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How Confident are Kindergarten Teachers in Their Ability to Keep Order in the Classroom? A Study of Teacher Efficacy in Classroom Management

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Abstract
The objective of the study was to investigate kindergarten teachers' efficacy beliefs in classroom management. The sample size was 299 teachers drawn from both public and private kindergarten schools in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana. The efficacy beliefs of the teachers with respect to their classroom management practices were measured on a six-point Likert agreement survey questionnaire. Findings from the study indicated that kindergarten teachers in the study area had high efficacy beliefs in classroom management practices. No statistically significant difference was found in the efficacy beliefs in classroom management practices of trained and untrained kindergarten teachers, and of public and private kindergarten teachers. The study drew the conclusion that the professional status of the teachers (i.e. whether they were trained or untrained) and their institutional placement (i.e. whether they taught in a public or private school) were not important influential factors in the teachers' efficacy beliefs in classroom management. Recommendations for early childhood teacher education programme and research are made.
Keywords: Classroom management practices, early childhood teacher education, kindergarten teachers, self-efficacy beliefs

1. Introduction

Research shows that any successful change that is to take place at the school level is directly related to the skill and ability of the teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Fitzgerald & Bass, 1997). Teachers are considered to play a critical role in the actualization of the objectives or ideas in the curriculum. No matter what the curriculum suggests, it is the teachers who make the ultimate decision about what goes on in the classroom (Cohen & Hill, 2001).

Among the many important decisions that teachers make is how to create a positive and supportive classroom environment based on a clear and well-organized management plan (Norris, 2003). Well-organized classroom management plans establish the parameters for the physical, social, emotional and intellectual environments of the classroom. The classroom climate teachers establish for themselves and their students greatly affects the learning process. Classrooms where students feel safe to take risks, acquire new knowledge, and know they are valued members of a community are classrooms where learning is optimized (Evertson, Emmer, & Worsham, 2003).

Classroom management refers to a teacher's ability to keep order in the classroom, engage students in learning and elicit students' cooperation in all activities in the classroom (Wong & Wong, 2009). In other words, everything teachers do to get their students to achieve the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for success must be the result of a purposeful and well thought-out series of actions and activities. Stichter, et al. (2009) defined effective classroom management as the management of those general environmental and instructional variables that promote consistent classroom-wide procedures of setup, structure, expectations and feedback. The ability of teachers to organise the classroom and manage the behaviour of the students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes.

Classroom management is an important element of pre-service teacher training and in-service teacher behaviour (Emmer & Stough, 2001), and is comprised of three central components: maximizing time allocated for instruction, arranging instructional activities to maximize academic engagement and achievement, and using proactive behaviour management practices (Sugai & Horner, 2006). These three elements make an effective classroom which, Horn (1998) believed, is the "single biggest factor affecting the academic growth of any population of youngsters" (p. 2). Although sound behaviour management in itself does not guarantee effective instruction, it establishes the environmental context that makes good instruction possible (Emmer & Stough, 2001). The ultimate goals of classroom management are to provide healthy, safe environment for learning and to equip students with the necessary skills to be successful in life, both academically and socially (Wong & Wong, 2009).

Classroom management has become increasingly important over the past few years. The reason being that

without good classroom management, effective teaching and learning cannot and will not take place in our schools (Marzano, Marzano & Pickerings, 2003). If one cannot manage a classroom, one cannot be sure that students are learning the material. Poor classroom management may lead to increased levels of school violence and bullying (Allen, 2010), as well as increased teacher stress levels, increased probability of teacher burnout, and higher levels of teacher attrition (Jepson & Forrest, 2006).

A teacher with poorly managed classroom will spend valuable instructional time maintaining discipline and order, rather than teaching (Nicks, 2012). Such a teacher may ultimately not be able to cover the material that students need to reach the stated lesson objectives or goals of the school. It is, therefore, important that teachers initiate and maintain an efficient and effective classroom management plan that promotes safe learning environment so that they can subsequently enhance academic achievement and success for all students.

1.1 The Research Problem

Classroom management problems are the leading concern of novice and experienced teachers and are the most common causes of teacher attrition within the first five years of teaching (Ritter & Hancock, 2009; Rosas & West, 2009). Yet, teacher education programmes have generally failed to provide a well-conceptualised practical approach to classroom management (Burden, 1983). The Ghanaian context is not an exception. Although some teacher education programmes in the country require some form of training in classroom management, a critical scrutiny of the early childhood teacher education curriculum in colleges of education and universities in Ghana reveals that little emphasis is laid on classroom management. This implies that kindergarten teachers may feel not adequately prepared to manage their classrooms effectively. They are likely to have doubts in their ability and competence in maximizing proactive classroom management practices to promote young children's learning.

Examining kindergarten teachers' efficacy beliefs in classroom management would provide data that would fill an important gap in the literature on early childhood teacher efficacy research in Ghana, and point direction to early childhood teacher education curriculum review.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate kindergarten teachers' efficacy beliefs about classroom management and its implications for the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum in the Kumasi metropolis. More importantly, the study sought to find out whether or not teacher professional status (i.e. whether trained or untrained) and institutional placement (i.e. whether public or private school) influence kindergarten teachers' classroom management efficacy.

1.3 Guiding Research Question and Hypotheses

The following research question and hypotheses guided the study:

- *Research question*: What are kindergarten teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about their classroom management practices?
- *Hypothesis 1:* There will be no statistically significant difference in the efficacy beliefs of trained and untrained kindergarten teachers with respect to their classroom management practices.
- *Hypothesis 2:* There will be no statistically significant difference in the efficacy beliefs of public and private kindergarten teachers with respect to their classroom management practices.

2. Research on Teacher Efficacy Beliefs in Classroom Management Practices

Earlier research on teacher efficacy by Gibson and Dembo (1984) identified two dimensions: personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. Woolfolk, Rosoff, and Hoy (1990) proposed that teachers' sense of efficacy (i.e. the belief that they can have a positive effect on student learning), whether personal or general, appeared to be related to teacher approaches to classroom management. Emmer and Hickman (1991) extended this research and defined a third factor called teacher efficacy for classroom management and discipline. They reported that high efficacy in this area predicted preferences for certain teacher strategies to manage situations, such as encouraging students to expand more effort, providing praise and helping students develop goals to become successful. Brouwers and Tomic (2000) defined teacher perceived self-efficacy in classroom management as teachers' beliefs in their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to maintain classroom order. Similarly, according to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), teachers' sense of efficacy for classroom management concerns their beliefs that they can maintain an orderly, organized, non-distractive classroom environment.

Teachers' efficacy beliefs could have an impact on their management strategies, and perceptions of attaining and maintaining a comfortable classroom environment. This has been confirmed by research on prospective teachers reported by Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) who argued that prospective teachers' beliefs about student control could impact how they managed their classrooms. Brouwers and Tomic (2000) noted that people who doubted their abilities in particular domains of activity were quick to consider such activities as threats, which they preferred to avoid. From

this perspective, teachers who distrusted their ability to maintain classroom order or who lacked confidence in their classroom management abilities were likely to be threatened by the classroom environment and be confronted by their incompetence every day. At the same time, teachers understand that if they are to perform well and help their students achieve their educational goals, then the importance of competence cannot be underestimated (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). This internal conflict could cause distress and impact instructional and behavioural strategies that teachers use to establish and maintain order in their classrooms.

Research suggests that highly efficacious teachers use a variety of methods, strategies, and resources to monitor and manage their classes. Teachers who believe in their abilities to effectively teach and deal with classroom issues are more motivated and persistent in managing their students when compared to low efficacious teachers who tend to lower their efforts and give up easily (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Teachers with weak efficacy beliefs are more likely to utilize poor teaching strategies and ineffective response styles (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Hoy & Spero, 2005), and are more likely to experience negative emotions such as stress, anger, frustration, embarrassment, or guilt (Friedman, 2003; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Shechtman et al., 2005).

Several researchers have investigated the relationship between teachers' efficacy to manage their class and teacher burnout (Betoret, 2006; Brouwers, Evers & Tomic, 2001). Chwalisz, Altmaier and Russell (1992) found that teachers who score low in self-efficacy reported a higher degree of burnout than their counterparts who score high in self-efficacy. Greenglass and Burke (1988) conclude that doubts about self-efficacy contributed significantly to the development of burnout among male teachers. Friedman and Farber (1992) found that teachers who considered themselves less competent in classroom management and discipline reported a higher level of burnout than their counterparts who have more confidence in their competence in this regard. Some findings suggest that teachers' efficacy beliefs to manage their class may mediate the impact of teacher stressors on mental health outcomes (Betoret, 2006; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008).

In the recent past, research on classroom management has mainly focused on student disciplinary issues, with the finding that disruptive student behaviours have significant impact on teachers' perceptions about their abilities to teach (Almog & Shechtman, 2007; Brouwers & Tomic, 2001; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Shechtman et al., 2005). Teachers with high perceptions of their teaching ability have fewer disruptive students in their classes than teachers with low perceptions of their teaching ability (Kokkinos, 2007). Also, high efficacious teachers are more likely to believe that their disruptive students' behaviour will diminish rather than continue, whereas low efficacious teachers are more apt to respond to student misbehaviour with anger and more severe punishments (Almog & Shechtman, 2007).

Brouwers & Tomic (1999) noted that when teachers have little confidence in their ability to maintain classroom order, they will likely give up easily in the face of continuous disruptive student behaviour. As a consequence they feel ineffective in their attempts to maintain classroom order. It is reasonable to assume that these feelings of ineffectiveness will quickly arise after a decline in perceived self-efficacy. Teachers who doubt their ability to maintain classroom order also do less to solve the problem of disorder in the classroom.

3. The method

3.1 Research Design

This study sought to collect data about the classroom management efficacy beliefs of kindergarten teachers at one point in time (i.e. not taking multiple measures over an extended period of time), focusing on studying and drawing inferences from any existing differences between the efficacy beliefs of trained and untrained teachers, and between public and private school teachers. Hence, the cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This design has the merit of being appropriately suited to gathering demographic data that describe the composition of the sample. Moreover, the researcher does not consciously aim at any active intervention to produce and measure change or to create differences, and findings derived from the study can easily be generalized (Kothari & Garg, 2014). These considerations influenced the researchers' choice of the descriptive survey design for the study.

3.2 Population and Sample Selection

The population for the study was all kindergarten teachers in the Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana, who were working in both public and private school during the 2013/2014 academic year. A list obtained from the Kumasi Metropolitan Directorate of the Ghana Education Service at the time of the study showed that there were 972 registered kindergarten schools within the Kumasi Metropolis, made up of 202 public and 770 private schools with 231 and 925 teachers respectively, giving a total of 1156 teachers.

Following the procedure used by the authors in an earlier study (Cobbold & Boateng, 2015), a three-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample. First, purposive sampling was used to select schools which had operated for five years or more, and were recognised by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Social Welfare Department in the metropolis. Drawing from knowledge in educational evaluation, a five-year period was considered sufficient enough to assess any aspect of a school's instructional programme. Official recognition of the schools by

the GES and SWD also "ensured that those schools operated under nationally accepted conditions in terms of physical infrastructure and instructional resources, among other criteria" (Cobbold & Boateng, 2015, p. 179). The application of the two criteria simultaneously yielded 75 public schools and 125 private schools. In the second stage of the sampling process, all the 75 public schools derived from the first stage were selected on account of their comparatively small number in relation to the private schools, and an equal number (75) of private schools were selected by simple random technique. In the third and final stage of the sampling process, all kindergarten 1 and 2 teachers from both types of schools sampled during the second stage were included. Together, a total of 350 teachers (175 each from public and private schools) constituted the initial sample for the study.

The three-stage sampling process adopted enabled the researchers to study the differences that might exist between the two sub-groups of the population, that is, public school kindergarten teachers and private school kindergarten teachers. Secondly, the process guaranteed adequate representation of the two groups of teachers in the study (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002).

3.3 Research Instrument and its Reliability

The instrument used to collect data for this study was the efficacy for classroom management practices sub-scale of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). The original TSES uses a nine-point Likert scale with an overall reliability of .94. However, many studies on teacher efficacy (e.g. Attay, 2007; Bakar & Mohammed, 2008; Poulou, 2007) used a five-point Likert scale of the TSES.

The present study measured kindergarten teachers' efficacy for classroom management practices on a six-point Likert agreement scale with values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The six-point Likert agreement scale was chosen for two reasons: (1) to reduce the risks which might be happening from the deviation of personal decision making and (2) to get discrimination and reliability values which are higher than the 5-point Likert scale (Gwinner, 2006; Chomeya, 2010).

It is also worth indicating that originally, TSES asks respondents "*How much....?*" questions. For example, *how much can you do to get through to the most difficult or unmotivated students?* However, since the main focus of the current study is teachers' personal beliefs with respect to their own teaching abilities, and not their beliefs concerning whether teaching can alter pupils' performance, we made slight changes to the presentation of the scale by asking respondents to indicate their personal confidence level concerning each of the teaching task or activities. For example, we asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to statements such as "*I am able to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom*" and "*I am able to do much to get children to follow classroom rules.*"

The final draft of the survey instrument consisted of two parts. The first part included 6 items measuring teachers' demographic characteristics such as age, educational background, length of teaching experience, gender, teacher professional status (trained or untrained) as well as institutional placement (public school or private school). The second part also consisted of eight items measuring efficacy for classroom management practices.

Though the reliability of the TSES had been established, there was a need to pre-test it again because of the few modifications made, and also to re-establish the instrument's reliability in the specific context of Ghana. This was done with 45 kindergarten teachers (26 from public schools and 19 from private schools) in a district different from but sharing similar characteristics with the Kumasi metropolis where the main study was conducted. Analysis of the pre-test data established a Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient of .83. George and Mallery (2003) would interpret this to mean that the internal consistency of the items in the scale was *good*, and Gliem and Gliem (2003) would describe it as *high*. Overall, therefore, the research instrument was acceptable.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

We administered the questionnaire personally to the teachers in their respective school. We sought permission from the Metropolitan Director of Education, Kumasi to engage both public and private kindergarten teachers in the study. It took us six weeks to administer the questionnaires. We visited the schools in the last three weeks of February, the first two weeks of March and the second week of April, 2014. We sought entry in each school by presenting the approval letter from the Metropolitan Director of Education to the head teachers, who also gave us permission to engage the kindergarten teachers.

In each school, we explained the purpose of the study and assured the teachers that their responses would be used solely for academic purposes and treated with maximum confidentiality. We also assured them that their names and schools were not going to be used in the write-up. In each selected school, kindergarten 1 and 2 teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaire. Three hundred and fifty questionnaire were administered and a total of 299 questionnaires representing 85. 43% were dully filled and returned.

3.5 Data Analysis

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical tools in the analysis of the data to answer the research questions. The resultant data from the descriptive analysis were organised into Tables of frequency and

simple percentages. A t-test for Independent samples was conducted to investigate the possible differences in teacher efficacy beliefs and professional status (i.e. whether trained or untrained) as well as institutional placement (i.e. whether public or private school). The 0.05 alpha level was used as a criterion of statistical significance for all the statistical procedures performed.

4. The Results

Of the total sample (n=299), 18.7% were men and 81.3% were women. The age of the respondents ranged from 20 to 61. About 57.2% of the respondents were teaching in public schools compared to 42.8% who worked in private kindergarten schools. Majority (64.2%) of the kindergarten teachers had low academic and professional background whereas 35.8% had academic and professional background required to teach at the basic school in Ghana.

4.1 Teacher's Self-Efficacy about their Classroom Management Practices

Eight items on a six-point Likert agreement scale were used to measure kindergarten teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management practices. Teachers' responses were coded as follows: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Moderately Disagree (MD), 3= Disagree (D), 4= Agree (A), 5= Moderately Agree (MA) and 6= Strongly Agree (SA). In the interpretation of the scores, frequencies, mean and standard deviation were used, and the means were interpreted as follows: 1.00-3.49 indicate low efficacy and 3.50-6.00 indicate high efficacy. Table 1 presents the results.

As Table 1 shows, the kindergarten teachers' reported high efficacy for all the eight classroom management practices listed, with an overall mean score of 4.39 (SD=1.243). Seven of the classroom management practices recorded mean scores of 4.30 or higher with only one, ability to 'keep a few problem pupils from disrupting an entire lesson,' recording a slightly lower mean (M= 4.23, SD =1.303).

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

This study assumed that the professional status of kindergarten teachers and the type of school where they teach could be important factors in predicting their efficacy in classroom management practices. This assumption informed the two research hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the study. Both hypotheses were tested using the independent samples t-test statistical technique at a p-value of 0.05.

Table 1: Respondents' Efficacy Beliefs for Classroom Management Practices

Classroom management practices	SD	MD	D	A	MA	SA	Total	Mean	STD
I am able to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom	4 (1.3%)	14 (4.7%)	56 (18.7%)	94 (31.6%)	67 (22.6%)	62 (20.9%)	297	4.32	1.209
I can do much to get pupils to follow classroom rules	2 (.7%)	12 (4%)	47 (15.9%)	97 (32.8%)	54 (18.2%)	84 (28.4%)	296	4.49	1.210
I am able to calm a pupil who is disruptive or noisy	3 (1%)	15 (5.1%)	47 (15.9%)	94 (31.4%)	71 (24%)	66 (22.3%)	296	4.40	1.197
I am able to establish classroom management system with each group of pupils	4 (1.4%)	13 (4.4%)	46 (15.6%)	100 (34%)	72 (24.5%)	59 (20.1%)	294	4.36	1.274
I can keep a few problem pupils from disrupting an entire lesson	7 (2.4%)	21 (7.1%)	55 (18.7%)	89 (30.3%)	59 (20.1%)	63 (21.4%)	294	4.23	1.303
I am able to handle effectively defiant pupils	6 (2%)	14 (4.7%)	52 (17.6%)	89 (30.1%)	77 (26%)	58 (19.6%)	296	4.32	1.222
I can take adequate measures that are necessary to keep activities running	5 (1.7%)	15 (5%)	44 (14.9%)	79 (26.7%)	70 (23.6%)	83 (28%)	296	4.50	1.273
I am able to always make my expectation about pupils' behaviour to my pupils	5 (1.7%)	15 (5%)	45 (15.1%)	76 (25.5%)	79 (26.5%)	78 (26.2%)	298	4.49	1.259
Overall Mean Score								**4.39**	**1.243**

4.2.1 Professional Status and Efficacy Beliefs in Classroom Management

Hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant difference in the efficacy beliefs of trained and untrained kindergarten teachers regarding their classroom management practices.

The results of the statistical test for this hypothesis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Independent Sample T-test on Efficacy Beliefs in Classroom Management Practices of Trained and Untrained Kindergarten Teachers

Efficacy for Classroom Management	DF	MD	t	P-value
I am able to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom	295	.148	1.011	.313
I can do much to get pupils to follow classroom rules	294	.486	3.371	*.001
I am able to calm a pupil who is disruptive or noisy	294	.060	.415	.679
I am able to establish classroom management system with each group of pupils	292	.224	1.574	.117
I can keep a few problem pupils from disrupting an entire lesson	292	-.055	-.346	.730
I am able to handle effectively defiant pupils	294	.161	1.090	.227
I can take adequate measures that are necessary to keep activities running	294	.305	1.993	*.047
I am able to always make my expectation about pupils' behaviour clear to my pupils	296	.291	1.921	.056
Overall	**294**		**1.379**	**.271**

*p-value<0.05

Table 2 shows that six of the classroom management practices of both trained and untrained kindergarten teachers appear not to differ significantly at the 5% level of probability. However, two of the classroom management practices, that is, 'I can do much to get pupils to follow classroom rules (t_{294} =3.371, p=.001) and 'I can take adequate measures that are necessary to keep activities running (t_{294}=1.993, p=.047) appear to differ among trained and untrained teachers. Despite this difference, the overall statistical evidence (t_{294} =1.379, p=.271) shows that efficacy beliefs of trained and untrained kindergarten teachers with regard to their classroom management practices do not differ. The null hypothesis is therefore confirmed.

4.2.2 Institutional Placement and Efficacy Beliefs in Classroom Management

Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant difference in the efficacy beliefs of public kindergarten teachers and kindergarten teachers with respect to their classroom management practices.

The results of the statistical test for this hypothesis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Independent Sample t-test on Efficacy Beliefs in Classroom Management Practices of Public and Private Kindergarten Teachers

Efficacy for Classroom Management	DF	MD	t	P-value
I am able to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom	295	.019	.133	.894
I can do much to get pupils to follow classroom rules	294	-.127	-.894	.372
I am able to calm a pupil who is disruptive or noisy	294	-.066	-.471	.638
I am able to establish classroom management system with each group of pupils	292	-.288	-2.097	*.037
I can keep a few problem pupils from disrupting an entire lesson	292	-.013	-.085	.932
I am able to handle effectively defiant pupils	294	-.099	-.685	.494
I can take adequate measures that are necessary to keep activities running	294	-.091	-.606	.545
I am able to always make my expectation about pupils' behaviour clear to my pupils	296	-.011	-.074	.941
Overall	**293**		**-.493**	**.606**

*p-value<0.05

Table 3 reveals that almost all the classroom management practices of both public and private kindergarten teachers appear not to differ significantly except their ability to "establish classroom management system with each group of pupils," which appears to be significant at 5% level of probability (t_{292}= -2.097, p=.037). The overall statistical evidence (t_{293}= -.493, p=.606) is that efficacy beliefs of public and private kindergarten teachers with regard to their classroom management practices do not differ. The null hypothesis is therefore retained.

4. Discussion

The present study found that kindergarten teachers in the Kumasi metropolis presented a high sense of efficacy (M= 4.23, SD=1.234) in classroom management. This suggests that they can confidently organize and execute courses of action required to maintain classroom order. Poulou (2007) and Guo, Justice, Sawyer and Tompkins (2011) reported similar findings, though with lower means (3.5 and 3.6 respectively), for preschool teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management. The difference in the means reported in the current study and the two earlier studies could be attributed to two factors. Firstly, it could be due to the different measurement instruments used to assess the teachers' sense of self-efficacy. Poulou (2007) and Guo et al. (2011) used a five-point scale Likert scale while the present study used a six-point scale. Bakar, Mohammed and Zakaria's (2012) assertion supports this explanation. According to them, the findings of many studies assessing teachers' sense of efficacy across different cultures have been similar, although each study might have used a different instrument.

Secondly, it could also be that the kindergarten teachers in the present study overestimated their actual level of competence since self-efficacy has to do with self-perception of competence rather than actual level of competence (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998). Out of the 299 teachers sampled, only 35.8% had received formal training for the position they occupy as against 64.2% who had received no training. Given the academic and professional background of these teachers one would have expected low efficacy. It is important to note that sometimes people overestimate or underestimate their actual abilities, and these estimations may have consequences for the courses of action they choose to pursue or the effort they exert especially in the implementation of a new kindergarten curriculum.

The study also reveals that the kindergarten teachers felt less efficacious in their ability to keep a few problem pupils from disrupting an entire lesson. This seems to suggest that they are more competent in handling pupils' behaviour as a group than to manage the unique behaviour of individual pupils. This finding echoes one of the outcomes of a previous study by Cobbold and Boateng (2015) who found that kindergarten teachers were more competent in providing instruction to pupils as a group than meeting the distinctive learning needs of pupils in their classroom.

The study revealed no significant difference ($t_{1.379}$ =294, p=.271) in the classroom management efficacy beliefs among trained and untrained kindergarten teachers. On the one hand, this result is interesting when one considers that trained kindergarten teachers would have taken courses in classroom management practices and undergone teaching practice as part of their pre-service training programme. Such training is expected to make the trained teachers more efficacious in classroom management practices than the untrained teachers who had received no similar training. Indeed, results from previous studies indicated that classroom management courses and teaching experience exerted effects on classroom management approaches (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Chambers & Hardy, 2005).

On the other hand, the absence of statistically significant difference in the classroom management efficacy beliefs of trained and untrained kindergarten teachers is not surprising. Some studies (e.g. Gencer & Cakiroglu, 2007; Martin et al., 2006; Yilmaz & Cavas, 2008) found that courses in classroom management and participation in teaching practice had no impact on classroom management practices. Martin et al. (2006), for example, found no significant difference between fourth and first year pre-service teachers' beliefs with respect to their classroom management practices. In that study, the fourth year pre-service teachers had completed their classroom management courses and teaching practice, but the first year pre-service teachers were yet to start these activities. Some teachers even report that they learned their classroom management skills on the job rather than through quality exercises and meaningful practicum in their pre-service teacher education (Nicks, 2012).

The results of the independent sample t-test on efficacy beliefs in classroom management practices among public and private kindergarten teachers show that the two groups of teachers did not appeared to differ significantly in their classroom management practices except their ability to "establish classroom management system with each group of pupils" which was significant at 5% level of probability ($t_{-2.097}$ = 292, p=.037).

A plausible reason for the slight difference in efficacy in classroom management practices among public and private kindergarten teachers may be the crowded classrooms in public schools. Kindergarten teachers in the public school have large class size than their counterparts in the private schools. Large class size is a central problem for the implementation of interactive teaching strategies. Forming groups, involving all the students, gaining cooperation, maintaining appropriate behaviours and using the time efficiently are more difficult in large classes than small classes. Studies that have investigated the relationship between class size and classroom management attitudes of teachers have found out that as the class size increases, the level of teacher control increases, especially in terms of behaviour and people management strategies (Kutlu, 2006; Erol, 2006).

5. Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- The kindergarten teachers in the Kumasi metropolis report high sense of efficacy in classroom management practices. They are highly confident in their ability to organise and execute courses of action required to maintain classroom order.

- The professional status of the kindergarten teachers (i.e. whether they are trained or untrained) is not an important factor in predicting their efficacy in classroom management.
- The type of school where the kindergarten teachers work (i.e. whether public or private) is not an important factor in predicting their efficacy in classroom management.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that at both the pre-service and in-service levels, early childhood teacher education programmes in Ghana should emphasize teacher trainees' ability to: (1) manage the peculiar behaviour of individual pupils; and (2) establish classroom management systems appropriate for each group of learners.

It is also recommended that further research on the topic of teacher self-efficacy in classroom management be conducted with a larger sample drawn from a widely distributed population to determine possible factors that influence the classroom management skills and abilities of kindergarten teachers.

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