

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING: A STUDY OF FIVE SCHOOLS IN EDUCATION DISTRICT 11, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Effective classroom management consists of teacher behaviour that produces high level of the involvement of students in the activities of the classroom, minimum level of students' behaviour that affects the teacher or other students as they interfere with their works and will often interfere with the efficient use of instructional time. Effective teachers who are effective classroom managers will involve such activities in all aspects of their work as planned rules and procedures which are carefully and systematically taught to the students. This paper therefore, examined the perceived impact of classroom management on effective teaching. The descriptive survey research design method was used. While the self-developed survey questionnaire (Perceived Impact of Classroom Management- PICM) was used to collect data. A total of fifty teachers were randomly selected from the five schools in Education District 11, Lagos State. The mean was calculated for each of the item on the questionnaire. The decision rule was that any mean of 2.5 and above was accepted. And the mean of below 2.5 was rejected. All the items on the questionnaire had mean above 2.5. This meant that they were all accepted. Thus the research questions were answered. Based on the findings, recommendations were made.

Keywords: Perceived, Classroom management, Effective teaching, Education District

Introduction

It can be rightly argued that the teacher is the biggest influence on how well students behave in a classroom. This means that it is not the quality of the students, the involvement of the parents, or the administration that make the most impact, but the teacher's attitude. This is premised on the fact that some students tend to live up to the teacher's expectations. In this instance when the teacher expects great things from them, they would surely rise to the challenge. The corollary is that when you expect poor classroom behaviour they would also meet that challenge. It must be appreciated that effective classroom management is probably the most difficult aspect of a teacher's duty and role. It is opined by Verstrate (2011) that, "it is not simply to teach curriculum content but it is to also guide, direct and empower students to govern their own behaviour so that their life within a social setting can be an enjoyable and productive one."

The overall value of effective classroom management and its positive effect in guaranteeing the achievement of outstanding educational outcomes is well captured by Emmer and Stough (2001). They argued that the ability of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behaviour of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes. Although sound behaviour management does not guarantee effective instruction, it establishes the environmental context that makes good instruction possible. Reciprocally, highly effective instruction reduces but does not eliminate classroom behavioural problems. The empirical report by Bohn, Roehring and Pressley (2004) on the first days in the classrooms of two more effective and four less effective primary-grades teachers supported the view expressed earlier on. In their research, they observed six primary-grades teachers in public and private schools. Based on midyear observations, two of these teachers were much more effective compared to the other four in producing greater student engagement and literacy progress.... These two more effective teachers began the school year differently than the other teachers, again documented through observation of their teaching. It was also observed that the two more effective teachers compared to the four less effective teachers established routines and procedures at the onset of the school year. Apart from this, they offered more engaging activities, they indicated higher expectations, praised students worth-while accomplishments, identified situations when some students were behaving in praise-worthy state and encouraged student self-regulation. This position is also supported by Pederson-Seelye (2011). He argued that effective classroom management procedures promote independent learning and success for all students in classrooms which are productive, orderly and pleasant.

It is posited by the writers from the positions above that it is generally believed that effective classroom management requires some basic classroom procedures / routine. According to Verstrate (2011), the classroom procedures can be used to provide “consistent momentum or transitions.” Some of them include entering / leaving the classroom. The procedure involves students coming in quietly, take out the needed materials for the class, and place their bags and other items neatly under their desks. In starting the class, the students should be quiet before the teacher walks in. The next procedure which is the taking of role can be accomplished quickly if you have assigned seats to each student and you have a seating chart readily with you. This can be followed by checking home work. To make this effective, the students can be offered an “open notebook home work quiz”. This serves as a form of positive reinforcement (Skinner, 1953). It is also suggested that the teacher should have supplies of materials for at least three students as shortage of such materials may cause distractions in the classroom. These stated routines / procedures can be better articulated if the tips identified by Lorenz (2011) are given reasonable consideration. The steps are put under the broad heading: “Tips on conducting the first ten minutes of class.” These tips include first, greeting the students as you stand at the door. The implication of this is that it demonstrates to the students that you are interested in interacting with them. Secondly, when you are prepared to begin any class, get everyone’s full attention before you start. It is important you wait to get every one’s attention before you begin the class. The third tip has to do with presenting class rules and consequences for misbehaviours. Fourthly, take attendance. It should be noted that immediately you present your classroom rules, you should take attendance. Closely following this is the need to explain your procedures for assigning and collecting work. You should also explain the consequences for late assignments. Lastly, explain your grading system. This should include details on how students will earn their grades. These tips if accomplished, will lead to effective teaching and classroom management. Consequently, there will be high educational outcomes.

It is important to consider the importance of maintaining order in effective classroom management. This has become necessary because establishing and maintaining order is central to what educators do. According to Doyle (2011) “the underlying assumption is that classroom order encourages student engagement which supports learning. Without order, a teacher is hard pressed to promote student learning”. The implication of this, according to him is that “classroom management results in the coupling of order and learning.” He therefore, saw classroom management as the progression of strategies that teachers utilize to promote order and student engagement and learning. The consequence of this position is the

prompt enhancement of the right learning outcomes. Some pro-active principles in maintaining order in classroom management according to Doyle (2011) include the following:

1. Develop coherent list of expected behaviours (usually only four or five rules).
2. Equip students with the skills needed to execute appropriate behaviour.
3. Continually assess the success of an implementation
4. Create and sustain a positive environment in which this can take place.

Embracing the essence of order in classroom management enables the teacher to apply all facets of discipline within the classroom. This centers on the three fundamentals of teaching. That is, “content, conduct and covenant management”. Content refers to the curriculum; conduct has to do with discipline while covenant has to do with relationship (Doyle, 2011). School and classroom management according to specialists in the field of education, aim at encouraging and establishing student self-control through a process of promoting positive student achievement and behaviour. Thus, academic achievement, teacher efficacy and teacher and student behaviour are directly linked with the concept of school and classroom management. This focuses on three major components: content management, conduct management and covenant management.

The research carried out by Froyen & Iverson (1999) showed that a high incidence of classroom disciplinary problems has a significant impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It has been found that teachers facing such issues fail to plan and design appropriate instructional task. They also tend to neglect variety in lesson plans and rarely prompt students to discuss or evaluate the materials that they are learning. In addition, students’ comprehension or seat work is not monitored on a regular basis. In contrast, strong and consistent management and organizational skills have been identified as leading to fewer classroom discipline problems (Froyen & Iverson, 1999). On the strength of this, according to Doyle (2011), ‘order’ in the classroom prompts ‘engagement’, whereas the teacher uses ‘discipline’ to curb ‘misbehaviour’. The result is ‘cooperation’. He further argued that ‘cooperation’ rather than ‘engagement’ (in the sense of involvement with content) is the minimum requirement for student behaviour. Hence, ‘engagement’ is learning, ‘cooperation’ is ‘passivity’. He further noted that order is not ‘absolute silence’ or ‘rigid conformity’ to rules, although these conditions are sometimes considered necessary for specific purpose (e.g. a major test). ‘Order’ in a classroom simply means that within acceptable limits, the students are following the programme of action necessary for a particular classroom event to be realized in the situation (Doyle, 2011).

It is argued that a tremendous body of research attests to the fact that classroom management/organization and behaviour management competencies significantly influence the persistence of new teachers in their teaching careers (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003). The consequence is that new teachers are quick to express their concerns over lack of competence in handling disruptive behaviour of students (Browsers and Tomic, 2000). This category of ineffective teachers often report high level of stress and symptoms of burnout concerning their job (Berliner, 1986, Browsers and Tomic, 2000, Espin and Yell, 1994).

The considerations above have made it pertinent to examine the perceived impact of classroom management on effective teaching. The major aim of classroom management is the improvement of students' academic outcome. This is the ultimate goal of education and it constitutes the major objective of the study.

Purpose of the study

The research addressed the perceived impact of classroom management on effective teaching: A study of five selected secondary schools in Education District I1, Lagos State.

The study therefore is designed to find out:

1. How the teacher can improve on his /her classroom management skills
2. Impact of classroom management on effective teaching
3. How teacher evaluation affects effective classroom management.

Research Questions

The research answered the following questions:

1. How can the teacher improve on his/her classroom management skills?
2. What is the perceived impact of classroom management on effective teaching?
3. How does teacher evaluation affect effective classroom management?

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used. The descriptive research is concerned with collecting data in order to adequately answer the research questions that were raised in the study. The researchers were able to gather information from a group of people which are representatives of a larger cluster of people that the researchers sought to know.

Population of the Study

The study was conducted in Education District II in Lagos State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of five randomly selected secondary schools in Education District II, Lagos State.

Sample / Sampling Procedure

The sample of the study was made up of ten teachers each from the five randomly selected secondary schools. A total of ten teachers each from the five selected secondary schools (making a total of fifty teachers) were given the questionnaire.

The table below shows the different respondents, that is, teachers from the five randomly selected schools in Education District II, Lagos State

S/N	SCHOOL	TEACHERS
1	A	10
2	B	10
3	C	10
4	D	10
5	E	10
Total	5	50

Instrumentation

A self-developed survey questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection in this study. The instrument for data collection is the PICM (Perceived Impact of Classroom Management) questionnaire which was administered to the ten teachers each from the five randomly selected secondary schools in Education District II, Lagos State.

Validity of the Instrument

To determine the degree to which the instrument used for the study measured accurately what it was expected to measure, face and content validity approaches were adopted. This allowed other competent assessors to assess the contents and items included in the questionnaire.

Reliability of the Instrument

In establishing the reliability of the instrument used for the study, a pilot study was conducted. The result of the pilot study tested how reliable the instrument was, and ensured good construction of the items in the questionnaire. In addition, inter-item coefficient of reliability at standardized item alpha was calculated. Reliability analysis scale for the teachers gave inter-item coefficient of reliability at 0.70, 0.65, and 0.64 at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Collection

The questionnaire with the responses was collected for analysis. The questionnaire included those of the ten teachers each from the five randomly selected secondary schools in Education District II, Lagos State.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency count and percentages. A four point (Likert) scale was used in the questionnaire. The mean for scaling items was computed by multiplying the frequency of the responses by the value of scaled items and dividing the total with the number of respondents.

Scaled items	Value
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

Decision Rule

Note

f = Frequency

% = Percentage

\bar{X} = Mean

\bar{X} = 4+3+2+1=10 (SA, A, D, SD) = 10

\bar{X} = $\Sigma fx / \Sigma f = 10/4 = 2.5$

If \bar{x} is below 2.5 it is considered **rejected**.

If \bar{x} is 2.5 and above it is considered **accepted**.

Research Question 1: How can the teacher improve on his/her classroom management skill?

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, DA=Disagree, SD= strongly disagree

S/N	Statement	SA	A	DA	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1.	The teacher should be exposed to both internal and external educational conferences / seminars	36	14	-	-	3.7	Accepted
2.	The teacher should have opportunity to attend in-service trainings	36	12	1	-	3.6	Accepted
3.	The less experienced teachers should under-study their peers who are effective teachers.	24	23	2	1	3.4	Accepted
4.	The teacher should receive regular feedback on his / her duties / performance	26	24	-	-	3.5	Accepted
5.	There is the need for the right climate in the school for effective teaching to take place.	31	19	-	-	3.6	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, Sept. 2011

The mean of the items were 3.7, 3.6, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 respectively. These were above the mean of 2.5, hence, they are accepted. The mean of the items relates to the teacher improving on his/her classroom management skills. This can be sharpened by exposure to in-service trainings, conferences/seminars, understudying experienced teachers’ and right school climate. It is commonly argued that the teacher is the biggest influence on how well students behave in a classroom. In support of this, Verstrate (2011) opined that “it is not simply to teach curriculum content, but it is also to guide, direct and empower students to govern their own behavior so that their life within a social setting can be an enjoyable and productive one”. The implication of this is that, both the personality, attitude and training of the teacher would affect classroom management. According to Baker (2005) there is the need for “improved teacher preparation and professional development in classroom management”.

Research Question 2: What is the perceived impact of classroom management on effective teaching?

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, DA=Disagree, SD= Strongly disagree

S/N	Statement	SA	A	DA	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1.	The effective teacher should know his / her subject and how to deliver it	43	5	2	-	3.8	Accepted
2.	The teacher should have an understanding of the curriculum.	38	12	-	-	3.8	Accepted
3.	The effective school teacher must have an adequate lesson plan	39	10	1	-	3.8	Accepted
4.	The teacher should be able to achieve the general aims and goals of the school (that is, the right educational outcomes)	36	14	-	-	3.7	Accepted
5.	The teacher should have full control on the class and students	38	12	-	-	3.8	Accepted
6.	It is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain order in the class	34	16	-	-	3.8	Accepted

Source: Field survey, Sept. 2011

The different items in the above table have the means above 2.5. Hence the research question was accepted. The decision rule guiding the research is that when the mean falls below 2.5, it is rejected, while the mean of 2.5 and above for any of the items in the questionnaire indicates that it is accepted.

The mean was calculated for the first item on the questionnaire thus:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f} \text{ (Where, SA = 4, A = 3, DA = 2, SD = 1)}$$

$$\text{That is, } \bar{X} = \frac{4 \times 43 + 3 \times 5 + 2 \times 2 + 1 \times 0}{50}$$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{172 + 15 + 4 + 0}{50}$$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{191}{50}$$

$$\bar{X} = 3.82,$$

$$\bar{X} = 3.8$$

(That is the mean for the first item in the above questionnaire)

The accepted research question agreed with the position of Emmer and Stough (2001). They argued that the “ability of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behaviour of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes. This is also concurred by Pederson-Seelye (2011). He posited that effective classroom management procedures promote independent learning and success for all students in classrooms that are productive, orderly and pleasant.

Question 3: How does teachers’ evaluation affect effective classroom management?

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, DA=Disagree, SD= strongly disagree

S/N	Statement	SA	A	DA	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1.	The teacher should be part of the school evaluation programme	35	15	-	-	3.7	Accepted
2.	Evaluation of the teacher will have a positive impact on the school. Consequently on the teacher.	33	16	-	-	3.6	Accepted
3.	In evaluating the teacher, both the teaching method and adaptation to the curriculum should be considered	28	22	-	-	3.6	Accepted
4	Do you see regular evaluation of the teacher as necessary in a school?	25	23	1	-	3.4	Accepted
5.	The co-operation between the principal and teachers will bring about positive outcomes from teacher evaluation and classroom management.	29	20	1	-	3.6	Accepted
6.	The aspect of instruction should be given top priority in teacher evaluation and classroom management.	27	23	-	-	3.5	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, Sept. 2011

The mean of the items in the above questionnaire were above 2.5. This means that they were all accepted. The aspect of teacher evaluation is quite pertinent in guaranteeing consistent re-appraisal of how the teacher is fairing. And if the need arises, the teacher can easily be assisted in order to carry out his/her tasks efficiently. The teacher may be evaluated to find out if he/she is following basic classroom procedures/routine. It is argued by Verstrate (2011) that the classroom procedures can be used to provide

“consistent momentum or transitions”. This includes entering/leaving the class, taking roles, checking home work and so on. The teacher could be evaluated on how he has carried out these procedures. The teacher could also be evaluated on how he carries out orders/discipline in the class (Doyle, 2011). It has been observed that new teachers often express burnout in their job (Berliner, 1986, Browsers and Tomic, 2000, Espin and Yell, 1994). It is mainly through evaluation of the teachers that this can be identified, thus easier to ameliorate. As a result, the lack of competence in handling disruptive behavior of students often expressed by some teachers (Browsers and Tomic, 2000) is adequately addressed through teachers’ evaluation.

Conclusion

It should be noted that, the “ability of teachers to organize classrooms and manage the behaviour of their students is critical to positive educational outcomes” (Oliver and Reschly, 2007). To ameliorate the challenge posed by ineffective classroom management, there is the need for “teacher professional management”. Supporting this position, Baker (2005) argued that, “although surveys indicate that experienced teachers have fewer concerns regarding classroom management, such surveys may be less an indication that teachers learn over time how to manage classrooms effectively and more a result of the fact that many teachers who did not learn classroom management skills simply have left the profession”(Baker, 2005). He therefore, argued that the solutions include, improved teacher preparation and professional development in classroom management. Finally, effective teachers have been able to appreciate that behaviour problems are at the lowest ebb in classrooms where the children are actively involved and interested. The teacher also appreciates the children for who they are, where they are from and what they can contribute. Effective teachers are also aware that they should know the background of their students so as to appreciate non-academic factors which may affect their behaviour, and, consequently class participation and learning (Heijnen- Maathuis, 2011). It is the opinion of the writers that effective classroom management would likely influence the academic performance of the students, consequently guaranty the right students outcomes desired by the school.

Recommendation

- There is the need for teachers to be exposed to different skills on classroom management. This could be through in-service trainings, conferences/seminars etc.
- The right school climate should be provided where teachers can effect the right classroom management practices without inhibition.

- There should be feed-back on every aspect of teachers' evaluation. This will enable them identify area of strengths and weaknesses.
- Students with consistent behavioural challenges should be referred to the school counselor for necessary support.
- Only qualified (trained) teachers should be allowed in the school setting. Thus, the aspect of professionalizing teaching should be given the prompt consideration it deserves.

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