
CLASSROOM ROUTINES AND ON-TASK BEHAVIOR OF LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of classroom routines on the on-task behavior of elementary learners in District II, Malaybalay City Division, during the School Year 2025-2026. Specifically, it assessed the level of teachers' classroom routines across five dimensions morning/entry, transition, instructional, cleanup/closing, and behavior management and the corresponding level of student on-task behavior. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, data were gathered from elementary grade teachers through a researcher-made survey questionnaire. Statistical tools, including mean, standard deviation, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, were employed for data analysis. Findings revealed that teachers implement classroom routines with a very high effect to the on-task behavior of learners. It implies that teachers are doing a great job of maintaining classroom routines, which effectively helps them keep the class organized and achieve their teaching goals. Consequently, elementary learners were found to be highly engaged in the class. Correlation analysis established a significant relationship between classroom routines and on-task behavior, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The study concludes that structured routines serve as essential proactive scaffolds that transform potential classroom chaos into stable learning environments. The high level of learner engagement signifies a successful transition from teacher-dependence to self-regulated learning. Recommendations include the institutionalization of standardized routines through specialized professional development and the introduction of more complex, self-directed projects to capitalize on student autonomy. These results affirm that procedural consistency is a fundamental driver of academic focus and sustained student participation in the elementary setting.

KEYWORDS: *Classroom Routines, On-Task Behavior, Learner Engagement, Proactive Management, Self-Regulated Learning, Elementary Education.*

INTRODUCTION

The classroom routines remained the primary focus, acting as the fundamental structure for a productive primary academic setting. Within these elementary schools, the capacity of learners to exhibit consistent on-task behavior, such as focusing on teacher guidance, staying committed to individual tasks, and adhering to provided steps, is related directly to the stability and order created by regular procedures. Without established, recurring methods for switching activities, distributing resources, or participating in collaborative tasks, elementary learners frequently experienced confusion, loss of focus, and a lack of interest, resulting in lost academic time and greater difficulty managing the room. This lack of concentration hindered learners' mental growth and mastery of vital scholastic abilities. Consequently, investigating the specific impact of these firm classroom routines on learners' on-task behavior became an essential goal for this inquiry.

Following practical observation of these settings, the significance of organized educational environments was further validated by legal requirements and academic studies. The Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Section 2(2), required the government to provide and uphold a free public educational framework for the elementary and secondary levels, suggesting a dedication to high-quality, efficient teaching methods, including classroom management. Additionally, DepEd Order No. 21, s. In 2019, the Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program, which detailed the Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program, highlighted the need for a supportive environment to promote learners' success and well-being. Previous investigations strongly reinforced this connection; for example, Sabol and Pianta (2018) emphasized that excellent organization and clear frameworks in schools served as major indicators of better outcomes for learners. Similarly, Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering (2003) recognized classroom routines as a fundamental element of successful teaching and the management of on-task behavior.

Despite general research confirming the strong connection between order and engagement, the existing literature remains unclear about the precise, quantifiable influence of intentional classroom routines on the on-task behavior of Filipino elementary learners within their specific cultural and teaching environment. Many international studies often focused on older learners or broader behavioral outcomes, leaving little data on how specific classroom

routines, such as start-of-day tasks or cleaning methods, effect on-task behavior across developmental stages in local elementary grades. This research filled that void by separating and measuring the relationship between a set of applied classroom routines and elementary learners' sustained concentration, yielding local data necessary for regional guidelines and teacher preparation.

Finally, this investigation was of great importance because the data provided factual evidence supporting the effectiveness of specific classroom routines in elementary settings. By showing a clear link between these established procedures and learners increased on-task behavior, the study offered a functional, affordable strategy that teachers could apply immediately. The gathered evidence served as a solid foundation for teachers' professional growth, shifting the emphasis from responding to misbehavior to proactive planning of the room. In the end, enhancing on-task behavior increased the time spent on teaching, leading to better grades, improved social skills, and a more fruitful atmosphere for both elementary learners and their teachers, thereby supporting the primary objectives of the educational system. The researcher conducted this study to determine the influence of classroom routines on the on-task behavior of elementary learners in District II of the Malaybalay City Division.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was anchored on B.F. Skinner's (1953) Operant Conditioning, which posits that behavior is a function of its consequences and can be shaped through a systematic arrangement of antecedents and reinforcers. In the elementary environment, classroom routines served as discriminative stimuli, or environmental signals, that indicated specific expectations for learners' on-task behavior at different developmental stages. By offering a stable framework, these classroom routines served as antecedents within the Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) structure, minimizing learners' mental effort and environmental uncertainty. This organization allowed preferred actions to shift from intentional efforts to automatic and habitual choices, which remained vital for elementary learners whose self-regulation was still developing.

In relation to this structure, the specific classroom routines, including those for morning entry, activity changes, instruction, tidying up, and conduct, operated as a coordinated chain of actions. The morning and transition classroom routines established immediate control over the environment. They created behavioral momentum, while the instructional classroom routines clarified the exact steps learners needed to take to earn academic rewards. Furthermore, the classroom cleaning routines frequently employed the Premack Principle, in

which teachers made a favored activity, such as leaving the room, dependent on the completion of a less desired duty, such as organizing materials. Through these frameworks, the teachers directed environmental factors so that adhering to a routine led to positive outcomes, such as teacher approval, peer respect, and personal pride in doing well, thereby strengthening the connection between classroom routines and learners' actions.

As a result of these interactions, the on-task behavior of learners was identified as the primary focus or the set of measurable actions that the research intended to improve. Frequent engagement levels indicated that the learners successfully distinguished between rewarded and unrewarded activities in the school setting. Figure 1 presents the schematic diagram of the study. As shown, the box on the left contains the Independent Variables (IV), which include the levels of effect for classroom routines of teachers in an elementary class, including Morning/Entry Routines, Transition Routines, Instructional Routines, Cleanup/Closing Routines, and Classroom Management/Behavior Routines. The box on the right contains the Dependent Variable (DV), which is the level of on-task behavior of elementary learners.

Significance of the Study

This research was carried out as the researcher expects it to be advantageous to these identified end-users:

For learners, the study was important because it aimed to demonstrate that clear, consistent classroom routines directly fostered a predictable environment, which, in turn, led to higher rates of on-task behavior. When learners understood the expectations and the day's structure, they spent less time in confusion or anxiety. They dedicated more time to educational activities, ultimately improving their academic outcomes and social-emotional growth across all grade levels.

For teachers, this study provided empirical evidence, particularly for those in the elementary department, supporting the use of organized classroom routines as an effective and proactive management strategy. The results served as a functional guide for the design, instruction, and application of specific classroom routines, such as those for transitions and instructional tasks, thereby maximizing the time available for teaching. By reducing disruptive behavior and increasing learners' on-task behavior, these strategies simultaneously lowered teachers' stress levels and enhanced their professional satisfaction.

To the Department of Education (DepEd), the study proved valuable to the Department of Education (DepEd) by offering insights driven by data into efficient teaching practices within

the K to 12 Basic Education framework. The gathered information was intended to inform and strengthen the preparation programs for future teachers and the training modules for those currently in service. This ensured that the teachers remained equipped with verified strategies for establishing the foundational classroom routines that promoted behavioral control and academic concentration throughout the various schools.

For parents, the research offered a clear perspective on behavioral expectations, and the organized frameworks present in elementary schools. This understanding empowered the parents to create similar classroom routines at home, which supported the steady development of the learners' self-regulation skills and long-term study habits. A shared structure between the home and the school facilitated a more supportive and seamless educational journey for every child.

To Valencia Colleges (Bukidnon) Incorporated, the study contributed to the goals of Valencia Colleges (Bukidnon) Incorporated regarding the creation of new knowledge, specifically in the areas of teacher preparation and elementary pedagogy. The successful completion and sharing of this research enhanced the school's scholarly reputation. They provided relevant local data that the college could integrate into the curriculum for individuals aspiring to become teachers.

The investigation validated the tools and methods used to connect classroom routines with learners' on-task behavior in the Philippine elementary setting. These findings established a firm empirical foundation and local context for further study, allowing subsequent researchers to examine the long-term effects of these procedures, test different models for implementing classroom routines, or compare the success of such structures across the various stages of basic education.

Definition of Terms

For a better understanding between the researcher and the readers, the following terms were defined operationally:

Classroom Management/Behavior Routines. Classroom Management/Behavior Routines are procedures that use specific, recurring methods to manage unforeseen circumstances or reinforce preferred actions, such as signals to gain attention, protocols for seeking help, and steps for resolving disagreements. Such classroom routines ensured a predictable environment and maintained order in the elementary schools.

Cleanup/Closing Routines. Cleanup/Closing Routines are actions that consist of the established methods for organizing educational tools, tidying individual desks, and preparing

for the conclusion of a lesson or the end of the day. These classroom routines fostered a sense of responsibility and provided a clear conclusion to learners' daily activities.

Instructional Routines. Instructional Routines refer to the fixed procedures for primary educational activities, including protocols for group collaboration, systems for handing in assignments, and regulations for participating in discussions. These classroom routines clarified the actual process of acquiring knowledge and reduced learners' mental strain.

Morning/Entry Routines. Morning/Entry Routines are the procedures focused on the initial arrival in the room, the organization of personal items, and the commencement of the first scholastic duty of the morning. These classroom routines established the initial atmosphere for concentration and academic preparation for learners.

On-Task Behavior of Elementary Learners. On-Task Behavior of Elementary Learners refers to the identified, observable duration during which learners remained actively involved in the educational task, listened to teacher guidance, or continued working through their assigned lessons. The researcher quantified this on-task behavior through direct monitoring and behavioral evaluations.

Transition Routines. Transition Routines are procedures that regulate movement between subjects, tasks, or locations within schools. These classroom routines reduced wasted time and prevented disorder during transitions between activities.

The Methodology

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design. It delved into the effects of classroom routines on learners' on-task behavior. Data on the extent of teachers' classroom routines in a class were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire. The level of on-task behavior of kindergarten learners was based on their adviser's anecdotal record in the First Quarter of School Year 2025-2026.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in District II of the Malaybalay City Division, located in the provincial capital of Bukidnon, Northern Mindanao. This district encompassed a group of schools located near the urban center and the surrounding fringe barangays, which had higher population density and better access to local infrastructure than the more remote rural areas. Malaybalay City, recognized as the "South Summer Capital of the Philippines," provided a stable research environment due to its favorable climate and geographic location. The city served as a center for both agricultural production and a robust service-based economy.

While the rural sections focused on crops such as rice and corn, the urban districts, including District II, were heavily influenced by wholesale and retail trade.

The city operated under a well-organized local government, supported by various offices that facilitated data collection and project implementation. This organizational stability found a mirror in the DepEd Malaybalay City Division, which maintained a clear mandate to provide high-quality and equitable education. Within this division, the focus remained on overcoming academic difficulties, such as improving reading comprehension and enhancing teachers' competence. Because the schools in District II were closer to the city center, they benefited from better access to government services and a diverse population of learners, which provided a unique lens on the intersection of urban growth and educational outcomes. Ultimately, District II served as an ideal research locale due to its geographically concentrated sample, which simplified data collection and facilitated strong coordination between the researcher and the schools. The existing culture of cooperation in research, combined with the district's transitional urban setting, provided a productive environment for implementing and evaluating interventions to improve classroom routines and learners' on-task behavior.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study in District II, Malaybalay City Division, were licensed professional teachers responsible for the academic instruction and holistic development of elementary learners across various developmental stages (Kindergarten to Grade 6). Their daily practice is centered on delivering the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, with a particular emphasis on fostering academic engagement and social-emotional learning through the consistent application of classroom routines. Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by school.

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents by School.*

School	Total Number of Teachers (N)
Sumpong Central School	40
Can-ayan Integrated School	19
Tintinaan Elementary School	7
Incalbog Elementary School	6
Kilap-Agan Integrated School	8
Tag-Ilanao Elementary School	4
Candiisan Integrated School	7
Baganao Elementary School	6

Kibalabag Integrated School	7
Total	104

Sampling Procedure

The researcher employed complete enumeration as the primary sampling procedure for this investigation. This approach required the researcher to invite every licensed elementary teacher from Kindergarten to Grade 6 who worked across the various public elementary schools in District II of the Malaybalay City Division to participate in the study. The researcher selected this sampling technique for its methodological strength and suitability to the overall research design. Consequently, the study used complete enumeration to capture the full range of management styles in the classroom across all key stages of basic education within the district.

By selecting this method and including the entire population of elementary teachers, the study avoided sampling bias and ensured that the results truly reflected the district's pedagogical environment. Furthermore, this strategy yielded a larger data set, thereby strengthening the statistical power of the Pearson r correlation and ensuring that the researcher analyzed the link between classroom routines and learners' on-task behavior across all developmental stages of the elementary department, from early childhood to pre-adolescence.

Research Instrument

This study utilized a researcher-developed questionnaire as the instrument. The survey questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part I was about the extent of teachers' classroom routines' effect on students. Columns for the choices are based on the Five-Point Likert Scale. Part II assessed learners' on-task behavior using ten (10) behavioral indicators. Using these indicators, the respondent evaluates the learners' engagement by selecting the rating that most accurately reflects their observed classroom behavior.

FINDINGS

This study yielded the following results:

There was a very high effect of teachers' classroom routines on morning/entry, transition, instructional, cleanup/closing, and classroom management/behavior. The routines were consistently and significantly effective in achieving their intended behavioral or organizational goals. The very high effect indicates that these routines weren't just helpful suggestions; they were statistically dominant factors in ensuring learners remained focused

and organized, proving that consistent structure is one of the most reliable ways to achieve specific behavioral and academic goals.

The elementary learners in District II, Malaybalay City Division, School Year (SY) 2025-2026 were highly engaged in their on-task behavior 90%–100% of the observed time. The data shows they completed their tasks with zero prompts, indicating a high degree of learner autonomy and self-regulation; they didn't need teachers to nudge them, remind them to stay focused, or give extra instructions to cross the finish line.

There was a significant relationship between the level of classroom routines of teachers inside an elementary class in terms of morning/entry routines, transition routines, instructional routines, cleanup/closing routines, and classroom management/behavior routines, and the level of on-task behavior of elementary learners. This means that when teachers implemented high-quality, predictable routines such as smooth morning entries, crisp transitions between subjects, and clear cleanup procedures there was a corresponding and measurable spike in students' on-task behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the findings presented, the study arrived at the following conclusions:

This study assessed the impact of classroom routines on learners' on-task behavior and found a very high level of effectiveness across all areas. These results highlight that structured procedures serve as essential behavioral scaffolds within schools. While limited to a specific district, teachers should prioritize these habits to maximize engagement. Overall, the findings prove that systematic management is a primary driver of academic focus.

This study delved on the level of on-task behavior of elementary learners in District II of the Malaybalay City Division during the 2025-2026 school year. The findings revealed that the learners remained highly engaged, completing tasks with zero prompts nearly 100% of the time. These results are relevant because they indicate a successful transition from teacher dependence to self-regulated learning in schools. While these findings are specific to one district, teachers should continue reinforcing these structures to sustain such autonomy. Overall, the data confirms that a well-structured environment effectively internalizes discipline and maintains consistent academic productivity.

This study determined whether a significant relationship exists between classroom routines and the on-task behavior of elementary learners in District II, Malaybalay City Division. The findings confirmed a significant correlation across all indicators, demonstrating that structured procedures serve as direct catalysts for engagement in schools. These results are

relevant because they identify teachers' procedural consistency as a fundamental driver of academic focus, though future research could explore diverse grade levels. Overall, the study shows that teachers' deliberate application of these classroom routines systematically shapes learners' capacity for sustained and autonomous participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

Teachers may sustain their very high level of procedural effectiveness by documenting and sharing their successful "scaffold" strategies. To further maximize instructional time, they should specifically focus on automating the few areas with lower means, such as bell work and multimodal signals, ensuring the classroom remains a predictable, high-functioning environment that prevents behavioral drift.

Teachers may capitalize on this high level of learner autonomy by gradually introducing more complex, self-directed projects that challenge their self-regulation. By providing opportunities for independent inquiry, teachers can further solidify the students' internalized discipline, ensuring that their 90%–100% engagement rate evolves into lifelong academic resilience and a permanent identity as capable, self-motivated learners.

Principals are strongly encouraged to institutionalize classroom routines as a core instructional priority by providing specialized professional development on procedural consistency. By fostering a school-wide culture of standardized routines, administrators can ensure that all teachers are equipped to leverage these behavioral catalysts, effectively transforming management practices into a primary strategy for enhancing student engagement and academic productivity.

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