

PERCEPTION OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE

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Abstract

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State. Survey research design was adopted in carrying out the study. The population of the study consisted of 4,365 respondents, made up of 238 principals and 4127 teachers in the 238 public secondary schools in Abia State. Using a multi-stage sampling techniques, a sample of 975 respondents, comprising 100 principals and 875 teachers out of 4127 respectively were selected and used for the study. Data for the study were collected using a researcher-developed structured questionnaire that underwent validity and reliability tests. Descriptive statistics namely mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the null hypothesis was tested with inferential statistics t-test statistic. The findings others are that the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools are ensuring that the classroom environment is conducive and attractive for teaching and learning process, ensuring that there is adequate provision and effective use of instructional materials in teaching and learning process, maintaining high standards of classroom discipline, ensuring that lessons are well planned and sufficiently challenging, and being active in time management practice. It was recommended that there should be increased funding of secondary schools in order to enable them have enough funds to provide the various needs of teachers for effective classroom management, there should be adequate training of teachers in the rudiments of effective classroom management, and that high standards of classroom discipline should be maintained in secondary schools in order to prevent classroom disruptive behaviours that hinder effective classroom management, among others.

Keywords: Secondary education, classroom management, effective classroom strategies and prospects for effective classroom management

Secondary education in the world over is one of the components of every educational system and it is the vehicle for providing all primary school leavers with a higher level educational opportunity required for the development of their personality characteristics. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), secondary education is the education which children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage with a view to preparing them for useful living within the society and for higher education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria further articulated the specific objectives of secondary education as encompassing the provision of opportunity for education of a higher level to all primary school leavers; the offer of diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles; the provision of trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; and the provision of technical

knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development, among others.

However, it is pertinent to note that the achievement of the foregoing specific objectives of secondary education demands as of necessity effective classroom management which is the pivot of effective teaching and learning at all levels of every educational system. Classroom management has been conceptualized in various ways by different authors. In affirmation to this assertion, Ademola and Waheed (2006) defined classroom management as the systematic process of using both human and material resources, proper leadership style and appropriate teaching methods to effectively and efficiently achieve identified classroom objectives. To Enyi (2013), classroom management refers to the various processes and activities undertaken by a teacher to harness and utilize available human and material resources within the classroom setting to achieve effective teaching and learning in the class. Moreso, Ogbonnaya (2013) defined classroom management as the organization, utilization and control of the resources and activities in the classroom for the achievement of the objectives of teaching and learning. Arising from these definitions is the fact that classroom management is the co-ordination and control of classroom elements and activities in order to engender effective teaching and learning in the classroom environment.

Essentially, the importance of classroom management has been highlighted in educational quarters. According to Ajayi (2004), it is classroom management that enables teachers to create conducive conditions that facilitate effective teaching and learning and prevent disruptive behaviours that impact negatively on teaching-learning process. Agabi and Okorie (2002) had earlier noted that it is through the process of classroom management that teachers ensure that instructional materials are adequately provided and effectively utilized in teaching-learning process as well as the maintenance of high standards of discipline. No wonder Okorji and Nwogbo (2013) opined that the ability of teachers to manage their classroom activities and the behaviours of their students is pivotal to effective teaching and achievement of positive educational outcomes. Thus, effective inculcation of worthwhile knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and competencies in students cannot be achieved without purposeful, goal-oriented and effective classroom management frame work.

Nonetheless, inspite of the significant role of classroom management in facilitating effective teaching and learning in secondary schools, classroom management activities appear not to be effectively carried out in secondary schools in Abia State. This viewpoint stems from the fact that Emenogu (2010) asserted that teachers in Nigerian secondary schools (Abia State secondary schools inclusive) have not been active in the management of their classroom environments and on the basis of which they can engender effective teaching and learning. Njemanze (2015) also noted that secondary school teachers in Abia State do not effectively manage their classroom environment by creating a classroom atmosphere that is conducive for effective teaching, learning and devoid of unpleasant feelings and disruptive behaviours which impact negatively on the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, Aluko (2014) had earlier remarked that the quality of instructional delivery and learning has grossly depreciated in Nigerian secondary schools (secondary schools in Abia State inclusive) due to the fact that the secondary school teachers perform their teaching functions in an unplanned, unorganized, unco-ordinated and uncontrolled classroom setting and that this anomalous situation underscores the need for effective classroom management practice by secondary school teachers.

However, the above allegations of ineffective and poor classroom management practice of secondary school teachers have been ascribed to inadequate knowledge of the teachers about the

classroom management strategies for engendering effective teaching and learning as well as the constraints to effective classroom management practices of secondary school teachers. For instance, Adewumi (2012) noted that effective classroom management is yet to be reckoned with in secondary schools in Nigeria because the teachers here are not yet aware of the classroom management strategies that can bring about effective teaching and learning. In his own perspective, Akpan (2015) noted that the classroom management initiative of all secondary school teachers in Nigeria has been bedeviled by a variety of constraints and that it is high time that these teachers identify and resolve these constraints for the benefit of effective classroom management requisite for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. Consequent upon these submissions, could it be that the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools lack empirical knowledge visualizing the fact that no study known to the researchers has been carried out on this issue of social concern. Consequently, it was the problem of this study to fill this knowledge gap by empirically determining the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State.
2. determine the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

For the purpose of guiding the study, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State?
2. What are the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools in Abia State?

Hypothesis:

The following null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀: There is no significant difference ($P < .05$) between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State.

Methodology

Survey research design was employed in carrying out the study. Best (1997) conceptualized survey research design as being concerned with assessing behaviours, preferences, perceptions and opinions of a specified sample. This research design was, therefore, deemed appropriate for this study as it involved assessing the perceptions of principals and teachers on the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. The study was carried out in the public secondary schools in Abia State. The population of the study was 4,365 respondents made up

of 238 principals and 4,127 teachers in the 238 public secondary schools in Abia State. The sample for the study was 975 respondents, comprising 100 principals and 875 teachers from 100 secondary schools sampled and used for the study. In selecting the sample for the study, a multi-stage sampling technique was adopted and simple random sampling technique was used in the first stage of the sampling process to select 100 secondary schools for the study. In the second stage of the sampling process, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 875 teachers from the population of 1,750 teachers in the 100 secondary schools sampled and used for the study. Therefore, 50 per cent of the teachers' population was selected which ensured their adequate representation in the study sample whereas the entire population of 100 principals participated in the study due to its manageable size.

The instrument used to collect data for the study was a 22-item researcher-developed structured questionnaire titled "Classroom Management Strategies Questionnaire (CMSQ)". The response mode of the instrument was structured along a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points; Agree (A), 3 points; Disagree (D), 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD), 1 point. By virtue of the four-point rating scale, the criterion mean was 2.50, meaning that mean scores of 2.50 and above indicated Agree while those below 2.50 indicated Disagree. The validity of the research instrument was ascertained by subjecting its initial draft to face validation by three experts, two in Educational Administration and Planning and one in Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by trial-testing it on 40 teachers and 10 principals in selected public secondary schools in Ebonyi State which was outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha method of reliability estimate was used to determine the internal consistency estimates for the items and an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained and considered high enough to make the instrument reliable in collecting the required data for the study. The researchers and fifteen research assistants administered the questionnaire to the target respondents in their various schools using direct delivery and retrieval technique and the data so collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics which include mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the inferential statistics which include t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis of the study and it was tested at 0.05 level of significance. It is pertinent to note that out of the 975 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents, 971 copies were duly completed, returned and used for data analysis.

Results

The results of data analysis are presented below in accordance with the research questions and hypothesis that guided the study:

Research Question One

What are the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State?

The data for providing answers to the above research question are provided on table 1 below:

Perception of Principals and Teachers on Classroom Management Strategies for Effective Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Abia State

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on Classroom Management Strategies for Effective Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Principals N = 100			Teachers N = 871		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec.	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
1.	Ensuring that the classroom environment is conducive and attractive for teaching-learning activities.	3.55	0.69	Agree	3.46	0.76	Agree
2.	Ensuring that there is adequate provision of instructional materials and that they are effectively used in teaching-learning process.	3.48	0.70	Agree	3.33	0.76	Agree
3.	Creating an enabling environment for students to work cooperatively and share experiences together.	3.50	0.73	Agree	3.35	0.76	Agree
4.	Maintaining high standards of classroom discipline in order to prevent the problems of students' truancy, unpunctuality and other disruptive behaviours.	3.25	0.82	Agree	3.03	0.89	Agree
5.	Ensuring that lessons are well planned and sufficiently challenging so as to stimulate students interest in the teaching-learning process.	3.56	0.73	Agree	3.40	0.80	Agree
6.	Putting in place unambiguous rules and regulations for steering classroom operations towards effective teaching and learning.	3.35	0.71	Agree	3.23	0.75	Agree
7.	Showing adequate mastery of subjects' contents and methods of instructional delivery in order to propel students' interest in the teaching-learning process.	3.45	0.74	Agree	3.25	0.82	Agree
8.	Being active in time management practice in order to make maximum use of lesson time and the time allotted to extra-curricular activities.	3.27	0.80	Agree	3.11	0.90	Agree
9.	Maintaining good inter-personal relationships between teachers and students in order to create a social climate of mutual trust and friendliness which impact positively on effective teaching and learning.	3.25	0.82	Agree	3.02	0.90	Agree
10	Using appropriate evaluation methods and materials in evaluating students' learning outcomes.	3.29	0.79	Agree	3.24	0.83	Agree
Grand Mean		3.39	0.45	Agree	3.23	0.48	Agree

In table 1 above is presented the mean ratings and standard deviations of the respondents on the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. Looking at the table, one can see that the mean ratings and grand mean scores of both principals and teachers are all above the criterion mean of 2.50. The implication of this is that these two categories of respondents agree that items 1-10 of the research instrument are the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. On the other hand, the standard deviations of the respondents which range from 0.69 to 0.82 for the principals and 0.75 to 0.90 for the teachers indicate convergence of the respondents' opinions and close deviation from the mean scores. This means that there was not so much difference in the mean scores of the respondents.

Research Question Two

What are the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools in Abia State?

The data for answering the above research question are provided on table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on the Constraints to Effective Classroom Management in Secondary Schools

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Principals N = 100			Teachers N = 871		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec.	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
11.	Inadequate funds to provide the various needs of teachers for effective classroom management.	3.51	0.67	Agree	3.39	0.86	Agree
12.	Inadequate infrastructural facilities and equipment for effective classroom operations.	3.38	0.73	Agree	3.23	0.81	Agree
13.	Inadequate motivation of teachers for effective performance of their classroom management functions.	3.31	0.84	Agree	3.23	0.81	Agree
14.	Improper leadership style of principals hamper effective classroom management practices of teachers.	3.21	0.89	Agree	2.97	0.97	Agree
15.	Some school policies being frustrating to teachers' classroom management efforts.	3.24	0.83	Agree	3.16	0.92	Agree
16.	Inadequate knowledge of teachers in the rudiments of classroom management.	3.35	0.77	Agree	3.28	0.83	Agree
17.	Inability of teachers to plan, organize and control the use of available infrastructural facilities and equipment for effective classroom operations.	3.34	0.82	Agree	3.03	0.95	Agree
18.	Disruptive behaviours of some students hinder effective classroom management.	3.37	0.72	Agree	3.29	0.75	Agree
19.	Poor attitude of teachers to effective classroom management.	2.39	1.10	Disagree	2.41	1.09	Disagree
20.	Inadequate professional development opportunities being given to teachers to improve their knowledge of classroom management.	3.38	0.75	Agree	3.17	0.84	Agree
21.	Classroom environments being uncondusive for effective classroom management.	3.37	0.84	Agree	3.24	0.77	Agree
22.	Poor inter-personal relationship between teachers and students hamper effective classroom management.	2.46	1.04	Disagree	2.39	1.08	Disagree
Grand Mean		3.35	0.42	Agree	3.20	0.45	Agree

In table 2 above is presented the mean rating and standard deviations of the respondents on the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools. The result shows that the two groups of respondents agree that items 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 and 21 of the research instrument are the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools. Thus, the two groups of respondents disagree with items 19 and 22 as being the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools. The decision rule is based on the fact that with an exception of items 19 and 22, the mean ratings of the two categories of respondents are all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Conversely, the standard deviations of the respondents which range from 0.67 to 1.10 for the principals and 0.75 to 1.09 for the teaches illustrate that the respondents were close to one another in their responses concerning the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools in Abia State.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference ($P < .05$) between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State.

Table 3 below presents the summary of t-test analysis for the above hypothesis.

Table 3: Summary of t-Test Analysis of the Difference Between the Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Classroom Management Strategies for Effective Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools

Group	N	\bar{x}	SD	Mean Diff.	Df	t-Cal.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Principals	100	3.39	0.45	0.16	969	1.39	0.15	NS
Teachers	871	3.23	0.48					

$\alpha = 0.05$, NS = Not Significant

Data presented on table 3 above show that a calculated t-value of 1.39 was obtained at 969 degree of freedom with associated probability value of 0.15. Based on the fact that the associated probability value of 0.15 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance at which the null hypothesis was tested, the null hypothesis of this study is hereby accepted as formulated. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Abia State.

Discussion of Findings

Consequent upon the findings of this study, the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools are ensuring that the classroom environment is conducive and attractive for teaching-learning activities, ensuring that there is adequate provision and effective use of instructional materials in teaching-learning process, creating an enabling environment for students to work cooperatively and share experiences together, maintaining high standards of classroom discipline in order to prevent disruptive behaviours, ensuring that lessons are well planned and sufficiently challenging, and putting in place unambiguous rules and regulations to steer classroom operations towards effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, showing adequate mastery of subjects' contents and methods of instructional delivery, being active in time management practice, maintaining good inter-personal relationship between teachers and students, and using appropriate evaluation methods and materials in evaluating students' learning outcomes are also the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.

The above findings are in agreement with the view of Adewumi (2012) that there are many classroom management strategies for engendering effective teaching and learning in secondary schools which are not yet known to the teachers. Thus, it is imperative that secondary school teachers adopt the identified classroom management strategies for the benefit of effective teaching and learning. This view point stems from the fact that Ajayi (2004) noted that it is classroom management that enables teachers to create conducive conditions that generate effective teaching and learning and prevent disruptive behaviours that impact negatively on teaching-learning process.

The research findings have also shown that the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools include: inadequate funds to provide the various needs of teachers for effective

classroom management, inadequate infrastructural facilities and equipment for effective classroom operations, inadequate motivation of teachers for effective performance of their classroom management functions, improper leadership style of principals hamper effective classroom management, and some school policies being frustrating to classroom management efforts of teachers. Other constraints are inadequate knowledge of teachers about classroom management, inability of teachers to make effective use of available infrastructural facilities and equipment, disruptive behaviours of some students hinder effective classroom management, inadequate professional development opportunities being given to teachers to improve their knowledge of classroom management, and classroom environments being unconducive for effective classroom management.

The above findings are in alignment with the view of Akpan (2015) that a variety of constraints hinder effective classroom management in Nigerian secondary schools. In view of the fact that Emenogu (2010) and Aluko (2014) observed that secondary school teachers in Nigeria no longer engender effective teaching and learning as a result of ineffective classroom management practices, there is need for the stake-holders in secondary education to resolve these multifarious constraints to effective classroom management for the attainment of effective classroom management requisite for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.

Implication of the Findings

It is pertinent to re-iterate that the findings of this study have exposed the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools as well as the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools. Essentially, the implication of these findings is that it is only when the identified classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning are adopted in secondary schools and painstaking measures also taken to resolve the identified constraints to effective classroom management that classroom management will foster effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. Therefore, the adoption of the identified classroom management strategies and resolving the constraints to effective classroom management is the recipe for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.

Conclusion

It is thus seen that classroom management is fundamental to effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. Regrettably, classroom management activities have not been effectively carried out in secondary schools in Abia State due to lack of knowledge of the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning. However, the findings of this study have exposed the classroom management strategies for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. These, among others, include: ensuring that the classroom environment is conducive and attractive for teaching-learning activities, ensuring that there is adequate provision and effective use of instructional materials in teaching-learning process, creating an enabling environment for students to work cooperatively and share experiences together, maintaining high standards of classroom discipline, ensuring that lessons are well planned and sufficiently challenging, showing adequate mastery of subjects' contents and methods of instructional delivery, being active in time management practice, and maintaining good inter-personal relationship between teachers and students.

Furthermore, this study has also ascertained the constraints to effective classroom management in secondary schools. These include: inadequate funds to provide the various needs of teachers for effective classroom management, inadequate infrastructural facilities and equipment for

effective classroom operations, inadequate motivation of teachers for effective performance of their classroom management functions, improper leadership style of principals hamper effective classroom management, and inadequate knowledge of teachers about classroom management, among others.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the research findings, the discussion that followed and the implication asserted, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be increased funding of secondary schools in order to enable them have enough funds to provide the various needs of teachers for effective classroom management.
2. Teachers should be adequately motivated for effective performance of their classroom management functions.
3. Principals should always exhibit proper leadership style that will encourage effective classroom management.
4. There should be adequate training of teachers in the rudiments of effective classroom management.
5. High standards of classroom discipline should be maintained in secondary schools in order to prevent classroom disruptive behaviours that hamper effective classroom management.
6. The ministries of education and educational policy-makers should formulate relevant policies that will ensure that teachers adopt the identified classroom management strategies for the benefit of effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.

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