

MANAGING CLASSROOM FOR IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined managing classroom for improved academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. A descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised all the 8452 teachers in the 248 public secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size of this study comprised 845 teachers using the stratified random sampling technique. A self-designed questionnaire titled: Managing Classroom for Improved Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State Questionnaire (MCIAPPSTQ) was used for data collection. A test re-test method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while the z-test statistics was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result among others revealed that the facilities available for managing classroom are writing board like chalkboard or a white board, shelves and lockers graph like charts, map and craft. Some problems noted are structural problems like classroom arrangement, location, position of chalkboard, disruptive behaviors as a result of children who live in a subjected environment. It was recommended that teachers should develop a positive attitude towards students and show trust in their actions and intentions consistently as they engage in quality teaching during classes.

Keywords: *Managing Classroom, Academic Performance.*

Introduction

The ability to manage classroom effectively is increasingly becoming a fundamental need in any quest for effective teaching and learning. In Nigeria the urge is about the same as the issue of classroom management effectiveness has become crucial, ubiquitous, and recurring in educational discourse due to the linkages of a well-managed classroom with effective learning. The medium through which the attainment of individuals and the nation's educational goals can be achieved is learning. Learning outcomes have become a phenomenon of interest to all and this account for the reason why scholars have been working hard to unravel factors that militate against good academic performance.

Effective teaching and learning can hardly be noticed in a poorly managed classroom. A well-managed classroom requires a teacher who is characterized by high knowledge of content, context, pedagogy and personal discipline (Clark and Walsh, 2012). The success of classroom management effectiveness is dependent on teacher's personal attributes evident in his or her standard of impeccable ethical and social conduct. Classroom management has been highlighted across numerous research studies as a major variable that affects students' academic performance. The most obvious reason for this assertion is that, effective classroom management sets the stage for teaching and learning. It sets a tone in the classroom that captures students' attention-as a necessity for effective teaching and learning.

This statement is obvious since a classroom which is chaotic and disorganized as a result of poor classroom management is highly unlikely to enhance expansive learning and students' academic performance which might indeed inhibit the achievement of school goals and objectives. Classroom management is a term used by many teachers to describe the process of ensuring lessons run

smoothly without disruptive behavior by students. It is possibly the most difficult aspect of teaching for many teachers and indeed experiencing problems in this area causes many people to leave teaching altogether. It is closely linked to issues of motivation, discipline and respect.

Classroom management refers to all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials to foster student involvement and cooperation in all classroom activities and to establish a productive working environment. It includes preparation of plans and materials, structuring of activities into time blocks, direct teaching of skills and subject matter, grouping of pupils to provide for the most efficient use of teacher and pupil time, plans for transition periods and adequate control of pupil behavior. It can be described as the teacher's ability to cooperatively manage time, space, resources and student roles and student behavior to provide a climate that encourages learning.

On this note, Idopise (2014) stressed that acquiring knowledge and skills are some of the basic things that the teachers must assist the learner to attain. It is the responsibility of the teacher to effectively manage the classroom for optimum learning outcome. This is to say that good classroom management which promotes effective teaching and learning, is a critical function for the teacher and a factor in ensuring high quality of education. It is also necessary to encourage students to achieve these objectives through motivations. Therefore, the concept of classroom management is broader than the notion of student control and discipline, rather it includes all the things teachers must do in the classroom to foster students' academic involvement and cooperation in classroom activities to create conducive learning environment.

Classroom management involves curtailing learner's disruptive behaviors such as fighting and noise making, close observation, arrangement of classroom learning materials, and response to students who suffer from poor sight (vision), poor reading, poor writing, poor spelling, shame, dullness, hyperactivity and poor study habits. When classroom management is viewed in a wider and holistic sense, incorporating every element of the classroom from lesson delivery to classroom environment becomes important. According to Nicholas (2017), this includes creating organized and orderly classroom, establishing expectations, inducing students' cooperation in learning tasks, and dealing with the procedural demands of the classroom.

Classroom management is a critical part of effective instruction which begins with efficient lesson planning preparation, helps teacher to teach and students to learn. Students thrive in a positive class climate and an environment in which they feel safe, cared for and involved. From a student perspective, effective classroom management provides students with opportunities to socialize while learning interesting content. From a teacher perspective, effective classroom management involves preventive discipline and interesting instruction. Effective classroom management requires the integration and effective use of the teachers' three basic activities. Good knowledge of managerial skills in addition to organizing the efforts of individuals in the group to work together and resolve conflicts that create disturbance in group functioning.

Statement of the Problem

The intense interest in classroom management effectiveness in secondary schools Rivers State is motivated by several compelling factors. One of the factors is the observed unconducive conditions of some of the classrooms in some public secondary schools in the state. In an attempt to put sound education on ground worldwide, many factors have been incriminated as being responsible for falling standard of education where it is perceived and established. Among such factors is the issue of classroom size, classroom congestion and low utilization rate of classrooms, which has led to the high cases of examination malpractices, indiscipline, school drop-outs and slow level of performance among students especially at the secondary education level.

Moreover, it seem to be that academic decadence experienced in Nigerian higher institutions is attributable to the weak foundation level from secondary schools. Most parents are thus, confused on which school to send their children. Teachers are usually responsible for the management and

administration of the education system. In this same vein, available infrastructures at this level of education that could help to curb the endemic issue of students' academic performance are grossly inadequate. Despite all efforts at making resources available for the administration of education at this level, there seem to be little or no remarkable success.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine managing classroom for improved academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. examine the extent teachers manage classroom effectively for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. find out the facilities available for managing classroom for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent do teachers manage classroom effectively to improve students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What are the facilities available to manage classroom for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were raised for study:

- H0₁:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers manage classroom effectively for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State Rivers State.
- H0₂:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the facilities available for managing classroom for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The Extent Teachers Manage Classroom Effectively to Improve Students' Academic Performance

Managing the classroom is the ultimate responsibility of a teacher, the way a teacher manages the classroom will change the thinking of the students towards learning. It will also define clearly the responsibility of the students, their behaviors, choices, and the overall targets and tone of the school. The extent a teacher develop a strong and consistent management and organizational skills have been identified as leading to fewer classroom discipline problems. The teacher is the major planner of classroom activities, but also play a role of a model and a manager of instructional materials. Effective teachers create a sound, supportive and friendly environment in classrooms where students feel safe, respected, cared and secured.

For this purpose the teachers manage the classroom to the extent of creating conditions of cooperation, discipline and responsibility both for themselves and for their students (Riaz, 2019). Teachers are the ultimate deciders of the classroom atmosphere, their role is crucial in influencing the behaviors of students. They offer practical plans that are geared to overcome many classroom problems such as disruptions, deviant behavior or misbehaviors of students. In this regard, different teachers have different ways of instinctively managing the classroom environment and patterns of setting up classroom that best fits their purpose. Akinwumiju and Agabi (2018) found that a teacher may sometimes go to the extent of grouping pupils from various social and economic backgrounds to strengthen the spirit of teamwork and tolerance.

It also helps learners to overcome complexes and prejudices. They mostly arrange classroom to protect learners from the vagaries of nature such as rain, wind and extreme weather conditions all to achieve effective classroom management. According to Alimi, Alabi and Ehinola (2011) teachers are indispensable change agents who must navigate their school structures, nurture relationships and lead their students to success as role models through collaborative efforts with the students and their significant others. The way teachers conduct the classroom matters has a deep influence upon their own teaching and learning of the students, because classroom is a place where the closest interaction between the students and the teachers takes place (Muhammad and Ismail, 2001). Effective classroom management decides the effectiveness of teacher's teaching quality and students learning.

According to Ostrosky, Jung, Hemmeter and Thomas (2018) in the development of a positive classroom environment a teacher plays a highly important role of creating favourable conditions inside the classrooms where students feel safe and learn how to work together effectively as individuals. Here, the role of the teachers is to maximize learning and minimize disruptions by fostering among students attitudes of trust, tolerance, acceptance and cooperation. In this regard Canter and Canter (2011) argue that there are two goals of classroom management, first, to create and maintain a highly supportive learning environment and second, to promote a safe classroom community so that students' interest, motivation and involvement in the learning process is maintained and third, is students are allowed to establish relationships openly and to set targets for themselves.

Facilities Available for Managing Classroom for Improved Students' Academic Performance

In order to meet the physical needs of the children and teachers that will transform quality outcome in the teaching and learning process, a safe structure, adequate sanitary facilities, balanced visual environment and sufficient shelter space for work needed to be provided. Agabi (2012) defines educational facilities as the physical structures, the furniture, the equipment, the machine, the aesthetic environment and other material resources that contribute either directly or remotely to the teaching learning process in the educational system.

The administrator maintains classroom facilities by ensuring that facilities that need to be replaced regularly are replaced on schedule. He also ensures that classroom facilities that are damaged are repaired or replaced on time so that they do not pose security threats to teachers and students, facilities such as chairs, tables, doors and windows, shelves, cupboards, chalkboards and electronics etc. must be maintained in conditions that ensure the safety of teachers and students. Regular inspection will help the administrator identify facilities that need to be repaired or replaced. Classroom facilities consist of all articles and furniture expected to be seen in a typical classroom irrespective of the type of school or level of education. According to Agabi, Onyeike and Wali (2013) and Longman (2015) they include:

- (i) **The Writing Board:** In a typical classroom, there should be a chalkboard or a white board as the case may be to facilitate writing and instructional activities. The chalkboard should be associated with a chalk. The teacher who teaches with a chalkboard should be equipped with a chalkboard duster and an adequate supply of chalk sticks. The white board should be associated with a white board marker and a white board duster. The teacher, who teaches with the white board, should have a regular supply of white board markers. Indelible markers should not be used on a whiteboard because they deface the board.
- (ii) **Classroom Seats:** The classroom should have an adequate supply of seats and writing desks to ensure that all learners in the class are comfortably seated for class activities. Seats and desks should be in good conditions that guarantee the safety of learners in the classroom. Double sitters or single-sitter chairs and desks could be used at the primary and secondary levels of education. Seats and desks that carry more than two persons at a time

are often used at the tertiary level of education. In nursery or pre-primary classrooms, single sitters are used with tables that can accommodate a minimum of four learners.

This is because of the nature of instructional activities at that level of education. Classroom facilities at the nursery level should also include appropriate furniture for classroom staff. In preprimary/nursery classes, seats and desks with smooth rounded edges are most appropriate as opposed to those with sharp angles. Every teacher is expected to have a table and a comfortable seat (FRN, 2015). Seats and writing desks should be designed to suit the average age of learners, and instructional method. The seats for pre-primary classes should consist of low tables and chairs for all pupils (FRN, 2015). The sitting arrangement for any level of education should be such that allows learners to use their books and other learning materials freely in the course of classroom instructional activities. Seats and lockers/writing desks should be arranged in neat rows to allow for free movement of learners and teachers.

(iii) Instructional Materials: Classroom instructional material refers to all resources that may be used in facilitating teaching and learning in the classroom. They include instructional toys and play-pens (at the pre-primary and primary levels); educative wall charts, textbooks, notebooks and writing materials. At the pre-primary and primary levels of education, textbooks, notebooks and writing materials should be neatly arranged in cupboards or shelves in the classroom, to ensure proper maintenance and appropriate usage. Wall charts and other educative images on paper should be neatly displayed on walls in the classroom. They also help to beautify the classroom. Toys and building blocks should be neatly arranged in shelves when they are not in use.

At secondary and subsequent levels of education, learners are expected to take care of their books and other learning materials. The provision of locker tables instead of plane, flat top tables especially at junior and senior secondary schools will help students at these levels of education to protect their learning materials from damage due to weather and frequent/unnecessary handling. The lockers also ensure that books and other learning materials are always available for use in classroom activities.

Theoretical Framework

The theory is anchored on the content theories of motivation as developed by Maslow (1943) and Alderfer (1969). The content theories of motivation are basically concerned with what motivates behaviour in an individual. They deal with the variables or factors that are mainly focused on the needs and motives of individuals in the school or any other organizational set-up (Ukeje, 1992). Abraham Maslow in his needs Hierarchy theory identified five levels of needs. These are physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs and self- actualization. On the other hand, Clayton Alderfer identified three Cole needs Viz, Existence (E) Relatedness (R) and Growth (G). Among all these, the needs that concern this study are the physiological and safety needs of Maslow and the existence needs of Alderfer.

The needs hierarchy theory states that man is a complex and changing being. The theory hinge on the assumption of a state of imbalance or disequilibrium in an individual which he or she seeks to restore to normalcy or to a state of homeostasis Muchinsky (1983) in Ukeje, (1992:140) states that "the source of motivation is certain needs which often influence behaviour consciously". Maslow identified the physiological needs as hunger, thirst, sex, shelter, and other bodily needs. The safety needs are, security, protection from physical and emotional harm. They are freedom from threat, danger or deprivation and self-preservation Alderfer's existence needs are material and are satisfied by environmental factors such as food, water, pay, fringe benefits and working situation.

In a class setting, student's behaviour problems which require control or management may be caused by certain prevailing motivational factors or conditions such as overcrowding students in an overcrowded classroom. Which might lead to disruptive behaviors such as fighting and noise making, close observation, arrangement of classroom learning materials, and response to students who

suffer from poor sight (vision), poor reading, poor writing, poor spelling, shame, dullness, hyperactivity and poor study habits. On the other hand, the teacher painstakingly grabbles with the problem of trying to control and manage the classroom but in most cases the situation gets worst due to frustration and low morale.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for this study is descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised all the eight thousand four hundred and fifty two (8452) teachers in the 248 public secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size of this study comprised eight hundred and forty five (845) teachers representing 10% of the population. The instrument used for data collection in this study was a self-designed questionnaire titled: Managing Classroom for Improved Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State Questionnaire (MCIAPPSTQ). A test-retest method was used to obtain the reliability of the instrument. The data gathered from the RPATEPSSRSQ were collated and analyzed. The mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The weighted mean is $(4+3+2+1/4) = 2.50$ which was deemed fit as the criterion mean for agreeing or disagreeing with the items of the questionnaire. Any items that has a mean score 2.50 and above was agreed (accepted), then any item below 2.50 was disagreed (rejected).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent do teachers manage classroom effectively to improve students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Male and Female Teachers on the extent teachers manage classroom effectively to improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State Rivers State.

S/N	The Extent Teachers Manage Classroom Effectively to Improve Students' Academic Performance	Male Teachers 336		Female Teachers 496		$\bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_2$	Remarks
		$\bar{x}$	SD ₁	$\bar{x}$	SD ₂		
1	Teachers create a supportive and friendly environment in classrooms where students feel safe, respected, cared and secured.	3.05	1.246	3.06	1.250	3.06	High Extent
2	Teachers manage the classroom to the extent of creating conditions of discipline and responsibility both for themselves and for their students	3.3	1.38	3.1	1.27	3.2	High Extent
3	Teachers group pupils from various social and economic backgrounds to strengthen the spirit of teamwork and tolerance.	2.44	1.119	2.4	1.122	2.42	Low Extent
4	Teachers establish rules and regulations to govern the behaviours of students.	3.68	1.626	3.47	1.480	3.58	High Extent
5	Teachers provide students with structure to work and interact with each other fairly	2.63	1.13	3.1	1.27	2.87	High Extent
6.	Teachers maintain conducive classroom environment through disciplinary control	2.60	1.26	3.7	1.640	3.15	High Extent
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation	2.95	1.29	3.14	1.34	3.05	

Table 1 indicated that item number 4 had the highest mean score of 3.58, followed by item 2 with 3.2, item 6 with 3.15, item 1 with 3.06 and item 5 with 2.87 which are above 2.50 criterion mean.

Research Question 2: What are the materials available to managing classroom for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Male and Female Teachers on the materials available for managing classroom for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Facilities Available for Managing Classroom for Improved Students' Academic Performance	Male Teachers 336		Female Teachers 496		$\bar{x}_1\bar{x}_2$	Remark
		$\bar{x}$	SD ₁	$\bar{x}$	SD ₂		
1	A writing board like chalkboard or a white board	2.89	1.21	3.17	1.17	3.03	Available
2	Shelves and Lockers which are furniture items that are vital in the maintenance of cleanliness and tidiness	2.8	1.14	2.89	1.184	2.85	Available
3	Charts which can come in the form of alphabets with visual representation of objects or animals that reflect the sound of each alphabet	2.17	1.17	2.33	1.131	2.25	Unavailable
4	Graphs like charts which constitute diagrammatic representation of information	2.7	1.36	2.66	1.32	2.68	Available
5	Map which are documents usually on paper that shows the location of countries and their major cities.	2.9	1.19	2.92	1.14	2.91	Available
6.	The globe which shows the map of all the countries in the world	2.97	0.24	3.211	0.211	2.92	Available
7.	Craft which represent as pieces of art work	3.17	0.48	3.17	0.411	2.75	Available
8.	Classroom books include textbooks, workbooks and notebooks of all categories used in the class by teachers and learners	2.97	1.23	3.14	1.29	3.06	Available
9.	Pictures which represent as instructional materials and serve as constant reminders of the events at which they were taken.	2.99	1.24	3.19	1.32	3.09	Available
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		2.51	1.05	2.97	1.02	2.84	

Table 2 indicated that item number 9 had the highest mean scores of 3.09 followed by item 8 with 3.06, item 1 with 3.03, item 6 with 2.92, item 5 with 2.91, item 2 with 2.85, item 7 with 2.75 and item 4 with 2.68 respectively. The various scores were above 2.50 which is the criterion mean.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent teachers manage classroom effectively for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 3: z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Opinions of Male and Female Teachers on the extent teachers manage classroom effectively for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Subject	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	Level of Sig.	Remark
Male Teachers	336	2.95	1.29	830	-2.05	± 1.96	0.05	H ₀₁ Rejected

Female Teachers	496	3.14	1.34
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The result of table 3 showed that the z-calculated value of -2.05 is greater than the z-critical value of ± 1.96 at degree of freedom of 830 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and uphold that: there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the extent teachers manage classroom effectively to improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

H0₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the facilities available for managing classroom for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test Analysis of the Difference between the Opinions of Male and Female Teachers on the facilities available for managing classroom for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Subject	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	Level of Sig.	Remark
Male Teachers	366	2.51	1.05	830	-0.16	± 1.96	0.05	H0 ₁ Accepted
Female Teachers	496	2.97	1.02					

The result of table 4 showed that the z-calculated value of -0.16 is less than the z-critical value of ± 1.96 at degree of freedom of 830 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted and uphold that: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the facilities available to managing classroom for improved students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The Extent Teachers Manage Classroom Effectively to Improve Students' Academic Performance

From table 1, the study revealed that the extent teachers manage classroom effectively to improve students' academic performance is that teachers create a supportive and friendly environment in classrooms where students feel safe, respected, cared and secured, they manage the classroom to the extent of creating conditions of cooperation, discipline and responsibility both for themselves and for their students. This finding is in consonance with Akinwumiju and Agabi (2018) who found that a teacher may sometimes go to the extent of grouping pupils from various social and economic backgrounds to strengthen the spirit of teamwork and tolerance.

Facilities Available for Managing Classroom for Improved Students' Academic Performance

From table 2, it was revealed that that the facilities available for managing classroom for improved students' academic performance in these schools are; a writing board like chalkboard or a white board, shelves and lockers which are furniture items that are vital in the maintenance of cleanliness and tidiness, graphs like charts which constitute diagrammatic representation of information, map which are documents usually on paper that shows the location of countries and their major cities. This finding is in line with Agabi, Onyeike and Wali (2013), Akinwumiju and Agabi (2018) and Longman (2005) who found that these materials are vital in the maintenance of cleanliness and tidiness, graphs like charts which constitute diagrammatic representation of information, map which are documents usually on paper that shows the location of countries and their major cities, craft which represent as pieces of art work, classroom books include textbooks.

CONCLUSION

Effective teaching and learning can hardly be noticed in a poorly managed classroom. Structural problems like classroom arrangement of seats, location in the classroom, systematic problems which arise from the changing roles of teacher and community demands which influence classroom events process problems which deal with individual differences and motivation of learning deviancy among the children. Teachers should create a supportive and friendly environment in classrooms where students feel safe, respected cared for and secured in order to manage an effective classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should develop a positive attitude towards students and show trust in their actions and intentions consistently as they engage in quality teaching during classes.
2. Teachers should provide the guidance (rules and regulations) to the students on how to discuss subject matter, ask questions and express ideas and also try to observe students' behavior problems carefully and decide on the strategy that could be used to solve the problems.

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