

Assessment of Classroom Management Practices on Social-Emotional Behaviour of Pupils

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Abstract

The study assessed of classroom management practices on social-emotional behaviour of pupils in the preschools and lower primary schools. Participants consisted of 115 preschool and lower primary teachers Ilorin and Ado-Ekiti metropolis in Nigeria. The Teacher Classroom Management Strategies Questionnaire was adapted and used to collect data. Results from descriptive and inferential analysis of data indicate that the most of the teachers who have spent between 16-20 years of experience have the highest level of classroom management, about 77% possess confidence in ability to promote their learners emotional, social and problem solving skills. The study also found that classroom behaviour management is associated involvement of parents in assisting to manage such behaviour when exhibited at home.

Key words: Classroom management, socio-emotional, teaching experience, teachers' confidence, parenting

Introduction

Managing of children's social-emotional behaviours during their early childhood is very critical as this can translate into either success or failure in the future. Teacher plays vital role in ensuring that children's cognitive and social-emotional behaviour are well built up, this helps them to learn (Beazidou, Botsoglou, and Andreou, 2013; Seth-Smith, 2006). Managing the classroom behaviour is one of the complex issues teachers are faced with today. This is because classrooms are much more complicated than they were in the previous years, most children come to school with behavioural problems than before and teachers are faced the challenge of managing the behaviours exhibited (Beazidou, et al 2013). Social-emotional problems among young children are common, studies have shown that children between birth and five years old experience social-emotional problems that negatively impact their functioning, development and school-readiness (Brauner and Stephens, 2006; Cooper, Masi and Vick, 2009).

In early years of a child's life, the most essential natural abilities are acquired that prepare a child for later success in life and school. Existing researches show that high-quality preschools improve behaviour, success and school readiness for children. Preschoolers are more prepared academically and socially to proceed to schools and have more tendencies to become responsible

citizens. Teachers are therefore needed to manage them well so that children can have healthy social-emotional behaviour. Children with healthy emotions are more able to establish and sustain relationships with adults and peers (Trawick-Smith, 2014). Preschool age children have common behavioural problem like hyperactivity, aggression, noncompliance, etc. Studies have shown that preschoolers display these behaviours at significant levels either at home or at preschool (Powell, Fixsen and Dunlap, 2003; Beazidou *et al* 2013). It has been suggested by Gouriotou (2008) that children's social behaviour in preschool classes can be affected (positively or negatively) by the general mood of the classroom. The environment of the preschool include members of the classroom, lessons being taught, teacher's attitude, response towards children's behavior, classroom practices and management. Also, children's interaction with family members at home has effect on their social-emotional behaviour. Teacher can therefore; gather information about preschoolers' interactions with peer group and adults through observations or any other measures, this appropriate strategy can be used to provide the social-emotional needs of the children (Okwori, Owodunni and Balogun, 2015).

An effective classroom management provide perfect environment for enhancing proper growth of children. A teacher with good classroom management style influences children's actions and facilitates changes in their behaviour in order to aid children's learning. The nature of teachers' interactions toward children is said to support children's display adaptive classroom behaviour in the preschool (Rimm-Kaufman, Curby, Grimm, Nathanson, and Brock, 2009). Lang and Hebert (1995) suggest that effective classroom management involves effective instruction. Teacher's instruction within the classroom, aid at the acquisition of student's both academic and non-academic skills. Classroom management has been defined broadly as any action a teacher takes to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning (Evertson and Weinstein, 2006; Beazidou, Botsoglou, Andreou, 2013). The quality of a classroom is basically on the practices of the teacher which is differentiated into the emotional support, classroom management and instructional support (Hamre and Pianta, 2007; Rimm-Kaufman et al, 2009). However, effective classroom management provides learners with chances to socialize and develop emotionally even though they are learning.

A systematic best evidence review was conducted to identify evidence based practices in classroom management have shown that teachers use six categories of discipline practices, including rewarding, punishing, involvement in decision-making, discussion and negotiation, hinting, and aggression in modifying and correcting the social-emotional behaviour of learners (Lewis, Romi, Katz, and Qui, 2008; Lewis, Roache, and Romi, 2011; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai, 2008). Additionally, combinations of one or more of these strategies comprise most of the available approaches to discipline (Charles, 2008; Tauber, 2007; Beazidou *et al* 2013).

Most preschool teachers maintain an exciting, enjoyable, secure environment and create positive relationships in their classrooms because they recognize that being warm and attentive, engage and encourage children, build strong and effective relationships with children and reduce misbehavior in their classrooms. Positive relationships between early childhood educators and children provide a potential classroom management tool (Edwards and Raikes, 2002). Also, structuring a positive classroom climate is essential in creating learning contexts in which children build a strong sense of being valued, confident, and competent (Kostelnik, Soderman

and Whiren, 1993; Beazidou *et al*, 2013). Another important factor in effective classroom management is bonding within the group, which will help children to adopt values like cooperation, mutual help, respect, and communication. All the above result in lower incidents of negative behaviour as well as antisocial tendencies, and add to socially acceptable behaviour. It is known that rules and clear expectations are components of effective behavior management in preschool classrooms.

Many different types of behaviour management strategies are grouped in two categories: positive and restrictive strategies. Positive strategies were defined as teacher behaviours that involve aspects of reward, positive reinforcement etc. Restrictive strategies were defined as teacher behaviours that include aspects of punishment, negative reinforcement, chastisement, etc. Classroom management is directly tied to levels of student involvement and academic achievement, in that it can help to decrease disruptive classroom behaviors and increase student engagement in academic tasks. Poor classroom management has been linked to long-term negative academic, behavioral, and social outcomes for students (Reinke and Herman, 2002).

Even though there is several literatures on effective classroom management strategies, little is known about classroom management practices in the early childhood classroom especially in Nigeria. However, more studies are needed to determine what early childhood educators are currently doing to manage the social-emotional behaviour of children in their classroom. Hence, this study assesses the classroom management practices of the social-emotional behaviour of pupils.

Method

This study employed a survey research design. Participants in this study consisted of 115 primary school teachers (Male = 26, Female = 89) selected from Ekiti and Kwara State. Two Local Government Area (LGA) and one LGA were randomly selected from the Ekiti and Kwara state respectively. The participants have spent between 0 and over 20 years in the teaching profession. The selection of participants was not necessarily random as they were teachers who the researchers met during visits to selected schools. An adopted research instrument was used in this study titled "Teacher Classroom Management Strategies Questionnaire". The scale is a 36-item instrument consisting of items intended to find out the extent to which the teachers were confident in handling classroom behaviour, how often they use specific teaching techniques and how useful they find each one for managing the classroom, work with parent, and planning and support. This with a view to assess classroom management practices on social-emotional behaviour of pupils. Participants were required to indicate how confident they were, the frequency and usefulness of the specific behavioural management techniques. The 36-item on the four sub-scales of the instrument were reported to possess satisfactory internal reliability with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.85, 0.75, 0.77 and 0.73 for level of confidence for managing classroom behaviour, specific teaching techniques, working with parents, and planning and support as above respectively.

Results

In order to ascertain the gender of the participants, data collected from the administration of the Teacher Classroom Management Strategies Questionnaire were subjected to descriptive analysis. The data in Table 1 reveal the gender of the participants.

Table 1: Reported Gender of Participants

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 26 | 23 |
| Female | 89 | 77 |
| Total | 115 | 100 |

The above table shows that 23% of the respondents are male while 77% are female which implies that there are more female teachers in the lower and upper primary schools in Ilorin and Ekiti metropolis. To ascertain the educational qualification of the participants', data collected from the research instrument were subjected to descriptive statistics. The percentage values of each educational qualification are as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Reported Educational Qualification of Participants

| Educational Qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| NCE | 41 | 36 |
| B.Sc./B.Sc.(Ed) | 63 | 55 |
| Masters | 8 | 7 |
| Ph.D | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 115 | 100 |

The above table shows that 55% of the respondents have a B.Sc./B.Sc. (Ed) educational qualification, 36% are NCE holders while 2% are Ph.D. holders which implies that more than half of the respondents are qualified to be teachers in the upper primary section of the schools. To determine the years of working experience of the participants', data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics of percentage Table 3.

Table 3: Reported Years of Working Experience

| Years of Experience(Years) | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 0-5 | 40 | 35 |
| 6-10 | 36 | 31 |
| 11-15 | 11 | 10 |
| 16-20 | 11 | 10 |
| Over 20 | 17 | 15 |
| Total | 115 | 100 |

A further attempt was made in this study to ascertain the perception of teacher about their classroom management technique/strategies on pupils' behaviour. Table 4 presents the level of confident of teacher in managing the classroom behaviour.

Table 4: Level of Confidence of Managing Classroom Behaviour

| | Unconfident (%) | Sometimes Confident (%) | Very Confident (%) |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| How confident are you in managing current behaviour problems in your classroom? | 3 | 22 | 75 |
| How confident are you in your ability to manage future behaviour problems in your classroom? | 3 | 30 | 67 |
| How confident are you in your ability to promote students emotional, social and problem solving skills? | 2 | 21 | 77 |

From table 4, it was revealed that 75%, 67% and 77% of the respondents are very confident that they can manage classroom behaviour in relation to pupils current and future classroom behaviour as well as promote pupils emotional social and problem solving skills; and 22%, 30% and 21% of the respondents are sometimes confident that they can manage classroom behavioral patterns of pupils while only 3%, 3% and 2% respectively of the respondents are not confident of their ability to manage classroom behaviour of pupils which implies that only a small percentage of respondents are less confident in their ability to manage pupils behaviour in their classroom. This result may be due to the fact that more than half of the teachers are qualified to be teaching in the upper primary section of the schools.

The study also investigated the influence teachers experience and their perception of classroom management technique using the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical procedures. The results of the analysis are as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance of Classroom Management Techniques

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 296.777 | 4 | 74.194 | 2.823 | .028 |
| Within Groups | 2890.788 | 110 | 26.280 | | |
| Total | 3187.565 | 114 | | | |

The table showed a lower sig. value of 0.028 compared to the p-value 0.05 therefore the null hypothesis was rejected which implies that there is a significant difference between teachers experience and their perception of classroom management technique. This further indicate that the experience gained by the teacher over the years assist in the management of classroom behaviour of people.

A further attempt was made to ascertain which years of experience had the least and the highest classroom management techniques. To this end, the overall data on classroom management techniques by teachers were subjected to a post-hoc multiple comparison test using the Least Significant Difference (LSD) formula. The results are as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple comparisons of classroom management techniques scores according to years of experience

| Years of Experience (i) | Years of Experience (ii) | of N | Mean | Mean Difference (i-ii) | Std. Error | p |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------|-------|------------------------|------------|-------|
| 0-5years | 6-10years | 36 | 43.56 | .544 | 1.178 | >0.05 |
| | 11-15years | 11 | 43.56 | 2.282 | 1.745 | >0.05 |
| | 16-20years | 17 | 48.64 | -4.536* | 1.745 | <0.05 |
| | Over 20years | 11 | 44.59 | -.488 | 1.484 | >0.05 |
| 6-10years | 0-5years | 40 | 44.10 | -.544 | 1.178 | >0.05 |
| | 11-15years | 11 | 43.56 | 1.737 | 1.766 | >0.05 |
| | 16-20years | 17 | 48.64 | -5.081* | 1.766 | <0.05 |
| 11-15years | Over 20years | 11 | 44.59 | -1.033 | 1.509 | >0.05 |
| | 0-5years | 40 | 44.10 | -2.282 | 1.745 | >0.05 |
| | 6-10years | 36 | 43.56 | -1.737 | 1.766 | >0.05 |
| 16-20years | 16-20years | 17 | 48.64 | -6.818* | 2.186 | <0.05 |
| | Over 20years | 11 | 44.59 | -2.770 | 1.984 | >0.05 |
| | 0-5years | 40 | 44.10 | 4.536* | 1.745 | <0.05 |
| Over 20years | 6-10years | 36 | 43.56 | 5.081* | 1.766 | <0.05 |
| | 11-15years | 11 | 43.56 | 6.818* | 2.186 | <0.05 |
| | Over 20years | 11 | 44.59 | 4.048* | 1.984 | <0.05 |
| Over 20years | 0-5years | 40 | 44.10 | .488 | 1.484 | >0.05 |
| | 6-10years | 36 | 43.56 | 1.033 | 1.509 | >0.05 |
| | 11-15years | 11 | 43.56 | 2.770 | 1.984 | >0.05 |
| Over 20years | 16-20years | 17 | 48.64 | -4.048* | 1.984 | <0.05 |

* Mean difference significant at 0.05 level

From Table 6, the mean value of teachers who spent between 16-20 years in the classroom showed higher mean values ($\bar{x} = 48.64$), followed by those who have spent over 20 years ($\bar{x} = 44.59$) than those between 0-5 years and 6-10 years of teaching experience. This implies that teachers who have spent between 16-20 years in the classroom have the highest level classroom management techniques.

The study also examined the relationship between teachers' managing classroom behaviour and working with parents using t-test statistical procedures. The results of the analysis are as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: T-test of Managing Classroom Behaviour to Working with Parents

| | Mean | Df | t | Sig. | Decision |
|------------------------------|-------|-----|---------|------|----------|
| Managing Classroom Behaviour | 8.11 | 114 | -30.225 | 0.00 | Accepted |
| Working with Parent | 15.49 | | | | |

As shown in Table 7, there is a significant effect between teachers' management of classroom behaviour and working with parents ($t = -30.225$, $p < 0.00$). This implies that proper management of classroom behaviour may be associated with involvement of parents in assisting to manage such behaviour when exhibited at home.

Table 8: T-test of Managing Classroom Behaviour to Planning and Support Strategies

| | Mean | df | t | Sig. | Decision |
|---------------------------------|-------|-----|---------|------|----------|
| Planning and Support Strategies | 17.64 | 114 | -31.624 | 0.00 | Rejected |
| Managing Classroom Behaviour | 8.11 | | | | |

Furthermore, Table 8 revealed a significant effect between managing classroom behaviour and planning and support strategies. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant effect between classroom management of pre-school children and teachers' planning and support strategies.

Discussion

The results of this study have shown that about 77% of the most preschool and lower primary school teachers in Ado-Ekiti and Ilorin metropolis of the participants are reported to be female. Data collected on the educational qualification of the participants revealed that 55 percent of the study sample reported to have B.Sc./B.Sc.(Ed) while 36% and 7% reported NCE and Masters respectively. The study has also revealed years of working experience of the participants as 0-5 years (35%), 6-10 years (31%) and over 20 years (15%).

A greater proportion of respondents reported high level of confident in their ability to promote learners emotional, social and problem solving skills, they are also confident in managing current behaviour problems in the classroom and capable of managing future behaviour problems in their classroom. The study indicates that teachers possess high level of confidence in managing classroom behaviour. This is consistent with earlier study by Powell (2014); Plant, Addysg, and Sgiliau (2006); Cakmak (2008); Emmer, Evertson, and Worsham (2000), they opined that this confidence has been built up as a result of ideas and approaches used in addressing issues and difficulties over a period of time depending on their role and their needs.

The findings of the study buttress the fact that most teachers in the preschool and lower primary school are female, this is consistent with that of McGrath and Bergen (2017); Antecol, Eren and Ozbek, (2012) which indicates that female teachers were significantly more than male teachers in the preschools and primary schools. This is because teaching is perceived to have low salary and status, men also face social pressures to conform to particular masculine ideals. And teaching is often seen as women's work.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also revealed that years of teaching experience was a significant factor in participants' management of classroom behaviour. Consistent with previous research (Ünal and Ünal, 2012; Hyland, 2014; Heller, 2004; Renard, 2003; Jacques, 2000; Savage and Savage, 2009; Savran and Cakiroglu, 2003; Ritter and Hancock, 2007; Martin, Yin, and Mayall, 2007). This study revealed that older teachers in the teaching service have higher level of classroom behavioural management. This finding is not surprising as the concept of classroom management skill according to Bosch (2006) that can be gained through training and many years of experience in the field. Also, experienced teachers are believed to have combined years of service and a repertoire of classroom skills and strategies (Ünal and Ünal,

2012). They typically have the ability to prioritize tasks and to attend selectively to a number of key classroom matters (Hagger and McIntyre, 2000).

Also, the finding of this study revealed that classroom behaviour management is associated with involvement of parents in assisting to manage such behaviour when exhibited at home. This is consistent with previous studies as they pointed out that many students who demonstrate behaviour difficulties come from home environments that lack positive parenting, support and modeling (McCormick, Cappella, O'Connor and McClowry, 2013; Abebe and Assegedetch, 2003). Also, longitudinal study has found out that parental involvement predict declines in problem behaviours, demonstrate positive relations with children's behaviors and related to children's positive socio-emotional outcomes (El Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Kohl, Lengua, McMahan, and the CPPRG, 2000; Domina, 2005; McWayne and Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, and Sekino, 2004).

The finding of this study also revealed that planning and support strategies were a significant factor in managing classroom behaviour. Consistent with previous research (e.g. Department for Education (DfE), 2012; Oliver, Wehby, and Daniel, 2011; Aston and Weaving, 2013; Evertson et al., 1988; Colvin, Kame'enui, and Sugai, 1993) this study revealed that planning and support strategies such as proactive approaches (adopting clear and consistent rules, learners accountability, conducting instruction and maintaining momentum) to discipline prevent negative behaviour and reactive approaches (whole-school discipline policy, ensuring that pupils understand what behaviour is expected and what the consequences are if they break the rules) that take place after the misbehavior occur.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has established the high level of confidence teachers possess to promote learner emotional, social and problem solving skills. In view of this, teachers are capable of managing current behaviour problems in their classroom and capable of managing future behaviour problems in their classroom. This skill has been built as a result of years of developing certain ideas and approaches used in addressing a particular issue and difficult over a period of time.

Also, more male teachers should be encourage to teach at the preschool and primary school, and should not be seen as women work so that certain social and emotional skills needed for future that are naturally inherit in male could be imparted in our children early. Teachers' salary that is perceived to low and status should also so that men in this profession and at the preschool will no longer be faced with social pressures.

Furthermore, more experienced teachers should be allowed to teacher at the preschool level. Inexperience teachers should be attached to experience ones so that they can gain more experience needed in handling and managing differs behaviour exhibited by preschool children. In addition, parents should be trained with necessary parenting skill, support and modeling that are essential in managing social emotional behaviours that their children exhibit at home. Parental involvement will help to demonstrate positive relations with children's behaviours and related to children's positive socio-emotional outcomes.

Moreover, teachers have to engage in planning and support strategies such as proactive approaches to discipline in other to prevent negative behaviour and reactive approaches that take

place after the misbehavior occur.

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