



Classroom Management and Students' Academic Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State: Implications for the Educational Administrators

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Abstract

Classrooms in all schools need proper management and control by both teachers and school administrators to ensure that set objectives and goals of education are achieved. It is in the light of this that this study investigated the relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study adopted a correlation design. A sample size of 600 teachers were obtained from a population of 7,145 teachers in the two hundred and seventy eight (278) public senior secondary schools in Rivers State with the use of stratified random sampling technique. Implicitly, about 12% of the entire population was used for the study. The instruments for data collection were self-constructed questionnaire titled; Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ) and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ). These instruments were validated by two of the researchers' colleagues in the department of educational management and one lecturer from measurement and evaluation department, all of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The reliabilities of the instruments were determined using test re-test method of data collection. The said instruments were administered on 30 teachers outside the sample population and the collected responses were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment technique as a measure of internal consistency. The reliability indexes of 0.87 and 0.89 were obtained indicating that the instruments were very reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to test the research questions and Spearman rank order statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses using SPSS package, version 22. Based on the analyses, the following findings were made; class size, provision of instructional materials, class discipline, use of appropriate curricular, classroom environment were all related to students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers state. The study therefore concluded that since classroom is the main place where set educational goals are achieved, teachers and school administrators should ensure that classrooms are properly and meticulously managed. The paper recommended among other things that school administrators should closely supervise classrooms, teachers and students activities to ensure that instructional goals are achieved and consequently improve students' academic performance.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Academic Performance, Class Size, Instructional Materials.

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INTRODUCTION

A unique attribute of formal education is the act of assembling learners in defined and conducive learning environments. These could be rooms in a building, spaces or places mapped out for teaching and learning activities. Such rooms in a school setting are called a classroom while the groups of individuals who use them for learning activities are called a class or classes. This does not however imply that learning cannot occur outside classroom. Rather, it implies that specific and planned learning experiences are the ones that occur in classrooms during instruction. The teachers as well as school heads have the responsibilities of ensuring that the expected or planned learning experiences actually take place. The teacher does this by teaching or exposing the learners to these new learning experiences while the school heads or administrators have the duties of supervising, coordinating, inspecting and directing the activities of teachers.

Classroom conditions to a large extent determine the effectiveness of instructional activities which directly reflect on students' academic performance as well as teachers' job performance, all indicating the extent of the achievement of the instructional goals. This is exactly why classrooms should be made conducive for learning. Supporting this Khan (2012) opined that classrooms should have pleasant look. The rooms should be tastefully decorated with some light colours. There should be adequate seating arrangements, lightening, ventilation and what it takes to make students comfortable while learning in the classrooms. There should be enough doors and windows to admit natural light and air from outside into classrooms.

This however is contrary to the conditions of some primary and secondary schools in Rivers State especially in rural areas where there are dilapidated classroom blocks and staff rooms. In such schools students lack conducive learning environments and teachers sit under trees as their staffrooms. The effective management of the classroom is mainly the responsibility of the classroom teacher. The teacher ensures that all human and material resources available in the classroom are used to achieve set educational goals. However, the inability of the teacher to efficiently manage the classroom resources often results in the non-achievement of the set educational objectives and goals. This inefficiency of the classroom teacher to manage the classroom is caused by several factors ranging from, class size, un-conducive classroom space, students' indiscipline, unavailability of instructional materials, inappropriate curriculum, use of wrong teaching methods, negative classroom climate and a host of other factors.

Most schools have the problem of overcrowded classrooms which obviously has negative influence on teachers' performance as well as students' academic performance. Overcrowded classrooms are most times caused by unguided students enrollment, poor availability of classrooms, and inadequate availability of subject teachers. In line with this view is the study conducted by Matshipi, et al (2017) on the causes of overcrowded classes in primary schools under Mamaila Circuit in the Mopani District in South Africa. It was discovered that overcrowded classes are caused by inadequate provision of infrastructure such as classrooms, one school serving one big community; the shortage of teaching staff, principals who try to increase the enrollment of their school so that their salaries can be enhanced, and that overcrowded classrooms have a negative impact on the performance of both educators and learners.

In another study carried out by Taueg (2015) to investigate the main problems that hinder teacher-student interaction in overcrowded classes, it was discovered that the main problems being faced in overcrowded classes are noise- making, lack of individual attention and poor classroom arrangement. The study therefore concluded that teacher-student interaction is

effected by the number of student enrolment. From all indications, it is obvious that many of these studies about classroom conditions and students performance have been carried out in other places, other than Rivers State, hence the need for the present study.

Statement of the Problem

The state of classrooms in public secondary schools in Rivers State obviously is far from meeting the required standards. In most public secondary schools, students learn in make shift, congested, over-crowded and un-conducive classrooms. Classrooms that are meant for about forty students sometimes are over- crowded with over sixty to seventy students even without seats for students to seat during instruction. This is contrary to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014:23) policy statement in the National policy on Education which has made recommendations for secondary school class size and thus states that; “the government shall regulate the establishment of schools, supervise and inspect schools regularly and ensure that all, schools follow approved curricular and conform to the National Policy on Education. The teacher-pupil ratio at the post-basic education level shall be 1:40”.

Also FRN (2014:13) states that “for effective teaching and learning at the Junior Secondary Education level, the teacher-student ratio shall be 1:35”. From all indications, there is a complete deviation from these stipulations of the National Policy. What we have in public schools are situations where up to sixty to seventy pupils/students stay in one classroom. Due to the over-crowded nature of these classrooms, there are the problems of noise control and other misbehaviors of students in classrooms. Due to the congestions, students lack seating spaces. Some do not have spaces to put their lockers for their books and as such run the risks of sharing lockers with their mates which most times result in the loss of their text books and note books.

Naturally, students who loose their books from time to time would not have the required concentration to read and understand and this could affect their performance in both internal and external examinations. Due to the overcrowded conditions of these classrooms, some teachers find it difficult to talk to the hearing of all the students. Some students who do not hear very well during the teaching process may feel afraid to call their teachers attention and as such resort to keeping quiet and go home without understanding the lessons. This definitely may be affecting their academic performance.

Another problem was the use of wrong curricular. Often times teachers expose student to inappropriate lesson content either higher or lower than their levels. When students are taught lesson higher than their levels, it causes noisy classroom and poor understanding of the lesson. On the other hand, when they are taught lesson lower than their levels they hardly pay attention, as they would see no reason to do so. There was the problem of unavailability of instructional materials. Teachers lacked relevant text books to teach the subjects and students equally did not have writing materials to take note of the lessons. It is in this light that this study investigated the relationship between classroom management and students’ academics performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

For clearer understanding of the information given in this study, the researcher thought it wise to discuss certain concepts that are related to classroom management and students’ academic performance. As such, this section has discussed the following concepts; a class, class size, classroom discipline, students’ academic performance, management, classroom space, learning

environment, instructional materials, and problems of un-conducive classrooms, classroom management, and students' academic performance, roles of school administrators in the provision of conducive classrooms.

A class- Conceptually, a class is a group of learners/ pupils/students arranged in designated rooms and places known as classrooms for the purposes of teaching and learning activities (Nwankwoala, 2018). These learners according to Abraham cited in Agi(2005) are individuals with different backgrounds, values, abilities, expectations, previous experiences and personal characteristics. This implies that the classroom system needs to take into consideration the unique state of the each learner as to grant each learner the opportunity to learn. This also means that because learners in a classroom have peculiar and individual differences, class teachers as well as school administrators/principals (who play supervisory roles) must consider these differences among students during instructional activities.

Class size- The number of students/pupils who are assembled together by the teacher for pedagogical purpose is regarded as the class size. The class size may be large, small, or normal depending on the entire students' population of a school. The recommended class size or ratio for crèche and nursery class as stated in FRN(2014:8) section 2 sub-section 16(i) are 1:10 and 1:25. For the primary and junior secondary school pupils/students the class ratio as recommended by the FRN(2014:12) in sub-section 20(f) is 1:35 while the teacher-student ratio for the post basic education level as stated in the National Policy on Education is 1:40. Implicitly, the situations whereby these class sizes are exceeded; teachers find it difficult to have effective class control. This brings about noisy classrooms and insufficient classroom spaces. As such, class size to some extent can influence pedagogical activities positively or negatively. The normal class size enhances instructional activities while abnormal class size often affects teaching and learning activities. It is therefore important that school administrators guide teachers on the appropriate class size, as to have effective attainment of lesson objectives.

A classroom space- A classroom can be defined as a place or room in a building where teaching and learning activities take place. Supporting this, Okonkwo and Ozurumba (1989: 364) defined classroom as "a place where classes meet. It could be an empty space, an art gallery, museum, workshop, display centre or special room". Ogunu (2000: 125), defined a classroom as "an institutionalized setting for teaching; in its most common form, it is a place where a teacher and twenty or more students meet regularly for a designated period of time over an interval of four to nine months". This means that a classroom can be learning place for a group of students in a formal school system for period of three terms in a session. Ogunu (2000) is also of the view that classrooms operate under a form of rationality which specifies that activities involving all students must have an educative justification. That means that the main reason for each class gathering in a classroom is for educative purposes even when practical lessons like dance drama, plays, etc. are involved.

Obomanu and Okoro (1999) viewed classroom as a place of interaction when they opined that the interaction pattern in the classroom entails teaching a lesson, administering tests, solving a common problem, discussing disciplinary questions, passing on general information, answering questions and addressing pressing academic problems. The main objectives of these interactions are to improve learning. Supporting this view Agi (2005) opined that these classroom teaching and learning activities throw up plethora of interactions and relationships in the process of accomplishing tasks tied to teaching. Agi (2005) is therefore convinced that interactions and

relationship that occur in the classroom are endemic to and are products of compulsory communications resulting from task pursuit and accomplishment in the classroom. As a place where educational objectives are achieved, Okonkwo and Ozuruba (1995) described classroom as the power-house where the success or failure of the learning process is generated and sustained. The ‘power-house’ depicts a place or venue where planned instructional objectives are achieved. The phrase ‘power house’ here equally implies that the classroom is the main place where educational objectives and goals are achieved and invariably without the classroom the formal school system will not be complete.

The Rivers State Ministry of Education (2004) cited in Agabi (2014) recommended the following features for primary and secondary school classrooms;

- Classroom size should not be less than 7m by 7.5 m for a class of 40 students;
- It should be cross ventilated and well lit;
- It should have storage facilities and built –in-cupboards for large and small items;
- It should have two access doorways to serve as alternative exits;
- There should be a veranda on either side of the classroom.

In line with this view is that of FME (2002) cited in Nwankwoala (2018) also recommended that a classroom internal space of 144 square meters. Within this space, each primary school pupil should have a desk space of 0.6m x 0.37m sitting space but not less than 0.23m per pupil. The space recommended for each secondary school student by the Federal Ministry of Education is 0.6mx0.45m internal space and a floor space of 0.8cubic meters. The main reason for this recommendation is to ensure that teachers and students do not stay in overcrowded classrooms. This recommendation is also applicable to private schools. It is also to maintain uniform standards.

Features of a classroom

A classroom set within the school system normally has the following features;

- The chalkboard;
- Table, chair, pulpit;
- Desks, seats, lockers and pigeon holes;
- Doors and windows;
- Sources of light;
- Microphones and other communication gadgets;
- Information and communication technologies centres (ICTs).

The chalk board-This is a board normally fixed on the wall directly opposite the class for the purpose of writing instructional information. It may be black or white board in colour. Teachers write with markers on white board and use chalk on black board. These boards must be kept in good conditions to enable the class visibly see what is written on them. Also, indelible markers should not be used on white boards. Any of these boards must be firmly fixed so as to avoid accidental fall that might injure any class member or even the teachers who are usually very close to them.

Tables, chairs, pulpits-Tables and chairs are used by teachers to place their writing materials and to sit down when necessary. Pulpits could be raised platform or box like elevations made of wood or glass by which teachers can lean while teaching a lesson.

Desks, seats, lockers and pigeon holes- Class members usually use desks and seats in the classroom during teaching-learning activities. This makes the sitting arrangement to be very orderly. The class teacher should ensure that class members are arranged in such a manner that the taller ones do not sit in front and obstruct the vision of the shorter ones who may be seated at the back. Also physically challenged pupils/students should be given special consideration in classroom sitting arrangements. Lockers are wooden boxes where students keep their notebooks and textbooks for safe keep. Pigeon holes also are boxes caved on a wooden platform where class members can keep their belongings to avoid being taken away by others. Pigeon holes are usually kept in primary school classrooms to ensure the pupils do not loose their school items like lunch boxes, pencils, rulers, crayons, and other personal belongings which they normally come to school with.

Windows and doors- Every well-structured classroom should be well ventilated. Classroom windows and doors should be positioned on appropriate places to allow free flow of air. Each classroom should have two doors that should be open during games or when students are permitted to leave the classroom for break, but one of them should be locked during lesson periods to prevent students' indiscriminant movements. Classrooms should as well be well lightened. Lighting points or bulbs should not only be fixed on the classroom walls but should also be fixed on the ceilings to avoid students' shadows being casted on their writing papers thereby blocking their views. Apart from the natural source of light, school management should endeavour to provide alternative sources of light like electricity, or solar lights. This is important during rainy seasons when classrooms may not have enough light from the sun rays.

Microphones and other communication gadgets-Teachers teaching large classes should use microphones for students to hear lesson information very clearly. The use of microphones helps teachers not to strain their voices during teaching process. Classroom telephones should also be provided for necessary communications by teachers and students. There is also the need for schools to have information and communication technologies (ICTs) centers where students are taught with modern communication gadgets. Here students are given the opportunities to study on their own as well as be taught online by their teachers.

Classroom discipline- Every class member in a classroom is expected to behave well and be orderly in conduct. When students in a classroom adhere strictly to classroom rules and regulations and maintain decorum, they are regarded as discipline class members. Onwuegbu (1979) defined discipline as training the mind and character to produce self-control habits of obedience etc. Classroom discipline therefore means the control of pupils by the teacher and involves the training which produces self-control, orderliness, obedience and power of cooperation in school children. This implies that training school children to be disciplined means making them to know how to be obedient to school rules and regulation, having self-control over wrong behaviours and staying orderly in classrooms. On the other hand undisciplined students are seen as deviants and cause social nuisance in classrooms. They exhibit some anti-social behaviours like fighting, noisy making, stealing, gossiping, quarreling etc. in classrooms.

The teacher therefore has the responsibility of maintaining disciplined class by ensuring that students are obedient, well behaved and friendly. Also, maintaining class discipline demands that the teacher should have good knowledge of the subject matter, as this makes students to have confidence in him; he must always adopt appropriate teaching methods and skills; use relevant instructional materials; involve students in making rules and regulations guiding the classroom conducts, use appropriate corrective measures and most importantly be a role model to his students. Webster's New Dictionary also stated that discipline as a concept can mean some other thing to some other persons. But in the context of classroom management, discipline entails the following:

- Training that develops self-control, character or orderliness and efficiency,
- Strict control to enforce obedience ...
- Self-control or orderly conduct;
- Acceptance of or submission to authority and control;
- Treatment that corrects or punishes.

Discipline is a vital tool used by the teacher to maintain conflict free, orderly and peaceful learning environment. To succeed in maintaining classroom discipline, the teacher must equally be disciplined. He or she must lead by example; being punctual to instructional activities, adhering to school rules and regulations and making students to obey them; ensuring that students who fail to obey the rules and regulations are punished, maintaining positive relationship with the learners and regularly remembering that he or she is acting in loco parentis.

Instructional materials- teachers have the duties of providing relevant instructional materials for students learning. Atanda and Lemeed (2006) opined that the success of any teaching-learning process depends not only on the teachers' competency, but as well on the use of relevant teaching resources/materials. They were of the view that there are three categories of instructional materials. They are as follows:

- Visual Aids- these include instructional materials which learners and teachers can visualize or see, feel, smell, or touch. Examples of such instructional materials are; moveable chalkboards, the bulletin board, flannel graphs, charts, magnetic board, posters, graphs, charts, models, objects and specimens, motion pictures, films strips and slides.
- Audio-Aids- these are teaching aids that produce sounds only. They are only connected to sense of hearing. Such instructional materials include; recorded cassettes, recorded discs and radio.
- Audio-Visual Aids- these normally combine the attributes of both visual and audio aids. They appeal to the five senses; sight, hearing, touch, and feel. Examples of these types of instructional materials are television sets, films, recorded educational videocassettes, sounds and sight projectors.

Importance of Instructional Materials

- They promote teaching –learning activities. They help teachers to talk less and make lessons more interesting;
- They help in bridging the gap in communication between teachers and learners;
- They stimulate learners and interests in learning;

- They assist teachers to be more efficient;
- They encourage clear thinking and concentration;
- They help students to make effective use of their senses.

Problems of un-conducive classrooms- Un-conducive classrooms have also made it difficult for teachers to teach effectively. Overcrowded classes pose a lot of difficulty on the teacher to control. The inability of teachers to have firm and effective class control have often times resulted in their inefficiency in delivering their lessons and covering their scheme of work. When schemes are not covered, students are deprived of the planned learning experiences and may fail below expectations during examinations especially the external ones.

Overcrowded classroom conditions in public secondary schools in Rivers state may be the cause of students' indiscipline. This may also make teachers inefficient in carrying out their teaching duties as they spend time allocated to their lessons for counseling and advising students to behave well. This results in the incompleteness of term scheme of work and probably students' poor academic performance. Supporting this claim, Ogunu (2000:p126) posited that "one of the most serious problems tending to undermine the provision of quality education in Nigeria is that of indiscipline".

Other anti-social behaviours that occur in the classroom that could lead to poor academic performance of students include: parental over-protection, teacher-student rejection, fatigue, fear, over-anxiety and disease. Obviously, these conditions are prevalent in public schools in Rivers State and a child suffering from one or more of these conditions cannot perform well academically. There is also the problem of idle children in classrooms. Students or pupils idleness in classroom is born out of the lesser –fair attitude of some teachers who instead of teaching their lessons at appropriate time schedules and keeping students or pupils busy, prefer to attend to their personal matters leaving students idle. When students are left alone without proper directives from their teachers, they are bound to misbehave.

Mass promotion is another possible contributory factor to students' poor academic performance in external examinations. Some principals and teachers in public schools in Rivers State tend to cover their inefficiencies in teaching of students/pupils by allowing mass promotion of students and pupils in their internal examinations. This to a large extent may have been one of the causes of students' poor academic performance in examinations like; WAEC, GCE, NECO, etc.

Inadequate provisions of text books and instructional materials like audio/visual aids, charts, posters, diagrams etc. for teaching and learning could to a great extent negatively affect students' learning process. Students need text books and other learning aids to perform well in their internal and external examinations. There is also the problem of teachers not doing their instructional duties due to poor remuneration and unpleasant working conditions. When teachers are given favourable working conditions and their salaries paid as at when due in line with other civil servants of the same cadre, they tend to put in their best. But when reverse is the case, they will slake and become careless about their duties. This consequently may negatively affect students learning and academic performance.

Poor disciplinary conditions can as well be a hitch to students learning and academic performance. There is high level of disciplinary problems in public secondary schools. These problems include; cultism, fighting, truancy, stealing, lateness and a whole lot of other vices. There is also the problem of poor curriculum which most times fail to meet the learning needs of students. In line with this Okonkwo and Ozurumba (1989) posited that poor curriculum is one

that fails to meet the needs of a larger number of students found in the slow and fast brackets. When this happens, the students may find the curriculum material either too easy or too difficult to cope with. As a result of this condition, they divert to other activities that will seriously disrupt the class discipline.

Management- Management as a concept is that function of an organization which involves planning, coordinating, directing, and supervising the available human and material resources to ensure that organizational goals are achieved. Educational management is the act of ensuring that educational goals are achieved through the proper utilization of the available human and material resources. Akinwumiju and Agabi (2010:1) defined management “as a systematic and conscious process of trying to achieve as much of an organization’s defined goals and objectives as much as is humanly possible with the use of available resources”. Implicitly, management is a role played by a person who in trying to attain set goals of an organization, exercises certain degree of decision and control over the activities of other staff placed under him or her in an organization. Nwankwoala (2016) also defined management as an effective and efficient organization and the utilization of the available human and material resources in a certain system with the purpose(s) of achieving the set goal(s) of that system.

Classroom Management-Every classroom requires careful management by the teacher in charge as well as the school administrator who play overall supervisory roles. This is why classroom management can be defined as the process by teachers carefully and dedicatedly ensure that students or pupils receive new learning experiences in line with the planned curriculum over a period of time. Classroom management is almost a daily responsibility of the teacher, because even outside the school days, the teacher while at home plans his/her lessons, gathers his teaching aids and creates new teaching strategies and methods that will enable him or her deliver his or her lessons successfully. While in the classroom, the teacher carefully monitors the activities of learners, and directs them towards instructional goals achievement. In line with this view Atanda (2008) defined classroom management as a well-organized and arranged room where classes of pupils/students having similar characteristics are being taught. This implies that the teacher as the classroom manager, ought to secure full cooperation of the students or pupils in performing his functions in the classroom.

Ogunu (2000: 125) in line with this view defines classroom management as “the planning, management and execution of the school’s programme as it affects teaching and learning in the classroom. The teacher manages the physical as well as the psychological environment to create an atmosphere that is conducive for learning”. This implies that the teacher in the course of managing the classroom must ensure that the classroom environment is conducive for learning. The classroom which is a sub-system of a wider system (the entire school) has its own resources as; the teacher, students, the curriculum and the environment. So the process of planning, directing, controlling and coordinating these resources with the aim of achieving the educational goals is what is known as classroom management.

Adiele et al. (2010) opined that classroom management involves activities by which teachers establish and maintain conditions that enable individuals in the classroom to maintain and apply all their natural and creative talents to the challenges of educational tasks instead of wasting their energies on disruptive activities. It can as well be regarded as a process of keeping a class organized for better achievement of set objectives. Normally, the classroom is a place where there are several interferences to students learning. As such the teacher uses certain

methods and techniques to curb such interferences and this is part of classroom management. For the teacher to have effective classroom management, the teacher should have good mastery of the subject matter, use appropriate teaching methods, have good knowledge of the learner, maintain cordial relationship with the learners and have the mind set to take the learners from where he or she met them to the right level they ought to be. Classroom management also involves teachers' patience and tolerance, because the grouping of learners from different home backgrounds into a single classroom is enough reason to have deviant behaviours. As such, the teacher is expected to bear this in mind and relate to learners individually rather than collectively.

Importance of Classroom Management

The availability of classroom facilities and human resources are not enough for the achievement of educational goals. They require efficient management of the classroom teacher as well as school administrator before set educational goals will be achieved. This was while Atanda and Lameed (2006) opined that classroom management and organization are of the following essence:

- To realize school objectives. This is because if the available resources in the classroom are not properly managed, it can lead to goal displacement.
- To prevent wastage of educational resources at the teachers' disposal. Proper management of classroom resources like time, facilities and humans curtails unnecessary wastage.
- To help learners achieve the highest levels of their potentials and abilities.
- To coordinate classroom activities. This involves proper monitoring and careful handling of both human and material resources available in the classroom.
- To guide against unforeseen administrative problems in the classroom that can result to not realization of instructional objectives.

Learning environment-The teaching-learning environment refers to the condition within the school premises that aids effective understanding of learning experiences. Adiele et al. (2010) described teaching –learning environment as the whole set of teaching- learning support assessment and administrative arrangements as well as the facilities and resources provided within a school. Stimulating learning environment can be achieved by ensuring that classrooms are well organized with necessary facilities; well lighted and ventilated and colorfully painted. There have to be educative charts, maps, pictures, diagrams well hung on classroom walls. The classroom desks must be such that would give learners comfort rather than the discomfort. There is also need to have good sitting arrangements such that each student would be allowed to sit where he/her chooses to sit, but would not cause obstructions to others. The entire school environment must be properly secured from external intrusion as to safe guide life of school personnel as well as school properties.

Use of appropriate curricular content- often times, teachers are directed by school heads to write their lesson plans from the prescribed scheme of work drawn from the syllabuses of different educational levels. This is to ensure that students are exposed to learning experiences appropriate to their educational levels. This also implies that teachers must have mastery of the subject matter of the areas of their specialization. They should use relevant educational resources

in relating lesson information or learning experiences to learners. Students should not be exposed to subject matters above their levels or waste their time by repeating what they already know in the name of teaching them.

Academic performance-Students' academic performance is a show of the degree of understanding by students of the learning materials or lessons they have been exposed to by the teacher. When students perform well in both internal and external examinations that are based on the set curricular, they are said to have high academic performance. On the other hand, when there are failures, students are said to have low academic performance. Apart from academic performance, students are equally assessed in the areas of affective and physiological domains since the whole essence of education is to produce all round individuals who can function efficiently in all fields of life and contribute meaningfully to the development of the entire society.

Secondary School-Secondary school education in the Nigerian according to the FRN (2014:p.12) is the 'education which a child receives immediately after primary education'. It is in two phases; the Junior Secondary School education which begins from JSS1 –JSS3 and Senior Secondary School education which starts from SSS1-SSS3. This implies that secondary school education lasts for six years in Nigeria. It is also important to note that the periods from primary one to JSS3 is also referred to as Basic Education while SSS1-SSS3 is also called Post-Basic Education. Students who graduate from secondary school levels of education in Nigeria normally proceed to universities or other institutions of higher learning.

The influence of classroom management on students' academic performance

There is no gain saying in the fact that the condition of classroom to a large extent influences the academic achievements and performance of students. The classroom is like the engine room of the entire school. When the classroom is not conducive for learning, it results to poor performance of students in both internal and external examinations. Teachers have the responsibilities of monitoring classroom activities during teaching as well as controlling students' conduct to ensure that instructional procedures are not distorted. Class teachers are classroom managers who see to day to day management of the students and other learning facilities in classrooms. It is also the duty of a classroom teacher to ensure orderly behaviors of students during pedagogical activities. Teachers maintain class discipline, provide instructional materials for learning, ensure the use of appropriate curricular content, maintains classroom environment and coordinate students' activities.

Implications of classroom management for school administrators in Nigeria

Apart from teachers' roles in managing classroom activities, school heads also have important responsibilities towards ensuring that there is good classroom management in their schools. Such roles include, supervision, organizing school programs, planning curriculum, directing school personnel, appraising of teachers, maintaining discipline, providing and managing instructional facilities, ensuring that school environments are kept conducive for learning, adequate financial management and a host of other responsibilities.

Classroom supervision is one key role of a school administrator, in the sense that the classroom is where the set educational goals are mainly achieved. As such, the classroom requires proper

management through teacher, students, and facilities supervision by school heads and teachers. School administrators also see to planning of school curricular and ensure that the appropriate lesson contents are delivered by classroom teachers. This they do by day to day marking of lessons plans and notes prepared by teachers.

Teachers must not be allowed to make choice of the lesson topics apart from the prescribed ones in the scheme of work. Administrators' classroom management roles also include liaising with teachers to ensure that class members are under control. Dull students should be helped to improve while bright students should be aided to keep doing well. Parents should as well be made to participate in classroom management by helping their children come to school early as well as do their assignments and home works. Parents should ensure that their children come to classrooms neatly and well dressed as to help maintain healthy air in the classroom.

Purpose of the study

This study aimed at finding out the relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Specifically, the study was billed to:

- Discover the relationship between class size and academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State;
- Find out the relationship between the adequate provision of instructional materials and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Determine the relationship between class discipline and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Investigate the relationship between the use of appropriate curricular and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- To discover the impact of classroom environments on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- How does class size influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- In what ways do the provisions of instructional materials influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What are the impacts of students' class discipline on students' performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- How do the use of appropriate curricular influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What are the impacts of classroom environments on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at the < 0.05 guided this study.

- H_{01} There is no significant relationship between class size and students' academic performance of public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- H_{02} The provision of instructional materials do not significantly relate to the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- H_{03} Class discipline do not significantly relate to students' learning and their academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- H_{04} There is no significant relationship between the use of appropriate curricular and students' academic performance in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- H_{05} Classroom environments do not have any significant relationship with academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlation research design. It tried to investigate the relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The population of the study comprised of about 7,142 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The stratified simple random sampling technique was adopted in this study to get a sample size of 600 teachers which was 10% of the entire population were used as respondents. Self-structured questionnaire instruments titled Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ) and Students' Academic Performance questionnaire (SAPQ) were used to illicit responses from the respondents. All the 600 copies of the instruments administered were retrieved. The modified Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (DA), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the scaling values of 4,3,2,1 respectively were used for the study. The instruments were validated by 3 of the researchers' colleagues in the department of educational management, and 2 lecturers from the department of measurement and evaluation all being staffs of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt. The reliability of the instruments were determined by conducting a test re-test on 30 teachers outside the sampled respondents within an interval of two weeks. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment statistical tool via SPSS and the reliability indexes of 0.79 and 0.81 were obtained showing the instruments were reliable. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The criterion mean was 2.5. This meant that the responses above criterion mean were accepted while the responses below the criterion mean were rejected. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman rank order at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

This section focuses on the empirical presentation of data, data analysis, summary of findings and discussion of findings.

Answer to research Questions.

Research Question One: How does class size influence the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers state?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation on how class size influences the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Students learn better when they are fewer in class than when they are very many.	3.15	.66	Related
2	Large classes are very noisy then smaller classes.	3.29	.79	Related
3	Students hear and understand lesson information better when the class size is normal in size than when it is abnormal.	3.28	.62	Related
4	Teachers have better class control in small class sizes than large class sizes.	3.23	.65	Related
5	Students have chances of playing in the classroom when the class size is very large than when the class size is small.	3.23	.76	Related
Grand mean		3.24	.70	Related

Criterion mean=2.5

Table 1 above showed the statistical analysis of respondents' answers to the research question one on item 1 with mean score of 3.15 and standard deviation of 0.66 which indicated strong relationship between class size and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The responses on item 2 showed strong relationship with mean score of 3.29 and standard deviation of 0.79. The mean score of 3.28 and standard deviation of 0.62 showed strong relationship for item 3. The respondents mean score of 3.23 and standard deviation of 0.65 on item 4 showed strong relationships. The mean score of 3.23 and standard deviation of 0.76 on item 5 showed strong relationships. This showed that the majority of the respondents agreed on their responses on research question one items that there is strong relationship between class size and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State with a cumulative average mean and standard deviation scores of 3.24 and 0.70. This is an indication that students' academic performance depends on class sizes in various secondary schools.

Research Question two: In what ways do the provisions of instructional materials enhance students' academic performance?

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation on the ways the provisions of instructional materials enhance students' academic performance

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
6	Instructional material are provided for teaching and learning in public secondary schools.	3.23	.75	Related
7	Pictures can effectively be used to teach students historical events and personalities.	3.33	.79	Related
8	Charts help in the presentation of the abstract ideas.	3.20	.85	Related
9	Maps help in understanding relationship between space and historical events.	2.95	1.01	Related
10	Slides are good attention catching device as it leads students to concentrate on the project image.	3.14.	.69	Related
Grand mean		3.17	.82	Related

Criterion mean=2.5

In the Table 2 above the respondents mean score and standard deviation of 3.23 and 0.75 on item 6 showed a strong relationship between the provisions of instructional material and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Responses on item 7 with mean score of 3.33 and standard deviation of 0.79 showed strong relationship. The respondents' answers on item 8 with mean score of 3.20 and standard deviation of 0.85 also showed strong relationship. The mean score of 2.95 and standard deviation of 0.1.01 on item 9 showed strong relationship. Item 10 indicated strong relationship between mean score of 3.14 and standard deviation of 0.69. All the items showed a cumulative mean score of 3.17 and standard deviation of 0.82. This showed that the majority of the respondents agree that there is a strong relationship between the provisions of instructional materials and students' academic performance in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This therefore implies that the provisions of instructional materials in schools are essential for students' academic performance.

Research Question three: What are the impacts of students' classroom discipline on their academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard deviation on the impacts of students' classroom indiscipline on their academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
11	Teachers are able to maintain class discipline by flogging the students anytime they go contrary to classroom rules and regulations.	1.81	.93	Not Related
12	Frequent use of punishment can counter productive lessons.	2.28	.88	Not Related
13	Asking students to kneel down with two hands raised up is a good way of instilling discipline in students when they go wrong.	2.98	.53	Related
14	Making students to kneel down under the sun when they disobey school rules helps in making them disciplined.	2.52	.77	Related
15	Suspension from school is the best method of instilling discipline on the offending students.	3.07	.94	Related
Grand mean		2.71	.81	Related

Criterion mean=2.5

Table 3 above shows the mean score and standard deviation for item 11 as 1.81 and 0.93 respectively which indicated strong relationship. The responses on item 12 showed mean score of 2.28 and standard deviation of 0.88 which also indicated strong relationship. The respondents' answers on item 13 showed mean score as 2.98 and standard deviation of 0.53 which as well indicated strong relationship. The responses on item 14 showed mean score of 2.52 and standard deviation of 0.77 which still indicated strong relationship. The respondents' responses for item 15 equally showed mean score of 3.07 and standard deviation of 0.94 which was a strong relationship. The statistical analysis of respondents' answers to the research question three items with the cumulative average mean and standard deviation scores of 2.71 and 0.81 showed that the majority of the respondents agreed that there is a strong relationship between students' classroom indiscipline and their academic performance in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This result indicates that proper handling of in- disciplinary behaviour of students by classroom teachers can enhance their academic performance.

Research Question Four: How does the use of appropriate curriculum influences students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4: Mean and Standard deviation on how the use of appropriate curriculum influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
16	Students should be exposed to learning experiences appropriate to their levels.	2.98	.70	Related
17	Teachers should follow strictly the recommended scheme of work while teaching their classes.	3.08	.61	Related
18	Lessons contents should be in line with the school curricula.	3.08	.73	Related
19	Teachers should be conversant with the subject matters of the topics they teach in their various subjects.	3.03	.91	Related
20	The adherence to the scheme of work by the teacher enables students to learn better	2.96	.66	Related
Grand mean		3.03	.72	Related

Criterion mean=2.5

Table 4 above shows the mean score and standard deviation for item 16 as 2.98 and 0.70 respectively which indicated strong relationship. The responses on item 17 showed mean score of 3.08 and standard deviation of 0.61 which also indicated strong relationship. The respondents' answers on item 18 showed mean score as 3.08 and standard deviation of 0.73 which as well indicated strong relationship. The responses on item 19 showed mean score of 3.03 and standard deviation of 0.91 which still indicated strong relationship. The respondents' responses for item 20 equally showed mean score of 2.96 and standard deviation of 0.66 which was a strong relationship. The statistical analysis of respondents' answers to the research question four items with the cumulative average mean and standard deviation scores of 3.03 and 0.72 showed that the majority of the respondents agreed that there is a strong relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students' academic performance in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This result indicates that exposing students to the right curriculum according to their level of education enhances their academic performance.

Research Question Five: What are the impacts of classroom environments on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 5: Mean and Standard deviation on the impacts of classroom environments on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
21	Learning environment should be conducive for students learning.	3.41	.72	Related
22	Noisy classroom do not aid students' learning.	2.97	.15	Related
23	Classrooms that lack chairs or desks do not aid students learning.	3.20	.61	Related
24	Well ventilated and lighted classrooms aid students' learning.	3.05	.56	Related
25	Well beautified classrooms make students to learn better.	2.70	.78	Related
Grand mean		3.07	.56	Related

Criterion mean=2.5

In the Table 5 above the respondents mean score and standard deviation of 3.41 and 0.72 on item 21 showed a strong relationship between the impacts of classroom environment and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Responses on item 22 with mean score of 2.97 and standard deviation of 0.15 showed strong relationship. The

respondents' answers on item 23 with mean score of 3.20 and standard deviation of 0.61 also showed strong relationship. The mean score of 3.05 and standard deviation of 0.56 on item 24 showed strong relationship. Item 25 indicated strong relationship between mean score of 2.70 and standard deviation of 0.78. All the items showed a cumulative mean score of 3.07 and standard deviation of 0.56. This showed that the majority of the respondents agree that there is a strong relationship between the impacts of classroom environment on students and their academic performance in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This therefore implies that favourable classroom environments aid students' academic performance.

Hypotheses testing using Spearman rank order Analysis at 0.05 significance of level.

The formulated hypotheses guided the data analysis for the study. Furthermore, the hypotheses were formulated in line with the purpose of the study and these hypotheses offered answers to the specific items in the questionnaire.

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between class size and students' academic performance of public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: Spearman rank order correlation coefficient for relationship between class size and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

		Correlations		
			Student academic performance	Class size
Spearman's rho	Student academic performance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.851**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	600	600
class size	class size	Correlation Coefficient	.851**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	600	600

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis one states that, 'There is no significant relationship between class size and students' academic performance of public secondary schools in Rivers State.' The result of analysis for hypothesis one stated above, showed that there is significant relationship between class size and students academic performance. The essence of this hypothesis is to test the relationship between class size and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This hypothesis was tested using spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient at p-value 0.05 level of significance on the responses on items 26-30 of the research questionnaire. The analysis of spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient reveal a positive and strong correlation coefficient of .851, with a significant p-value of .000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between class size and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result reveals that there is strong and positive significant relationship between class size and student academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on this the hypothesis was rejected, therefore upholding the alternative hypothesis , meaning that there is significant relationship between class size and students academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State(see table 6 above).

H0₂: The provision of instructional materials do not significantly relate to the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 7: Spearman rank order correlation coefficient for relationship between the provision of instructional materials and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Correlations			Students' academic performance	Use of instructional materials
Spearman's rho	Student academic performance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.258**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	600	600
	use of instructional materials	Correlation Coefficient	.258**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	600	600

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis two states that, ‘the provision of instructional materials do not significantly relate to the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State’. The result of analysis for hypothesis two stated above showed that there is significant relationship between the provision of instructional materials and students’ academic performance. The essence of this hypothesis is to test the relationship between the provision of instructional materials and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This hypothesis was tested using spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient at p-value 0.05 level of significance on the responses on items 31-35 of the research questionnaire. The analysis of spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient reveal a positive and strong correlation coefficient of .258, with a significant p-value of .000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the provision of instructional materials and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result reveals that there is strong and positive significant relationship between the provision of instructional materials and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on this the hypothesis was rejected, therefore upholding the alternative hypothesis , meaning that there is significant relationship between the provision of instructional materials and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State(see table 7 above).

H0₃: Class discipline do not significantly relate to students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: Spearman ranking order correlation coefficient for the relationship between class discipline and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Correlations			Student academic performance	Influence of class discipline
Spearman's rho	Student academic performance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.218**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000

	N	600	600
influence of classroom discipline	Correlation Coefficient	.218**	1.000
	N	600	600

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis three states that, ‘class discipline do not significantly relate to the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State’. The result of analysis for hypothesis three stated above showed that there is significant relationship between class discipline and students’ academic performance. The essence of this hypothesis is to test the relationship between class discipline and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This hypothesis was tested using spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient at p-value 0.05 level of significance on the responses on items 36-40 of the research questionnaire. The analysis of spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient reveal a positive and strong correlation coefficient of .218, with a significant p-value of .000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between class discipline and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result reveals that there is strong and positive significant relationship between class discipline and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on this the hypothesis was rejected, therefore upholding the alternative hypothesis , meaning that there is significant relationship between class discipline and students’ academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State(see table 8 above).

H0₄: There is no significant relationship between the use of appropriate curricular and students’ academic performance in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 9: Spearman rank order correlation coefficient for relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students’ academic performance in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

		Correlations		
			Student academic performance	Use of appropriate curriculum
Spearman's rho	Student academic performance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.215**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	600	600
	use of appropriate curriculum	Correlation Coefficient	-.215**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	600	600

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis four states that there is no significant relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students’ academic performance in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State’. The result of analysis for hypothesis four stated above showed that there is significant relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students’ academic performance. The

essence of this hypothesis was to test the relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This hypothesis was tested using spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient at p-value 0.05 level of significance on the responses on items 41-45 of the research questionnaire. The analysis of spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient reveals a positive and strong correlation coefficient of .215, with a significant p-value of.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result reveals that there is strong and positive significant relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on this the hypothesis was rejected, therefore upholding the alternative hypothesis , meaning that there is significant relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State(see table 9 above).

H0₅: Classroom environment do not have any significant relationship with the academic performance of students of public senior secondary school in Rivers State.

Table 10: Spearman rank order correlation coefficient for the relationship between classroom environment and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers state.

Correlations			Student academic performance	Influence of classroom environment
Spearman's rho	Student academic performance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.258**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	600	600
	Influence of classroom environment	Correlation Coefficient	.258**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	600	600

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis five states that, 'Classroom environment do not have any significant relationship with the academic performance of students of public senior secondary school in Rivers State'. Hypothesis four states that 'There is no significant relationship between classroom environment and students' academic performance in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State'. The result of analysis for hypothesis five stated above showed that there is significant relationship between classroom environment and students' academic performance. The essence of this hypothesis was to test the relationship between classroom environment and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This hypothesis was tested using spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient at p-value 0.05 level of significance on the responses on items 46-50 of the research questionnaire. The analysis of spearman (rho) rank order correlation coefficient reveals a positive and strong correlation coefficient of .258, with a significant p-value of.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between classroom environment and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result reveals that there is strong and positive significant relationship between classroom environment and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools

in Rivers State. Based on this the hypothesis was rejected, therefore upholding the alternative hypothesis, meaning that there is significant relationship between classroom environment and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State(see table 10 above).

Summary of the findings

- Class size influences the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- The provision of instructional materials enhances students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Classroom discipline has impact on students' academic performance in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- The use of appropriate curriculum influences students' academic performance in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Classroom environments have impacts on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is a significant relationship between class size and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is a significant relationship between the provision of instructional materials and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is a significant relationship between class discipline and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is a significant relationship between the use of appropriate curriculum and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is a significant relationship between classroom environment and students' academic performance in Public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

The study examined classroom management and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study tried to investigate the relationship between classroom management variables like; class size, provision of instructional materials, class discipline, use of appropriate curriculum and classroom environment and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Class Size and Students Academic Performance

The result on class size disclosed that there is significant relationship between the size of the class and the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This implies that the numbers of students grouped together as a class have influence on their performance academically. In other words, the fewer the class size, the better their academic performances. This was why FRN (2014:13) stated that "for effective teaching and learning at the Junior Secondary Education level, the teacher-student ratio shall be 1:35 while the teacher-student ratio for the post basic education level as stated in the National Policy on Education is 1:40." Also, FME (2002) cited in Nwankwoala (2018) also recommended that a classroom internal space of 144 square meters. Within this space, each primary school pupil

should have a desk space of 0.6m x 0.37m sitting space but not less than 0.23m per pupil. The space recommended for each secondary school student by the Federal Ministry of Education is 0.6m x 0.45m internal space and floor. Students can learn comfortably in such recommended classroom spaces. Anything contrary to this might result to congestions and overcrowded classrooms and consequently poor academic performance of students.

The Provision of Instructional Materials and Students' Academic Performance

The result on the variable on the provision of instructional materials indicated significant relationship between it and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. It was in line with this that Agina-Obu (2005) observed that instructional materials variously called teaching aids or audio-visual aids are not teachers' aids, rather they are learners' aids. They are aids to learning rather than teaching. As such, instructional materials should be learner-centred not teacher centred. In other words instructional materials when properly provided aids students' academic performance in schools. Supporting this view, Atanda and Lameed (2006) stated that instructional materials consist of objects either audio or visual which makes the lesson to be lively for the pupils and give the concrete examples as well as enhancing their understanding. Still emphasizing the value of instructional resources/materials on learning, Esu and Ntukiem (2003) also stated that the use of instructional resources/materials allow pupils to have relatively uniform attention and opportunities to practice skills. They also claimed that instructional materials making teaching experiences flexible and rich enough to meet individual pupils learning styles. Pupils are able to use a combination of senses (smell, hearing, touch, taste and sight) for easier and better acquisition of concepts they are being taught.

Class Discipline and Students' Academic Performance

The result on class discipline revealed that there is a significant relationship between it and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This implies that maintaining class discipline by the teacher and learners contribute to improved students' academic performance. In the view of Olagboye (2004), school or class discipline implies the readiness or ability of students (and teachers) to respect authority, observe and obey school rules and regulations, and to maintain a high standard of behaviour necessary for the smooth running of the teaching-learning process. This also means that the obedience to set rules and regulation can help students to understand their lessons well and as such perform better academically. Still in agreement to this Nwankwoala (2018) asserted that when a school lacks discipline, many facets of it will adversely be affected. No meaningful teaching and learning activity can take place in the classroom when students exhibit a degree of indiscipline. Suggesting on how best to curb students' indiscipline in the classroom, Ogunu (2000) stated that a teacher has to analyze the situation in his classroom and try to find out the causes of his pupils indiscipline since most of the children are from different backgrounds and are subjected to learn in the same condition. So being able to know the causes of the discipline problems would help a teacher to manage them efficiently as to enable them have good condition and favourable atmosphere for learning and consequently perform well academically.

Use of Appropriate Curriculum and Students' Academic Performance

The result on the use of appropriate curricular disclosed a positive relationship between it and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. There is an obvious influence of the use of relevant and appropriate subject content on students' academic performance. When the right curriculum content is used for the appropriate level of students, they understand the lesson content better and thus perform better than when contrary is the case. It was in line with this view that Mezieobi (2002) asserted that the curriculum content of every lesson given to the child should be relevant to the child's environment, culture and values as to make the learner have practical understanding of the learning experience. It is only when this is done that the students can perform well academically. This is different from the unfavourable curriculum content of the western education which rigidly compartmentalized knowledge. In fact Mezieobi (2002) also stated that no matter how relevant the western curriculum was, it was only perceived as meeting imperial interest. It was largely culturally irrelevant in the context of Nigeria as it educated the child away from his society and his environment. In addition to this view Nwankwoala, (2018) opined that a closer look at the concept of curriculum as planned learning experiences also exposes the fact that learners or students while in school are not restricted to learning only the planned learning experiences or curriculum content. They also learn from the various things they see, hear, or feel. All these aid their academic performance.

Classroom Environment and Students' Academic Performance

The result of the analysis of the influence of classroom environment on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State showed a positive relationship. Classroom environment in the words of Nwankwoala (2018) is a place where teachers conduct their works. As such classrooms should always be in appealing condition as to enhance students' learning. Supporting this view, Agabi, Onyeike and Wali (2013) described a classroom environment as that which complements the teachers' efforts during teaching and learning activities. Supporting the fact that proper management of classroom environment aids students' learning Nwadike and Godwins (2017) opined that improper management of the classroom by the class manager (teacher) leads to decline in learning or students lack of interest in any activities in the class of which classroom is a clinic where problems are diagnosed and solutions given to the already identified problems.

CONCLUSION

The nature of classroom is such that so many factors interfere with teaching-learning process. This demands proper management by the teacher, school heads as well as students' participation. This paper so far discussed certain intervening variables such as class size, use of instructional materials, appropriate use of curricular, class discipline and classroom environment and so on as the ones that influence students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers state. The extent a classroom teacher has effective control and management of these classroom management variables determines how classroom objectives and goals are achieved. This paper therefore concludes that since these classroom management factors have great influence on students' learning and academic performance, they should be carefully and meticulously managed as to ensure that instructional objectives are timely achieved.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this investigation on the classroom management and students' academic performance, the following recommendations are hereby made.

- Class sizes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State should be in accordance with the prescribed or stipulated number by the Federal Ministry of Education as well as the National Policy on Education of 2014 edition.
- Teachers should endeavour to teach their lessons with relevant teaching materials as to ensure better understanding of the lesson topics and improved students' performance.
- There should be the use of appropriate curricular content that are relevant to students' learning environment, culture and societal values for better understanding of their lessons and improved academic performance.
- Teachers and school administrators should endeavour to maintain classroom and school discipline by making students to obey school rules and regulations. The essence is to ensure that they maintain safe and secured environment for pedagogical activities.
- Learning environments, especially classrooms should be made attractive and conducive for learning. Teachers and school heads can do this by providing all the needed learning facilities and equipment within schools compounds.
- School administrators must ensure that classrooms, class activities and teachers are properly and timely supervised, directed and coordinated in other to achieve set educational goals.
- School administrators are also to liaise with schools Board and state Ministry of Education to ensure that needed school plants are provided and maintained from time to time. The reason being that students learn better and perform better in well-structured and organized school premises.
- Finally, classroom management should be given priority attention by both teachers and principals to ensure that students perform well academically, morally and in all aspects of schools programmes.

Further Research Suggestions

This study tried to investigate the relationship between classroom management and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. It has so far revealed that students' academic performance have strong and significant relationships with certain variables like class size, class discipline, school environment , use of appropriate curricular and as such there is need for proper management of these variables by teachers and school administrators. Since this study was carried out in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, further studies of this nature can be conducted at junior secondary schools levels within the state. It can as well be carried out in public senior and junior secondary schools levels of other states of Nigeria. There is also the possibility of investigating the relationship between students' academic performance and other elements of classroom management like classroom climate, teacher job performance and other related classroom factors.

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