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## Evaluation of School and Classroom Rules in Primary Schools In Accordance With Classroom Teachers' Opinions in Northern Cyprus

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to evaluate the school and classroom rules of primary schools in Northern Cyprus in accordance with the classroom teachers' opinions. In this research, conducted within this scope of this particular aim, the qualitative method of interviewing has been utilised. The research's population consists of classroom teachers who teach Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Social Sciences employed in primary schools in Northern Cyprus. The sample group of the research is formed of 55 classroom teachers chosen with the maximum variation sampling method. A semi-structured interview form developed by researchers for classroom teachers has been used as the data gathering tool of the research. Case study was also used in this qualitative research as a research model. The implementation period of the research has been executed as an interview method after receiving the necessary permission from Northern Cyprus Ministry of Education, Department of Primary Education and afterwards, face-to-face interviews were carried out with the classroom teachers of the sample group to gather the research data. In light of this study which concerns the school and classroom rules in primary education institutions, certain suggestions were put forward.

**Keywords:** school rules, classroom rules, Northern Cyprus

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary factor to be considered when regarding the development of a country or a society. In addition, individuals require a life-long education to achieve and maintain their personal development and address their various needs. Ilgar (2005), states that the only way for a country's social, cultural and economic development and reaching the same level as developed countries is through education. Furthermore, Ilgar also states that education has an important role in the development of a country and its adaptation to the current age.

Even though education is known as the "art of behavioural modification" in the most common sense, contemporary and extensive definitions can be found regarding this concept in literature. In their definition, Demirel and Kaya (2007) express that education is a social process providing social sufficiency and maximum development; especially under the influence of schools. Similarly, Deniz, Avşaroğlu and Fidan (2006) have identified education as a process of behaviour modification and development that is progressive in life's all stages. Öz (2003) expresses that education is a process which lasts from one's birth to death and states that it is a concept

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#### State of the literature

- Having rules is a must for classroom management.
- Setting up rules is a process and should be equitable, fast, effective, and mutually acceptable.
- 'Classroom management' is essential for learning process.

#### Contribution of this paper to the literature

- Setting up rules and classroom management contribute to both classroom teachers' and learners' learning process.
- The nature of the classroom management programs need to be changed for the benefit of the practitioners.
- Classroom teachers need to go through the process of setting up rules in order to develop new perspectives, understandings and practices in both learning and teaching.

that takes the following as basis: an individual's personal features and governing them in accordance with their talents, their acquirement of positive behaviours and their access to necessary information.

Based on education being a process, the basic features listed below have been determined (Cafoglu, 2007):

- Behaviours of individuals are altered through education in the desired way.
- Individuals need to actively participate in the process in order to achieve alterations in the terminal behaviour.
- The behavioural alterations of the individuals are not coincidental or random, but deliberate.
- The desired behaviour alterations of the individuals are in accordance with a pre-determined plan and program.

Education is related to the concepts of teaching and learning. Thus, it will be useful to also consider the concepts of teaching and learning while clarifying the concept of education. In their definition of learning concept, Erden and Akman (1998) state that learning eventually brings forth a series of alterations in behaviour; is a product of life and it leaves its mark on the long-term basis. When learning, the role and importance of efficient teaching is an incontrovertible fact. Demirel (2011), for achieving learning, defines teaching as a planned, deliberate and systematic process.

Effective management of a classroom plays an important role when the learning and teaching processes are to be maintained in the desired means and also for preventing undesired behaviours in a school or a classroom through discipline. Classroom teachers' recognition of responsible behaviour and discussion with students relate to less distraction and greater belief that the intervention was necessary (Lewis, R., Romi, S., Qui, X. and Katz, J. 2005).

Classroom management is regarded as the strategies and methods implemented by classroom teachers to manage the students' behaviours in order to create an effective learning environment, incline them into cooperation and to increase their responsibility (Emmer & Emertson, 2013). Gold and Holodynski (2017) argue that setting rules and routines (at the beginning of the school year) are understood as the teacher's strategies designed to stabilize the primary action program. Allen (2010), in the strict sense, has defined classroom management as managing students' behaviours in a learning environment and disciplining negative behaviours. With a similar statement, Gilpatrick (2010) defines classroom management as a body of rules that requires the teacher to be responsible while consisting of a classroom's physical structure and the interactions between the teacher and his/her students. Steffensky, M., Gold, B., Holdynski, M., & Möller, K. (2015) define classroom management as orchestrating classroom activities smoothly, establishing socially shared expectations as well as monitoring and preventing interruptions and misbehavior in order to ensure as much time on task as possible.

According to Tal (2010), classroom management is a systematic process that consists of planning and implementing factors while also considering the students and external factors. According to the relevant literature, classroom management is a systematic process conducted to generate desired behaviours in the learners in

accordance with a certain framework of rules, use time efficiently and in a productive manner, correct problematic behaviours and create an efficient learning environment. According to Lewis, R., Romi, S., Qui, X. And Katz, Y. (2008) for classroom management classroom teachers' recognition of responsible behaviour and discussion with students relate to less distraction. Lewis, R., Romi, S., Qui, X. and Katz, Y. (2008) argue that there are likely to be cultural differences associated with preferred styles of discipline too. For example, differences of opinion between Chinese and other Americans (Mitchel, 2001) appear to focus on the relative virtues of submission to authority versus the child's right to be assertive and individualistic.

According to Shechtman & Leichtenritt (2004), a teacher's behaviour, attitude and strategies have effects on maintaining productive learning activities and discipline in the classroom during the learning and teaching process. Classroom teachers are equipped with the required knowledge and skills for classroom management can efficiently utilise teaching methods and teaching tools while identifying and implementing teaching programmes in such a manner that they can alter the students' behaviours. However, classroom teachers can encounter some problems while they are fulfilling this basic duty. Controlling the students' classroom activities and homework, improving and developing the studying environment in a classroom and eliminating factors that prevent teaching, can be given as examples to these problems. The concept of classroom management includes all the approaches, strategies, methods and techniques classroom teachers use in order to ensure all the aforementioned factors in a classroom.

Classroom management requires change and development. According to Kiraz and Omağ (2013) educational programs are updated and redesigned according to the 'developing by changing principle', which is a result of technology. These programs predict an understanding of learner centred teaching methods by decreasing the traditional approach.

The purposes of teaching and learning processes have an extensive place in literature. Erden (2008), states that classroom management has purposes such as using time efficiently in classroom activities, maintaining the classroom activities in an organised and productive fashion, and contributing in the development of self-management skills of the learners. Başar (2003) states that classroom management has several purposes. The most important of those are defined as organising the learning environment and reaching the pre-determined goal, using time efficiently, defining the classroom rules and helping the students adopt, ensuring a productive student - student, teacher - student communication, ensuring classroom appropriate behaviours from the students and motivating them.

Çalık (2009), defines the following as the primary aims of classroom management: preparing an organised and secure environment that will motivate the students, contributing in the development of the students' sense of responsibility and aiding them in correcting their behaviour. Additionally, Çalık (2009) states that in an effective classroom management, the students' behaviour should not be adjusted by pressure or enforcement; but by ensuring their participation and willingness while also aiding them in self-management. He also underlines the necessity to perceive classroom management as a tool for developing the students' sense of responsibility, self-assessment, control and internalising self-control.

There are some important factors that affect classroom management. Considering these factors plays an important role in ensuring an efficient classroom management. The main ones of these factors are education policies, teacher profile, teaching principles and methods, physical structure of the school and the classroom, family, features of students and their basic needs, environment and the school's management structure. Considering the teacher, as the one who manages the classroom, and acknowledging the basic skills the classroom teachers need to possess as a classroom manager are of utmost importance.

For an efficient classroom management and learning process, the teacher factor is regarded to be rather important. Classroom teachers generating a healthy form of communication with their students, organising classroom activities efficiently during teaching and learning activities and ensuring that these activities transform into educational attainment, are of importance for classroom management. In addition to this, the classroom teachers are expected to be aware of the events occurring in the classroom and organise that classroom environment in accordance with the features and requirements of the learners (Celep, 2002; Özyürek, 2005).

Kaçmaz (2006) has discussed the necessity for classroom teachers to be equipped with an immense knowledge and skill in order to actualise the pre-determined activities during the education and teaching processes. In addition to this, Kaçmaz states that, while educating classroom teachers for their future occupation, classroom management is the primary feature a they should possess among their basic qualifications. According to Simpson and Allday (2008), a productive and efficient process of learning and teaching and the learners' attainment of pre-determined achievements can be realised only through an efficient form of self-management of classroom teachers' behaviours. Çağlar and Kurtuluş (2005), list the efficient classroom management principles as follows:

- Classroom teachers should value their students in the classroom. It is possible for a student to misbehave in a classroom if he/she feels a lack of belonging or value.
- Classroom rules should not only apply for students, but also for the classroom teachers.
- Instead of an interdictor and oppressive sense of discipline, a more constructive, reparative and positive approach should be adopted.
- During the evaluation process of a student's problematic behaviours, listening to that student, avoiding judgemental approaches and a positive solution for the unwanted behaviours should be encouraged.
- Students should not be forced to apologise.
- Students should not be threatened.
- Small and non-critical situations should not be exaggerated.
- The dignity of the students should be considered in the learning environment.
- A fair and totalitarian approach should be displayed in the classroom.
- Exaggerated praises should be avoided.
- Activities that will motivate the learners, that are interesting and will ensure their active participation should be organised.
- Interesting and motivating materials should be used during activities.
- Time should be used efficiently and productively.
- If existing, the source of a problem within the classroom should be investigated and ways of resolution should be searched for.
- The purpose of discipline in a classroom should not be to punish the students, but to alter their behaviours and cognisance.
- To prevent discipline problems and alter incorrect behaviour, an early and appropriate method of interference should be found.
- It should be remembered that the discipline problems within a classroom can be a result of the student's aggressive personality, social interactions or family.
- The discipline approach of a classroom should be based on mutual respect and face-to-face communication.
- The teacher should be positive and tolerant to his/her students.
- The disciplinary approach in a classroom should not be based on individual behaviour, but on group actions.
- Instead focusing on exceptions, the general behaviour within a classroom should be considered.
- To preserve efficiency, a technique or approach should not be overused.

Similar to these statements, Celep (2008), stated that the classroom teachers should form healthy communications with their students within a classroom. He states that the foundation of education is formed by healthy communications. For this reason, the teacher should create a democratic environment in the classroom and ensure that their students can express themselves in a comfortable and free manner. Marzano & Marzano (2003), state that classroom teachers should make the necessary alterations in the classroom system and classroom management to address the needs of all students, to provide maximum level of learning and to contribute in their feeling of worthiness. Another factor is the efficient management of time.

McLeod, Fisher & Hoover (2003), by mentioning the concept of “time”, state that it is a value that cannot be saved, bought, decreased or increased; but a value that can only be utilised at the present moment. Thus, they define the concept of time as one of the strategic factors of classroom management and state that classroom teachers should control the factors affecting its use while also utilising the current time as efficiently and productive as possible.

During an effective classroom management process, the school and classroom rules are given a considerable importance. Turkish Language Society (TLS) explains the concept of “Rules” as a collective of principles that derives behaviour and should be abided. Erdoğan (2001) defines the concept of rules as written or verbal regulations created to ensure a healthy, productive and efficient maintenance of relationships. Rules in the school or classroom environment are important factors for preventing misbehaviour, ensuring discipline and creating an efficient learning environment.

When rules are considered, what comes to mind is the written and non-written regulations that exist to maintain organised, efficient and non-problematic interactions among individuals. Not all existing rules need to generate from a written text. In social environments, non-written rules are as effective as those which are written. In our daily lives, several rules exist which derive our behaviour and relationships. Some of those rules are clear and easily understandable; they are also presented as written texts. In addition to these, there are subtle, implicit and non-written rules also exist. For example; etiquettes, games that children play as groups or parents’ rules about watching television, teeth brushing, hand washing, studying are some examples to many rules which are not based on written texts. The most distinct feature of these rules is the fact that they can differ among societies and individuals and that they have a flexible structure (Aktaş, 2010).

Many rules that aim to regulate the relationships of individuals in social life, derive them to be consistent, organised, productive and successful. For example, the non-smoking rule in public places determines where individuals can smoke or not. With these rules, societies present what they expect from each individual. Individuals specify and shape their own behaviour in accordance with these sort of rules (Durukan & Öztürk, 2005).

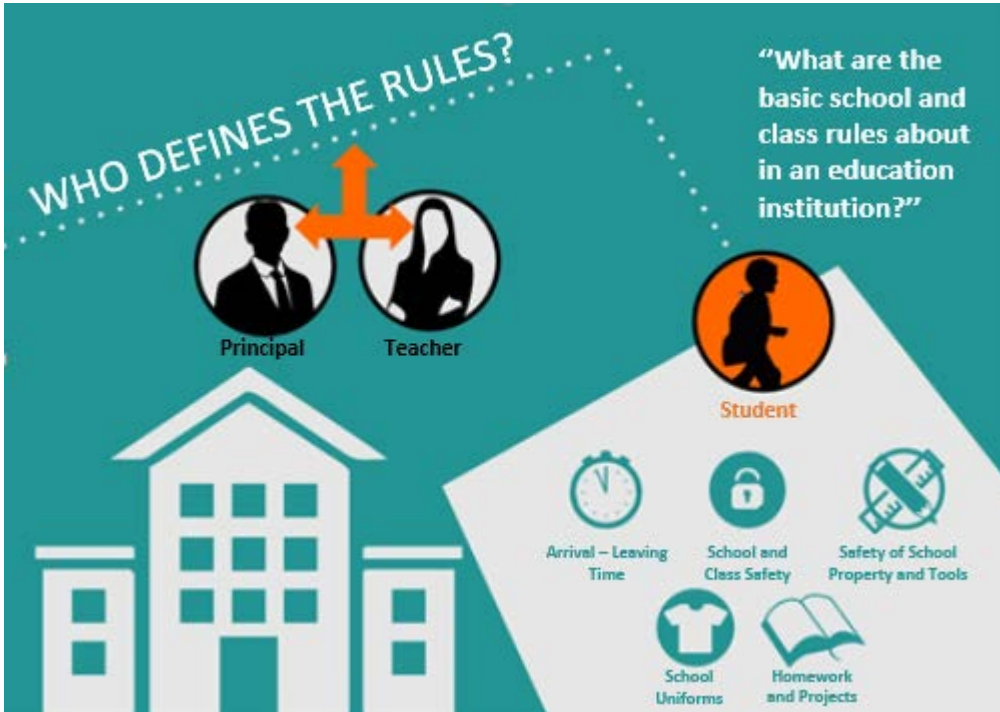
Rules are effective in regulating the students’ behaviour in school or classroom, and ensure their performance of terminal behaviour. All education institutions have basic rules such as attending, coming to classroom on time and not harming other students or public properties. These prepared rules involve all the students pursuing their education in an institution. Failure to abide by these pre-determined rules has some penalties (Ertuğrul, 2001). Sarıtaş (2000), referring to the importance of classroom rules with a similar statement, states that students having the relative knowledge about what is and is not expected from them, will prepare a basis for them to behave with more control. Sarıtaş also states that school and classroom rules will benefit both the classroom teachers and the students in protecting their rights. These benefits are explained as: eliminating the obligation of classroom teachers to constantly make decisions, creating a neutral environment, justifying authority, adopting to commands, requests and expectations and the acceptance of rewards and sanctions without personalisation.

School and classroom rules in an education institution not only includes the classroom teachers and students; but also includes factors such as school security, creating a productive learning environment, cleanliness and tidiness, and the safety of school properties, and tools. The scope of school and classroom rules are visually presented in [Figure 1](#).

As it can be observed in literature, school and classroom rules are regarded and valued as important components for creating an efficient learning – teaching environment, solving disciplinary problems, generating a healthy communication between classroom teachers and students and regulating student behaviours. The research conducted in light of this information focuses on the question of: “What are the classroom teachers’ opinions on school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus?”

According to teacher opinions;

- a) How is the process of creating school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus?



**Figure 1.** Infographic on the Scope of School and Classroom Rules (Designed by Researchers)

- b) How is the implementation process of school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus?
- c) How is the evaluation process of school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus?

## METHODOLOGY

The qualitative method of interviewing and case study were used in this research which takes classroom teacher's opinions as a basis on evaluating the school and classroom rules of primary schools in Northern Cyprus. In scientific studies, the most important aim is to reach the information assumed to be correct in accordance with the following functions: definition, explanation, justification and controlling. According to Büyüköztürk (2016), qualitative studies provide a more thorough pool of information compared to quantitative studies when focusing on psychological measurements and social events. Additionally, it is stated that qualitative researches are regarded as necessary when searching for answers to questions which cannot be fully expressed by traditional research methods.

Interviews are generally defined as verbal data gathering techniques (investigations). Another definition explains interviews as efficient methods used to determine individuals' knowledge on different subjects, opinions, attitudes and behaviours while also considering the possible reasons for these factors (Karasar, 2004). The reason behind the choosing of interviewing as this research's method can be identified as; the aim of examining school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus as thoroughly as possible. The internal validity of this study was provided by gathering expert opinions within the scope of the research.

## Population and Sampling

The population of this research that takes the evaluation of school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus as a basis is formed of currently employed classroom teachers who teach Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Social Sciences at these institutions.

**Table 1.** The Demographical Features of the Classroom teachers Forming the Sampling Group

<b>Sex</b>	<b>f</b>
Female	40
Male	15
<b>Age</b>	
26 – 30	9
31 – 35	20
36 – 40	15
41 – 45	9
46 – 50	2
<b>Level of Education</b>	
Bachelors	39
Masters	15
Doctorate	1
<b>Occupational Seniority (Experience)</b>	
1 – 5 Years	5
6 – 10 Years	12
11 – 15 Years	24
16 – 20 Years	12
21 – 25 Years	2
<b>Attendance to Classroom Management Related Conferences, Activities</b>	
Yes	54
No	1

The sampling of the study is formed by 55 classroom teachers who Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Social Sciences, employed in five government schools that are located in five different districts in Northern Cyprus. These classroom teachers who teach Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Social Sciences were chosen according to the maximum variation sampling method (one of the random purposive sampling methods). The demographical features of the sampling groups is presented in detail in [Table 1](#).

### Data Gathering Tools

In this research, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers was used. The related form consists of 4 sections. In the designed interview form, personal information related questions are in section 1, questions related to the creation process of school and classroom rules in primary schools Northern Cyprus are in section 2, questions related to the implementation of these rules are in section 3 and questions related to the evaluation process are in section 4.

For the validation of the interview form, prepared in accordance with the research's problem, goal and sub-goals, opinions of 12 field expert academicians were taken under consideration. After receiving their feedbacks, the interview form was re-organised. After this stage, the draft interview form was tested in pilot interviews held with 5 principals, 5 classroom teachers who teach Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Social Sciences and 5 teacher candidates which brought the form its prepared stage for implementation.

### Implementation

In this research based on the evaluation of school and classroom rules in primary schools Northern Cyprus with classroom teachers' opinions, the implementation was done according to the interview form after the necessary permissions were obtained from Northern Cyprus Ministry of Education, Department of Primary Education. For the gathering of the research data, face-to-face interviews were held with the classroom teachers

forming the population of the research. To prevent loss of data, the interviews were recorded with a voice recorder after receiving permission from the interviewee classroom teachers.

### Data Analysis

In this research based on the evaluation of school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus with classroom teachers' opinions, the data from the interview forms were measured via content analysis. During the analysis of the qualitative data, "cognitive data coding" technique was used. During their analysis, the data were coded separately by a researcher and an academician and the results were thereafter compared. The data from the teacher feedbacks were separately coded and compiled according to certain themes. In the next stage, the code frequencies were presented as tables for the readers' convenience. Personal identifying information of all principals, classroom teachers who teach Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Social Sciences and teacher candidates were held confidential and each was assigned a number (T1, T2, T3).

### FINDINGS

Findings obtained from the data analysis have been presented as sub-headings and the details are provided in tables.

#### Teacher Opinions on the Creation Process of Rules in Primary Schools in Northern Cyprus

Related data to the teacher opinions on the creation process of rules in primary schools Northern Cyprus are presented in **Table 2**.

According to the data presented in Table 2, all classroom teachers have stated that they concert with the administrative staff during the decision making process. This finding concurs with the opinions of the administrators.

*"The principal, vice-principals and the classroom teachers participate in the process of creating the rules."*  
T12

*"The school administration and the classroom teachers..."* T1

According to the classroom teachers' answers to the second question, the creation process of the school and classroom rules takes places at the beginning of the school year. 12 classroom teachers stated that additional to the decisions made at the beginning of the school year, school and classroom rules can be restructured during a school year in necessary circumstances.

*"School and classroom rules and related decisions are made at the beginning of the school year."* T28

*"The decisions are made at the beginning of the school year. However, if deemed necessary, new regulations can be applied on those decisions."* T21

According to the classroom teachers' answers to the third question, the decision making process takes place in meetings to which both administrative staff and classroom teachers attend. For the formation of school and classroom rules, cause and effect relations, negative student behaviours from previous years and disciplinary problems are addressed.

*"During our meetings that are held with the participation of the principal, vice-principals and classroom teachers, we make decisions about school and classroom rules. While making these decisions, we consider the disciplinary problems that occurred during the previous years."* T44

*"In our group meetings, we determine the school and classroom rules. While we do this, we evaluate our previous experiences, disciplinary problems and negative behaviours."* T18



**Table 2.** Creation Process of Rules in Primary Schools in Northern Cyprus According to Teacher Opinions

<b>Question</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>f</b>
Question 1. Who participates in the creation process of school and classroom rules in your institution?	School Administration and Classroom teachers	<b>55</b>
Question 2. When does the creation process of school and classroom rules take place in your institution?	Beginning of the school year.	<b>55</b>
	If necessary, during the school year.	<b>12</b>
Question 3. How does the school and classroom rules creation take place in your institution?	In meetings including the administrative staff and classroom teachers	<b>55</b>
	Rules are made according to the cause and effect relation.	<b>18</b>
	They are made according to the student behaviours from previous years.	<b>13</b>
Question 4. Which topics are emphasised during the creation process of school and classroom rules in your institution?	School and student safety	<b>54</b>
	Arrival – Leaving Hours	<b>48</b>
	Use of school supplies	<b>43</b>
	Discipline	<b>41</b>
	School uniforms	<b>39</b>
	Homework	<b>38</b>
	Respect and tolerance for classroom teachers and students	<b>37</b>
	Cleanliness of the school and environment	<b>33</b>
Question 5. What criterion is taken as a basis during the creation process of school and classroom rules in your institution?	Attendance	<b>23</b>
	Personal safety and health of children	<b>51</b>
	Cultural differences	<b>38</b>
	School and classroom order	<b>33</b>
	Education needs	<b>31</b>
	Children's rights	<b>25</b>
	Students' age range	<b>17</b>
	Perception of justice	<b>15</b>
Question 6. In your institution, do you decide on rewarding the students for abiding the rules or punishments for breaking them during the creation process of school and classroom rules?	Social rules and norms	<b>12</b>
	Yes	<b>55</b>
Question 7. Are there any difficulties you encountered during the creation process of school and classroom rules in your institution?	No	<b>21</b>
	High number of students per classroom	<b>39</b>
	Cultural differences	<b>25</b>
	Lack of a discipline legislation	<b>22</b>
	Discrepancies between teacher and administration opinions	<b>19</b>
	Surplus of immigrants	<b>17</b>
	Differences in family structures	<b>13</b>
	Insufficient classroom equipment	<b>4</b>
Some classroom teachers' failure in careful observation of the students' abidance with the rules	<b>3</b>	

According to the classroom teachers' answers to the fourth question, during the creation process of school and classroom rules, the following are considered: arrival – leaving time, use of school supplies and tools, discipline, school uniforms, homework, respect to classroom teachers and students, cleanliness of school and environment; and attendance. According to the same data, the primal factor to be considered is observed to be "school and student safety". This finding concurs with the opinions of the administrators.

*"When creating the school and classroom rules, our priority is ensuring the safety of our students. We also consider the standard rules, similar to every other school, such as attendance, school uniforms, respect and whether the students do their homework regularly." T27*

*"These rules are related to the safety and health of students, ensuring discipline in classroom, attendance, mutual respect between classroom teachers and students, tolerance and whether the students do their homework regularly." T39*

According to the classroom teachers' answers to the fifth question, primary criteria taken as basis have been identified as the safety and health of the students, cultural differences, school and classroom order, education needs, children's rights, age range of students, social rules and norms. Also in this question, while determining the school and classroom rules, it can be observed that the primal factor is determined as "school and student safety". Based on the same data, "cultural differences of students" is regarded as one of the most affective basic criteria.

*"When determining school and classroom rules, school and student safety is our key criterion; because, it is not possible for us to pursue teaching activities in a place where safety is not ensured." T12*

*"We determine the school and classroom rules in a manner that will allow us to provide security to students answer their educational needs and ensure order in classroom." T5*

*"As Northern Cyprus is a highly migration-receiving country, cultural differences play a key role in determining the rules." T19*

According to the classroom teachers' answers to the sixth question, it can be observed that the classroom teachers decide on rewarding methods for rule abidance and punishments for rule breaking. This finding shows differences when compared to administrator opinions; because, a majority of the administrators state that they are not involved in the determination process of these rewards or punishments.

Different answers from the classroom teachers have been given to what kind of difficulties they encounter during the determination process of school and classroom rules. While 21 interviewee classroom teachers stated that they did not encounter any problems when forming the rules, the rest defined the surplus of students per classroom, cultural differences, lack of an existing disciplinary legislation and opinion differences between classroom teachers and administration as problems.

*"Unfortunately, the number of students per classroom is very high. Like every other topic, we also encounter problems with this matter. In a crowded environment, it is quite difficult to implement the rules..." T51*

*"Crowded classrooms generate problems on almost on matters. Also, students' cultural differences, different family structures, surplus of immigrants and the lack of a disciplinary legislation are important problems..." T29*

## **Teacher Opinions on the Implementation Process of Rules in Primary Schools in Northern Cyprus**

Related data from the teacher interviews on the implementation process of school and classroom rules in primary schools Northern Cyprus have been presented in [Table 3](#).

**Table 3.** Implementation Process of School and Classroom Rules in Primary Schools in Northern Cyprus in Accordance with Classroom teachers' Opinions

<b>Question</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>f</b>
Question 1. What are the school and classroom rules in your institution?	Keeping the school, classroom and environment clean	55
	Not harming school property, supplies or tools	54
	Arriving to school on time	53
	Listening to the lectures in classroom	52
	Following the proper dress code	51
	Mutual respect and tolerance between classroom teachers and students	47
	Submitting a homework on time	43
	Avoiding excessive noise in the school or classroom	38
	Avoiding behaviours that are health threatening for other students	37
	Not interrupting the lecture	36
	Avoiding verbally or physically violent behaviours	33
Question 2. Are the students informed about the school and classroom rules in your institution? If yes, how are they informed?	Sharing the common activity areas of the school with other students	25
	General moral principles	11
	Verbal notice	41
Question 3. Are the parents of your students informed about the school and classroom rules in your institution? If yes, how are they informed?	Written notice	8
	Both verbal and written notice	6
Question 4. In your institution, what do you do to ensure your students' full abidance to the school and classroom rules?	Verbally informed during parent-teacher meetings	43
	A written notice is sent to their house.	7
	They are only informed when necessary.	6
	No	5
Question 5. Which school and classroom rules are mostly broken by the students in your institution?	Rewarding the students who abide by the rules	53
	Punishing the students who break the rules	47
	Choosing a student of the month	11
	Verbal warnings	8
Question 5. Which school and classroom rules are mostly broken by the students in your institution?	Violence against other students	48
	Disrupting the lecture	37
	Using inappropriate statements involving insults and abusive language	35
	Not doing homework	34
	Speaking without permission in classroom	28
	Making noise in the school or classroom	24
	Not following the rules about cleanness	23
	Not arriving to school on time	21
	Harming school property, supplies and tools	18
	Theft	4

**Table 3 (continued).** Implementation Process of School and Classroom Rules in Primary Schools in Northern Cyprus in Accordance with Classroom teachers' Opinions

Question	Theme	f
Question 6. If the students abide by the rules, are they rewarded at your institution?	Yes	55
Question 6.1 Which rewarding method/methods are used?	Verbal encouragement	44
	Choosing a student of the month	25
	Giving presents such as stickers, snacks or pencils	22
	Adding a star on the "star chart"	20
	Certificate of appreciation	12
	Evaluations that will affect the student's school report	7
Question 6.2 Are the students informed about the rewards they will receive if they abide by the rules?	Yes	51
	No	4
Question 7. If the students break the rules, are they punished at your institution?	Yes	49
	No	6
Question 7.1 Which punishment method/methods are used?	Verbal warnings	41
	Depriving of an activity the student enjoys	39
	Late permission for leaving classroom on break time	34
	Sending to the administration	21
	Removing a star from the "star chart"	18
	Thinking corner	12
	Extra homework	9
	Reorganising the classroom	7
	Garbage collecting	4
Question 7.2 Are the students informed about the punishments they will receive in case of a rule breaking?	No	51
	Yes	4
Question 8. Are there any problems you encounter during the implementation process of school and classroom rules? If yes, what are they?	High number of students per each classroom	49
	Cultural differences	31
	Communication problems between some parents and classroom teachers/school administration	12
	Insufficient classroom equipment	8
	I do not encounter any problems	6
	Children who require special education	1

According to classroom teachers' opinions in **Table 1**, it can be observed that the principal rules implemented in school and classroom are as follows: keeping the school, classroom and environment clean, not harming school property, supplies and tools, arriving on time, proper dress code, being respectful and tolerant to other students and classroom teachers, listening to the lectures in classroom, doing their homework on time, not

making noise in the school or classroom, avoiding behaviours that involve verbal or physical abuse, avoiding behaviours that threatens other students' safety and sharing common school areas with other students.

*"The implemented rules in school are carefully listening to lectures, doing homework regularly, not harming the equipment of supplies in the classroom, being respectful towards classroom teachers, wearing uniforms etc."* T8

*"Standard rules implemented in other schools also exist in our school. For example, avoiding violent behaviours, coming to classroom on time, doing homework regularly, not harming school property, keeping the environment clean..."* T29

According to the classroom teachers' answers to the second question, it can be observed that all students are informed at the beginning of the school year about the rules. While a majority of the classroom teachers inform their students about the school and classroom rules verbally, 8 classroom teachers convey this information via written notices and 6 use both methods. When observing the answers to the third question, 42 classroom teachers state that the parents are verbally informed during the parent – teacher meetings, 7 state the rules are sent to their homes in written form, 6 state that the information is provided only when necessary and 5 state that no information is given on the topic.

According to classroom teachers' answers to the fourth question, with the purpose to ensure the students' abidance to the school and classroom rules, it can be observed that the students who follow the rules are rewarded and their behaviour is encouraged while the ones who break the rules receive punishment. The "student of the month" technique is also exercised and verbal warnings are given when necessary.

*"We use the rewarding method to encourage the behaviours of students who strictly follow the rules and to set them as examples to other students. Similarly, we use different forms of penalties for students who break the rules."* T29

*"We choose a 'student of the month'. Thus, the students become more careful about the rules to earn that title."* T42

According to classroom teachers' answers to the fifth question, in primary schools, there are several ways of rule violation such as; violent behaviours, disruption of lectures, inappropriate and abusive statements, interrupting a teacher without permission for speech, excessive noise in school or classroom, nor arriving on time, and harming school properties, supplies and tools.

*"In our institution, I observe that some students try to resolve a problem with violence. This poses a threat to us and other students. Apart from this, neglecting homework, abusive language and interruption of lectures without permission of speech are frequently encountered."* T31

*"Violent events sometimes happen in the school. We usually encounter this situation with children of migrant families. During break time, the students never play without making excessive noise. We encounter negative behaviours such as neglecting their homework, arriving late to classrooms or disrespectfulness from time to time."* T43

*"The students fight and engage in violence. Over-populated classrooms and surplus of children from different cultures or families also increase this problem. Additionally, some students delay their homework, which is also an important problem."* T9

According to classroom teachers' answers to the sixth question, students are rewarded when they follow the school and classroom rules. The rewarding methods include practices such as verbal encouragement, choosing a 'student of the month', giving small prizes such as school supplies or snacks, adding a star to the 'star chart', giving a certificate of appreciation or making evaluations that will affect the student's school report. 49 of the classroom teachers stated that their students were informed about the rewards they may receive for abiding the rules and 4 classroom teachers stated that this information was not provided to the students.

According to classroom teachers' answers to the seventh question, while 49 classroom teachers stated that the students receive penalties for rule breaking, 6 have stated otherwise. When examining the general opinions, it is observed that students who break the rules receive punishments such as verbal warnings, being deprived of an enjoyable activity, late permissions for going on break time, being sent to the administration, removing a star from the 'star chart', waiting in the 'thinking corner', extra homework, reorganising of the classroom and gathering garbage. According to the same statements, 51 classroom teachers indicated that the students are not pre-informed about the punishments they may receive in case of any rule breaking; while 4 have stated otherwise.

According to classroom teachers' answers to the eighth question of Table 3, while 6 classroom teachers stated that they encountered no problems during the implementation of school and classroom rules, a vast majority have expressed that problems on several topics occurred in schools. Among these, it has been observed that the primary problems are the over-crowded classrooms and cultural differences between students. Other problems have been determined as; the non-cooperation of parents with the school administration and classroom teachers, insufficient classroom equipment and children with need of special education being in the same classrooms as other children.

*"There are too many students in the classrooms! ... Being able to pay individual attention to all students is unlikely. This complicates ensuring authority in a classroom and generates disciplinary problems..." T18*

*"Our primary problem is the crowded classrooms. This makes it very difficult to implement the rules and we have to deal with various disciplinary problems. Additionally, the cultural differences between the local children and those coming from migrant families can also create problems." T27*

*"Of course, it is the number of students... The classrooms are very crowded. The classroom equipment is insufficient for such numbers and creates problems for us when implementing the rules; because, it is impossible to pay individual attention to all students or control their behaviour during lectures or break times. Other problems are the cultural or familial differences between the children. This can create problems from time to time." T30*

### **Teacher Opinions on the Evaluation Process of Rules in Primary Schools in Northern Cyprus**

Related data from the teacher interviews on the evaluation process of school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus have been presented in **Table 4**.

According to the opinions of classroom teachers in Table 4, 43 classroom teachers stated evaluations related to school and classroom rules are carried out during meetings held with the administrative staff. Based on the same data, while 12 classroom teachers stated that they conducted no studies concerning the evaluation process of school and classroom rules, another 12 indicated that their evaluations were carried out with the participations of their students.

*"We assess this topic during our meetings held with the administrative staff. These meetings are usually held at the end of each school year." T29*

*"There have not yet been any attempts to make evaluations on school and classroom rules. Actually, I believe they are necessary." T7*

*"We evaluate with my students at the end of each school year. We share our expectations and opinions." T44*

According to the opinions related to the second question, while 43 classroom teachers stated that the students did not partake in the evaluation process of school and classroom rules, 12 expressed that they and their students carried out the eliminations together at the end of each school year. Once more, according to the related information, 39 classroom teachers stated that the parents were not involved in the evaluation process while 16 expressed that the school and classroom rules were evaluated with the parents during parent – teacher meetings.

**Table 4.** Evaluation Process of School and Classroom Rules in Primary Schools in Northern Cyprus in Accordance with Classroom Teachers' Opinions

Question	Theme	f
Question 1. Are the school and classroom rules evaluated in your institution? If yes, how does this process take place and who are involved?	The evaluations are carried out during the group meetings held at the end of each school year.	<b>43</b>
	Classroom teachers and students carry out the evaluation together at the end of each school year.	<b>12</b>
	No evaluations are carried out.	<b>12</b>
Question 2. Do you give your students the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process in your institution? If yes, how does the students' evaluation process take place?	The students are not given the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process.	<b>43</b>
	Classroom teachers and students carry out the evaluation together at the end of each school year.	<b>12</b>
Question 3. Do you give your students' parents the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process in your institution? If yes, how does the parents' evaluation process take place?	No evaluations are carried out with the parents.	<b>39</b>
	Evaluations are carried out with the parents during the parent – teacher meetings.	<b>16</b>
Question 4. Do you believe that the embraced punishment method/methods for breaking school and classroom rules are efficient in your institution? In situations when these methods remain insufficient, what kind of an approach do you use?	Efficient	<b>46</b>
	Partially efficient	<b>9</b>
Question 5. Are there any difficulties you encounter during the evaluation process of school and classroom rules in your institution? If yes, what are they?	No	<b>48</b>
	Difficulties generating from the communication problems with the parents	<b>7</b>

Considering this data, it is indicated that the school and classroom rules are generally evaluated by the administrative school and classroom teachers while the students and their parents are not actively involved in this process.

*“No assessments are made on this topic with the students or their parents. This topic is usually discussed in meetings involving us, the classroom teachers, and our administrative staff members.” T49*

*“We evaluate the school and classroom rules with the principle, vice-principles and our fellow classroom teachers. However, occasionally, we discuss the topic with our students or their parents when they meet us for the parent – teacher meetings and share our opinions. T3*

According to classroom teachers' answers to the fourth question, 46 classroom teachers stated that the punishments they implement in the case of a rule violation are efficient. 9 classroom teachers expressed that these methods' efficiency was only partial. For the fifth question, 48 classroom teachers stated that they encountered no

problems during the evaluation process of school and classroom rules and 7 expressed several problems they encounter causing from inefficient communication between the classroom teachers and the parents.

*"Generally, we encounter no problems but; our communication with the parents is very little, if any. If an effective and productive communication can be generated with the parents, I believe that we can find solutions for most of our problems concerning the implementation of school and classroom rules." T12*

## DISCUSSION

In this research conducted to assess the school and classroom rules of primary schools in Northern Cyprus by taking classroom teachers' opinions as a basis, different results have been reached. According to classroom teachers' opinions, the creation process of the school and classroom rules takes place during the group meetings held with the administrative staff at the beginning of each school year. In these meetings, it has been observed that the following topics are discussed: school and student safety, arrival-leaving times, use of school supplies and equipment, homework, school uniforms, respect for classroom teachers and students, cleanliness of school and environment and regular attendance. When creating these rules, safety and health of students, cultural differences, ensuring order in school and classroom, education needs, children's rights, students' age range, sense of justice and social rules/norms are taken in consideration. As these results indicate, the creation process of school and classroom rules focuses generally on student behaviours and aims to eliminate possible disciplinary problems in schools.

With the teacher interviews, it has been determined that the rewards and punishments, implemented for rule abidance or breakings, are also decided during the creation process of school and classroom rules. With the formation of school and classroom rules, it has been determined that the classroom teachers specify which methods of rewarding are to be used for abiding by the rules and which methods are to be used for their violation.

After the interviews, some problems have been identified which the classroom teachers encounter during the creation process of school and classroom rules. While some classroom teachers expressed that they had no problems during the creation process of school and classroom rules, some have stated that they encounter several problems for the following reasons: surplus number of students per classroom, cultural differences, lack of an existing disciplinary legislation, opinion differences between the classroom teachers and the administrative staff, immigrant students, familial differences of students, insufficient equipment in the classrooms, failures in efficient and organised follow up of the rules and parents with lower education levels. A vast majority of the classroom teachers have emphasised on the problems caused by the surplus number of students per classroom when considering the creation process of school and classroom rules.

Another discussed topic with the classroom teachers was the implementation process of the school and classroom rules. According to their answers, the primary rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus are as follows: keeping the school and environment clean, arriving to school on time, not harming school property, equipment or tools, listening to lectures in classroom, proper dress code, being respectful and tolerant towards classroom teachers and other students, doing homework regularly, avoiding noise in school and classroom, avoiding actions that will threat the safety and health of other students, not interrupting the lectures, avoiding verbal or physical violence, sharing the common school areas with other students and behaving in accordance with moral principles. During these interviews, it has been observed that the parents generally receive verbal or written information about these rules. According to this conclusion, the awareness of students and their parents about the school and classroom rules has been observed.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to fully ensure abidance for school and classroom rules, the reward - punishment, verbal warnings or 'the student of the month' methods can be used in schools.

Classroom teachers argue that the role violations in primary schools in Northern Cyprus are as follows: violence against other students, disrupting lectures, inappropriate statements that include insults or abusive



language, speaking without permission in classroom, making noise in school and classrooms, failing to comply with the current rules on cleanliness, arriving late to school, harming school property/equipment/supplies and theft. It can be observed that many of the established school rules are being violated by students. Similarly, in a research conducted by Üstün & Ereş (2009) focusing on secondary education in Amasya, Turkey, fights between students groups have been observed. When asked about the violation of rules, a majority of the interviewee classroom teachers emphasised on the events of violence. In a research conducted by Tunç, Yıldız & Doğan (2015), similar examples of rule breaking have been observed such as; speaking without permission in classroom, indifference for lecture contents, using statements involving vulgarism and insults, not following the dress code rules, violent behaviours, harming school property, equipment and supplies and arriving late for classrooms. Whether they be primary or secondary schools, it has been observed that the primary problem to be in consideration has been determined as violence among students. The reasons for violence in schools and other disciplinary problems can be further examined and suggestions can be made accordingly in future researches. The gathered data can be compared to other research results, based on the disciplinary problems in schools and classrooms, conducted in other countries. Thus, similarities and differences between the countries can be identified.

According to classroom teachers' statements, the students who abide by the current rules of primary schools in Northern Cyprus receive rewards whilst; the ones who violate them receive punishments. The classroom teachers stated that the students who follow the school and classroom rules receive rewards such as; verbal encouragement, choosing of a 'student of the month', snacks or stickers, stars on the 'star chart' and certificates of appreciation. For the students who violate the rules, the following is implemented: verbal warnings, depriving of an enjoyable activity, late permission for going on break time, sending to the administration, removing stars from the 'star chart', sending to the thinking corner, giving extra homework, reorganising the classroom and collecting garbage. In a similar research performed by Tunç, Yıldız & Doğan (2015), it has been observed that the following are used to prevent rule breaking and disciplinary problems: contacting the student's parents, warning the student verbally or with body language, sending them to the school administration, giving extra homework, sending them to the counselling service, giving responsibilities in the classroom, disallowing them to go out during the break time or verbally encouraging positive behaviours. In a study conducted by Dağlı & Baysal (2011), the following methods have identified in the cases of breaking the school and classroom rules: warning the student with body language, talking to the student after classroom, diverting the student's attention, contacting the student's parents or sending them to the administration/counselling services. Thus, it can be stated that the results of this research show parallelism with the findings of other researches already included in literature.

Some classroom teachers point out that while it has been stated that the students are informed about the rewards they may receive for abiding by the rules, they receive no information about the possible punishments for their violation.

According to classroom teachers' statements, it has been determined that some problems occur during the implementation process of the school and classroom rules. The classroom teachers' opinions indicate that the surplus number of students per classroom is the primary impeding factor for the implementation of the rules. Overcrowded classroom are regarded as the key problem for implementing the rules. A majority of the opinions are also focused on the cultural differences of students as a problem. Other issues have been identified as the non-cooperation of parents with the school administration or classroom teachers and insufficient classroom equipment. The difficulties classroom teachers encounter during the implementation process of the rules can also be identified as the source of disciplinary problems and rule violations. Tunç, Yıldız & Doğan (2015), in their research, stated that crowded classrooms, deficiencies in classroom equipment, domestic problems, insufficiency of the disciplinary legislation and the implicitness of school and classroom rules can pave the way for disciplinary problems. According to the findings of the research conducted by Nazlı (2015), the following can be effective factors in the formation of disciplinary problems: long duration of lectures, short break times, the lack or insufficiency of social activities, physical inefficiency of schools, insufficiency of educative tools, insufficient familial support for educational behaviour or attitude, domestic problems, the socio-economic or educational level of the family, computer games and negative effects of TV series and programmes. According to the research conducted by Hemde

(2010), the rule violations and disciplinary problems at schools arise from familial problems. The results found within this scope show parallelism to other studies with similar features in literature.

In this research, the evaluation process of school and classroom rules is another aspect of the teacher interviews. According to the majority of the interviewee classroom teachers, the evaluation process of the school and classroom rules takes place during group meetings held at the end of each school year with the participation of the classroom teachers and the administrative staff. Also, the majority states that the students or their parents are not active participants in this process.

According to classroom teachers' opinions, the punishments implemented in case of a violation of school or classroom rules, generate effective results. While some classroom teachers do not encounter any difficulties during the evaluation process of school and classroom rules, others have expressed that some difficulties occur from the communication problems they have with the parents.

Like all researches, this one also has several limitations. The related data to the creation, implementation and evaluation of school and classroom rules have been gathered only through classroom teachers. Thus, by considering the opinions of administrative staff or students in a future research with similar features can present a different perspective on the topic of school and classroom rules in primary schools in Northern Cyprus. This research is only limited to primary schools. In similar studies to be conducted in the future, processes of school and classroom rules can be assessed by involving secondary schools and differences can be identified.

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