

## **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

By

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### **Abstract**

*Teaching-learning process is a set of activities through which educational objectives are achieved. However, many teachers lack adequate skills of managing the classroom in which the process occurs. This paper therefore examined classroom management strategies which could influence effective teaching and learning. The paper discussed the existing approaches to classroom management and proposed a stakeholder-and-teacher-factor model. The stakeholder- factor consists of government, parents, community and school administrators whose influence on classroom management is beyond teacher's control. The teacher-factor consists of teacher's personality, learners' characteristics, curriculum, classroom climate, time, instructional resources and facilities, upon which the teacher has control. It was recommended that the teacher should be aware of the factors which he could not control and explore means of influencing them positively. He should also identify factors within his control and adapt them towards achieving teaching and learning effectiveness.*

**Keywords:** Classroom management, Teaching, Learning, Stakeholders, Educational institutions

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### **Introduction**

In Nigeria, primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions are established by governments, private individuals and organizations as a strategy for ensuring national development and integration. The institutions are provided with resources which are to be mobilized towards actualization of the nation's objectives. Heads and teachers of these institutions constitute vital human resources required for successful implementation of educational programmes. The heads are responsible and accountable for overall management of their institutions. The teachers who are also referred to as classroom teachers, subject teachers, course tutors, lecturers or facilitators based on type and level of education, are the managers of their classrooms.

The teachers are to ensure that learners acquire appropriate skills and knowledge which could assist in addressing societal challenges and contributing to national development. As stated by the Government (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004), the quality of a teacher would determine the quality of an education programme. Teacher's quality is reflected in his performance as a facilitator of learning. He is expected to interact with the learners and ensure that they acquire adequate knowledge and skills. This is done mostly in a classroom. Moreover, teaching and learning is conducted in places such as laboratories for sciences and languages, studios for creative arts, workshops for technical education, playing ground for human kinetics and virtual learning environment for online or distance learners. A teacher engages in classroom management in a specifically designated room in a school. In other learning places where he meets a class of learners, he engages in class management.

In this paper, concepts of classroom, teaching, learning and classroom management were explained. The paper also reviewed some existing approaches to classroom management and proposed a two-factor model on managing classroom for teaching-learning effectiveness.

### **Concepts of Classroom, Teaching, Learning and Classroom Management**

A classroom is also referred to as a class, a learning place, a lecture room and an auditorium. Although, it is the smallest and the lowest level of the education sector, it is very important as a determinant of the success or otherwise of the entire system. It is the level where all theories, principles and policies of education are put into practice. Failure of any educational programme at this level could result into failure in all other levels of education. Akubue (1991) sees it as an important place within a school, in which students are gathered for achievement of educational objectives through teaching and learning.

Majasan (1995) identifies teaching and learning as two ways of acquiring knowledge and skills. He states that teaching is a process of knowledge and skill acquisition through an external agent called 'teacher'. Learning, according to him is another way of knowledge and skill acquisition which is attained through an individual's own efforts. In another dimension, Abimbola (2001) defines teaching as a process of facilitating learning by setting up a conducive classroom environment and guiding the learners through the use of available resources. This implies that teaching is a democratic process in which the teacher recognises the potentials in the learners and guides them through proper management of curriculum, methods and materials. Management is a process of planning, organizing, influencing and controlling activities of members of an organisation with a view to actualising group objectives (Olagboye, 2004). Thus, an individual who is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring achievement of organisational objectives has managerial roles to play.

Classroom management is viewed as classroom discipline (Tauber, 1990). This implies orderliness, control and organisation in the school. In the same vein, Akubue (1991) refers to it as a set of activities which are aimed at facilitating desirable behaviour, discouraging deviancy and ascertaining teacher's authority. Also, Ajayi (2007) defines it as teacher's mastery of teaching subjects, use of appropriate teaching method and student personnel services. Therefore, classroom management is a process of organising, controlling and influencing human and non-human resources in a classroom with a view to encouraging appropriate behaviour and ensuring achievement of educational objectives. It is a set of activities which are performed in order to encourage effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

### **Approaches to Classroom Management**

Akubue (1991), identifies three levels of behaviour management in the classroom. These are maintenance control behaviour, preventive teacher behaviour and corrective teacher behaviour levels. At maintenance control level, there is no sign of latent or overt misbehaviour among learners and everyone seems to be in conformity with the norms of the classroom. This level could be seen as an ideal situation which hardly exists among learners. They have individual needs and aspirations which could make them act or react in different ways.

The second level is referred to as preventive teacher behaviour. Here, the teacher perceives that learners are exhibiting one form of misdemeanor or another. He therefore takes steps towards correcting and stopping it. This level is important in classroom management. The teacher is supposed to be vigilant on each member of the class, point out any form of bad behaviour and make necessary adjustments before the situation gets out of hand.

The third level, according to Akubue, is referred to as corrective teacher behaviour. The teacher, having observed deviant behaviour among learners, initiates steps towards correcting such behaviour. The teacher should be conscious of the fact that many factors could disrupt classroom lesson. He should be watchful of these factors and take corrective measures on them.

In another dimension, Provenzano (2011) posits that disciplinary problems do arise among students and that teachers should not assume such problems do not exist. He identified three steps of effective classroom management. The first step, the teacher should let each learner realise that he is aware

of learners' activities in the class. He should identify the learners by name and constantly have eye contact with each of them in the classroom. The next stage emerges when students continue to exhibit acts of indiscipline and there is need to call him to order. This has to be done in privacy in order to make it effective. The teacher invites the student and counsels him on good behaviour. The third stage is to report a deviant student to higher authority for disciplinary action. This step has to be taken when steps one and two have proved abortive. Provenzano seems not to believe that ideal situation suggested by Akubue is feasible in a classroom in any educational institution. He advises that a teacher should be watchful for any form of deviancy and to let offender realise that the teacher is aware. He suggests that disciplinary cases should be reported to higher authority as the last resort.

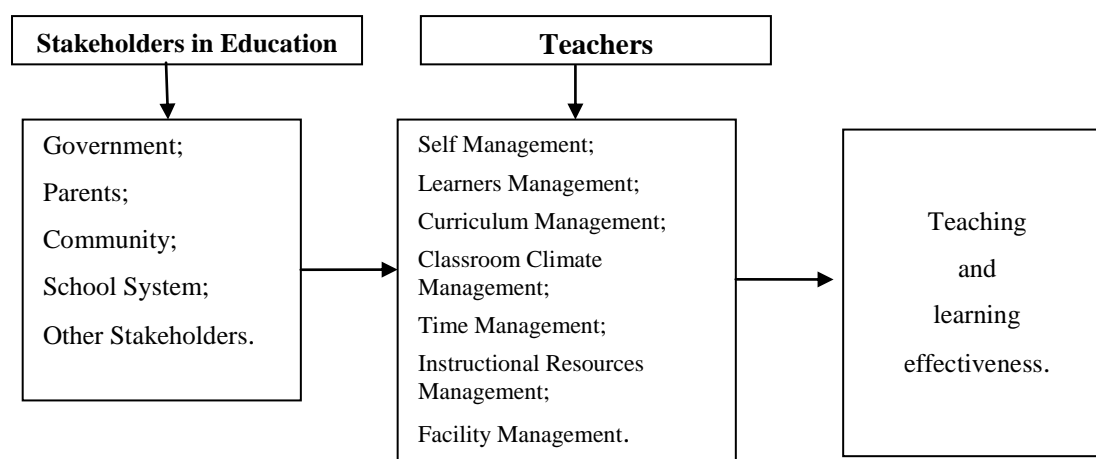
Lynch (2016), observes that classroom environment is an important resource for teaching and learning. He identifies physical space, students' cooperation, communal environment and positive climate as four areas of focus for achieving effective classroom management. According to him, the teacher should have a good layout of the physical space in the classroom by ensuring that furniture and other facilities are well organised to suit classroom interaction, ensure students cooperation by consistently discouraging misbehaviour, create a communal environment by encouraging students to be caring for one another and maintain a positive learning climate.

In another dimension, Kizlik (2018) points out that in spite of series of training programmes designed and provided for student teachers, a major area of inadequacy is classroom management. Kizlik advises teachers to know what they want and emphasis it to students. He opines that although classroom arrangement may not guarantee good behaviour, it may be a source of misbehavior. He therefore suggests setting of simple rules, effective teacher instruction and appropriate use of positive and negative consequences (reward and punishment), as strategies for achieving effective classroom management.

Akubue and Provenzano's approaches to classroom management focus on learners' behaviour in the classroom and how a teacher could positively influence the behaviour. Lynch focus on classroom environment while Kizlik suggests control of learners' behaviour through simple rules. However, there are many variables within and outside classroom that should be considered in order to attain effective teaching and learning. Thus a two-factor model of managing a classroom is examined.

### **A Two-Factor Model of Classroom Management**

Figure 1 shows a model of classroom management that is capable of enhancing teaching and learning effectiveness. In this model, stakeholders constitute a factor influencing classroom management outside the control of the teacher. The second factor emanates from the teacher.



**Figure 1:** Two-Factor Model of Classroom Management for Teaching and Learning Effectiveness

A teacher is the manager of his classroom. However, there are stakeholders in education whose activities could foster or frustrate his efforts in the management of his classroom. This assertion was corroborated by Tauber (1990), when he stated that parents and out-of-school factors could influence children's behaviour and consequently determine their level of participation in school activities.

### **Stakeholder Factors on Classroom Management**

As shown in Figure 1, Government, parents, communities and other stakeholders in education constitute external forces which could influence teaching and learning effectiveness in the classroom. Although the teacher does not have control over them, he should be aware of their possible intervention in his classroom management and explore administrative strategies of benefitting from their positive influence on teaching and learning.

The Government is constitutionally responsible for policy formulation and determination of standards in education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). This has been demonstrated in government policies on class size and resources required at different levels and types of education. If teachers are not employed adequately to meet the government stipulated teacher-learner ratio, a class could be overpopulated and classroom management problem would arise. Also, financial and facility inadequacy could cause problem even if the class size is moderate.

Moreover, other stakeholders in education are parents and the community members. The Government recognised them and allowed their participation in the administration and financing of education at all levels (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). They provide socio-economic background and influence which determine the behaviour of children in school and affect their class works positively or negatively. The teacher as a classroom manager is at receiving end of this influence.

The school system has a stake and direct influence on the effective classroom management. School location and school environment must be safe. School facilities must be relevant, adequate and safe. Staff-student relationship must be cordial in order to give room for effective interaction in school and in classroom. The head of the institution has the responsibility of providing guidance and necessary assistance to make the school and classroom environment conducive for teaching and learning.

Religious organisations, industrial and business organisations are stakeholders in education whose contributions to educational development are recognized by the government and the citizens. Religious organisations are capable of complementing efforts of schools in moral upbringing. The industrial and business organisations could assist in facility and financial provision.

### **Teacher Factors on Classroom Management**

#### ***Teacher's self management***

A teacher, as an important resource in education should be able to manage himself before he can manage other resources effectively. His personality is capable of influencing his classroom management activities. Personality, according to Robbins (2001), is the sum total of different ways in which an individual acts and reacts towards other people, events and situations. Robbins stated further that an individual is endowed with personality traits. Using Costa and McCrae model, Pappas (2017) described five personality traits. These are openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. An open person is curious and imaginative; conscientiousness refers to being committed to duty and achievement focused; being an extrovert is to be sociable, assertive and cheerful, while agreeableness refers to being kind, helpful and cooperative. A person who is low in neuroticism is likely to be emotionally stable while high neurotic would be less stable. This emotional state would affect classroom management.

Self management demands that a teacher should understand himself, identify his personal characteristics and be conscious of his strength and weakness. The teacher should adapt his personality

traits to suit his professional code of ethics and use them positively in the classroom. He should be a role model academically, morally, socially and emotionally. He should be moderate in dressing, talking, walking and be conscious of his verbal and non verbal actions.

### ***Teachers' Time Management***

Class time table is a time management device. It spells out time and duration for curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities in the classroom. The time table should be studied and followed by the teacher. Deviation from time schedule for a class activity could result in disruption of other class activities. In order to achieve effective teaching and learning, time and duration should be attached to each stage of a lesson plan. The teacher should be aware that engaging learners in academic work during recreation period could be counter-productive as the students will not be able to concentrate and their participation level would be very low. The teacher should do the right things at the right time.

### ***Facility Management***

Wall, floor, ceiling, roof, furniture, electricity fittings, doors and windows are some of the facilities in a learning place. Dilapidated wall, bad floor, sinking ceiling, blown-off roof, doors and windows without shutter could constitute health hazard, danger and insecurity to learners and teachers. Similarly, inadequate furniture and poor electricity fittings could cause disruption to class lessons. The teacher must ensure adequate provision, appropriate utilization, proper maintenance and safe keeping of the facilities.

### ***Curriculum Management***

The teacher as a classroom manager prepares syllabus, scheme of work and lessons from the curriculum. He plans and organizes teaching and learning in the classroom. As a curriculum implementer, success or otherwise of the education system at classroom level depends on him. He should ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the learners' needs in order to sustain their interest and prevent misbehavior.

### ***Learners Management***

An educational institution is to impart knowledge, skills and competencies in the learner in order to prepare them for their roles as agents of national development. It is the duty of the teacher to provide an enabling classroom environment that could actualize the educational objective. The teacher is in loco parentis to children and young adults who are enrolled in school as learners. He has been entrusted with their care and he should not betray the trust. The learners are not likely to behave the same way because of their individuality. The teacher should study their personalities, monitor, counsel and respect their fundamental rights. He should spell out the consequences of their positive and negative actions as contained in the school rules and regulations. He should be fair, firm and moderate in dispensation of justice.

### ***Classroom Climate Management:***

Classroom climate is the prevailing social characteristics in the classroom environment which could influence behaviour of members. It is determined by the extent of rigidity and flexibility in policy formulation and implementation, line of communication and decision-making process. The classroom climate must be positive and not negative. A positive climate is safe, respectful, welcoming and supportive to teachers and learners. On the other hand, negative classroom climate would be hostile, chaotic and uncontrollable. As observed by Young (2014), a positive learning environment would encourage active participation in class activities and enhance effective learning among students. The teacher should therefore initiate positive climate by relating well, creating a safe, threat-free environment where learners could interact and exchange ideas. He should also ensure orderly arrangement of furniture and sittings, adequate illumination and ventilation. These would bring healthy environment and desirable climate in the classroom.

## Conclusions

It could be concluded from the foregoing that factors influencing classroom management are multidimensional and that knowledge of these factors is vital for accomplishment of teaching and learning objectives. It could also be concluded that many teachers have been concentrating on factors in the classroom with little or no attention to factors that are external to the classroom.

## Recommendations

In line with the findings, it is recommended that teachers should identify the stakeholders' roles in classroom management and influence them positively. The teacher should also be aware of factors within the classroom and make use of them in line with his professional ethics to achieve teaching and learning effectiveness. Stakeholders should assist teachers to secure adequate resources for class use while teachers should undergo training on classroom management for teaching and learning effectiveness.

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