



ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: IMPLICATION FOR TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Abstract:

The study investigated teachers' classroom management practices with the aim of determining their effectiveness for curriculum delivery. A total of one hundred (100) primary school teachers from ten (10) randomly selected primary schools from Kaduna metropolis were used for the study. A questionnaire tagged "*Analysis of Primary School Teachers' Classroom Management Practices*" (APSTCMP) was used to collect data from respondents. The result of the findings revealed that pupils in classrooms with highly structured classroom management practices demonstrated more appropriate behaviour and positive learning outcome than students in classrooms haphazardly managed by teachers. It was therefore concluded that classroom management practices provide the structure to support teacher behaviour thus increasing the success of classroom instruction. Teacher proficiency in classroom management is therefore, necessary to ignite successful environments that will encourage appropriate student behaviour and positive learning outcome. It was therefore recommended among others, that the curriculum for teacher training colleges should include an in-depth programme or course in classroom management skills in order to provide teachers with content knowledge and opportunities to develop proficiency in classroom management.

Keywords: classroom management, curriculum, primary school teachers

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Introduction/Background to the study

Disruptive behaviour in schools has been a source of concern for school systems for several years. Indeed, the single most common request for assistance from teachers is related to behaviour and classroom management (Rose & Gallup, 2005). Classroom with frequent disruptive behaviours have less academic engaged time, and the students in disruptive classrooms tend to have lower grades and do poorer on standardized tests (Shinn, Ramsey, Walker, Stieber, X O'Neill, 1987). Furthermore, attempt to control disruptive behaviours cost considerable teacher time at the expense of academic instruction.

Effective classroom management focuses on preventive rather than reactive procedures and establishes a positive classroom environment in which the teacher focuses on students who behave appropriately (Lewis & Sugai 1999). Rules and routines are powerful preventive components to classroom organization and management plans because they establish the behavioural context of the classroom by specifying what is expected, what will be reinforced and what will be retaught if inappropriate behaviour occurs (Colvin, Kame'enui and Sugai, 1993). This prevents problem behaviour by giving students specific appropriate behaviour to engage in. Inappropriate behaviour significantly disrupts individual learning, social acceptance and opportunities for inclusion into the society at large. Extreme challenging behaviour can be dangerous and even life threatening. Researchers such as Bello (1981) and Baker (2005) have argued that anti-social behaviours in youths have led to a host of academic and social problems such as low self-esteem, membership in deviant groups, substance abuse, truancy and delinquency. It is their belief that due to the high level of social incompetence among youths exhibiting delinquent behaviours, these youths are unable to get along with others, deal with group situations effectively, make appropriate choices, understand others' viewpoints or deal reasonably with stressful situations. This present study is aimed at analysing primary school teachers' classroom management practices to determine their effectiveness in curriculum delivery.

Review of Related Literature

Classroom management has been defined broadly as any action a teacher takes to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Instructional procedures could also be considered classroom management by this definition; however, effective instruction

alone is insufficient for establishing universal classroom management. Procedures that structure the classroom environment, encourage appropriate behaviour, and reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behaviour are necessary for strong classroom management (Evertson, Emmer, Sanford, & Clements, 1983). Instructional procedures, although equally important to the classroom environment, can be considered a separate set of procedures. The components of effective classroom management are important in several ways. For example, focusing on preventive rather than reactive procedures establishes a positive classroom environment in which the teacher focuses on students who appropriately behave (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Rules and routines are powerful preventative components to classroom organization and management plans because they establish a behavioural context for the classroom that includes what is expected, what will be reinforced, and what will be retaught if inappropriate behaviour occurs (Colvin et al., 1993). This prevents problem behaviour by giving students specific, appropriate behaviours to engage in. Monitoring student behaviour allows the teacher to acknowledge students who are engaging in appropriate behaviour and prevent misbehaviour from escalating (Colvin et al., 1993).

Today, many schools in urban and rural areas are comprised of children who have been described by the prefix “dis”; “*disenchanted, disaffected, disaffiliated, distributed and disruptive.*” Many of these children live in community conditions that have adversely impacted their readiness for school. Some of these conditions include: the family’s loss of meaningful employment, the infestation of meaningful illegal drugs and an increase in single parent households. In addition, the number of children being reared by grandparents and foster parents has increased, and there are still others who have been left to rear themselves. Children subjected to these living conditions have greater propensity to engage in inappropriate behaviour in the classroom. Problem behaviour occurs when a child is unable to communicate needs or desires effectively. The behaviour is a communicative function. Typically a challenging behaviour serves to obtain something or to avoid something. It becomes a very effective form of communication and to the child, it seems reasonable and logical.

Research on classroom management has typically focused on the identification of individual practices that have some level of evidence to support their adoption within classrooms. These practices are then combined under the assumption that, if individual practices are effective, combining these practices into a package will be equally, if not more effective. Textbooks written and policies and guidelines are disseminated to school personnel based on these assumptions. Without research that examines classroom management as an efficient package of effective practices a significant gap in

our current knowledge base still exists. Understanding the component that make up the most effective and efficient classroom management system as well as identifying the effects teachers and administrators can expect from implementing effective classroom management strategies represent some of these gaps. An analysis of classroom management practices which identifies more and less effective approaches to classroom management as a set of practices is needed to provide the field with clear research-based standards.

School discipline issues such as disruption behaviour and violence also have an increased effect on teacher stress and burnout (Smith and Smith, 2006). There is a significant body of research attesting to the fact that classroom organization and behaviour management competencies significantly influence the persistence of new teachers in their teaching career (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003). New teachers typically express concerns about effective means to handle disruptive behaviour (Browers & Tomic, 2000). Teachers who have significant problems with behaviour management and classroom discipline often report high levels of stress and symptoms of burnout and are frequently ineffective (Berliner, 1986; Browers & Tomic 2000). The ability of teachers to organise classrooms and manage the behaviour of their students is critical to achieving both positive education outcomes for students and teacher retention. In view of all of the above issues highlighted, the present study aims at analysing practices with the aim of determining their effectiveness in curriculum delivery.

Objective of the study: To identify and determine the effectiveness of primary school teachers' classroom management practices in curriculum delivery.

Research Question: To what extent are primary school teachers' classroom management practices effective in curriculum delivery?

Methodology

Descriptive research design was used for this study. Ten (10) randomly selected primary schools from Kaduna metropolis were used for the study. A total of one hundred (100) teachers i.e ten (10) from each school were used for the study. A questionnaire tagged "*Analysis of Primary School Teachers' Classroom Management Practices*" (APSTCMP) was distributed to one hundred respondents. Respondents were instructed to respond to the questionnaire by ticking under the appropriate column. 4 point Likert scale of strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree was used. The

questionnaire contained Biodata information and four other sections. Section one addressed the learning activities pupils are exposed to. Section two addressed the issue of classroom organization of teachers. Section three addressed the issue of communication while section four addressed classroom management. The instrument was validated through a pilot test that was carried out in Government Junior Secondary School U/Rimi. The instrument was pilot tested using (10) teachers who were not part of the main study but had the same qualifications as those used in the main study. A test-retest approach using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (PPMC) was used to establish the reliability. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.79. Data collected from the study were analysed using descriptive statistics, frequency counts and simple percentages.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Teachers' Bio data

Age distribution	40 and below	50
	41 – 50	32
	51 and above	18
Gender	Male	55
	Female	45
Educational qualification	NCE	55
	B.A/Bsc/B.Ed/B.Sc Ed/B.A Ed./HND	32
	M.sc/M.A/M.Ed	13
Years of Experience	1 – 10	55
	11 – 20	34
	21 – 30	9
	31 and above	2

The table above shows 82% of the teachers used for the study are below 50 years while 18% are above 51 years. 50% are male while 45% are female. 55% are NCE holders, 32% are degree holders while 13% have masters degree. 55% have between 1 – 10 years teaching experience while 34% have between 11 – 20 years, 9% have 21 – 30 years teaching experience and 2% had above 31% years of teaching experience.

Table 2: Teachers' Response on Learning Activities

SN	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	My pupils are able to do all classroom task/activities.	13	27	35	25

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2	My pupils are able to understand my directions/instructions.	10	20	48	22
3	My learning tasks and instruction consider pupils' learning style.	22	23	34	21
4	All class activities helped to promote self-confidence (instead of frustration).	43	22	20	15
5	Pupils understand what completion means.	30	15	32	23

Table 2 shows that 70% of the teachers agreed that their pupils are able to do all classroom tasks/activities while 30% disagreed. Since majority of the teachers agreed that their pupils are able to do all classroom tasks/activities, it implies they have good classroom management practices otherwise, they will not have been able to meet the instructional demands of the classroom. Majority of the teachers i.e 70% agreed that their pupils understand their directions/instructions. 55% agreed that all learning tasks and instructions consider pupils' learning style. 65% however disagreed with the statement that says all class activities help to promote self-confidence instead of frustration. 55% agreed that pupils understand what completion means. Some of the teachers who did not have good classroom management could not delivery their lessons successfully due to disruptive behaviour from pupils. Generally speaking, instructional demands of the classroom and curriculum delivery are hampered where teachers cannot adequately manage their classrooms.

Table 3: Teachers' Response on Classroom Organization

SN	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Classroom rules are clearly understood by all pupils.	10	17	48	25
2	Rules/regulations have been practiced and taught to the pupils.	15	25	35	25
3	I adhere to my classroom rules/routines without exception.	23	12	40	25
4	Consequences of breaking rules/regulations are enforced fairly and consistently.	10	11	57	22
5	There are variety of rewards and consequences.	10	20	45	25
6	Pupils understand my expectations.	25	15	40	20
7	Pupils understand consequences for inappropriate actions.	12	18	43	22
8	My classroom is always inviting and organized.	25	28	36	11
9	My children understand all transitional routines.	32	28	25	15

Table 3 shows majority (over 60%) of the teachers used for the study have rules clearly understood by pupils, the rules/regulations have been practiced and taught to pupils, the consequences of breaking rules/regulations are enforced fairly and consistently, there are variety of rewards, pupils understand teacher's expectations and they also understand consequences of inappropriate actions. 53% however are of the opinion that their classrooms are not inviting and organized because pupils are overcrowded. 60% of the teachers also disagreed with the statement that says children understand all transitional routines. This implies that children require more teaching and enlightenment in order to understand all transitional routines.

Table 4: Teachers Responses on Communication

SN	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I always demonstrate respect for all pupils.	20	15	45	20
2	I praise my pupils and give them ample opportunities to experience success.	10	15	65	10
3	I ensure that I have pupils' attention before I talk.	2	8	48	42
4	My instructions and directions are always presented clearly and specifically.	18	22	35	25
5	I use appropriate voice intonation.	25	23	32	20
6	I regularly use positive reinforcement.	8	12	48	32
7	I always use good sense of humour.	33	22	25	20

Table 4 shows that over 60% of the teachers demonstrate respect for all pupils, praise their pupils, ensure pupils' attention before they talk, give clear and specific instructions and directions and use positive reinforcement. Only 52% use appropriate voice intonation, 48% do not use appropriate voice intonation. Only 45% use a good sense of humour while teaching, 55% do not. The general tone in most of the classrooms observed is one of "seriousness" and "no-nonsense".

Table 5: Teachers Responses on Classroom Management

SN	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I have arranged my classroom to minimize crowding and distraction	15	35	30	20
2	I have maximize, well- structured, explicit and established rules in my classroom (e.g explicit classroom routines, specific directions, etc).	15	35	24	26
3	I have posted, taught, reviewed, and reinforced 3-5 positively stated expectations (or rules).	20	22	30	28
4	I provided more frequent acknowledgement for appropriate behaviours than inappropriate behaviours	15	25	33	27
5	I provided each pupil with multiple tasks in observable ways (e.g, writing, verbalizing)	15	25	35	25
6	My instruction actively engaged pupils in observable ways (e.g writing, verbalizing)	12	28	38	22
7	I actively supervised my classroom (e.g, moving, scanning) during instruction	10	15	42	33
8	I ignored or provided quick, direct, explicit reprimands, redirections in response to appropriate behaviour	15	20	30	35
9	I have multiple strategies/systems in place to acknowledge appropriate behaviour (e.g, class point systems, praise etc.	18	17	35	30
10	In general, I have provided specific feedback in response to social and academic behaviour errors and correct systems, praise, etc)	11	14	37	38

Table 5 shows that generally, over 50% arrange their classrooms to minimize crowding and distraction, provide frequent acknowledgement for appropriate behaviours, provide pupils with multiple tasks in observable ways, actively engage pupils in observable ways such as writing, actively supervise their classroom, provide quick direct, explicit reprimands in response to inappropriate behaviour, have multiple strategies in place to acknowledge appropriate behaviour and provide specific feedback in response to social and academic behaviour errors. About 53% of the teachers do not have well-structured, explicit and established classroom rules and routines and as a result, they have non-challant attitude towards class management practices. This may be probably because they are overwhelmed by overcrowded classrooms with over eighty (80) pupils and they also lack training in classroom management.

Discussion of findings

To answer the research question based on the data obtained one can safely categorize teachers' classroom management practices into the following broad categories: those who have well-structured and explicit classroom rules and routines; those who teach, review and provide feedback on expectations; those who actively engage pupils in observable ways; those who use a continuum of strategies to respond to appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Over 60% of the teachers used for this study actively engage pupils in observable ways and use a continuum of strategies to acknowledge appropriate behaviour as well as respond to inappropriate behaviour. 50% of the teachers do not have well-structured, explicit and established classroom rules and routines. From the data obtained from the study, one can deduce that most teachers do not have well-structured classroom management practices. Most teachers could not control their pupils; there were disruptive behaviours here and there due to the overcrowded nature of the classrooms. This contributed to teachers' inability to successfully deliver planned lessons. The ability of teachers to organize their classrooms and manage the behaviour of their pupils is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes for students and teachers. This is because pupils in classes where teachers had good class management practices were seen to be more actively involved in class discussions/activities. Such teachers also had minimal misbehaviour/disruptive/disciplinary problems. This finding is in agreement with those of Oliver et al (2010), Smith and Smith (2006) who identified inadequate competency in classroom management practices as having detrimental effects on teachers challenged with handling disruptive behaviour and meeting instructional demands of the classroom. Teachers who are unable to manage their classroom environment usually have high rates of discipline problems and low rates of teacher responses to the problems and consequently ineffective in teaching process and curriculum delivery.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study one can conclude that individual classroom management practices, such as having well-structured, explicit classroom rules and routines, teaching, reviewing and providing feedback on expectations, engaging pupils actively in observable ways and using a continuum of strategies to respond to appropriate and inappropriate behaviour appear to have enhanced smooth and successful lesson/curriculum delivery. Thus, one can say that these classroom practices

are effective. Teacher proficiency with classroom management is necessary to structure successful environments that encourage appropriate student behaviour. Therefore adequate teacher preparation is an important step in providing content knowledge and opportunities to develop proficiency in classroom management.

Recommendations

- Teachers should be given opportunities to develop practical classroom management skills through “classroom management practicum programme or course” in addition to the teaching practice programme already in existence.
- Teachers should be consistent in maintaining good classroom management practices for effective and efficient curriculum delivery.
- Teachers should be encouraged to demonstrate mastery in their subject areas, be adequately prepared for their lessons and they should be organized in their lesson delivery system to minimize disruptions in their classrooms that could trigger misbehaviour on the part of pupils.
- Teachers should be encouraged to devote time in arranging their classrooms to minimize crowding and distractions.
- Teachers should be encouraged to actively supervise their classroom during instruction for effective curriculum delivery.
- Teachers should put multiple strategies in place to acknowledge appropriate behaviour and they should also provide specific feedback in response to social and academic behaviour errors.
- Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) and Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) should ensure that all primary schools comply with the National Policy on Education approved teacher/pupil ratio of 1:35 per class for effective teaching and learning. This will help to decongest classes that are already overcrowded, thereby, making it easier for teachers to manage their classes.

Implication for Teacher Education Curriculum

- Curriculum for teacher training colleges and institutions should include an in-depth programme or course in classroom management practices in order to provide teachers with content knowledge and opportunities to develop proficiency in classroom management.

- In addition to the Teaching practice programme already in existence in teacher training institutions, the curriculum for Colleges of Education and other teacher training institutions should include a practicum in classroom management practices. This will provide trainee teachers with opportunities to acquire practical classroom management skills.
- Classroom management content should be spread across all courses offered in Colleges of Education and other teacher training institutions to acquaint and prepare teachers to be able to manage their classrooms effectively and efficiently.

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