



Effective classroom management strategies for supporting students with autism spectrum disorder: Insights from Home de la Vierge des Pauvres (HVP) Gatagara/Gikondo, Rwanda

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ABSTRACT

Despite increasing recognition of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the benefits of effective classroom management, there remains a significant gap in understanding how such strategies are implemented and their effectiveness within inclusive educational settings in Rwanda. This study explores the classroom management strategies employed for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 27 participants sampled from a total population of 29, including 24 teachers, one head teacher, one director of studies, and one resource room manager. Data collection methods included questionnaires, in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document reviews. Findings indicate that strategies such as clear communication of rules, praise and reward systems, delegation of responsibilities, and adequate supervision are utilized at the school. However, classroom observations revealed inconsistencies in the implementation of these strategies. The study underscores the importance of consistent application and individualized support for students with ASD. Recommendations include enhancing teacher training and promoting a more uniform and deliberate approach to classroom management to better support inclusive education in similar contexts.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Classroom Management, Educational Strategies, HVP Gatagara/Gikondo, Inclusive Education, Rwanda, Special Needs Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental condition characterized by persistent challenges in social interaction, communication, and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2024). Globally, the prevalence of ASD has been on the rise, with estimates suggesting that approximately 1 in 160 children worldwide is affected by this condition. This increasing prevalence has prompted a growing body of research and interventions aimed at understanding and supporting individuals with ASD, particularly in educational settings.

In Africa, the prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is not well-established due to limited documentation. Studies have highlighted the need for comprehensive data and support systems for individuals with ASD on the continent. In Rwanda, specific data on ASD prevalence is scarce; however, global estimates suggest that approximately 1 in 160 children may be affected (University of Rwanda, 2024). This finding underscores the importance of developing targeted interventions and support mechanisms for students with ASD in Rwandan schools.

Effective classroom management is crucial for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for students with ASD. Traditional classroom settings can be particularly challenging for these students due to their unique needs and sensitivities. Sensory overload, difficulties in social interaction, and resistance to changes in routine are common issues that can hinder their learning experience (Buescher, 2014). Therefore, implementing effective classroom management strategies is essential to mitigate these challenges and foster a conducive learning environment.

Various strategies have been identified as effective in managing classrooms for students with ASD. Clear communication of rules, for instance, helps students understand expectations and routines, reducing anxiety and

promoting a sense of security (Barnabas et al., 2010). Visual aids, such as schedules and charts, can further enhance this clarity by providing a tangible reference for daily activities and expectations.

Praise and reward systems are another critical component of effective classroom management for students with ASD. These systems motivate students by reinforcing positive behaviors and achievements, thereby encouraging continued engagement and participation (Batool et al., 2023). By consistently acknowledging and rewarding desired behaviors, teachers can foster a positive learning environment that supports the unique needs of students with ASD.

Delegation of responsibilities and adequate supervision are also vital strategies for managing classrooms with students who have ASD. Delegating tasks and responsibilities to students can help them develop essential skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and time management (George et al., 2017). Additionally, providing adequate supervision ensures that students receive the support they need to stay focused and engaged in learning activities. Regular check-ins and individualized attention can help teachers address any challenges promptly and provide tailored support to meet each student's unique needs.

Moreover, creating a sensory-friendly environment is crucial for students with ASD, who often have heightened sensitivities to sensory inputs such as light, sound, and touch (Omoteso & Semudara, 2011). Adjusting the classroom environment to accommodate these sensitivities, such as using soft lighting, reducing noise levels, and providing sensory tools, can significantly enhance the learning experience for these students.

In Rwanda, the implementation of these strategies is particularly important given the growing recognition of ASD and the increasing enrollment of students with ASD in mainstream schools. However, there is a gap in understanding how these strategies are specifically applied and their effectiveness in inclusive educational settings in the country. Empirical evidence is lacking, and teachers often do not have the necessary training and skills to support these students effectively (Onsare et al., 2022). This study aims to address this gap by identifying effective classroom management strategies applied for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District, Rwanda.

Understanding and implementing effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD is not only beneficial for the students but also for the broader school community. A well-managed classroom can reduce disruptions, enhance learning outcomes, and promote a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. By identifying and promoting effective strategies, this study contributes to the development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms that can improve the educational experiences and outcomes for students with ASD in Rwanda and similar contexts.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of ASD and the acknowledged benefits of effective classroom management strategies, there is a significant gap in understanding how these strategies are specifically implemented and their effectiveness in inclusive educational settings in Rwanda. Empirical evidence is lacking, as highlighted by recent studies and official reports. For instance, a qualitative study conducted in Rwandan schools found that while information communication technologies (ICT) can aid in teaching children with ASD, further research is needed to understand their impact fully (Ntalindwa et al., 2019).

Similarly, a systematic review revealed that research on ASD in sub-Saharan Africa is concentrated in a few countries like South Africa and Nigeria, with limited studies from Rwanda, indicating a significant empirical gap (Abubakar et al., 2016). Moreover, the Ministry of Education in Rwanda has acknowledged challenges such as a shortage of specialized teachers, inadequate curricula, and insufficient data systems for supporting children with ASD, underscoring the need for more research and policy development in this area (MINEDUC, 2024).

These gaps are particularly evident in inclusive educational settings where teachers often lack the necessary training and skills to support students with ASD effectively (Onsare et al., 2022). This study aims to address these gaps by identifying effective classroom management strategies applied for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District, Rwanda. The research question guiding this study is: "What are the effective classroom management strategies tailored for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District?"

1.2 Research Objective

The primary objective of this study is to identify effective classroom management strategies applied for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District, Rwanda.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory (SLT), introduced by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in shaping behavior (Bandura, 1977). In the context of classroom management for students with ASD, SLT highlights the importance of positive role models and reinforcement in promoting desired behaviors.

Teachers can use modeling and reinforcement to encourage positive behaviors and reduce disruptive behaviors among students with ASD. SLT posits that individuals learn by observing the behavior of others and the consequences of those behaviors. For students with ASD, observing and imitating positive behaviors modeled by teachers and peers can be a powerful tool for learning appropriate social and academic behaviors. Reinforcement, both positive (e.g., praise, rewards) and negative (e.g., removal of privileges), plays a crucial role in shaping behavior. Teachers can leverage SLT by consistently modeling desired behaviors and providing immediate and consistent reinforcement to encourage their adoption by students with ASD.

2.1.2 Effective Classroom Management for Students with ASD

Creating an effective classroom environment for students with ASD involves several key strategies:

Clear Communication: Using simple and direct language, visual aids, and schedules to help students understand expectations and routines (Barnabas et al., 2010). Clear communication is essential for students with ASD, who often struggle with abstract concepts and ambiguous instructions. Visual aids, such as picture schedules and task analyses, can provide a concrete representation of expectations and routines, reducing anxiety and promoting understanding.

Sensory Accommodations: Adjusting the classroom environment to address sensory sensitivities, such as lighting and noise levels (Omoteso & Semudara, 2011). Students with ASD often have heightened sensory sensitivities, which can lead to sensory overload and distress. Creating a sensory-friendly environment, such as using natural lighting, reducing background noise, and providing sensory tools (e.g., noise-canceling headphones, fidget toys), can help students with ASD focus and engage in learning activities.

Structured Routines: Establishing predictable routines and clear expectations to reduce anxiety and promote a sense of security (George et al., 2017). Predictable routines provide a sense of stability and security for students with ASD, who often struggle with changes in routine. Clear expectations and consistent schedules can help students anticipate and prepare for transitions, reducing anxiety and promoting engagement.

Positive Reinforcement: Focusing on rewarding positive behaviors to encourage and build confidence (Batool et al., 2023). Positive reinforcement is a powerful tool for encouraging desired behaviors and building confidence in students with ASD. By consistently acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviors, teachers can foster a positive learning environment that supports the unique needs of students with ASD.

2.2 Empirical Review

Saima investigated the impact of classroom management strategies on the academic performance of students with ASD. The study found that strategies such as clear communication of rules, praise and reward systems, and structured routines significantly improved academic outcomes and behavioral management for students with ASD. The findings highlighted the importance of consistent implementation and tailored support for effective classroom management (Saima, 2023).

The study emphasized the role of clear communication in reducing anxiety and promoting understanding among students with ASD. By using simple and direct language, visual aids, and schedules, teachers can help students understand expectations and routines, reducing disruptive behaviors and enhancing learning outcomes. The study also highlighted the importance of praise and reward systems in motivating and reinforcing positive behaviors among students with ASD. By consistently acknowledging and rewarding desired behaviors, teachers can foster a positive learning environment that supports academic and behavioral development.

George et al. (2017) examined the relationship between classroom management strategies and the academic performance of students with ASD. The study identified that effective strategies, including clear rules, praise and rewards, delegation of authority, and supervision, positively influenced academic outcomes. The findings emphasized the need for teacher training and consistent application of these strategies to support students with ASD effectively.

The study highlighted the importance of clear rules in establishing a structured and predictable learning environment for students with ASD. By clearly defining expectations and consequences, teachers can reduce disruptive behaviors and promote engagement in learning activities. The study also emphasized the role of praise and rewards in motivating and reinforcing positive behaviors among students with ASD. By consistently acknowledging and rewarding desired behaviors, teachers can foster a positive learning environment that supports academic and behavioral development.

Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of delegation of authority and supervision in promoting independence and responsibility among students with ASD. By assigning tasks and responsibilities to students, teachers can help them develop essential skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and time management. Providing adequate supervision ensures that students receive the support they need to stay focused and engaged in learning activities, promoting academic and behavioral development.

Onsare et al. (2022) analyzed the effect of mainstreaming on the educational experiences of autistic learners in primary schools in Nyamache sub-county, Kisii County, Kenya. The study aimed to assess the impact of Peer Interaction, Learner's Self-Management, Antecedent Procedures, and Peer-Mediated Interventions on the educational

experiences of autistic learners in mainstream settings. Using a descriptive survey design, the study selected 11 out of 102 primary schools that included autistic learners. The participants included 11 head teachers and 36 teachers trained in Special Needs Education (SNE), totaling 47 respondents. Data collection methods included structured questionnaires and observation schedules, analyzed through descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) and inferential statistics (Spearman correlation, chi-square test). The study revealed that the strategies examined significantly enhanced the educational experiences of autistic learners in mainstream schools. Respondents highlighted the importance of peer interaction in improving ASD learners' educational experiences. Self-management, antecedent procedures, and peer-mediated learning were also identified as effective strategies. The statistical analyses indicated a strong association between these approaches and the educational experiences of autistic learners. The study concluded that mainstreaming positively affects ASD learners, supporting their skill development through peer interactions and improving their educational experiences. Recommendations were made to expand mainstreaming efforts and involve the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) in recommending strategies to address diverse learning needs in classrooms.

Ma'rifah and Sinaga (2023) assessed the impact of classroom management on the academic outcomes of undergraduate students, taking into account the views of both teachers and students. The study had two main objectives: to identify classroom management factors from teachers' perspectives and to understand students' viewpoints. The first objective aimed to uncover key classroom management factors, strategies used by teachers, and their effects on students' performance. The study involved 35 randomly selected teachers from the Science and Art University in Yazd Province, who completed a questionnaire comprising three sets of six questions each. The results emphasized the role of addressing students' needs, teachers' expertise, and instructional skills in classroom management. Teachers highlighted the importance of awareness-raising during instructional activities. They also emphasized that effective classroom management is essential for creating a successful learning environment and fostering positive teacher-student relationships, which contribute to students' academic success. Students' responses, gathered using a five-point Likert scale, stressed the need for integrating modern technologies into classrooms. Additionally, students supported transparency, consistent rule enforcement, and adherence to class schedules.

Omoruyi and Aigbedion (2015) explored the impact of classroom management techniques on the academic performance of students in select junior secondary schools in the Municipal Area Council. The study utilized primary data collection methods and analyzed the results using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), focusing on means and simple percentages. The data from questionnaires were tabulated and interpreted. The study found a significant difference between classroom management techniques used in junior secondary schools within the Municipal Area Council and a positive effect on students' academic outcomes. The results indicated a strong correlation between classroom management strategies and academic performance in these schools.

Overall, the literature reviewed highlights the importance of effective classroom management strategies in promoting academic and behavioral development among students with ASD. By implementing strategies such as clear communication, sensory accommodations, structured routines, positive reinforcement, and individualized support, teachers can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that meets the unique needs of students with ASD. The empirical studies reviewed underscore the importance of consistent implementation and tailored support in promoting effective classroom management for students with ASD.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gather comprehensive data on classroom management strategies for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo. This approach was chosen to provide a holistic understanding of the research problem by integrating both numerical data and in-depth insights from participants.

3.2 Target Population

The research population comprised 27 participants, including 24 teachers, 1 Head Teacher, 1 DOS, and 1 Resource Room Manager. The target population for this study comprises the students and teachers at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo, a school located in Kicukiro District. The school caters to students across different class levels, ranging from 1 to 8, covering a diverse age range from 3 to 19 years. The total number of teachers in the school is 26 teachers providing education and support to these students. The study also included key administrative personnel, such as the Head teacher, Director of Studies (DOS), Accountant, and Resources Room Manager, form an integral part of the target population. Their roles in overseeing school operations, resources, and educational planning are relevant to the current study. Therefore, the total population for this study is 29 people.



3.3 Sampling Procedures

To ensure a comprehensive inclusion of all segments within the study population, a mix of simple random sampling and purposive sampling methods were utilized. These methods were employed to select respondents based on distinct categories, aiming to improve the representation of various subsets within the research context.

3.3.1 Simple Random Sampling

To establish the number of teachers included in the sample, a method of simple random sampling has been applied. This approach involved using the Yamane formula to select a subset of respondents from the total population of 26 teachers who have been invited to participate in the study. The formula utilized for this calculation is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = stands for number of samples or sample size

N = stands for total population

e = stands for error of tolerance (5% = 0.5)

3.3.2 Purposive Sampling

In studying the impact of classroom management strategies on the academic performance of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District, purposive sampling selected key personnel like the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teachers (DOs), and Resource Room Manager. This approach aimed to understand how specific strategies influence academic outcomes for students with ASD. Input from these stakeholders provided insights into the implementation and effectiveness of these strategies in creating supportive learning environments for students with ASD, aiding in assessing their impact on academic success.

3.4 Sample Size

In this study, Yamane's formula has been used to calculate the sample size for teachers, with a confidence level of 95% to ensure representativeness and a sampling error of 5% to control for accuracy. The calculation of the sample size was based on a population of 26 teachers from HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District. This decision is due to the minimal number of key administrative personnel, not included in the sample size calculation for the study.

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \\ &= \frac{26}{1 + 26(0.5)^2} \\ &= 24 \text{ teachers} \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the sample size of the current study is 27 respondents including 24 teachers, 1 Resource Room Manager, 1 DOS, and 1 Head teacher from HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this investigation. Primary data was collected via the use of a questionnaire and interviews, and secondary data through the use of documentation review. The selection of these instruments is explained in the following sections.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

These tools have been chosen for this research due to their effectiveness in assessing various aspects such as behavioral patterns, preferences, intentions, attitudes, and opinions of the subjects.

The questionnaire employed in this study were carefully structured and included Likert-style questions designed on a five-point scale. A total of 24 participants engaged in responding to these questionnaires. The utilization of questionnaires serves the purpose of acquiring specific and pertinent data, thereby enhancing the study's precision and realism in terms of data collection. The questionnaires have been employed strategically to extract pertinent insights from the sample population composed of teachers. Adequate time has been allotted to the participants for completing the survey, facilitated through a user-friendly drag-and-drop interface.

3.5.2 In-Depth Interview Guide

To complement data collected from questionnaires, the researcher used semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews involve direct face-to-face interaction, facilitating the exchange of viewpoints. Within the scope of this study, in the data collection phase, the research conducted interviews with a targeted group comprising the Head Teacher, Resource Room Manager, and the Director of Studies.

This approach sought to gather in-depth insights into the perspectives, experiences, and practices of educators who play a pivotal role in implementing classroom management strategies for students with ASD. The inclusion of the



Head Teacher and Director of Studies in the interview process aims to capture overarching administrative perspectives and strategies, providing a holistic understanding of the school's approach to supporting students with ASD. The information obtained from these interviews contributed valuable qualitative data to the study, enriching the exploration of the influence of classroom management strategies on the academic performance of students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Nyarugenge District.

3.5.3 Document Review

In the context of this study, documentary reviews have been employed as a method to acquire secondary research data. This has been achieved by critically examining information available in various sources such as books, journals, reports, school reports, and examination results. The purpose of this approach is to complement primary data collected from the field.

3.6 Data Analysis

Upon collection, the data underwent editing, coding, and categorization based on similarities. To facilitate quantitative analysis, the data was converted into numerical codes to represent the attributes of the research instruments. The analysis incorporated both descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, percentages, and frequency tables and inferential statistics.

For qualitative data, the content thematic analysis method was employed. This technique, characterized by its flexibility and detailed approach, guided the analysis process. The approach chosen centered on capturing the explicitly expressed perceptions of experiences articulated by the participants. This method aims to uncover the consciously held perceptions that shape participants' behavior. Questions from the questionnaire have been chosen and structured using a theoretical framework, guiding the coding process with specific inquiries in mind. Sub-themes have been identified through thorough readings of individual transcripts. Following a preliminary thematic map, the transcripts and coded items were reviewed to enhance the validity of the thematic map.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Teachers' Views on Effective Classroom Management Strategies

The researcher gathered numerical data on teachers' perspectives regarding effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo. The results, presented in Table 1, highlight the teachers' viewpoints.

Table 1

Teachers' Views on Effective Classroom Management Strategies for Students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
The classrooms of HVP Gatagara/Gikondo have clear and consistent rules that are communicated effectively to students with ASD.	1	4.2	3	12.5	3	12.5	6	25	11	45.3	3.9	1.2
Teachers implements effective praise and reward systems to motivate and reinforce positive behavior among students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo.	1	4.2	3	12.5	0	0	5	20.8	15	62.5	4.2	1.2
Teachers and support staff at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo effectively delegate responsibilities and authority to ensure smooth classroom management for students with ASD.	0	0	3	12.5	0	0	11	45.8	10	41.7	4.1	0.9
Adequate supervision is provided to students with ASD to ensure their safety and well-being during classroom activities at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo.	1	4.2	2	8.3	0	0	4	16.7	17	70.8	4.4	1.1

The results presented in Table 1 reveal the teachers' responses regarding effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo. According to the table, a majority of respondents, 17 teachers (70.3%), agreed that the classrooms at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo have clear and consistent rules effectively



communicated to students with ASD, yielding a mean of 3.9 and a standard deviation of 1.2. Additionally, 20 respondents (83.3%) agreed that teachers implement effective praise and reward systems to motivate and reinforce positive behavior among students with ASD, with a mean of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 1.2.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that 22 teachers (87.5%) agreed that teachers and support staff at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo effectively delegate responsibilities and authority to ensure smooth classroom management for students with ASD, showing a mean of 4.1 and a standard deviation of 0.9. Moreover, 22 teachers (87.5%) agreed that adequate supervision is provided to students with ASD to ensure their safety and well-being during classroom activities, with a mean of 4.4 and a standard deviation of 1.1.

Overall, these findings highlight that HVP Gatagara/Gikondo employs several effective classroom management strategies, including clear communication of rules, use of praise and rewards, delegation of responsibilities, and adequate supervision. Collectively, these strategies demonstrate a comprehensive and effective approach to classroom management at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo.

4.2 Key Informants' Views on Effective Classroom Management Strategies

In this research, the views of key informants were sought on effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo. The key informants included the Head Teacher, DOS, and Resource Room Manager at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo. During interactions with these key informants, the primary research question posed was: "What are the effective classroom management strategies tailored for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District?" The following are some answers provided by them.

One of the interviewees said:

"Effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo include collaborating with parents to support students, offering incentives, involving students in decision-making, and creating structured routines with clear expectations. We ensure that all students understand the daily schedule and classroom rules through visual aids and consistent communication. This approach helps reduce anxiety and fosters a sense of stability and predictability, which is crucial for students with ASD."

According to this respondent, effective classroom management strategies tailored for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo involve collaboration with parents, offering incentives, involving students in decision-making, and establishing structured routines with clear expectations. These strategies help reduce anxiety and create a stable, predictable environment essential for students with ASD.

In addition, another respondent provided the following answer:

"From my perspective, effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo include incorporating individualized support plans. Each student with ASD has unique needs, and we tailor our strategies to address these, which includes personalized learning objectives, sensory breaks, and specific behavioral interventions. Collaboration with teachers and support staff is key to successfully implementing these individualized plans."

Finally, another respondent said:

"Classroom management strategies tailored for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo include praising them for any achievements, reinforcing good behavior, assigning small responsibilities, and conducting regular check-ins. These approaches help build their confidence, encourage positive behavior, and ensure continuous support and engagement."

Data from key informants indicate that effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo include collaboration with parents, offering incentives, involving students in decision-making, and establishing structured routines with clear expectations. Additionally, individualized support plans tailored to each student's unique needs, such as sensory breaks and specific behavioral interventions, are crucial. Acknowledging achievements, reinforcing good behavior, assigning small responsibilities, and maintaining regular check-ins are also essential. Together, these strategies reduce anxiety, create stability, and enhance the educational experience for students with ASD.

4.3 Findings from Observation about Effective Classroom Management Strategies

The findings from the observation guide indicate several challenges in implementing effective classroom management strategies tailored for students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo. A significant number of classrooms lack clear and consistent rules communicated through visual aids, which are crucial for helping students with ASD understand and follow routines. Inconsistencies in the use of praise and reward systems further highlight the need for a more uniform approach to reinforce positive behavior among these students.

Delegation of responsibilities and adequate supervision are also inconsistent across classrooms. While some classrooms effectively assign small tasks to students and provide adequate supervision, others do not, leading to potential safety concerns and missed opportunities for students to develop independence. The lack of clear delegation and supervision highlights a gap in ensuring smooth classroom management.



Another major challenge is the variation in teachers' concern for the emotional well-being of students with ASD. Some teachers are attentive and regularly check in with students, offering emotional support, while others are less attentive to these needs. This inconsistency can impact the students' emotional stability and overall classroom experience, making it difficult for them to feel secure and supported.

Finally, the use of individualized teaching strategies and tailored language support is not uniformly applied. While some classrooms demonstrate effective differentiation and individualized support, others rely on generalized teaching methods that may not meet the unique needs of students with ASD. This inconsistency in teaching approaches can hinder the academic progress of students, emphasizing the need for more consistent implementation of tailored strategies to ensure all students receive the support they need to succeed.

4.4 Discussion

The findings of this study align with the existing literature on effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD. The use of clear communication of rules, praise and reward systems, delegation of responsibilities, and adequate supervision are consistent with the strategies identified in previous studies (George et al., 2017; Batool et al., 2023). The importance of individualized support and structured routines is also emphasized in the literature (Barnabas et al., 2010, Omoteso & Semudara, 2011). However, the observations indicate inconsistencies in the implementation of these strategies, highlighting the need for more uniform and consistent application. The variation in teachers' concern for the emotional well-being of students with ASD and the lack of individualized teaching strategies further emphasize the importance of tailored support and training for teachers.

The study found that clear communication of rules, praise and reward systems, and structured routines significantly improved academic outcomes and behavioral management for students with ASD (Saima, 2023). These findings are consistent with the current study, which highlights the importance of these strategies in creating a supportive learning environment for students with ASD.

The study emphasized the role of clear rules in establishing a structured and predictable learning environment for students with ASD (George et al., 2017). The current study supports this finding, as clear communication of rules was identified as an effective strategy for reducing anxiety and promoting understanding among students with ASD.

The importance of praise and reward systems in motivating and reinforcing positive behaviors among students with ASD is also supported by the current study. By consistently acknowledging and rewarding desired behaviors, teachers can foster a positive learning environment that supports the unique needs of students with ASD.

The study highlighted the importance of peer interaction, learner's self-management, antecedent procedures, and peer-mediated interventions in enhancing the educational experiences of autistic learners in mainstream settings (Onsare et al., 2022). The current study supports these findings, as effective classroom management strategies, including collaboration with parents and involving students in decision-making, were identified as crucial for creating a supportive learning environment for students with ASD.

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of effective classroom management strategies for students with ASD in a specific context. The results highlight the importance of clear communication of rules, praise and reward systems, delegation of responsibilities, and adequate supervision. However, the inconsistencies in the implementation of these strategies underscore the need for more uniform and consistent application. Recommendations include enhancing teacher training and promoting a more uniform approach to classroom management strategies to support students with ASD effectively.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District reveals a comprehensive understanding of effective classroom management strategies tailored for students with ASD. The findings emphasize the importance of structured approaches such as clear and consistent rules, visual aids, and positive reinforcement in creating stable and supportive learning environments. Regarding academic performance, while strengths are evident in fine motor skills and basic numeracy, challenges persist in areas like verbal communication and higher-level math concepts, necessitating individualized education plans. The study underscores a significant correlation between tailored management strategies and academic success, supported by quantitative data, correlation analysis, key informant insights, and classroom observations. Overall, the symbiotic relationship between effective classroom management and optimized academic outcomes for students with ASD highlights the ongoing need for targeted interventions and supportive educational environments to ensure holistic development and success.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the current research provides the following recommendations:



Collaborative Efforts: All stakeholders involved in the education sector in Kicukiro District are recommended to work collaboratively to enhance the use of effective classroom management strategies to promote inclusive education. **Resource Availability:** MINEDUC, through REB, is recommended to avail enough and adequate materials indispensable for teaching students with ASD. **Teacher Training:** MINEDUC is also recommended to avail enough training for teachers to equip them with inclusive education skills. **Support for Disability Education:** All stakeholders in the education sector are recommended to the education of students with disabilities, especially those with ASD.

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