3 lines 100-102, {09-06-2025}).

The participant observed that TPP, while important, could not fully prepare them and that real growth began only when they assumed full classroom responsibility. Likewise, other participants felt unprepared and anxious at the start. This reinforces that, although TPP was valuable, it often could not mirror all classroom scenarios as supported by Jensen et al. (2018) and Tavakoli and Gamlem (2024). As a result, participants had to imitate the ideal teacher they imagined with the realities of teaching, in turn becoming more flexible, patient, and resilient than they expected.

Participants' descriptions show that their first days of TPP triggered an emotional identity crisis. The participant who said it was "a shock" realised that what they had imagined being a teacher would be was not what they found in practice. This mismatch between expectations and reality created uncertainty, anxiety, and even self-doubt, marking a turning point in their understanding of what it truly means to manage a classroom. Their unpreparedness for junior secondary learners, despite training for senior secondary, shows how identity formation is shaped by context. They interpreted the classroom not just as a place to apply theory but as a space that demanded flexibility, emotional adjustment, and rethinking of their role.

In addition, these experiences also reflect the essence of transformative learning: novice teachers later interpreted the "shock" as a necessary awakening that forced them to grow. Instead of seeing their struggles as failure, many came to view them as part of becoming a real teacher such as adopting patience, adaptability, and resilience. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle is evident here: the concrete frustrations and surprises of TPP triggered reflection, which reshaped how participants saw themselves as professionals. Their identities began to shift from idealistic trainees to emerging teachers who understood that teaching is unpredictable and emotionally demanding.

4.4.2.4.2 Feelings of Incompetence and Inferiority

Another aspect of emerging identity was how novice teachers felt about themselves in the TPP context. Some external factors, like how experienced teachers and school staff treated them, negatively impacted their confidence. For instance, one novice noted that regular teachers:

“see you like you are new... they feel like you don't know anything... they feel they are superior”, which “makes you feel... undermined” (Interview, Participant 3, p.1-2 lines 23-24, {15-06-2025}).

Being treated as less than by colleagues or even by students, who would compare them to permanent teachers, led to feelings of inadequacy in some participants. In Focus Group 2, a teacher shared that discouraging responses from the school and community made him *“feel demotivated”* and *“his self-esteem is low”* (FGD 2, Participant 4, p.2 lines 49-52, {15-06-2025}). These emotions demonstrate that classroom management experiences are not only about managing students but also about managing one's own sense of competence and belonging. Not all feedback was negative; some mentors were supportive, but the instances of being ignored or criticised forced novices to either doubt themselves or become more assertive as emerging professionals.

For one participant, these feelings of incompetence were further complicated by his personal history and identity as an immigrant. He later explained that he had moved to Kenya as a child with his family due to conflict in his home country. Growing up and studying in a new environment shaped his sense of identity, particularly in relation to language, belonging, and career formation. He described constantly struggling with his foreign Swahili accent, which, according to him, became a silent barrier during classroom interactions. He felt that students sometimes mocked or questioned him

because of how he spoke, and teachers occasionally assumed he was “less capable” because he sounded different. The participant stated:

“Sometimes when I speak, you can just see their reaction... some learners look at me like, ‘Sir, where are you really from?’ And even the teachers, they smile politely, but you can tell they notice the accent. I always feel like I have to prove that I belong here, that I’m not less of a teacher because I was not born in Kenya.” (Interview, Participant 4, p.3-4 lines 131-138, {15-06-2025}).

This participant revealed that these identity tensions affected his confidence during TPP, making classroom management feel heavier and more personal. He believed his linguistic difference contributed to students dismissing him or testing his authority. The pressure of navigating both teacher identity and immigrant identity became overwhelming to the point where, after completing his university degree, he took a full one-year break before deciding to return to teaching. He described that year as a time of *“trying to rebuild myself before I face the classroom again”* (Interview, Participant 4, p.3-4 lines 139-140, {15-06-2025}).

His story illustrates how emerging teacher identity is deeply entangled with broader social identities such as language, culture, and belonging. His experience shows how identity is lived in the body and in the voice, making classroom management not just a technical skill but an emotional and existential negotiation. His journey highlights that for some novice teachers, TPP challenges are intensified by the feeling of being an outsider, which shapes how they interpret feedback, confront misbehaviour, and construct their confidence as teachers.

4.4.2.4.3 Growing Confidence and Professional Growth

The data shows that most novice teachers experienced significant growth in skills and mindset by the end of the TPPs, contributing to a growing teacher identity. Challenges

that once seemed overwhelming were later viewed as valuable learning experiences. One participant, after facing very unruly classes and material shortages, reflected on the growth in his capabilities:

“I met different kinds of learners... it built in me patience... I could tailor my teaching... Scarcity of materials... taught me to improvise... those challenges... helped me develop my teaching style” (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.3 lines 82-94, {09-06-2025}).

This illustrates transformative learning where the participant started as a newcomer struggling to cope, and emerged as a more adaptable, patient educator with his style. Similarly, others mentioned small victories like successfully handling a difficult student or completing the syllabus on time that boosted their confidence. One interviewee noted that by the end of TPP, *“I felt very comfortable... it was very nice, I enjoyed my stay there”* after initially feeling nervous (Interview, Participant 4, p.6 line 227, {15-06-2025}).

Such positive outcomes, coupled with reflection, contributed to some novices beginning to see themselves as real teachers rather than students on attachment, while some still struggle with it. In essence, through the cycle of concrete challenges and reflective learning (Kolb, 1984), novice teachers are gradually constructing a professional identity marked by greater confidence, practical wisdom, and recognition of teaching as a learning journey.

4.4.2.5 Self-Reflection

Kolb’s theory highlights a crucial stage in experiential learning. The extent to which novices engaged in reflecting on their classroom management practice varied widely. Some were very intentional about reflecting and learning from their daily experiences, while others admitted they did little to no reflection, especially under stress. This theme

thus captures how reflection, or the lack of it, featured in participants' experiences and growth.

4.4.2.5.1 Lack of Reflection

A group of participants confessed that during the intensity of TPP, they rarely paused to reflect systematically. In a few cases, participants were simply too overwhelmed or exhausted to engage in self-reflection. One teacher, who had a particularly difficult TPP in a hostile environment, bluntly stated:

“At that particular point I was tired... I was like, when will I leave? ... I didn't have that time to say whether I learned or not... I didn't reflect on it. ... I just wanted to disappear.” (FGD 1, Participant 3, p.8 lines 335-352, {09-06-2025}).

For him, surviving each day took all his energy, and as soon as the term ended, the participant left without looking back. This shows how reflection can fail when a novice is in survival mode, such as under extreme stress, and thus has no opportunity to analyse lessons. The downside is ultimately missed opportunities for critical growth or emotional processing. These cases highlight the need for better support and structured reflection sessions for struggling student-teachers, as suggested by Kiggundu & Nayimuli (2019).

Participants who reported a lack of reflection revealed an important insight, that when novices are operating in survival mode, the cognitive and emotional space required for reflective learning collapses. The excerpt also reveals that the TPP this participant was at emphasised performance over personal and holistic growth of this teacher. Therefore, there were a lot of administrative responsibilities which left the participant with little time to reflect on his journey. The statement *“I was tired... I just wanted to disappear”* also shows that this participant's emotional exhaustion completely overshadowed the pedagogical purpose of TPP.

Therefore, this illustrates how contextual stressors suppress reflective functioning, meaning the novice teacher cannot move into Kolb's (1984) reflective observation stage. This indicates that for some novices, classroom management development stagnates not because they lack ability, but because the emotional and environmental climate is too overwhelming to allow meaning-making. The absence of reflection is therefore not a personal failure but a context-bound restriction, highlighting the structural need for scaffolding, mentoring, and emotional support during TPP.

4.4.2.5.2 Deliberate Reflective Practice

In contrast, other novice teachers intentionally took time to reflect on their classroom management, seeing it as essential for improvement. One FGD participant described his weekly habit of quietly meditating on the week's teaching:

"I did reflect. I'd call it meditation... I would do that frequently, especially around Friday... I see where we are doing well, I see where we are not doing well. At some point it acts as a strength... at some point, it is discouraging, because... you're not doing it well... quite a number of times I had thought of quitting... it requires so much patience." (FGD 1, Participant 4, p.3 lines 335-362, {09-06-2025}).

Through regular reflection, he adjusted his approach and prepared for challenges. Such reflective practice is precisely what Kolb's model (1984) envisions in the reflective observation stage, and it proved helpful for some. Some mentioned writing journals or discussing experiences with peers as forms of reflection. The key was that those who reflected gained insights into their classroom management, for example, realising a strategy that failed and figuring out a better approach for next time, therefore improving their competence over time.

4.4.2.5.3 Reflecting Overtime

Several novices noted that reflection was not automatic at first, but something they learned to value after feedback from mentors or supervisors. One interviewee admitted:

“At first, no... we were just like, this is just a process... not a serious reflection.” It was only “after the first assessment, you sit with the supervisor who tells you where you went wrong, where you did right ...from that time I started now trying... we interrogated our practices.” Through this process, “after reflection, we came to understand that it’s in order, it is a necessity to do things properly, and actually they make one’s work easier” (Interview, Participant 2, p.8-9 lines 343-353, {15-06-2025}).

This narrative shows that these previously neglected habits actually made teaching smoother and more effective, and they thereafter adopted them. Reflection then became part of their teaching routine as required by the new curriculum, indicating a lasting change. This turning point highlights how timely feedback can encourage reflective practice, as supported by Mwang’ombe (2021).

In summary, when novice teachers engaged in reflection, whether self-initiated or prompted, it served as a powerful tool for translating experience into learning. It helped them identify weaknesses, reinforce strengths, and adapt their strategies, thereby fostering their development into competent teachers.

4.4.3 Enablers and Constraints

Participants identified several conditions that enabled them to develop classroom management skills during their TPPs, and also went ahead to suggest enabling conditions. This section answered the third research question: “What conditions do novice teachers experience that enable or constrain their classroom management skill development during TPPs in Public Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu-Central Sub-County, Kenya?” These factors generally fell into few sub-themes grounded in their lived experiences.

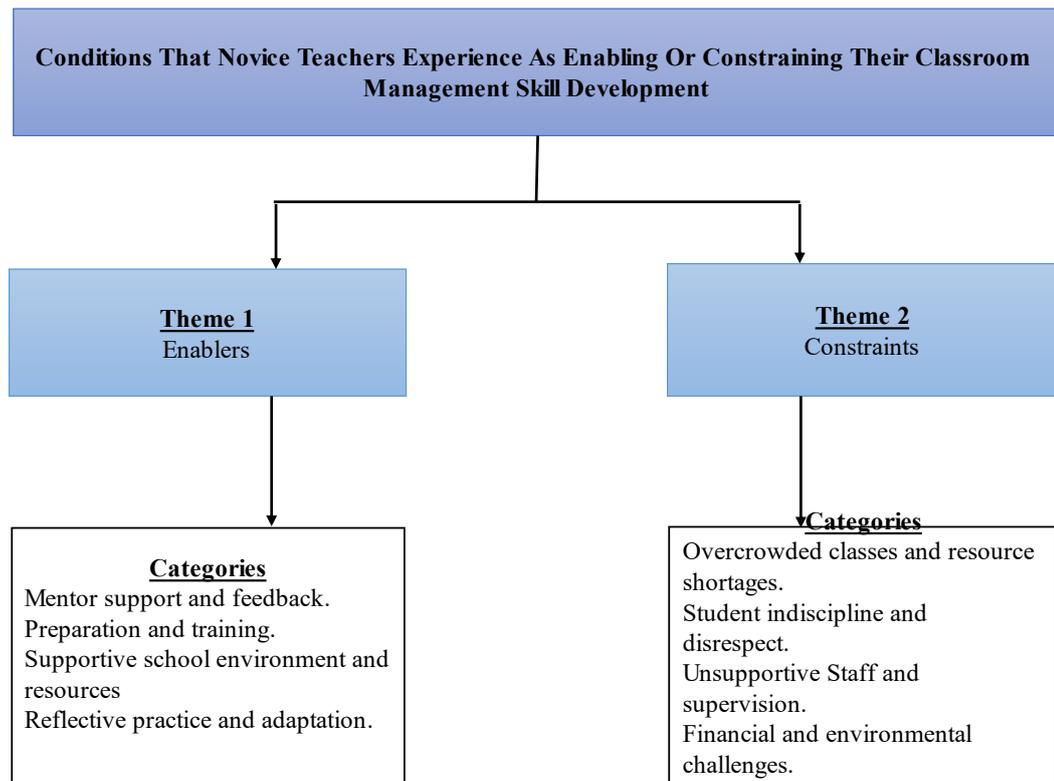


Figure 4: Research Question 3 Themes

Note. Diagrammatic representation of conditions that novice teachers experience as enabling or constraining their classroom management skill development

4.4.3.1 Theme 1 Enablers

4.4.3.1.1 Mentor Support and Feedback

Some participants pointed to the guidance of experienced mentors, cooperating teachers, and supervisors as crucial enablers. Having a supportive teacher observe lessons and offer constructive feedback was highly valued. For instance, one interviewee recalled:

“...the first lesson I went in on my TP, a teacher was in class observing what I was doing. Then after that, she told me where I can improve and where I'm good, my strengths and weaknesses” (Interview, Participant 1, p.2 lines 64-66, {09-06-2025}).

“The head... encouraged us with words, ‘you’re doing some good work, that, in itself, motivates. Imagine if the head is saying nothing about you being there; it can demoralize you... Inviting me to his office to listen to your opinions is support... that is support enough to

ensure that going back to that class, you do something better.” (Interview, Participant 2, p.6 lines 233-238, {15-06-2025}).

A participant shared, older teachers eventually started giving practical advice like: *“avoid this learner... when she’s coming for consultation, don’t be alone with her at least have another teacher or student with you”*, turning the placement into a genuine learning session (FGD 2, Participant 3, p.2 lines 311-314, {09-06-2025}).

This kind of feedback gave the participants clear targets for improvement. Research indicates that praise and collegial support help counteract novices’ feelings of isolation and enhance their confidence and engagement (Zondo & Adu, 2024; Bennett, 2020). Marzano (2003) notes that direct observation and reflective discussions with mentors are key to building ECM practices. It also reflects Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle, where mentor feedback corresponds to the reflective-observation stage, helping novices turn concrete experience into refined teaching strategies.

4.4.3.1.2 Preparation and Training

Participants also drew on their pre-service training and coursework as enablers during the TPP. They reported that the theoretical foundation and micro-teaching practices provided by their teacher education programs gave them strategies to manage real classrooms. One participant credited her college coursework in educational psychology for equipping her to handle different learner needs:

“We learn a lot on campus before going for teaching practice... for example, the psychology unit teaches you are taught how you can manage different types of learners: the slow learners, those who are sharp... how you can handle them differently, yeah? And how you can notice different behaviors...we go through micro-teaching before going to the teaching practice. It’s a session where we do similar things to our teaching practice” (Interview, Participant 1, p.2 lines 47-55, {09-06-2025}).

Several novices mentioned actively applying theory to practice as an enabling strategy:

“tried to focus on what I’ve been taught... applying the theory... trying to get the

attention of the learners” in order to maintain control (Interview, Participant 2, p.2 lines 53-55, {09-06-2025}). One focus group member affirmed that the teaching practice:

“really helped, you get to know the different aspects or characters of learners, and then you're able to come up with management strategies for every kind of behavior” (FGD 1, Speaker 5, p.2 lines 59-62, {09-06-2025}).

This suggests that theoretical knowledge about learner differences and simulated micro-teaching practice provided useful strategies. Marzano and Marzano (2003) also emphasise planning and preparation as central components of instructional organisation.

4.4.3.1.3 Supportive School Environment and Resources

The school environment during TPP placements played a big role in enabling or hindering classroom management, and many participants were fortunate to be in relatively supportive schools. In positive cases, schools provided material resources, facilities, and an encouraging atmosphere that helped novices practice management skills. One interviewee described how his host school was very accommodating:

“The school itself was very much willing to make things work out. They had the materials you want any materials you wanted, they would make it available for you not to be stuck... if it isn't there, then they will procure it and make it available” (Interview, Participant 3, p.4 lines 104-110, {09-06-2025}).

Having adequate textbooks, teaching aids, or even technology like projectors or laptops, as another participant noted, gave novice teachers the tools to engage learners and maintain control. It also reduced the stress of improvising with nothing; as Marzano’s model suggests, preparedness and resource management are integral to ECM (Marzano, 2003). Participants who accessed adequate materials were able to focus on pedagogy and behavior management rather than struggling with shortages,

confirming findings that resource adequacy enhances instructional organisation (Emmer & Evertson, 2017; Kulu et al., 2024).

Schools also supported novices' well-being and logistics, indirectly enabling better classroom performance. In one focus group, participants mentioned that some host schools provided housing or meals for student-teachers:

“Accommodation was provided to ensure the teacher arrived steady and comfortable. Of course, meals were available in school ...consider that one as support” (FGD 2, Speaker 3, p.8 lines 347-349, {15-07-2025}).

This kind of care meant the trainees could focus more on teaching rather than commuting or affording lunch. Research on TPPs states that supportive school cultures foster novice teachers' confidence and reduce stress, enhancing their ability to manage classrooms (Njui, 2017; Fitzsimons et al., 2024).

A positive, welcoming school culture was another enabler. When principals and staff treated novice teachers as colleagues and valued contributors, it boosted the trainees' morale and professional growth. For example, in one instance the principal actively sought the novice's opinions and made them feel part of the school family, which *“ensured that going back to that class, you do something better”* because the novice felt motivated and supported (FGD 2, Speaker 4, p.9 lines 355-360, {15-07-2025}).

These enabling conditions echo wider findings that a conducive TPP environment, with sufficient resources, administrative support, and inclusion of novices in the school community, enhances classroom management skill development (Adarkwah et al., 2022; Echaune & Maiyo, 2023). In summary, the experiences align with Marzano's emphasis on organisational preparedness and the supportive environment's role in reinforcing novice teachers' classroom management strategies.

4.4.3.1.4 Reflective Practice and Adaptation

A few participants highlighted self-reflection as a key personal practice that enabled them to grow their classroom management skills over time. With guidance from their training and in line with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning cycle, they understood that analysing one's own teaching experiences is crucial for improvement. One focus group participant described his habit of weekly reflection:

“I did... call it meditation. I would do that frequently, especially around Friday... at least I see where we are doing well, and where we are not doing well. At some point it acts as a strength... at some point, it is discouraging, because you're like: whatever you're doing... you're not doing it well... I had thought of quitting... It requires so much patience” (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.12 lines 545-553, {09-06-2025}).

Despite the mixed emotions in his reflection, this teacher's practice of quietly reviewing successes and failures each week allowed him to identify which strategies worked and which did not. Through such deliberate reflective practice, he adjusted his approaches and mentally prepared for ongoing challenges. Another interviewee admitted that after each lesson: *“after reflecting, I improve the weak points I had, and then strengthen the strengths”* (Interview, Participant 1, p.4 lines 150-152, {09-06-2025}).

Not all novices initially knew how to reflect effectively, but those who did found it empowering. A few participants mentioned writing notes about lessons or discussing their day with fellow student-teachers, which helped them process difficult classroom situations and find solutions. Such peer reflection resonates with findings that state structured reflection and dialogue enhance professional growth during TPPs (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2019).

The participants who engaged in reflection gained insights into their management style and developed more refined approaches over time. This repetitive process of trying new

strategies, observing outcomes, and reflecting mirrors Kolb's cycle of concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Finally, reflection transformed challenges into growth opportunities, reinforcing both professional identity and classroom management competence.

4.4.3.1.5 Suggestions from Teachers

Novice teachers offered numerous ideas for strengthening TPPs. A common theme was enhanced mentorship and feedback. For example, one suggested assigning each student-teacher an assessor with whom they have previously worked:

“let the learner be given an assessor that he or she has interacted with...because the assessor will be able to know the learner” (FGD 1, Speaker 3, p.10, lines 428-429 {09-06-2025}).

Similarly, participants recommended regular multi-source observation and feedback.

One teacher proposed that school heads, mentors, HODs, principals, and even students each observe several lessons, noting:

“everybody's perspective...opinions from five different people, including the learners...if four people say you're good...that will give a broad picture” (FGD 1, Speaker 2, p.11 lines 450-452 {09-06-2025}).

They emphasised that no single supervisor should be the final judge. In practice, participants asked for ongoing support rather than a single visit. As one novice reflected: *“the support should be constant...ask learners...because I think they are even the best people to ask”* (Interview Participant 2, p.4 lines 140-143, {09-06-2025}).

Clear communication of roles was also urged; co-teachers should be told what level of responsibility to give student-teachers, and universities should brief host schools on teaching-practice goals (Speaker 4, FGD 1, p.2, lines 332-340, {09-06-2025}). This aligns with earlier findings that poor coordination between universities and schools undermines the TPP experience (Njui, 2017).

Teachers also suggested improvements in resources and learning conditions. A strong recommendation was to reduce class sizes and improve materials supply:

“When it comes to a normal classroom, it should be having at most 45 students. So the government, with the institutions, should look for a way under which they are supposed to construct or should provide finances to construct more classes to accommodate these students. Then the government or the institution also should look for a way to get enough resources for these learners.” (FGD 2, Speaker 3, p.6, lines 246-250, {15-06-2025}).

Involving parents and the community in providing textbooks and lab equipment was seen as necessary.

“let the parents be involved when it comes to resources, collection of the resources...let the parent, give the student all the resources that he requires for learning” (FGD 2, Speaker 3, p.2 lines 251-253, {15-06-2025}).

Several advocated lengthening and enriching the TPP:

“I feel that those three months for teaching practice is very little. I think this education, they should increase. Those three months, maybe to five months, it will go it will offer skills required for these teachers to teach” (FGD 2, Speaker 6, p.2 lines 263-265, {15-06-2025}).

Finally, institutional support and welfare were highlighted. Novices asked for contractual protections, for example, a clear anti-harassment clause: *“they can...come up with a contract...if this happens to me, what am I supposed to do?”* (FGD 1, Speaker 5, p.2, lines 455-458, {31-05-2025}). They wanted teaching-practice teachers to be treated like other interns with insurance or a stipend. One suggested student-teachers be covered by health insurance and even modest pay: *“placed under cover...if you are sick...you just go to hospital...some of the principals have less understanding”* (FGD 2, Speaker 7, p.2, lines 456-464, {15-06-2025}). Another urged restructuring fees so student-teachers effectively *“receive a monthly allowance during practice”* (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.2, lines 309-318, {09-06-2025}).

Overall, participants stressed that TPPs should formally involve mentors, protect novices' well-being, and ensure adequate time and materials to enable classroom management learning better. These recommendations resonate with broader research highlighting mentorship, sufficient resources, and supportive policy as critical enablers of TPP effectiveness (Abongdia et al., 2015; Mwang'ombe, 2021). By grounding their suggestions in lived experience, novices underscored that practical support structures must complement theoretical preparation, aligning with Kolb's (1984) principle that meaningful learning emerges from supportive, practical experiences.

4.4.3.2 Theme 2 Constraints

4.4.3.2.1 Overcrowded Classes and Resource Shortages

One of the most frequently mentioned constraints was the size of classes and the lack of adequate resources, which made effective development of management difficult. Many novice teachers were posted to public secondary schools with far more students than ideal. A participant in FGD 2 illustrated this clearly:

“When it comes to a large classroom we had about 90 learners to control that class, it's a bit challenging to a student teacher. Assume you are giving out a task... you are supposed to mark their books within 40 minutes. It becomes tedious managing a class of about 90 students. Also, resources are not enough... textbooks... learning materials are not enough because the classroom is huge. The number of students is high, and to get that ratio of one-to-one textbook is a challenge... a student may fail to do the task due to unavailability of the textbook.” (FGD 2, Speaker 1, p.2 lines 13-29, {15-07-2025}).

This description shows how overcrowding strains a novice teacher's capacity to maintain order and give attention to all learners. It also shows how inadequate teaching materials increase the problem, since students without books get disengaged or disruptive, further complicating management. These challenges are widely documented; for instance, new teachers in Pakistan reported that overcrowded classes and scarce resources hindered their ability to keep students on track (Ahmed and Din,

2024). Similarly, in Kenya, large class sizes and insufficient materials significantly undermined novices' effectiveness in maintaining control and delivering lessons (Ouma et al., 2021). Consistent with Marzano's classroom management theory, an effective learning environment requires not just behavior control but also adequate preparation and resources (Marzano, 2003). Lacking these essentials in a huge class left the trainees scrambling just to maintain basic order, with little capacity to engage students or implement creative methods.

In some cases, novices were deliberately assigned the most difficult classes with the largest size or most rowdy learners, as a trial. These conditions often left them feeling overwhelmed. As one focus group member put it:

“the space to be creative is a bit limited when you are just struggling to get through a lesson with 80 plus students there is little chance to implement engaging activities or personalized approaches” (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.9 lines 369-372, {09-06-2025}).

Large class size and resource constraints were structural issues in the TPP that constrained novices' ability to practice ECM, e.g., enforcing rules, using varied teaching aids, and giving individual attention.

4.4.3.2.2 Student Indiscipline and Disrespect

Another major challenge was learner misbehaviour, which participants often felt ill-equipped to handle. Participants recounted frequent cases of indiscipline ranging from minor disruptions to serious confrontations. One participant noted that students sometimes did not regard student-teachers as real authority figures:

“Teachers on teaching practice may find it hard to instill... discipline, because of the attitude the students may have against them. They may see those teachers as their peers or as less authoritative... hence that teacher may be faced with a lot of challenges... when enforcing rules or trying to get activities done. You'll find that [the trainee] will not have an easy time when it comes to class control” (FGD 2, Speaker 2, p.2 lines 34-42, {15-07-2025}).

This lack of respect led to frequent testing of boundaries. For a novice still developing confidence, such pushback from learners was highly stressful and quickly undermined their management efforts. Indeed, many novice teachers enter the classroom feeling unprepared to handle real-world misbehavior, as their training often provides minimal exposure to effective discipline strategies. Research in the U.S. supports that new teachers frequently lack knowledge of preventive behavior management techniques, leaving them unsure how to assert authority without escalating conflicts (Shank, 2023). In Kenya, similarly, novice teachers typically have strong content knowledge but limited practical training in behaviour management, leading them to rely on trial-and-error or overly strict approaches (Gichunge, 2017). Such authoritarian tactics can go wrong.

In some extreme cases, the misbehavior crossed into harassment or safety concerns, particularly with adolescents. One male participant shared an incident at a mixed school:

“Ladies are very dangerous out here. I was almost being sexually assaulted, you know... a learner would say ‘I’m coming for consultation,’ and there are like five girls... I had to struggle to run from that room... it was hard.” (FGD 1, Speaker 3, p.8 lines 312-318, {09-06-2025}).

A female participant in the same discussion described how some male students behaved inappropriately toward women teachers:

“Form Two boys become so hungry... their hormones shooting. I would see female teachers come and it would get so ugly, they would flock around her and before she knows, she is spanked and getting those funny comments from the boys. That was a big challenge.” (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.8 lines 322-330, {09-06-2025}).

These disturbing examples of student misconduct highlight how vulnerable novice teachers can feel. Without strong backup, being subjected to such disrespectful or even aggressive behavior significantly constrained their ability to maintain a safe, respectful

learning environment. The female teachers were “*scared... of being labeled with some terms, based on their physical appearances,*” and felt the school provided no protection (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.8 lines 328-331, {09-06-2025}).

Reports from Kenyan schools note rising cases of student-on-teacher harassment and violence, to the point that training workshops on positive discipline have been organized to help teachers manage and defuse these situations (Odiero, 2024). A local study in Mombasa similarly found that inadequate classroom management practices were associated with increased disruptive behaviour from students (Yegon et al., 2019), illustrating the high stakes of novice teachers not being fully prepared or supported to handle serious indiscipline. An atmosphere of unchecked misbehavior inevitably destroys a new teacher’s confidence and willingness to engage closely with students, as seen in our participants’ narrations. This challenge shows the importance of the support systems and experiential learning cycles highlighted by Kolb’s theory through confronting real classroom conflicts and reflecting on them (Kolb, 1984).

4.4.3.2.3 Unsupportive Staff and Supervision

While some mentors were helpful, others unfortunately became a source of stress. A number of novices experienced unsupportive or even hostile attitudes from the regular school staff and university supervisors, which constrained the development of their classroom management skills. One issue raised was the “big man syndrome” among certain host teachers who looked down on student-teachers. As one participant explained:

“some of the regular teachers... think everything should resonate from them, that a teacher on teaching practice is a lesser teacher that cannot instruct and cannot participate in decision making. So that’s a challenge” (FGD 2, Speaker 1, p.8 lines 333-338, {15-07-2025}).

Instead of treating the novice as a colleague in training, these teachers sidelined them. In some cases, they offloaded work onto the trainee without providing guidance. One novice recounted how an older Head of Department kept calling him “*my son... go to this class, my son, go to that class*” to cover lessons outside of his assignment, essentially exploiting him as free labor (FGD 1, Speaker 2, p.10 lines 449-450, {09-06-2025}). This lack of support meant novices often struggled alone with their challenges, contrary to the collaborative approach recommended for effective TPPs.

In addition, unhelpful or harsh supervision by university assessors was a notable constraint. Instead of coaching novices, some supervisors instilled fear. A participant in FGD 1 described one supervisor who:

“was worse... he was going to an extent of even telling us ‘I cannot let you pass... The lecturer should inform you beforehand when coming, but he was just coming impromptu. Our first encounter, we thought he was a parent... then after break he said, ‘Where are the teaching practice students? I want to assess you. We were so unprepared... That also becomes a challenge, because someone who is assessing you someone you don’t even know, and he doesn’t even know you just comes’” (FGD 1, Speaker 3, p.9 lines 381-389, {09-06-2025}).

This surprise inspection caused panic; some student-teachers literally fled to avoid being assessed in that moment.

“When he returned next time, he insisted on his own way of teaching, forcing a lesson when a test was planned and penalised me for not obeying his wish. He also nitpicked minor issues to give poor grades, and “confidently said that no one normally passes in my zone”, as if determined to fail the trainees (FGD 1, Speaker 3, p.10 lines 423-425, {09-06-2025}).

Overall, inadequate mentorship and harsh assessment practices emerged as severe constraints. These experiences echo international research noting low engagement or support from school teachers and supervisors as a significant cause of challenges during TPPs (Lebala et al., 2024). When those meant to guide novices instead neglect or

intimidate them, novice teachers are essentially left to sink or swim on their own, impeding their professional growth.

4.4.3.2.4 Financial and Environmental Challenges

The participants' ability to focus on classroom management skill building was often constrained by practical life challenges during the TPP, especially financial strain and difficult living conditions. Many participants spoke about the costs of teaching practice and how the lack of money created constant anxiety. Unlike salaried staff, student-teachers had to pay their way through the TPPs, such as for transport, food, materials, etc., with minimal support. One focus group member bluntly stated:

“Finances is a very serious challenge, and it can make a teacher not to maximally get what that experience was meant to do... Instead, he is disorganized, up and down, thinking of how he can meet his needs. I may worry so much on this minor thing money such that I miss out on the major thing, which is classroom management” (FGD 1, Speaker 4, p.6 lines 239-245, {09-06-2025}).

This insight reveals that when a novice is preoccupied with basic survival, for example, figuring out where the next meal will come from or how to afford teaching aids, their mental capacity for reflective practice or creative classroom strategies is significantly reduced.

Beyond finances, the environment and community around the TPP also constrained some novices. A couple of participants posted in unfamiliar regions felt unsafe and isolated: *“The place I was in, it was very insecure... You live in fear;”* (FGD 1, Speaker 3, p.6 lines 249-253, {09-06-2025}). Being far from home and in a community that at first treated them as outsiders, sometimes even with tribal prejudice, meant these novices never felt entirely comfortable: *“I was like, I came here to do this thing for just three months, then I leave... I survived”* despite being socially isolated. This survival mentality is detrimental to learning, as he later admitted, *“at that point I was tired... I*

didn't have time to say whether I learned or not... I just wanted to disappear" (FGD 1, Speaker 3, p.8 lines 300-303, {09-06-2025}).

The mental and emotional strain of coping with an unsupportive environment, along with personal stressors, pushed some to forego any reflection or extra effort, aiming only to get the TPP over with. Indeed, one participant concluded that many student-teachers enter "*survival mode, waiting to finish this thing and just leave... doing it for the papers at this point*" when circumstances become too harsh (FGD 1, Speaker 1, p.13 lines 577-580, {09-06-2025}).

Similar studies have observed that where student-teachers' well-being is not supported, e.g., being posted to remote or hostile environments without guidance, their professional development suffers greatly (Bennett et al., 2024).

In summary, multiple constraints within the TPP environment, such as large classes, unruly students, a lack of support, and personal hardships, significantly challenged novice teachers in Kisumu as they attempted to hone their classroom management skills. These challenges led to frustration and a feeling that their potential was not fully realised during the TPP. It is clear that where supporting conditions existed, participants thrived more in developing their competencies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore novice teachers' experiences of classroom management skills development during teaching practice programmes (TPPs) in public junior secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya. 13 junior secondary schools in Kisumu County were selected to represent typical teaching practice settings, and 15 novice teachers were purposively sampled from these schools based on their years of teaching after completing from their teacher education studies. The study adopted a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm, employing a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of the participants. 2 semi-structured FGDs and six semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to gather data on their perceptions and experiences of classroom management development during their TPPs. The interview transcripts were then analysed thematically to identify key patterns in the data. This chapter, therefore, concludes the study by summarising the key findings in relation to each research objective, the conclusions of the study, the recommendations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This section provides a summary of the findings in accordance with the research objectives. The objectives of the study were:

1. To explore how novice teachers understand classroom management during TPP.
2. To establish novice teachers' experiences of constructing classroom management skills during TPP.
3. To explore the conditions in the TPPs that novice teachers experience as enabling or constraining their classroom management skill development.

5.2.1 Novice teachers' understanding of classroom management skills during TPP

The thematic analysis used generated two themes to answer the research question:

“How do novice teachers understand classroom management during TPP?”

The findings show that novice teachers' understanding of classroom management was initially narrow and discipline-oriented, but gradually expanded through lived classroom experiences during TPP.

At the outset, participants largely defined classroom management in terms of establishing order, maintaining discipline, and enforcing rules. Clear authority, routines, and control over learner behaviour were viewed as essential prerequisites for teaching and learning, particularly in contexts where novice teachers felt vulnerable to being tested or undermined. With time and repeated classroom encounters, their understanding broadened to include instructional organisation, planning, time management, and resource use as critical components of effective management. Classroom management was thus not only about reacting to misbehaviour, but also about proactively structuring lessons to prevent disruption.

Importantly, novices came to associate classroom management with learner engagement and relational strategies. They understood that varied, learner-centred teaching methods, motivation, and positive teacher-student relationships reduced behavioural problems by keeping learners involved and attentive. Many described classroom management as a balancing act between authority and empathy, maintaining firm boundaries while responding to learners' individual needs. This balance was learned experientially through trial, error, and reflection during TPP rather than through prior theoretical instruction.

Overall, novice teachers constructed classroom management as a dynamic and evolving practice, shaped by real classroom pressures rather than fixed definitions. While their understanding became more holistic over time, the findings also suggest that relational and emotional dimensions of classroom management were still developing and not yet fully integrated. This indicates that TPP significantly shapes novice teachers' initial conceptualisations of classroom management, but also exposes gaps that require continued support beyond TPPs.

5.2.2 Novice teachers' experiences of constructing classroom management skills during TPP

The thematic analysis used generated two themes to answer the research question:

“What are the novice teachers' experiences constructing classroom management skills during TPPs?”

The findings show that classroom management skills were not acquired smoothly or uniformly, but were constructed through intense, context-bound, and emotionally charged classroom experiences.

Participants consistently reported that behaviour management formed the most immediate and pressing aspect of their experience. Many described confronting misbehaviour, testing of limits, and in extreme cases, incidents that threatened their authority and safety. These encounters forced novices to react instinctively and revealed gaps between university preparation and classroom realities. Behaviour management was therefore experienced not as a theoretical skill, but as a survival-oriented practice that shaped how novices understood control and authority in real classrooms.

Instructional organisation emerged as another major experiential dimension. Large class sizes, limited resources, and strict time constraints required novices to improvise constantly. Participants learned to share materials, re-organise tasks, and adhere closely to lesson structures to maintain order. Through these experiences, they came to realise that classroom management extends beyond discipline to include planning, pacing, and resource management. These organisational strategies were learned experientially through repeated trial and adjustment rather than prior mastery.

Importantly, these experiences significantly influenced novices' professional identity. Early in the TPP, many felt insecure, underestimated, or viewed as "teachers on practice" with limited authority. For some, successfully managing lessons and navigating challenges gradually built confidence and a sense of professional legitimacy. For others, negative interactions, lack of institutional support, or identity-related challenges undermined confidence, leaving their developing teacher identity fragile or unresolved. This variation highlights that identity construction during TPP is uneven and deeply shaped by individual and contextual factors.

Reflection played a critical but inconsistent role in this construction process. Some novices, overwhelmed by workload and stress, operated in survival mode and lacked opportunities for reflective processing. Others engaged deliberately in reflection through journaling, meditation, or peer discussion using it as a tool to interpret experiences and refine their classroom management strategies. Those who reflected were better able to transform experience into learning and growth.

Overall, novice teachers constructed classroom management skills through direct engagement with real classroom challenges, rather than through prescribed methods. Growth depended largely on the interaction between classroom conditions, emotional

resilience, access to support, and the extent of reflective practice. While some novices emerged with increased confidence and competence, others carried forward unresolved struggles, underscoring the uneven impact of TPP on classroom management development.

5.2.3 Enabling and constraining conditions for classroom management skill development during TPP

The thematic analysis used generated two themes to answer the research question:

“What conditions do novice teachers experience that enable or constrain their classroom management skill development during TPPs?”

The analysis identified several enabling and constraining conditions affecting classroom management skill development during the TPPs. Enabling factors included strong mentorship from supervising teachers, collaborative reflection sessions with peers, and training in teaching strategies. Many novices mentioned that opportunities to observe skilled mentors and receive clear, ongoing guidance enabled them to implement management practices more effectively. In contrast, common constraints were overcrowded classrooms and limited instructional resources, which made it difficult to maintain order and implement varied activities. Participants also noted that misalignment between their theoretical training and actual classroom challenges, as well as heavy teaching loads and infrequent feedback, hindered their skill development. Additionally, participants shared practical suggestions such as extending the TPP period, reducing teaching workloads, and ensuring more supportive supervision, which they believed would further enable classroom management skill development during TPPs.

These findings highlight that both contextual supports, such as mentor guidance and structured training, and systemic barriers, such as large class sizes and resource shortages, played a significant role in shaping novices' ability to develop classroom management skills during the teaching practice programme.

5.3 Conclusion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore novice teachers' experiences of developing classroom management skills during their Teaching Practice Programmes (TPPs) in Kisumu Central sub- County, Kenya. The findings indicate that novice teachers initially understood classroom management primarily as establishing order and control. However, through lived classroom experiences, this understanding expanded to include instructional organisation, learner engagement, and relationship-building. In practice, classroom management was constructed as a balance between firm rules and routines on the one hand, and engaging, learner-centred instructional strategies on the other. Keeping learners actively involved was perceived as a key preventive strategy for reducing misbehaviour and sustaining a supportive learning environment.

The study further showed that classroom management skills were developed experientially through real-time challenges rather than through pre-existing mastery. Novice teachers relied heavily on practical strategies such as careful lesson planning, tight time management, and improvisation to manage overcrowded classrooms with limited resources. Over time, successfully navigating challenging lessons and behavioural issues contributed to increased confidence and a growing sense of professional capability for some participants. However, this growth was uneven. While some novices began to see themselves as legitimate teachers, others continued to struggle due to heavy workloads, limited mentorship, and emotionally demanding classroom environments.

Importantly, the findings revealed that classroom management development cannot be separated from emerging teacher identity. Experiences of being undermined, questioned, or inadequately supported affected how novices perceived their competence and belonging within the profession. For some participants, identity challenges were intensified by broader personal and social factors, such as migration background, language accent, or perceived “outsider” status, which shaped classroom interactions, student responses, and self-confidence. These narratives illustrate that classroom management is not solely a technical or pedagogical skill, but also an identity and context sensitive process, experienced emotionally and socially in everyday classroom encounters.

The study also identified critical enablers and barriers within the TPP structure. Supportive mentorship, constructive feedback, and opportunities for reflection emerged as key enablers of classroom management growth. In contrast, systemic constraints such as overcrowded classes, inadequate instructional resources, mismatches between university training and classroom realities, and insufficient psychosocial support often hindered novices’ progress. These structural challenges shaped not only skills acquisition but also teachers’ motivation, resilience, and long-term commitment to the profession.

Overall, the findings underscore the central role of TPPs as a formative space where classroom management skills, professional identity, and career trajectories begin to take shape. At the same time, they point to important gaps in how novice teachers particularly those navigating complex identity or migration-related experiences are supported during this critical phase. These insights provide a foundation for future research, including deeper examination of how teacher preparation systems respond to mobility, identity diversity, and transnational career pathways.

5.4 Theoretical Implication

This study was guided by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and Marzano's Classroom Management Theory. These two theories provided a foundation for understanding how novice teachers develop classroom management skills during teaching practice. Kolb's theory emphasises the importance of learning through experience, reflection, and experimentation. Marzano's theory identifies key components of ECM, including clear rules and procedures, maintaining student engagement, managing student behaviour, and developing positive teacher-student relationships. These theoretical perspectives helped interpret the study findings and understand how novice teachers developed various aspects of classroom management during their TPP experiences.

The findings related to the first research objective, which sought to identify how novice teachers understand classroom management skills, revealed that most participants perceived classroom management primarily as behaviour control, setting rules, and ensuring order in class. Marzano's Classroom Management Theory provided the conceptual lens through which this understanding was analysed. According to Marzano, ECM requires a balance between clear expectations and positive teacher-student interactions. The novice teachers' views aligned with these categories, as they spoke about the importance of establishing boundaries, maintaining discipline, and communicating expectations to learners. Their conceptualisation of management focused more on rule enforcement and less on relationship-building, which points to a partial engagement with Marzano's broader framework. The theory was thus instrumental in framing how novices defined classroom management in practice.

The second objective explored the lived experiences of novice teachers as they constructed classroom management skills during TPP. The findings showed that while

teachers struggled with discipline, they also developed skills in lesson planning, student engagement, and managing instructional flow, areas well covered in Marzano's framework. The theory provided a structure for categorising the different strategies employed by teachers, including rule-setting, use of praise and warnings, lesson pacing, and organisation. In addition, two important themes emerged that extended beyond Marzano's model: professional identity and reflective practice. Some participants described how their perception of themselves changed through the TPP from being student teachers to identifying as professionals. This development fits within Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which explains how learners gain insight through reflection on practical experience. Teachers who reflected on their classroom interactions were able to adjust their strategies and feel more capable over time. Thus, Kolb's theory helped explain how learning and identity formation occurred through cycles of teaching, reflection, and adjustment.

The third objective explored the conditions that enabled or constrained the development of classroom management skills. Marzano's framework again proved helpful in identifying constraints such as inadequate teaching resources, overcrowded classrooms, and poor discipline systems, which prevented effective implementation of classroom strategies. On the other hand, support from mentors, feedback from university supervisors, and access to instructional materials were seen as enablers. These support systems allowed novice teachers to apply what they had learned and improve their skills over time. Kolb's theory helped explain how supportive environments allowed for deeper reflection and learning. Teachers who had time and space to process their experiences through feedback or self-reflection reported growth in their classroom management competence. In addition, the suggestions provided by novice teachers, such as reducing lesson loads, extending the TPP period, and

improving supervisor engagement, reflect their experiential insights and support Kolb's idea that meaningful learning occurs when learners are actively involved in shaping their learning context.

Overall, the theories were essential in analysing how classroom management is understood, developed, and supported during TPP. They guided both the thematic development and interpretation of the findings in this study.

5.5 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings, I make the following recommendations:

- The Ministry of Education should review and strengthen the existing TPP policy framework by placing more emphasis on classroom management development. This includes ensuring that classroom management is given priority in TPP assessment tools and mentor training guidelines, so that novice teachers in Kisumu's public junior secondary schools are more effectively supported in managing real classroom challenges.
- Universities should implement structured reflection practices into their training programmes, such as requiring student teachers to keep guided reflection journals or hold regular reflective discussions with mentors. This would help novice teachers make sense of their classroom experiences, refine their management strategies, and develop a stronger teaching identity before and during TPP. Structured reflective sessions should also be included to help student teachers explore identity, belonging, and authority within diverse classroom contexts.
- University supervisors should increase the frequency and quality of their school visits, with a focus not only on assessment but also mentorship. Constructive verbal and written feedback on classroom management strategies delivered in a timely and

supportive manner would help novices build competence and confidence through experiential learning.

- School administrators should assign experienced teacher mentors to novice teachers and encourage them to observe skilled colleagues, so that novice teachers receive guidance and support in developing ECM practices.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

I recommend the following for further research:

- The study was limited to public junior secondary schools in Kisumu Central Sub-County. In order to gain a broader understanding of novice teachers' classroom management development, I recommend replicating this study in other regions and in different types of schools, such as primary or private schools, to see if similar classroom management challenges and experiences occur elsewhere.
- While this study focused on novice teachers' own experiences, further research should include cooperating teachers and TPP supervisors. Examining how these mentors and school leaders perceive and support classroom management skill development would provide a more complete picture of how to strengthen TPPs.
- The approach used in this study was qualitative. I recommend that future research employ quantitative or mixed methods, for example, surveys or longitudinal designs, to measure how widespread the identified classroom management challenges are among novice teachers and how their skills develop over time.
- Further research could examine the effect of targeted interventions, such as structured mentoring programmes or classroom management workshops, on the development of novice teachers' classroom management skills during teaching practice, to explore practical ways of addressing the needs identified in this study.

- Further research could be conducted to specifically explore the development of professional identity and self-reflective practices among novice teachers. Such studies should examine how novice teachers construct and negotiate their professional identity during and beyond the TPPs, and how structured reflection influences their confidence, classroom decision-making, and long-term professional growth.
- Further research could examine how structured migration or labour mobility programmes prepare immigrants towards their careers, for example, teachers for professional integration and classroom practice in Kenya.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: A Map of Kisumu Central Sub-County County



Source: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Moumie-Maoulidi-2/publication/270703937/figure/fig2/AS:295274351218689@1447410299292/Map-of-Kisumu-Municipality-Showing-Main-Areas-and-Sublocations.png>

Appendix II: Focus Group Discussion Prompt

Introduction

- Explain the importance of the participant and why the participant was picked.
- Introduce the purpose of the FDG: it will focus on their experiences in developing classroom management during TPPs.
- Outline the guidelines of the FDG: their responses and identity will be kept confidential, their participation and withdrawal from the interview is voluntary, the topics that will be covered in the discussion, the expected time the discussion is scheduled to take, the interview will be recorded, they can request for research findings after the study is complete and they might be contacted for clarifications or additional questions.
- Provide the consent form for the participants to review and sign it. They keep the duplicate form.

Ground Guidelines

- Encourage every participant to take part in the discussions
- Explain to them there are no right or wrong answers.
- Guide them to speak one at a time and listen to others.
- Emphasise respecting each other's opinions

Main Discussion Prompt

- In your TPP you are supposed to develop a number of skills that will make you a good teacher. I am mostly interested in the classroom management skills and would like you to tell me: First, how did you understand the term “Classroom Management?” how did you experience your TPP in terms of gaining new skills,

who or what supported you in developing these skills and what was maybe missing if you look back?

Probing Questions

- Can you describe a specific moment in your TPP when you felt you learned an important classroom management skill?
- Who was most influential in supporting your development of these skills, and in what way?
- What barriers or difficulties did you face, and how did you navigate them?
- Looking back, what would you say was not provided that could have helped you more?

Concluding

- I will thank participants for their participation and time.

Appendix III: Interview Guide for Novice Teachers

Introduction

- Explain the importance of the participant and why the participant was picked.
- Introduce the purpose of the interview: it will focus on their experiences in developing classroom management during TPPs. It is also essential to make clear that there are no right or wrong answers; they can talk freely about their experiences and perceptions.
- Outline the guidelines of the interview: their responses and identity will be kept confidential, their participation and withdrawal from the interview is voluntary, the topics that will be covered in the interview, the expected time the interview is scheduled to take, the interview will be recorded, they can request for research findings after the study is complete and they might be contacted for clarifications or additional questions.
- Provide the consent form for the interviewee to review and sign it. They keep the duplicate form.

Overview

I am Diana Achuch, a student at Moi University pursuing a master's degree in education research. I am conducting a research study that focuses on novice teachers' experiences regarding the development of their classroom management during TPPs in Kisumu Central sub-county, Kenya. You have been selected for this research because of your significant experience in TPPs as a teacher who has completed their teacher education programme, including TPPs, and started working independently as a teacher in the past 3 years. Your experiences will help us understand how significant TPP was in the development of your classroom

management skills and where possible shortcomings are. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

Probing Questions

- a. Could you provide specific examples to illustrate this point?
- b. That was a very insightful example. Would you provide me with another example to help me understand better?

Main Questions

- a. How did you understand the concept of “Classroom Management” during your TPP?
- b. I would like you to tell me as much as you can about your experiences when you started, how you felt in the school, what your first teaching experiences were, who helped you, etc. What kinds of support did you receive in the TPPs that influenced your classroom management skills?
- c. The second part purely refers back to something that the participant said, and that I want to get more details about, or check whether I understood it correctly. For instance, you mentioned (specific situation), could you explain more about how it influenced your classroom skills development?

Conclusion

- a. I will thank participants for their participation and time.

Appendix IV: Informed Consent Document for Interviews with Novice Teachers

Title of the Study: Novice Teachers' Experiences of Developing Classroom Management Skills During Teaching Practice Programmes in Junior Secondary Schools, Kisumu, Kenya

Investigator (s): DIANA ACHUCH

Institution (s): MOI UNIVERSITY

Introduction

The investigator is a student at Moi University, Kenya. She is pursuing a Master of Education in Research. This informed consent explains the study to you. After getting to know the study, your questions will be answered, and you will decide to participate. If you choose to participate in this research, you will be required to sign a consent form and keep a carbon copy of it. This study is designed to explore novice teachers' experiences of developing classroom management skills during their teaching practice programmes in junior secondary schools in Kisumu County. The findings will help improve how classroom management is supported during teacher preparation.

A brief description of the sponsors of the research project

The sponsor of this research is DAAD (The German Academic Exchange Service), which has funds from the German Federal Foreign Office. DAAD further funds CERMESA, a partnership among universities: Moi University (Kenya), University of Oldenburg (Germany), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (South Africa), Uganda Management Institute (Uganda), and the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania).

Purpose

This study aims to explore the experiences of novice teachers in developing classroom management skills during their teaching practice programmes. The findings of this study will help improve how teacher training programmes and TPP structures support the development of classroom management competence. This could lead to better-prepared teachers and improved learning environments.

Procedures

Participation in the study entails a face-to-face interview, which may last about 30-40 minutes. I will conduct the interview, audio-record it, and later transcribe it for analysis. Any answer from you is valid because we value different viewpoints.

Who will participate in the study?

You have been selected to take part in this study because you are a novice teacher who has recently completed a teaching practice placement and is believed to have important experiences to share. The study will last around two months. About twelve participants are expected to take part. Each interview will be arranged on a different day, and each participant will be interviewed once.

Risks/discomforts

The only discomfort foreseen is the time you will spend during the interview process. There are no other known risks or discomforts.

Benefits

You will receive feedback from us about the progress and findings of this study. These findings may help improve teacher preparation, especially in relation to classroom management support.

Confidentiality

Your identity will not be revealed because it will be coded. The information you give will be stored securely and only accessible to the research team. Printed transcripts will be kept in locked drawers, and digital files will be stored on a password-protected drive. Your name will not appear in any publication or report. After the study, all data will be safely destroyed by shredding paper copies and deleting digital files. The results of this study may be published in a research paper, presented at a professional meeting, or published as a book.

Alternatives

Participation is voluntary. If you choose not to take part, you will not lose any benefits.

Cost

You will not be charged anything to participate in this study.

Questions

If you have questions or need more information, you may contact me at achuchdiana@gmail.com. You may also reach the study supervisors: Dr. Stellah Keter of Moi University at stellahketer@yahoo.com and Dr. Curwyn Mapaling of the University of Johannesburg at curwyn.mapaling@nwu.ac.za.

Statement of voluntariness

Participation is voluntary, and you are free to decide. You may also withdraw from the study at any time with no penalties. If you have concerns about your rights, please get in touch with the Institutional Review Board of Moi University at +254790940508.

Statement of Consent

..... has clearly explained to me what will take place during the study, the benefits involved, the anticipated risks, and the rights I hold while participating in this study. Therefore, I understand that my decision to participate in and withdraw from this study will not have any penalties. I am also aware that my identity and responses will not be revealed. I understand that by signing this form, I don't waive any of my legal rights, but show that I am well informed about this study I am voluntarily participating in. A copy of this form will be made available to me.

Name of participant..... **Signature**.....**Date**.....

Name of Interviewer..... **Signature**.....**Date**.....

Appendix V: Informed Consent Document for Focus Group Discussions with Novice Teachers

I am Diana Achuch, a student at Moi University, Kenya. I am pursuing a Master of Education in Research. I am conducting a study that focuses on novice teachers' experiences of developing classroom management skills during their teaching practice in junior secondary schools in Kisumu County. The Moi University Research Ethics Committee has approved this study.

You are requested to participate in this study because you are believed to have the necessary experience and information. The study aims to explore the enabling and constraining conditions within the TPP environment that shaped your development of classroom management skills. The findings will help improve how novice teachers are supported during their TPP and contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to take part, you will not lose any benefits. You may also withdraw at any time without any penalties. This FGD will be audio-recorded. Your identity and individual comments will not be revealed in any reports or publications.

There are no right or wrong answers, and we encourage different points of view. Please be honest. We also ask that you respect each other's opinions, speak one at a time, and listen respectfully to all contributions, even if you disagree. You will be provided with refreshments and transport reimbursement.

I understand this information and voluntarily agree to participate fully in the study under the above conditions. A copy of this form will be made available to me.

Name of participant.....Signature.....Date.....

Name of Interviewer.....Signature.....Date.....

Appendix VIII: Research Authorisation Evidence



MOI UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, School of Education

Phone No. +254 790 940 508
+254 736 138 770
Email: deaneducation@mu.ac.ke

P.O. Box 3900
Eldoret
Kenya.

REF: MRS/6503/24

DATE: 9th June, 2025

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
National Council for Science and Technology
Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT IN RESPECT OF DIANA ACHUCH OGOLLAH – MSR/6503/24

The above named is a 2nd year master of Education (M.Ed) Student at Moi University, School of Education, Department of Educational Management & Policy Studies.

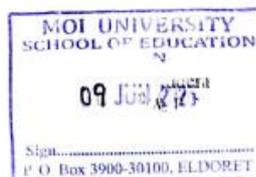
It is required of her studies to conduct a research project and produce a research report. Her research topic is entitled:

“Novice Teachers’ Experiences of Developing Classroom Management Skills During Teaching Practice Programmes in Public Junior Secondary Schools,, Kisumu, Kenya.”

Any assistance given to enable her conduct research successfully will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

PROF. ANNE S. KISILU
DEAN, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION





REPUBLIC OF KENYA

RefNo: 359954



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Date of Issue: 14/June/2025

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Miss. Diana Ogollah Achuch of Moi University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kisumu on the topic: NOVICE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF DEVELOPING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE PROGRAMMES IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, KISUMU, KENYA for the period ending : 14/June/2026.

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Deputy Director NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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See overleaf for conditions

Appendix IX: Plagiarism Awareness Certificate

SR988

*ISO 9001:2019 Certified Institution***THESIS WRITING COURSE***PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE*

This certificate is awarded to

*DIANA ACHUCHOGOLLAH***MSR/6503/24**

In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

Awareness test for Thesis entitled: **NOVICE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF DEVELOPING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS DURING TEACHING PRACTICE PROGRAMMES IN PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, KISUMU, KENYA** with similarity index of 4% and striving to maintain academic integrity.

Word count:31403

Awarded by

Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu**CERM-ESA Project Leader** Date: 22/08/2025