



Physical Environment and Arrangement of the 21st Century Classroom for Managing Disruptive Behaviour in Public Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated impacts of physical classroom environment and arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Two research questions were answered and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 Alpha level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all 7,619 teachers in the 258 public secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size for the study was 530 teachers gotten through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The face and content validities were assured. The reliability of the study was established using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient, which yielded a reliability index of 0.78. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that nature of furniture provided for students contributes to students disruptive behaviour, classroom with sufficient space for movement and adequate ICT facilities help to minimize students' disruptive behaviour, creating a positive learning space for students, classroom with enough furniture for comfortable seating, adding shelves, labels or cubbies for students books and bags promotes orderliness in the classroom encourages positive behaviour among students. The study recommended that school principals and educational managers should ensure that classroom physical environment is properly planned and designed to meet the needs of teachers and students.

Keywords: Physical Environment, Arrangement, 21st Century, Classroom, Managing, Disruptive, Behaviour, Public Schools, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

A classroom is a room within a school environment where students meet on regular basis for the purpose of learning which takes place under the guidance of a teacher. In the classroom, students acquire desirable knowledge and skills needed to reach predetermined educational goals. It is in the classroom that the core school activities take place. However, certain unique qualities are inherent in the classroom for effective teaching and learning. These include, among others, textbooks, well-arranged desks/chairs, well positioned board, tables, appropriate instructional materials, clean and neat floor, wall arts, well-ventilated and spacious for movement within, rules, drawings of human skeleton. There may not be any meaningful academic achievement when a classroom lacks the basic components.

Classroom quality in the 21st century therefore, is a classroom in which teaching and learning opportunities are maximized through effective utilization of ICT and other resources, and classroom management so that the goals and objectives of the school are more effectively achieved, while at the same time positively influencing the behaviour of students. The elements of the classroom seem to interact with each other and have an impact on the students' learning outcomes. Besides, improving quality of classroom increases the efficiency of teaching and learning process, and it is an important aspect that should be considered and given attention because of its ability to affect positively students' behaviours.

Physical environment of a classroom in the 21st century should help to facilitate teaching and learning. The classroom environment ought to be kept clean always. Certain areas need to be designated for disposing of trash, storing papers among others. Ventilation, temperature and lighting of the classroom may affect students' behaviour and ability to concentrate. A room that is too stuffy, too hot, too cold, or a room that has dim or bright lightning is often distracting, causing students to focus on their discomfort rather than on their learning. Display of certain materials can add much to the attractiveness. Construction off bulletin boards and displays gives the classroom unique quality. A situation where the classroom physical environment is not conducive for the students, disruptive behaviour could arise. The classroom physical environment significantly affects students' behaviour and ensures effective teaching and learning (Suleiman & Hussain, 2014). This indicated that without good classroom physical environment, fruitful teaching and learning cannot take place. However, students gain more information and becomes focused on their teachers in a well facilitated classroom, and consequently show positive behaviour. Classroom physical environment provides students with opportunities to be engaged in learning process.

The 21st century physical classroom environment is capable of stimulating students to engage in the learning process and able to influence the behaviour of students as well as to assist in the development of their skills or cognitive perception (Nurul, Che, Asmayati, Mohd, Mazlini & Norraini, 2013). This indicates that a good physical classroom environment is important in ensuring the comfort of teachers and students, who spend most of their time in the classroom. However, the furniture and the equipment in the classrooms should be adapted to teachers and student body. Height of tables and chairs, seat widths, fabrics used and the position back on the chairs is one of the elements that needed to be considered as limitations, which may interfere with the concentration of students in the classroom.

Arrangement of the classroom and the teaching materials in a manner that makes easy for the teacher to circulate through the room, student disruptive behaviour is less likely occur (Papa-Gusho, & Bicaku-Cekrezi, 2015). This implies that classroom arrangement promotes appropriate

academic and social behaviour. In the study conducted by Bicard, Ervin, Bicard and Baylot-Casey (2012) found that disruptive behaviour occurs more in the classroom when students choose their seats than when the teacher chooses. Seat arrangement provides opportunities for the students to be enthusiastically engaged in learning process and creating opportunity to work with the teacher (Suleman & Hussain, 2014). Inclusion, without adequate classroom arrangement, fruitful teaching and learning cannot be possible. Students gain more information and become focused on their teachers in a well-organized classroom. However, if students feel uncomfortable in a classroom, disruptive behaviour may arise which tends them to lose valuable information from the teacher. The quality of classroom arrangement ensures effective teaching and learning. Arrangement of ICT facilities is of great importance in order to avoid disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

The arrangement of the classroom can be an effective means to ascertain the quality of a classroom. The way the seating pattern and gadgets are arranged could aid the teaching and learning, and help to maintain discipline. The seating arrangement needs to focus on the board since most class instructions occur there. Seat arrangement can be used as a means to control students' behaviour. Allowing students to seat individually or as a group to select their own seating may reward appropriate behaviour. Teachers can rearrange the seating as a reward for good behaviour. Placing a disruptive student's desk beside the teacher's desk could enable the teacher to give more attention, personal contact and encouragement to the student. Seat arrangement is an important aspect of classroom management that helps the teacher to address behavioural problems in the classroom.

Bosah, Ejesi and Alele (2016) carried out a study on disruptive classroom behaviours among primary school pupils in Nsukka East Local Educational Authority and intervention measures needed in Enugu State, Nigeria. The findings showed that all stakeholders in education contributed in one way or the other in causing classroom disruptive behaviours among primary school pupils. It also indicated that administrators lack of provision of conducive learning environment, the teachers not using of age appropriate teaching methods, the pupils not modelling the required conduct and parents, not providing learning materials for children among other causes. The researchers therefore concluded that for classroom disruptive behaviour to be prevented and controlled, all stakeholders should join hands together. It was recommended among others that the government through the school administrators should provide conducive learning environment and adequate materials for both the pupils and teachers.

Oliver, Wehby and Reschly (2011) stress that disruptive behaviour of students have increased influence on teachers' stress and burn out. Ministry of Education, Guyana (2015) states that disruptive behaviour occurs when a student's intentionally create a disturbance in class that directly interferes with the teachers' ability to instruct the class and with other students ability to learn. They further stressed that disruptive behaviour can have negative effects on not only the classroom environment, but also on the school experience as a whole. The time it takes to give attention to students with disruptive behaviour can be used to pass additional information on the subject matter. Students' classroom disruptive behaviour does not only restrain the culprits from learning but prevents other students in the class from learning as well. It redirects the students' attention, interrupts lessons, wastes limited instructional time, and most disturbing, reduces the likelihood of completing their formal education. Again, it could increase the teachers' stress levels, intense feelings of dissatisfaction, redirect their attention away from the lesson, and thus affect the quality of teaching and learning. It is against this background that the study seeks to investigate physical classroom environment and arrangement on the management of students'

disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State. It is obvious that schools populated with ‘digital/ICT natives’, class participation in a learning environment furnished with ICT gadgets will be high. Therefore, proper arrangement of the gadgets in the classroom has the ability to stem disruptive behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching and learning encompass a wide range of activities such as writing on the board, discussing with students, explaining concepts, demonstrating a procedure, supervising students’ class work, reading and marking students’ notes, etc. Classroom with good desks, seats well-spaced out for easy movement within, well ventilated, good lighting, good ceilings, roofs, smooth floor, class rules, appropriate instructional materials and modern ICT facilities will facilitate effective teaching and learning. In this classroom, there is a possibility of balance for active participation of students in the learning processes. But where the quality of a classroom is poor with few or no ICT facilities, some imbalances may arise that disrupt the learning processes. A crowded, noisy and ill-equipped classroom environment may create negative impact on the learning processes. In such situation, both the teachers and the students suffer. The teachers struggle to achieve set objectives, and students are most likely to learn less than they should. In order to manage student disruptive behaviour in the classroom, the quality of the classroom becomes essential in ensuring that the classroom atmosphere is that where teaching and learning flourish. This study therefore, seeks to investigate physical environment and arrangement of the 21st century classroom for the management of students’ disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate physical classroom environment and arrangement on the management of students’ disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Ascertain the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students’ disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Verify the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students’ classroom disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students’ classroom disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What are the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students’ classroom disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

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

- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' classroom disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' classroom disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design is therefore appropriate for this study because it seeks to describe the physical classroom environment and arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The researcher examined the effect of the independent variable 'classroom quality' on the dependent variable 'students' disruptive behaviour' in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The population of the study comprised 7,619 teachers in the 258 senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The population includes 3,926 male teachers and 3,693 female teachers. A sample of 530 respondents (teachers) was drawn from the population. This sample was determined using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Using this technique, the entire population was stratified into two subsets of male and female teachers as well as into three senatorial districts in Rivers State. The research instrument was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Physical Classroom Environment and Arrangement on the Management of Students' Disruptive Behaviour Questionnaire (PCEAMSDBQ)". The questionnaire contains 10 items structured in a four (4) points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 and was used for data collection. The face and content validity of the instrument was ascertain by three experts, one from measurement and evaluation department and two from educational management department in the University of Port Harcourt. The reliability of the instrument was tested with thirty (30) teachers in Rivers State which was outside the sampled schools. The reliability coefficient for the instrument yielded 0.78. This indicated that the instrument was reliable and therefore considered appropriate for the study. 530 copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher with the aid of two (2) research assistants who was trained by the researcher. All the instrument distributed were retrieved for data analysis. Data collected from the field was analyzed using statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' classroom disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State

| S/N | Classroom physical environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour | Male Teachers = 273 | | | | Female Teachers = 257 | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | | \bar{x}_1 | S.D ₁ | \bar{x}_2 | S.D ₂ | Weighted mean | Rank Order | Remarks |
| 1. | The nature of furniture provided for students can contribute to students disruptive behaviour | 3.18 | 0.87 | 3.19 | 0.85 | 3.19 | 6 th | Agreed |
| 2. | Classroom with enough ICT facilities for students do not have disruptive behaviours | 3.40 | 0.88 | 3.20 | 0.80 | 3.30 | 1 st | Agreed |
| 3. | Classroom with sufficient space for movement within helps to minimize noise and distraction | 3.44 | 0.78 | 3.10 | 0.78 | 3.21 | 5 th | Agreed |
| 4. | A well ventilated classroom provides comfort for students' during lesson | 3.29 | 0.80 | 3.31 | 0.88 | 3.30 | 1 st | Agreed |
| 5. | A clean classroom promotes students concentration during less | 3.26 | 0.82 | 3.35 | 0.83 | 3.30 | 1 st | Agreed |
| 6. | Well positioned chalk/white board provides students with the platform to actively participate in the learning activities | 3.25 | 0.71 | 3.22 | 0.77 | 3.23 | 4 rd | Agreed |
| Grand Mean | | 3.30 | 0.81 | 3.23 | 0.82 | 3.26 | | Agreed |

Legend:

\bar{x} : Mean

SD : Standard Deviation

Scale

1.00-2.49: Disagreed

2.50-4.00: Agreed

Data on Table 1 show the mean ratings and standard deviation of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary school in Rivers State. Items 1-6 had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were agreed as the impacts of physical classroom environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour. Also, the overall mean show that classrooms with enough ICT facilities for students, a well-ventilated classroom provides comfort for students during lesson, and a clean classroom promote students' concentration during less is rated highest with weighted mean score of 3.30, while the nature of furniture provided for students can contribute to students disruptive behaviour was rated lowest on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary school in Rivers State.

Therefore, with a grand mean scores of 3.30 and 3.23 for male and female teachers, show that teachers agreed that the nature of furniture provided for students contributes to students disruptive behaviour, while classroom with sufficient space for movement helps to minimize students' disruptive behavior. On the other hand, adequate ICT facilities in classrooms, a well-ventilated classroom provide comfort for students during lesson, clean classroom promotes concentration of students during less and a well-positioned writing board provide students with the platform to participate in the learning activities.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

| S/N | Impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour | Male Teachers = 273 | | Female Teachers = 257 | | Weighted mean | Rank Order | Remarks |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | | \bar{x} | S.D | \bar{x} | S.D | | | |
| 7. | Creating a positive learning space for students encourage positive behaviour | 3.16 | 0.77 | 3.12 | 0.77 | 3.14 | 1 st | Agreed |
| 8. | Classroom with enough furniture for comfortable seating helps to minimize students' disruptive behaviour | 3.02 | 0.71 | 2.94 | 0.65 | 2.98 | 5 th | Agreed |
| 9. | Adding shelves, labels or cubbies for students books and bags promotes orderliness in the classroom | 3.06 | 0.77 | 3.01 | 0.68 | 3.03 | 3 rd | Agreed |
| 10. | Classroom arrangement addresses acoustics quality in the classroom by eliminating objects that produce background noise | 3.07 | 0.81 | 2.98 | 0.69 | 3.02 | 4 th | Agreed |
| 11. | Classroom arrangement promotes order and decency for smooth flow of teaching and learning experience | 3.10 | 0.86 | 3.14 | 0.69 | 3.12 | 2 nd | Agreed |
| Grand Mean | | 3.08 | 0.79 | 3.04 | 0.70 | 3.06 | | Agreed |

Legend and scale for table 1 applied

Data on Table 2 show the mean ratings and standard deviation of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Items 7-11 had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were agreed as the impacts of classroom arrangements on the management of students' disruptive behaviour. Also, the overall mean shows that creating a positive learning space for students encourage positive behaviour was rated highest with weighted mean score of 3.06, while classroom with enough furniture for comfortable seating helps to minimize students' disruptive behaviour was rated lowest on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary school in Rivers State.

Therefore, with a grand mean scores of 3.08 and 3.04 for male and female teachers agreed that creating a positive learning space for students encourage positive behaviour, classroom with enough furniture for comfortable seating helps to minimize students' disruptive behaviour, adding shelves, labels or cubbies for students books and bags promotes orderliness in the classroom, classroom arrangement addresses acoustics quality in the classroom by eliminating objects that produce background noise and classroom arrangement promotes order and decency for smooth flow of teaching and learning experience.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary school in Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of z-test analysis of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour public secondary school in Rivers State

| Respondents | n | \bar{x} | SD | df | z-cal | z-crit. | Decision |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|------|-----|-------|------------|-----------------|
| Male Teachers | 273 | 3.28 | 0.79 | 528 | 0.71 | ± 1.96 | Not Significant |
| Female Teachers | 257 | 3.33 | 0.82 | | | | |

Legends

N: Number of respondents

\bar{x} : Mean

SD: Standard Deviation

z-cal: z- calculated value

df: Degree of freedom

z-crit: z-critical value

Data on Table 3 show summary of subjects mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers state. The calculated z-value used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.71 while the z-critical value stood at ± 1.96 using 528 degree of freedom. At 0.05 level of significance and 528 degree of freedom, the calculated z-test of 0.71 is less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 , hence there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers state. Based on the foregoing, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and confirmed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom physical environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of z-test analysis male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

| Respondents | n | \bar{x} | SD | df | z-cal | z-crit. | Decision |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|------|-----|-------|------------|-----------------|
| Male Teachers | 273 | 3.08 | 0.77 | 528 | 0.72 | ± 1.96 | Not Significant |
| Female Teachers | 257 | 3.05 | 0.75 | | | | |

Data on Table 4 show summary of subjects mean, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers state. The calculated z-value, used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.72, while the z-critical value stood at ± 1.96 using 528 degree of freedom. At 0.05 level of significance and 528 freedom, the calculated z-test value of 0.72 is less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 , hence there is no significant difference between the responses of the male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on the foregoing, the researchers accepted the null hypothesis and conformed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

Impacts of Classroom Physical Environment on the Management of Students' Disruptive Behaviour

The finding of this study indicated that the nature of furniture provided for students contributes to students disruptive behaviour, classroom with sufficient space for movement helps to minimize students' disruptive behaviour, a well-ventilated classroom provide comfort for students during lesson, clean classroom promotes concentration of students during less and a well-positioned chalk/white board provides students with the platform to participate in the learning activities. It was also found that classrooms with enough ICT facilities do not have disruptive behaviours. This finding implies that the situation were the classroom physical environment is provided with good furniture for students to comfortably seat during lessons, sufficient space for easy movement within the classroom, well ventilated, clean and well positioned chalk/white boards students disruptive behaviour can be managed. This in line with the finding of Suleiman and Hussain (2014), who found that the classroom physical environment significantly affects students' behaviour.

Again, Nurul, Che, Asmayati, Mohd, Mazlini and Noraini (2013), opined that the physical classroom environment is capable of stimulating students to engage in the learning process and able to influence the behaviour of students as well as to assist in the development of their skills or cognitive perception. The importance of ICT usage in classrooms was flagged up by Abraham and Nwabueze (2016) confirming the findings of this study that there is no disruptive behaviour in classrooms where students have enough ICT facilities. The state of affairs at the moment according to Abraham and Nwabueze (2016) is that of inadequacy. The test of hypothesis two was accepted that there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of physical classroom environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers state. This implies that both male and female teachers have similar opinion on the items raised on the impacts of physical classroom environment on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Impacts of Classroom Arrangement on the Management of Students' Disruptive Behaviour

The finding of this study indicated that creating a positive learning space for students encourage positive behaviour, classroom with enough furniture for comfortable seating helps to minimize students' disruptive behaviour, adding shelves, labels or cubbies for students books and bags promotes orderliness in the classroom, classroom arrangement addresses acoustics quality in the classroom by eliminating objects that produce background noise and classroom arrangement promotes order and decency for smooth flow of teaching and learning experience. This is in line with Bicard, Ervin, Bicard and Baylot-Casey (2012) who found that disruptive behaviour occurs more in the classroom when students choose their seats than when teacher choose. Again, Suleman and Hussain (2014) concluded that seat arrangement provide opportunities for the students to be enthusiastically engaged in learning process and creating opportunity to work with the teacher. The test of hypothesis two was accepted that there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers state. This implies that both male and female teachers have similar opinion on the items raised on the impacts of classroom arrangement on the management of students' disruptive behaviour in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

The nature of furniture provided for students contributes to students disruptive behaviour, classroom with sufficient space for movement helps to minimize students' disruptive behaviour, a well-ventilated classroom provide comfort for students during lesson, clean classroom promotes concentration of students during less and a well-positioned chalk (white board provides students with the platform to participate in the learning activities has impacts on the management of students' disruptive behaviour. Creating a positive learning space for students encourage positive behaviour, classroom with enough furniture for comfortable seating helps to minimize students' disruptive behaviour, adding shelves, labels or cubbies for students books and bags promotes orderliness in the classroom, classroom arrangement addresses acoustics quality in the classroom by eliminating objects that produce background noise and classroom arrangement promotes order and decency for smooth flow of teaching and learning experience has impacts on the management of students' disruptive behaviour.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- School principals and educational managers should ensure that classroom physical environment is properly planned and designed to meet the needs of teachers and students.
- Teachers should be encouraged to devote time in arranging their classroom to minimize students' disruptive behaviour.
- Rivers State government should provide enough furniture for comfortable seating of students in the classroom
- Teachers should ensure that students bags are locked up in their cupboards in order to promote orderliness in the classroom.

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