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Enhancing Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools: The Vicissitude of Classroom Management Skills

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Abstract:

This study examined classroom management with focus on class control as well as classroom discipline in correlation with academic performance of secondary schools' students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study comprised all the 87, 336 secondary school students and 7,538 teachers in 203 secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample for this study consisted 720 students selected from 24 public secondary schools using multi-stage sampling procedure which involved simple random, stratified and purposive sampling techniques. Two set of instruments tagged "Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ)" and an Inventory on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results were used for the study. The face and content validity of CMQ was done and the test-retest method of reliability was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained for CMQ. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used and all hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the levels of classroom management and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State were moderate. The findings also showed that there was significant relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance. It was found out that class control and classroom discipline were positively related to students' academic performance. It was recommended that routine inspection of teachers for effective teaching and learning should be encouraged while teachers in secondary schools should adopt appropriate class control measures in order to enhance better students' academic performance.

Keywords: Classroom management, class control, classroom discipline, academic performance

1. Introduction

Teachers all over the world are regarded as the shakers and movers of the education system most especially in secondary levels because the quality of education and schooling in particular depends on their disposition toward work and subsequent job performance. Over time, the achievement of students ranging from societal sustainability, coupled with students' academic performance in both internal and external examinations has been the index for determining teachers' performance. Though teachers' influence cannot be underrated as a factor that pose a great influence on student academic performance. This is evidenced in the work of Ekundayo & Alonge (2012) and Odunlami & Omodan (2017) that teachers as human capital in school system contribute significantly to students' performance when their job is discharged with almost ability. Therefore, the success attached to teaching and learning depend to a great extent on teacher, no the wonder an effective teacher is synonymous with a productive teaching which was conceptualized by Omodan, Kolawole & Fakunle (2016) as teachers with high productivity. This is so because they are responsible for turning educational policies into actions in classrooms.

Despite all these highlighted importance and influence of teachers on students' performance, the reverse is still the case as shown in various literatures and observations that the hug government investment in education is not reflecting in students' output in terms of performance and quality of school graduates (Onaolapo, 2017). The academic performance of students in the West African Examination Council (WAEC) between 2013 and 2014 is a proven evidence to attest to this argument. The percentage of learners who passed with at least 5 credit passes and above including English and Mathematics between the same years was about 38.81% in Nigeria (Arafat, 2015). This shows a systematic declining in the outputs of external examination in Nigeria because in 2012, 30.9% of the entire candidates who sat for the same examination obtained credit level passes in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics while in 2011 only 22.34% of the 1,160,561 candidates passed with at least 5 credit and above in English Language and 25.14% in Mathematics in the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (Owadie, 2011; Arafat, 2015).

The story in Ekiti State is not different from what happens generally regarding the performance of students in the examinations. Observation showed that Ekiti state which used to be noted for academic excellence in West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) in the past had declined from 1st -10th position to 34th position in 2013/2014 session. Results showed that between 2001 and 2010, only 17% of the students had English language while 36% Yoruba language, 20% Biology, 31% Mathematics and 26% Economics were successful in SSCE (Ministry of Education, Ekiti State 2015).

Besides, the results of students who sat for Senior Schools Certificate Examination (SSCE) between 2011 to 2016 also showed clearly the decline in the academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti State. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, the number of students who registered for SSCE conducted by West Africa Examination Council were 11,956, 11,011, 13,639 respectively. Only 23%, 29%, 25% had 5 credits including the core subjects such as Mathematics and English language while others failed. In 2015, the percentage of candidates that passed with at least five credits including Mathematics and English language were 38.68% (Punch Newspaper, 2016). While in 2016, candidates recorded 50% with five credits in Mathematics and English language which is still not encouraging. (Ekiti State Ministry of Education, 2016). Upon the observations in the decline in the students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, one begins to wonder if the persistence in the academic deterioration is not a reflection of teachers' poor classroom management in the schools. In other words, the observed poor academic performance of students could be as a result of teachers' ineffective classroom management.

Classroom management plays a very important role in the teaching and learning process. It is a veritable practice expedient in instructional process from the teachers to the students. Therefore, the success of any educational system may not be unconnected to the effectiveness of classroom management. Since teachers are managers in the classroom which are expected to be in control of their lesson from the beginning of the end of the lesson, must at all-time ensure that the students benefit from the classroom business that transpires. This, to a reasonable extent, would enhance smooth and uninterrupted coordination and responses on the part of both the teacher and the learners. This may be the reason why Nakpodia (2006) concluded that classroom management is an action a teacher takes to create an environment that supports and facilitates instructions, academic, social and emotional learning. Which is a process of creating favourable conditions to facilitate instructions as well as that of regulating social behaviour of students in the classroom. Hence, teachers in the classroom are by the nature of their profession, managers of classroom activities. The classroom teachers' job unlike that of other professionals is concerned with maintaining order, allocating resources, regulating the sequence of events and directing his own attention towards achieving educational goals.

Classroom management becomes one of the essential conditions for the disposition of effective instruction in classroom which begins with efficient preparation in lesson planning that enable teachers to teach effectively and learners to learn effectively. This is evidenced in the opinion of Omodan, Kolawole & Fakunle (2016) that positive classroom climate and safe environment enable student to thrive higher academically. This had earlier been said by Ekundayo, Konwea & Yusuf (2010) that effective classroom management provide diverse opportunities for students to socialize because it keeps them motivated, provide them with appropriate instructional feedback and thereby minimize disruptive behaviours. These views also justified the conclusion of Akpakwu (2003) that the success or failure of any teaching and learning process depends on the classrooms management skill of the handlers (teachers). Therefore, inability of teachers to effectively and efficiently manage their classroom can expose the entire education process to negative output, most especially on students' academic performance.

Secondary school students' academic performance according to Fadipe (2009) takes into cognizance both quality and quantity of the internal and external results achieved. It implies that it is not just the number of students that scored good grades that matters but how competent the students are in meeting the academic demands of tertiary education. Recent happening and occurrences at the level of secondary schools, and even other levels of education have left many scholars in panic today and Ekiti State is not left out. The teachers find themselves in the classroom filled with students who are disposed to violence, not only to their fellow students but teachers also. In a bid to control this tendency toward violence, indiscipline and noise making, careful management of the classroom is therefore important. Considering the importance of classroom management and its practical implications on students' academic performance in schools, this study therefore specifically investigated class control, classroom discipline as indices of classroom management vis-à-vis their relationship with students' academic performance.

Class control appears to be one of the biggest challenges, teachers face while they teach. In any classroom regardless of grade-level, the potential for disorder, misconduct and conflict is inevitable. So, to ease the tension, anxieties and frustration of students' misbehaviors on the part of the teachers, the acquisition of control strategies, skills and knowledge are important in the management of classroom. A disorderly or poorly controlled classroom implies ineffective classroom management which may lead to negative academic performance. It is imperative to know that, teacher's ability to control the class appears to be among the most influential factors that can help students develop positive attitudes towards learning and promote students' academic performance. Effective learning depends, to a large extent, on a well-controlled classroom, if not well controlled, a classroom may be disordered and disruptive and hence poor learning may result and students' academic performance may be badly affected.

Classroom discipline is a function of the interaction between the teacher and students that bring about self-control and respect for authority (Ada, 2004). Discipline is widely acknowledged to be essential for creating a positive classroom climate conducive to sound academic performance. It is a basic requirement for successful teaching and learning in classroom and a subject of concern for teachers (Ada, 2004). It appears that where there is good discipline, there is improved academic performance. This implies that, discipline is vital to students' academic performance. It is also

necessary for effective classroom management and accomplishment of its goals. It is on this premise, this study investigated classroom management as a correlate of academic performance of students in secondary schools.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The study examined classroom management as a correlate of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State with special focus on the relationship between each of the classroom management components such as class control and classroom discipline vis-a-vis students' academic performance.

1.2. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

- What is the level of classroom management in public secondary schools in Ekiti State?
- What is the extent of students' academic performance in Ekiti State?

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

- There is no significant relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance in Ekiti State?
- There is no significant relationship between class control and students' academic performance?
- There is no significant relationship between classroom discipline and students' academic performance?

2. Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for this study. The population for this study consisted 87, 336 secondary school students and 7, 538 teachers in the 203 secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria as at the time of this study 2016/2017 academic session. The sample for the study comprised 720 students to assess teachers' classroom management using multi stage sampling procedure. The subjects were drawn from 24 public secondary schools in Ekiti State. In stage one, two Local Government Areas were randomly selected from each of the three senatorial districts by balloting method. In stage two, four public secondary schools were selected from each of the six local governments chosen using stratified random sampling technique. In the last stage, 30 SS3 students were selected from each of the 24 public secondary schools earlier selected using purposive sampling technique. In this study, two instruments were used to collect data for the study.

The first one is tagged Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ) and second one is an Inventory on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results in the May/June, of 2013/2014, 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 sessions. The face and content validity procedures of the instruments were ensured by research experts to ascertain the appropriateness and representation of contents in measuring what it supposed to measure. Test-retest method of reliability was used; the two results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to determine the reliability of the instruments and 0.81 co-efficient was obtained which is high enough to make the instruments reliable and useful for the study. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

- Question 1: What is the level of classroom management in public secondary schools in Ekiti State?

In answering the question, scores on classroom management in secondary schools in Ekiti State were computed. Mean score, frequency counts and percentages were used to illustrate the responses to items in Section B of "Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ)". To determine the levels of classroom management in secondary schools in Ekiti State (low, moderate and high) the mean score and standard deviation of the responses on classroom management were used. The level of classroom management in secondary schools in Ekiti State is presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Levels of Classroom Management	Frequency	Percentage
Low (25.00 – 82.31)	233	32.4
Moderate (82.32 – 90.66)	405	56.2
High (90.67 – 100.0)	82	11.4
Total	720	100.0

Table 1: Level of Classroom Management in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State

Table 1 presents the levels of classroom management in secondary schools in Ekiti State. The result showed that out of the 720 respondents sampled, 233 representing 32.4% rated their teachers as having low level of classroom management. Those who rated their teachers as having moderate level were 405 representing 56.2% while the rest of the respondents, 82 of them rated their teachers as having high level of classroom management. This showed that the level of classroom management among teachers in secondary schools in Ekiti State is moderate. Figure 1 further revealed the levels of classroom management in secondary schools in Ekiti State.

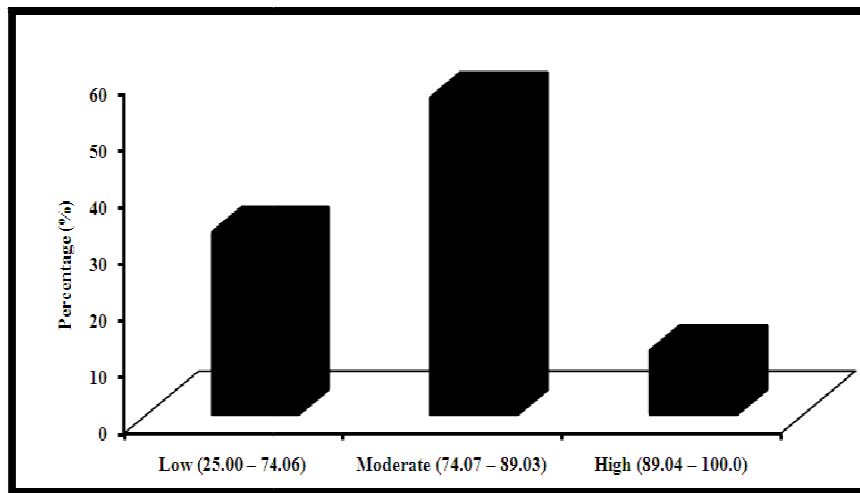


Figure 1: Levels of Classroom Management in Secondary Schools in Ekiti State

- Question 2: What is the extent of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State?

In order to answer the question, inventory on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results in the May/June, of 2013/2014, 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 sessions for the sampled schools were used. The result was presented in Table 2.

Sessions	No. Registered	5 Credits including English & Maths		5 Credits & above without English & Maths		Less than 5 Credits	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
2013/2014	2528	676	26.7	1122	44.4	1406	55.6
2014/2015	1954	733	37.5	1080	55.3	874	44.7
2015/2016	1564	780	49.9	1071	68.5	493	31.5
Total	6046	2189	36.2	3273	54.1	2773	45.9

Table 2: Extent of Students' Academic Performance in Ekiti State

Table 2 presents the extent of students' academic performance in Ekiti State. The result shows that 44.4% of the total enrolment in 2014 had 5 credits and above, 26.7% had 5 credits and above including English Language and Mathematics while 55.6% had below 5 credits. In the year 2015, 55.3% of the students who sat for the examination had 5 credits, 37.5% had 5 credits including English Language and Mathematics while 44.7% obtained less 5 credits. 68.5% of students' enrolment in 2016 had 5 credits and above, 36.2% 5 credits including English Language and Mathematics while 45.9% had below 5 credits. Out of a total of 6046 students' enrolment between 2014 to 2016 academic session, 54.1% had 5 credits and above, 36.2% had 5 credits including English Language and Mathematics while 45.9% had below 5 credits. This implies that students' academic performance in Ekiti State was fair enough. The extent of students' academic performance in Ekiti State is further depicted in Figure 2.

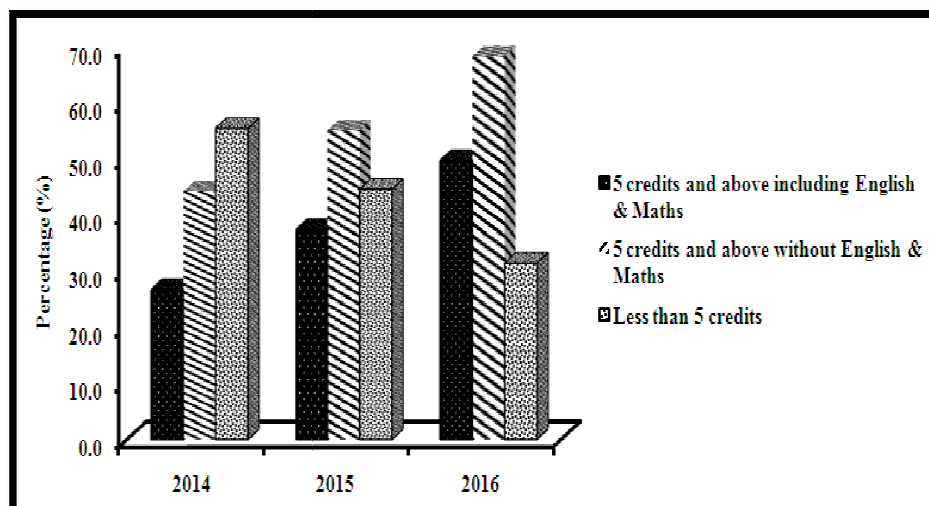


Figure 2: Extent of Students' Academic Performance in Ekiti State

3.1. Testing of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to classroom management and students' academic performance were computed using items in Section B of "Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ)" and Inventory on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results respectively. These scores were subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result was presented in Table 3.

Variables	No of Schools	Mean	SD	R-cal	R-Tab
Classroom management	24	86.49	4.18	0.501*	0.388
Academic Performance	24	2.45	0.81		

Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Showing Classroom Management and Students' Academic Performance

*P<0.05(Significant Result)

Table 3 showed that $r_{cal}(0.501)$ is greater than $r_{table}(0.388)$ at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant positive relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance.

- Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between class control and students' academic performance.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to class control and students' academic performance were computed using items in Section B of "Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ)" and Inventory on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results respectively. The set of scores were subsequently subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result was presented in Table 4.

Variables	No of Schools	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Class control	24	14.07	3.56	0.583*	0.388
Academic Performance	24	2.45	0.81		

Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Showing Class Control and Students' Academic Performance

*P<0.05(Significant Result)

Table 4 showed that $r_{cal}(0.583)$ is greater than $r_{table}(0.388)$ at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant positive relationship between class control and students' academic performance.

- Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between classroom discipline and students' academic performance.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to classroom discipline and students' academic performance were computed using items in Section B of "Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ)" and Inventory on Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination results respectively. These scores were subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result was presented in Table 5.

Variables	No of Schools	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Classroom Discipline	24	17.21	0.83	0.426*	0.388
Academic Performance	24	2.45	0.81		

Table 5: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Showing Classroom Discipline and Students' Academic Performance

*P<0.05(Significant)

Table 5 showed that $r_{cal}(0.426)$ is greater than $r_{table}(0.388)$ at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is positive significant relationship between classroom discipline and students' academic performance.

4. Discussion of the Findings

The study showed that the level of classroom management in secondary schools in Ekiti State was moderate. It implies that classroom management (class control and classroom discipline) is good enough to enhance effective teaching-

learning process. What can be responsible for this finding may be the fact that both government and school administrators are making concerted efforts to ensure that there is effective classroom management in the schools for teaching and learning. The result showed the extent of students' academic performance in Ekiti State which was fair enough. This implies that teachers are doing well in their curricular and extra curricula activities; hence the academic performance of the student is good. When teaching and learning activities in the schools are going on well, good academic performance of the students will be guaranteed.

It was revealed that there is significant relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance. This shows that students will perform better academically if effective classroom management strategies in form of class control, classroom discipline are put in place. What could be responsible for this finding is the fact that the use of effective and result-oriented classroom management practices is entrenched by the teachers and this brought about good academic performance of the students also. The finding agrees with Stoop (2011) who contended that effective teachers acknowledge student differences, build collaborative learning relationships, have clear communication with parents, provide feedback to students and use strategies enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning.

The study showed that there was significant relationship between class control and students' academic performance. There is no doubt about the fact that that the success of any educational institution depends largely on the quality of its products. To this end, students' academic performance will be good, where effective classroom control mechanisms are entrenched. The outcome of this result showed that when teachers put in place adequate control classroom activities, students' academic performance is guaranteed. The finding is in consonance with the submissions of Lewis (2001) and Altinel (2006) who asserted that teachers control styles and skills maximize students' academic performance.

The result showed that there was significant relationship between classroom discipline and students' academic performance. This by implication means that if discipline is enforced through prefects' bodies and councils, disciplinary committees, teachers and involvement of parents, students' academic performance will be enhanced. This finding may be as a result of the influence of the enforcement of rules and regulations by the teachers, during teaching/learning which has brought decorum to the learning environment and consequently enhance students' academic performance. The finding is in accordance with the findings of Okumbe (2003), Ekundayo, Konwea and Yusuf (2010) who established that there is wide spread violation of school rules and regulations which was capable of obstructing the smooth functioning of the school system and thereby affect students' academic performance.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that classroom management variables such as class control and classroom discipline were important predictors that influenced academic performance of secondary school students. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that concerted efforts should be made by stakeholders to improve the existing classroom management practices and academic performance of the students through routine inspection of teachers for effective teaching and learning. It was also recommended that teachers of secondary schools should adopt appropriate class control measures such as proper arrangement of the students' sitting positions, accommodate individual differences and promote effective classroom interaction to enhance better students' academic performance. It was recommended that teachers should ensure effective classroom discipline through enforcement of students' compliance to rules and regulations during teaching and learning activities for better academic performance of school.

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