

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING QUALITY TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Introduction

Classroom is an important place in the operation of any school. It holds the students together and offers them the opportunity of achieving the purpose of education. Classroom determines what the child eventually becomes, morally and academically. This goes to prove how indispensable the provision of adequate, conducive, suitable and child-friendly classroom is, for children to achieve their educational goals.

Classroom has been defined in various ways by scholars. Emmer and Stough (2011) define classroom as an avenue where students share experiences and grow in groups, living not only for learning but for development. This shows that a classroom is the power house where the success of teaching and learning process is generated, implemented and sustained. According to Azubuike (2012), the achievement and success of classroom teaching and learning interaction depends to a large extent on the teachers' skills and abilities as classroom managers. Hence, the goals of quality education cannot be achieved in any school system without effective classroom management. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (2012) states that in the teaching and learning process, it is important for a teacher to set the classroom to attract and sustain the attention of the learners. There is the need for proper management of the available classrooms in secondary schools for quality and sustainable education system.

Classroom management is the process of efficiently and effectively organizing the classroom so that learning objectives can be achieved. Organizing the classroom efficiently and effectively for positive learning outcome is largely dependent on the ability of the teachers. When a teacher is able to manage his classroom effectively through evolving good classroom practices, learning experiences become more task oriented, predictable and therefore lead students to learning in their highest potentials and even exceeding set standards. These classroom management practices are what Osakwe (2014) refers to as the tactics or methods adopted by teachers to ensure decorum in the classroom and thus create a healthy and conducive

atmosphere for learning. The classroom must be arranged properly to accommodate students, seats, tables and instructional materials among others. It is also the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that the students are communicated the rules and regulations that guide the classroom.

According to Canary (2011) communication may be defined as the transfer of a message or information from one person to another. The way the teacher communicates during the teaching and learning situation influences how he/she and the learners will perform in the teaching and learning process. Teachers can achieve much if they use the following strategies: encourage communication process with the students and create a meaningful bond with the students based on genuine social interactions; create opportunities for socialization as part of instructional activities and design learning experiences that promote socialization and discussion; hold and communicate high behavioural expectations; systematically teach classroom routines; use more positive than negative teacher students interactions; give students the opportunity to express their opinion and contribute ideas; involve students in creating rules, consequences and routines. Browne (2013) emphasized that when these are done, teachers may prevent challenging behaviour from occurring and promote academic performance of the students.

Many communication activities go on in the classroom either in the form of teaching, students' discussion and conversation, (Okorji, 2014). Communication abilities of the teachers are indispensable in the management of classrooms. Jana and Robert (2013) opine that

when a teacher communicates the goals and objectives of the class, explains the class expectations, clearly states the rules and procedures of the classroom to the understanding of the students, the students tend to be more cooperative and willing to complete a task because they have a clear understanding of what they are to do, why they are being asked to do it and how they are to proceed.

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (2010) in support of the above states that the teacher should also use non-verbal behaviour to communicate. Non-verbal feedback smiles, frowns, nod among others move closer to students, for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Eye contact and/or facial expressions communicate pleasure, concern, interest, mood and there must be audibility among others. The teacher should make sure that his verbal communication is consistent with his non-verbal behaviour.

Communication, be it verbal or non-verbal, is a very important tool in classroom management but should be well handled to avoid misunderstanding

or sending the wrong signal. The following strategies are recommended: state all objectives and instructions clearly, where possible in positive terms; check for understanding – if the student don't understand the stated goals, then you have not communicated; give instruction and information in small bite size ; use a tone or voice that does not alienate students; be careful not to talk for too long at a stretch; speak respectfully to students; establish clear routines for who is allowed to talk and then ask students to give feedback to you.

The teacher should be able to tell a student what to do and watch him do it, always give feedback to what they have done wrong or right and reward them when necessary. This helps students to know where they are not doing well and then ask questions for better performance. In fact, good communication has great importance for good classroom management. The crux of the matter is that teachers no longer send the right signals and the students misbehave

Another important aspect of classroom practice the teacher must use is classroom arrangement. This has to do with how a teacher puts in order all the physical objects that are found in his class. It comprises the sitting arrangements, chalkboard arrangement, placement of teaching aids so as to allow easy movement of both the teacher and the students to avoid misbehaviour and promote quality teaching and learning. Mishra (2008) suggested a few common sense rules to guide classroom arrangement. They include that:

students should be seated where their attention is directed towards the teachers, high traffic areas should be free from congestions, students should be able to clearly see the chalkboard, the screens and the teacher; students should be seated facing the front of the room and away from the windows; classroom arrangements should be flexible to accommodate a variety of teaching activities, and that students should be seated so that teachers can easily move among students to monitor their work and behaviour.

The researchers observed that setting up the physical environment of the classrooms can be quite demanding, especially when faced with older buildings, crowded classrooms and insufficient storage space as is the case in most schools in the state. In tandem with this UBEC (2012) stipulated that arranging the classroom properly and providing clean classrooms promote qualitative teaching. Many schools in Nigeria today are characterized by so many classroom challenges that must be carefully handled by the classroom

teachers for quality teaching to take place. Teachers in most secondary schools in Nigeria, Anambra State inclusive complain that one of the challenges they encounter in the course of their profession is classroom management and its worrying consequences on quality education. The teachers are observed to use punishment more often in the classrooms than reward, thereby making students to be afraid of them rather than respect them. Also students in classrooms sleep while classes are on, make noise, move in and out of the classroom, fight, and chew gum, among other vices in the presence of the teacher in the classroom. With this scenario, misbehavior and poor performance become the order of the day in most schools.

The concern for quality has been at the core of the motivating forces for reforms in education, secondary schools (both public and private) inclusive. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013), and Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (2010), the main policy objective in education in Nigeria is to raise the quality of education at all levels in order to make the recipients of the system more useful to themselves and the society as well. These goals will not be significantly achieved if the teacher fails in his responsibility. Ayeni and Adelabu (2012) see quality teaching in education as the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and review of the resources and reformation process (teaching and learning) to produce quality output (students) that meet set standards and expectations of the society. This implies that quality teaching focuses on enhancing and improving the processes of teaching and learning in order to produce students who are worthy in character and in academics. This means that the learning environment in secondary schools in Nigeria must be conducive and safe enough for quality teaching to take place.

Parents and students often complain about the classroom activities of the teachers in secondary schools. Teachers on the other hand complain of students' inattentiveness, disruptive behaviour and lack of cooperation among others. This seems to be the case in schools in Anambra state. Teachers in the state often complain that one of the challenges they face in carrying out their duties as teachers is how to manage their classes that are most times over populated and lack sufficient learning and teaching resources which are all obstacles to effective classroom instruction for quality teaching. The effect of this is that the students are constantly sent out of the classrooms, punished, suspended and sometimes expelled from school.

Some schools in the State have more than 40 students per class as against the teacher student ratio of 1:40 recommended by the FRN (2013). This situation has led to spreading resources thinly and inability of the teachers to manage the classes effectively in Anambra state, thereby, affecting

the quality of education. As a result of this, indiscipline among students abound and quality hindered. The need for the classroom teachers to possess the necessary skills and to a great extent use them to manage instruction and behaviour in secondary schools for quality teaching seem to be neglected.

The main purpose of this study therefore, was to ascertain the extent teachers use classroom management practices for quality teaching in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the extent the teachers use effective communication skills to promote quality teaching in public and private secondary schools in the state and to determine how the teachers' classroom arrangement enhances teaching in public and private secondary schools in the state.

This study was conducted using public and private secondary schools in Anambra state. The classroom management practices covered are teachers' use of effective communication skills for quality teaching, and adequate classroom arrangement.

Two research questions guided the study namely;

1. To what extent does the teachers' effective use of communication skills promote quality teaching in secondary schools in Anambra state?
2. How does the teachers' classroom arrangement enhance teaching in secondary schools in Anambra state?

Two hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance namely;

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the teachers in public and private secondary schools in Anambra state on their use of effective communication skills to promote quality teaching.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary schools teachers in Anambra state on their classroom arrangement to enhance teaching.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population for this study was 15,990, teachers. This is made up of 9,697 teachers from the 481 private secondary schools and 6,293 teachers from the 256 public secondary schools in the six education zones in the State, namely; Aguata, Awka, Ihiala, Nnewi, Ogidi and Otuocho education zones.

The sample size for this study was 1,258 teachers drawn from public and private secondary schools in the state. The multi-stage sampling technique was utilized to arrive at the sample size. The first stage involved randomly drawing three education zones out of the six education zones in the state.

Accordingly, Aguata, Awka, and Nnewi zones were drawn using simple random sampling technique of balloting with replacement. The second stage involved the use of proportionate stratified sampling technique to draw 10% from each of the two categories of schools. This resulted to 74 secondary schools from the three education zones, consisting of 26 public and 48 private secondary schools. Stratification was based on school type. Thereafter, simple random sampling technique was used to sample teachers from the 74 schools. In each school, 17 teachers were randomly sampled making it, 1,258 teachers (442 from the 26 public secondary school and 816 from 48 the private secondary schools earlier sampled).

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers and titled "Teachers' Classroom Management Practices for Quality Teaching Questionnaire" (TCMPQTQ). The instrument contained 26 items and was made up of two parts; A and B. Part A contained two items designed to elicit response on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Part B contained 24 items and had two sections namely sections 1 and 2. Section 1 contained twelve items that sought responses on the teachers' effective use of communication skills to promote teaching while section 2 also contained twelve items that sought responses on the teachers' classroom arrangement and organization to promote teaching. The items in section 1 were structured on a four point scale of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent, while the items in Section 2 were also structured on a four-point scale but with response options of Strongly Agree, (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The options in the two sections were weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The instrument was validated by three experts. Two of them are lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one a lecturer in Educational Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University..

Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the items in the instrument. The results showed reliability co-efficient of 0.74; and 0.71 for sections 1 and 2 of TCMPQTQ respectively with an overall index of 0.73. Direct delivery method was used in collecting data with the help of six research assistants. Out of the 1,258 copies of the questionnaire administered, 1,253 were successful collected. This represented a 99.61% return rate. These 1,253 copies collected were used for data analysis.

Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z- test was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of

significance. Mean ratings of 2.50 and above were taken to indicate acceptance and agreement with the research questions posed, while any item with mean score of less than 2.50 was considered to indicate non acceptance and thus disagreed with the research question posed. For the hypotheses, where the calculated z value was greater than the table z value, the hypothesis was rejected. Otherwise the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does the teachers’ effective use of communication skills promote quality teaching in public and private secondary schools in Anambra state?

Table 1: Mean responses of public and private secondary school teachers’ effective use of communication skills to promote quality teaching.

To what extent do you	Public school (N= 442)			Private School (N=816)		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1. Display the major classroom rules and procedures in an appropriate section of the classroom.	2.22	1.01	LE	2.15	.92	LE
2. Use non-verbal signals such as gestures, movement, facial expressions to indicate approval.	2.42	.91	LE	2.50	.98	GE
3. Give frequent and consistent feedback regarding students’ behaviour and performance.	2.48	.94	LE	2.43	.91	LE
4. Involve students in constant Interactions.	2.49	.89	LE	2.50	.96	GE
5. Use questions and answers to promote teaching and learning in the classroom.	2.55	.84	LE	3.01	.76	GE
6. Provide clear directions for classroom activities so that the students know what to do at any given time.	2.40	.77	LE	2.49	.81	LE
7. Use tones and voice that don’t alienate students during teaching and learning.	2.43	.92	LE	2.30	.68	LE
8. Systematically teach and re-teach classroom routines within the context of the classroom (e.g. turning in home work, requesting assistance, talking in turns etc.).	2.62	.90	GE	2.47	.93	LE
9. Make clear to students the	2.14	.90	LE	2.40	.91	LE

consequences of their behaviour in the classroom.							
10. Call students by their names to keep them involved and focused.	2.37	.88	LE	2.44	.91	LE	
11. Provide each student with multiple opportunities to respond and participate during instruction.	2.48	.81	GE	2.53	.88	GE	
12. Present lessons with accuracy and clarity for better understanding of the topics.	2.51	.97	LE	2.52	.67	GE	
Grand Mean	2.42	2.96	LE	2.47	1.74	LE	

The grand mean ratings of public and private schools on the extent of the teachers' use of effective communication skills were 2.42 and 2.47 respectively. This indicated that the teachers in both public and private secondary schools to a low extent used effective communication skills in the classroom. The grand standard deviation for public schools was 2.96 while that of the private school was 1.74. This shows that the respondents in the private schools were more coherent in their responses than those in the public school.

The item by item analysis indicated that in the public schools, item 8 had the highest mean rating of 2.62. This showed that the teachers to a great extent systematically teach and re-teach classroom routines within the context of the classroom, while item 1 with the lowest mean rating of 2.22 indicated that teachers in the public schools had low display of classroom rules and procedures. On the other hand, in private schools item 36 with the highest mean rating of 3.01 revealed that teachers in private schools to a great extent used questions and answers to promote teaching and learning in the classroom, while item 32 with the lowest mean rating of 2.15 showed that teachers in private schools to a low extent displayed school rules and procedures in an appropriate section in the classroom.

Table 2: Mean responses of public and private secondary schools teachers' on classroom arrangement that enhances teaching.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements	Public school (N= 442)			Private School (N=816)		
	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
I arrange students in rows to facilitate task behaviour and academic learning.	2.45	1.0	Disagree	2.56	1.02	Agree
I remove distracting materials from view when instruction is going on in the classroom.	2.79	.84	Agree	2.53	.87	Agree

I organize visual and audio aids in the classroom to facilitate learning.	2.55	.92	Agree	2.44	.98	Disagree
I strategically place students with special needs or behaviour problems in close proximity to me.	2.58	.90	Agree	2.55	.90	Agree
I keep a neat and tidy classroom to facilitate learning.	2.55	.73	Agree	2.60	.83	Agree
I ensure that all seats and desks are well arranged to suit a method.	2.67	.99	Agree	2.53	.97	Agree
I disallow noise making formally but pleasantly.	2.76	.90	Agree	2.69	.89	Agree
I display the major classroom rules and procedures agreed upon by teacher and students.	2.4	.92	Disagree	2.44	.92	Disagree
I ensure that the classroom is well ventilated and has proper lighting.	2.68	.94	Agree	2.48	.95	Disagree
I ensure there is order in the classroom during lessons to facilitate learning.	2.72	.89	Agree	2.67	.89	Agree
I manage student's movement in and out of the class during lessons to avoid distraction and promote teaching and learning.	2.67	1.02	Agree	2.81	1.12	Agree
I ensure that the chalkboard is placed where every students could see it to facilitate learning.	2.61	.76	Agree	2.65	.74	Agree
Grand Mean	2.62	2.44	Agree	2.58	2.57	Agree

From the results in Table 2, the grand mean for teachers in public schools on how they arranged their classrooms to enhance teaching was 2.62 while the grand mean for teachers in private schools was 2.58. This showed that the teachers in both public and private secondary schools agreed that the teacher's classroom arrangement enhanced quality teaching. The grand standard deviation for public and private schools was 2.44 and 2.57 respectively. These indicated that teachers in public schools were more coherent in their responses than those in private schools. The item by item analysis showed that in the public schools the teachers disagreed with item 13 ($x = 2.45$), namely that they arranged students in rows to facilitate task behaviour and academic learning. and also with item 20 ($x=2.49$) namely that

they displayed the major classroom rules and procedures agreed upon by teacher and students. The teachers however agreed on the rest of the items with mean scores ranging from 2.55 to 2.79. On the other hand, in the private schools the teachers disagreed with items 15, 20 and 21 with mean scores 2.44, 2.44 and 2.48 respectively. The teachers agreed on the rest of the items with mean scores ranging from 2.53 to 2.81.

Table 3: z-test comparison of mean responses of teachers in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State in their use of effective communication skills to promote quality teaching.

	Public School (N= 442)	Private School (N=816)		df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
	Mean SD	Mean	SD				
Use of effective communication skills to promote quality teaching	2.42 2.96	2.47	1.74	1256	1.89	1.96	Not Significant

The results in Table 3 show that the z-cal (1.89) was less than z-critical (1.96) at alpha level of 0.05 and degree of freedom 1256. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is not rejected. Thus there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the teachers in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State in their use of effective communication skills to promote quality teaching.

Table 4: z-test comparison of public and private schools mean responses of teachers in their classroom arrangement to enhance teaching.

	Public School (N= 442)	Private School (N=816)		df	z-cal	z-crit.	Decision
	Mean SD	Mean	SD				
Classroom arrangement to enhance teaching	2.64 2.44	2.58	2.57	1256	1.86	1.96	Not Significant

The analysis in Table 4 showed that the z -cal (1.86) was less than z -critical (1.96) at alpha level of 0.05 and degree of freedom 1256. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected. It therefore means that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State in their classroom arrangement to enhance teaching.

Discussion

The results indicate that teachers in private and public secondary schools to a low extent use effective communication skills for classroom management for quality teaching in the classroom. The implication is that teachers in both public and private secondary schools in Anambra state to a low extent display the major classroom rules, give frequent feedback on students' behaviour, involve students in constant interaction, provide clear directions, call students by their names and present lessons with accuracy and clarity for better understanding of the topics. There is no doubt that the inadequacies will have adverse effects on the quality of teaching in secondary schools. It also shows that effective communication abilities of the teachers are indispensable in the management of classrooms. The findings confirmed the observations of Asiyai (2011) that the teachers' use of communication techniques in the classroom in public schools is very low. This is further supported by Mgbodile (2004) who found out that the teachers' use of communication techniques in the classroom in public schools is very low. The teacher should be able to communicate the rules and expectations of the class and make the students know the consequences of their actions.

Again the findings of this study show that there is no significant difference between the responses of teachers in public and private schools in their use of effective communication skills to promote quality teaching. This disagrees with Ahmad (2011) who found out that the use of communication skills by the teachers is higher in private secondary schools than in public secondary schools.

The results also indicate that teachers in public and private secondary schools in Anambra state agreed that good arrangement of classrooms to enhance teaching can come through; arranging students to facilitate task behaviour, removing distracting materials, organizing audio-visual aids, strategically placing students with special needs, and keeping neat and tidy classroom. This finding agrees with Idu (2012) who found out that teachers in

schools possess the necessary skill in class arrangement for efficient teaching and learning. Idu further found that the teachers' classroom arrangement like arrangement of seats, desks, chalkboard, learning materials, in rows enhances quality teaching and learning in schools. The result of this study is however not in agreement with Ahmad (2011) who found out in his study that classroom arrangement is better practised in private secondary schools than in public secondary schools. It however confirmed the findings of Kukuru (2011) that physical arrangement of the classroom is one of the basic classroom principles every teacher must possess to enhance quality teaching in any school system.

Conclusion

From the data interpretation and discussions of results of this study, it is concluded that the importance of classroom management cannot be over emphasized. It is as useful as teaching itself and forms an important strategy for promoting quality teaching in schools. It is the primary function of the teacher to maintain both human and materials resources available in the classroom in order to enhance quality teaching. It has been observed that conducive environment equals quality teaching. Hence, effective communication and good classroom arrangement are positive classroom management practices that the teachers need as strategies for promoting quality teaching in secondary schools. The study showed that teachers in both public and private secondary schools to a low extent use effective communication skills as classroom management practices for quality teaching in Anambra state. The teachers also agreed that arrangement of classrooms would enable the teacher to manage the classroom for quality teaching. It is important to note that if quality in education is to be maintained, the teacher must maintain conducive environment by using different classroom management practices. This will help in properly forming the students in character and academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Monitoring teams should be set up in all the schools in Anambra state so as to monitor the classroom management practices of the teachers.
2. Training and retraining of teaching staff should be the watchword of school management. Workshops should be regularly organised by the Anambra State Government to refresh the teachers on the teaching methodology. These conferences should accord classroom management a top priority with the sole aim of improving their

- ineffectiveness. This will create enabling environment for teachers to improve where they are lacking in classroom management in schools.
3. Adequate staff welfare should be mandatory in schools. Adequate remuneration should be made to the teachers at all levels. This will make them to be dedicated to their classroom duties and management.
 4. Classroom management content in teacher education training colleges and institutions should be given priority with the sole aim of improving the standard of teaching in our classrooms.
 5. Teachers should package their instructional materials well in order to enhance quality teaching to meet the educational needs of the students in their classrooms.

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