

Relationship between Teachers' Classroom Management Styles and Pupils' Discipline in Public Primary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study determined the relationship between teachers' classroom management styles and pupils' discipline in public primary schools in Anambra state. To this end, the study was guided by 3 research questions and three null hypotheses where tested at 0.05 level of significance. A population of 74,947, consisting 645 teachers and 74,302 primary 6 pupils in 3 educational zones which comprised Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha Education zones. A sample of 303 primary school teachers and 3,715 pupils were chosen for the study through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using two instruments titled Teachers' Classroom Management Styles Questionnaire (TCMSQ) and Pupils Discipline questionnaire (PDQ). The instruments were validated by three experts. Internal consistency reliability index of 0.75 and 0.71 were obtained for TCMSQ and PDQ using Cronbach's alpha method. Data analysis was done using Pearson's correlation analysis. The findings revealed that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between democratic classroom management style of teachers and pupil' discipline. A low positive and significant relationship exists between autocratic classroom management and laissez-faire classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline.

Key Words: Classroom, Classroom Management, Management Styles, Discipline, Pupils' Discipline

Introduction

Globally, education is considered very important for personal and societal development. Nigeria regards education as an instrument for the promotion of national development as well as affecting desirable social change (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). In the Nigerian context, the journey towards the acquisition of formal education begins with the basic education. Basic education is the education given to children, adults, and out-of-school youths. It consists of early childhood, primary education and junior secondary education. Although basic education begins with early childhood education, the Federal Government of Nigeria still see primary education as the "the foundation of the entire education system" (FRN, 2009, p.11). This is because it is aimed at, among other things, providing the Nigerian children with permanent literacy, numeracy and ability to communicate effectively; solid foundation for scientific and critical thinking; opportunities for developing manipulative skills, right morals and values with which to function effectively in the society. (FRN, 2009).

In order to accomplish these aims, schools are set up to actualize these objectives through their teaching and learning process and activities. Schools are, therefore, planned social institutions which act as an instrument of the society for teaching and learning

(Balogun in Ikediugwu, 2005). For effective teaching and learning activities, children are further grouped into different primary levels with teachers assigned to each level. In each level, there are classrooms.

The school is an open system with a classroom as subsystem consisting of the teacher, the pupils and the curriculum interacting within the physical environment. It is through quality interaction between the teacher and the pupils on one hand, and the interaction among pupils on the other hand that positive classroom environment is created and effective teaching and learning achieved. Thus, positive learning environment cannot be achieved without pupils' discipline.

Pupils' discipline is necessary and vital for conducive classroom climate needed for learning to occur. In line with this view, Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014), observed that discipline at school plays a vital role in the achievement of expectations and goals. Discipline is defined as readiness or ability to respect authority and observe conventional or established laws of the society or of any organization (Charles, 2009). Nakpodia (2010) perceives discipline as a training that develops self-control, character, orderliness and efficiency. In the view of Oboegbulem (2004) discipline means conduct of an individual which is exhibited through training in self-control and in habit to socially approved standards of thoughts and action. In relation to the view of Oboegbulem, discipline is therefore the ability of pupils to respect authority and observe conventions and established rules and regulations that govern the class or the school. This translates to pupils showing respect for teachers, being attentive in the class, peaceful class interaction, engaging in learning activities, among other things.

In a disciplined classroom, instructional time is utilized effectively and all opportunities for learning are maximized. The teacher is held accountable for all these levels of interactions within the classroom in order to achieve the discipline necessary for academic activities to take place. This is because the teacher is at the center of the implementation of the curriculum. Owodunnia (2010), corroborated this view when he noted that it is the responsibility of a teacher to build up desirable behaviour in pupils and also help pupils to establish a code of conduct for themselves. This is achieved through his/her classroom management style.

Classroom management has been viewed differently by many scholars. Savage and Savage (2010) see classroom management as involving the establishment and maintenance of the classroom environment so that educational goals can be accomplished. According to Sarahlyne (2013), classroom management is the process of governing a classroom through procedures, rules and policies. She added that it involves controlling and disciplining pupils to ensure effective teaching and learning. Nwankwo (2014) had a more expanded notion of classroom management as the methods, techniques, actions or plans that teachers bring into the classroom to ensure a positive learning environment and the best behaviour from pupils. The definition of classroom management proffered by Nwankwo shows that teachers should make use of different techniques, methods or styles for managing the classroom to ensure positive learning environment and to elicit appropriate behaviour from pupils.

According to Burden (2000), classroom management style is the technique teachers use to maintain control in the classroom. Literature is replete with different classroom management styles. Teachers have different classroom management styles at their disposal. For instance, Falodan (2003) identified three classroom management styles, namely; autocratic, democratic and *laissez-faire* while Dunbar (2004) enumerated four styles, namely; authoritative, authoritarian, indifferent and *laissez-faire*. More recently, Ali (2014) identified four styles, namely; traditional, democratic, autocratic and leisurely classroom management styles. Democratic style of management is characterized by more pupil participation was perceived to be positive style, while leisurely and *laissez-faire* is known for giving too much freedom to pupils. This may perhaps be detrimental where the pupils are not matured. The use of autocratic classroom management style is characterized by teacher exerting strong teachers' control over pupils and making decisions

while the pupils are mostly passive. While this approach was considered beneficial for short term quantitative task accomplishment, it is detrimental to quality and long term performance (Ali, 2014).

The classroom management style adopted by the classroom teacher often determines how the pupils behave. As observed by Onyali (2014), effective classroom managers create orderly life, safe environments where pupils feel valued and comfortable, thus, setting the stage for teaching and learning. As observed by Kolak (2010), teachers' classroom management styles influence other determinants of learning process like pupils discipline. Indeed, ineffective classroom management style can lead to serious conditions of indiscipline with resultant negative effect on classroom learning environment.

Although there are a number of classroom management styles, some classroom teachers reported experiencing difficulty in choosing the right style to create positive classroom climate for learning (Good, 2015). This may be one of the reasons for the increase in the cases of indiscipline among pupils. In consonant to the view, Ali (2012, p.46) noted that "discipline in schools is passing through extended eclipse". The author noted that indiscipline has the potential for affecting pupils' concentration, academic performance and on the long run, national development. Ajayi and Ayodele (2010) are of the view that indiscipline in school exposes it to social vices such as stealing, armed robbery, vandalism, cultism, prostitution, examination malpractices, dishonesty, disobedience, drug trafficking amongst others.

Writing from the perspective of Anambra State, Obi (cited in Nweke, 2014), observed that indiscipline in the classroom and school settings manifest in the forms of lateness to class, cheating, bullying, insolence, failure to do class assignments, insubordination, aggression, eating in class, sleeping in class, damage to school materials and facilities, noise making, failure to obey prefects, untidy dressing habits and any other act capable of disrupting class activities. Indiscipline in schools and classrooms can be partly associated with teacher-related factors. Some scholars identified teachers' modeling of misbehaviors and poor instructional management in the class as the root cause of pupil's indiscipline (Ali, 2012; Iwu & Iwu, 2013), others associated pupils' indiscipline with teachers' use of inappropriate classroom management style (Ben 2006). Ben states that effective classroom management styles contribute significantly to pupils discipline while ineffective style leads to indiscipline" (Ben, 2006,p.54).

In view of the growing cases of indiscipline and the negative consequences of indiscipline, there is the need to ascertain how much the classroom management styles of primary school teachers are related to pupils' discipline in primary schools in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching and learning can only take place in a conducive classroom climate. Teachers' use of appropriate classroom management styles is expected to ensure that this type of environment is realized. However, there appear to be a significant deterioration in the behavior of pupils in the primary schools. In Anambra State, disciplinary problems appear in the classroom and interruptions of class teaching continue to increase. These include talking when not to talk, throwing things during the lesson period, staring out of the windows and waving to others, among others. The more publicized incidents of disruptions are those which involve violent behaviours, especially when this includes the use of offensive weapons, secret cult activities, as well as personal attacks on teachers. Some of these offences took their roots from the classroom indiscipline behaviours. Cases of indiscipline affect pupils, teachers, parents and other stakeholders in education and if it is not checked can perhaps lead to lawlessness in the school and society at large. Considering this fact, the researchers deemed it necessary to carry out a study on the relationship between classroom management styles of teachers and pupils discipline.

Purpose of the Study

The study ascertained the relationship between classroom management styles and pupils' discipline in primary schools in Anambra State.

Specifically, this study ascertained:

1. The nature of relationship between democratic classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline.
2. The nature of relationship between autocratic classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline.
3. The nature of relationship between Laissez-faire classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the nature of relationship between democratic management style of teachers and pupils' discipline?
2. What is the nature of relationship between autocratic management style of teachers and pupils' discipline?
3. What is the nature of relationship between Laissez-faire management style of teachers and pupils' discipline?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between democratic management style of teachers and pupils' discipline?
2. There is no significant relationship between autocratic management style of teachers and pupils' discipline?
3. There is no significant relationship between Laissez-faire management style of teachers and pupils' discipline?

Method

The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was carried out in Anambra state on a population of 74,947 consisting 645 teachers and 74,302 primary 6 pupils in 3 educational zones which comprises Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha Education zones. A sample of 303 primary school teachers and 3,715 pupils were chosen for the study through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Two sets of instruments developed by the researchers and titled Teachers' Classroom Management Styles Questionnaire (TCMSQ) and Pupils Discipline questionnaire (PDQ) were used to collect data for the study. The instruments were validated by three experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 and 0.71 were obtained for TCMSQ and PDQ using Cronbach's Alpha method. Data collected for the study were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

Results

Table 1. Pearson's Correlation between democratic classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Democratic Style	292	0.424	0.00	Moderate positive significant relationship
Pupils' Discipline				

The above table shows that the Pearson's correlation coefficient $r(292) = 0.424$. $P\text{-value} = .000$. This shows that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between democratic classroom management style of teachers and pupil' discipline.

Table 2. Pearson's Correlation between autocratic classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Autocratic Style	292	0.356	0.00	Low positive significant relationship
Pupils' Discipline				

As shown in table 2, the Pearson's correlation coefficient, r . (292) = 0.356. P-value=.000. This indicates that a low positive and significant relationship exists between autocratic classroom management style of teachers and pupil' discipline.

Table 3. Pearson's Correlation between laissez-faire classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Laissez-faire Style	292	0.381	0.00	Low positive significant relationship
Pupils' Discipline				

As shown in table 3, there is a low positive and significant relationship between laissez-faire classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline. This is shown by the size of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, r which is 0.381. P-value=.000.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study shows that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between democratic classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline. While a low positive relationship exist between autocratic and laissez-fair classroom management styles of teachers and pupils' discipline. These suggest that an increase in teachers' use of democratic classroom management style will result to a moderate improvement in pupils' discipline. While an increase in teachers' use of autocratic and laissez-fair classroom management style will result to a low increase in pupils' discipline.

The findings of this study in line with that of Onyinloye (2010), which showed a positive significant relationship between classroom management style of primary school teachers and pupils' activities. Also, the finding Ngwangwa (2012) is in line with the findings of the present study. His study showed that teachers adopt various management styles in order to achieve students' discipline in schools which include: democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire styles of management. He further stated that democratic management style was mostly used by teachers in managing their classrooms. The finding of this study is consistent with that of Al-Shami (1989), Ann (2010), Ngwangwa (2012) and Okwori, Owodunni and Balogun (2015). These researchers found that that teachers adopt democratic classroom management style in order to achieve students' discipline in schools. The findings of the study also agree with Obiejemba (2008). He found that disciplinary problems are more prevalent in schools and classrooms where the teachers adopt lassies fair classroom management style.

However, the finding of this study is not consistent with that of Yflmaza (2009). His finding indicated that there is a moderate, positive and significant correlation between the authoritarian classroom management style and classroom control.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the researchers concluded that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between democratic classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline. A low positive relationship exist between autocratic and laissez-fair classroom management style of teachers and pupils' discipline.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. Anambra State Ministry of Education and the State Post Primary School Services Commission (PPSSC) should from time to time organize workshops and seminars aimed at improving teachers' classroom management. This will better equip teachers to manage students' disciplinary problems.
2. The researchers also recommended that teachers should adopt more of democratic management style in addressing pupils' disciplinary problems. They should also ensure that they make use of teaching methods that cater for all categories of learners. This will help in the attainment of disciplined classes.
3. The State Government should ensure that schools are well facilitated in terms of teaching and learning materials. This will enable the teachers successfully plan their teaching and learning environment to attract students' attention.

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