

Enhancing instructional outcomes through the application of effective classroom management strategies in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated the enhancement of instructional outcomes through the application of effective classroom management strategies in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study was guided by four research objectives, four research questions, and four corresponding null hypotheses which were tested at a significance level of .05. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was the 5,833 teachers of the 333 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This comprised of 2,844 male and 2,989 female teachers based on data sourced from the Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board in 2024. The sample size of the study was 200 teachers comprising 100 males and 100 females, and selected using stratified random sampling of the study population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher and titled “Enhancing Effective Classroom Management Strategies for Improved Instructional Outcomes Questionnaire (EECMSIIIOQ). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.81 which was determined using test-retest method of data collected through a pilot study on the population, and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. The research questions were descriptively answered using mean and standard deviation statistics while the hypotheses were inferentially tested using independent samples t-test at a significance level of .05. The findings of the study revealed several classroom management strategies deemed effective by teachers for improved instructional outcomes, some of which included disciplinary measures, delegation of responsibilities, and positive reinforcement. The study also revealed that teachers utilized these strategies to a high extent in public senior secondary schools. Moreover, the male and female teachers differed in their extent of utilization of some of the strategies. The study thus suggested among others that the Ministry of Education in collaboration with principals of public senior secondary schools should periodically organize teacher training and professional development programs for teachers in the area of classroom management for continuous improvement in instructional outcomes of secondary schools in the state.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Instructional Outcomes, Senior, Secondary Schools, Classroom Discipline, Delegation of Responsibilities, Positive Reinforcement, Student Engagement, Teacher Training.

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INTRODUCTION

The classroom is arguably the most important facility of the school system. It is the factory in which the education production process takes place. It is in the classroom that the character of the learner is formed and fabricated. It is in the classroom that the real transformation or change in the learner occurs. Every form of knowledge gathered by learners from outside the walls of the classroom, both from within the school and from outside the school can be altered, reshaped,

disbanded, reinforced or affirmed in the classroom. The place, role, and significance of the classroom in the education process can simply not be overstated. As such, it is imperative that priority be given to the management of this critical educational resource, the classroom.

The classroom is the production room or rather the workshop of the school system where the most important service of the school (teaching and learning) is delivered for the production of the schools' most important product (graduates found worthy in character and learning). However, there are several factors within the classroom that try to defeat this purpose (instruction) and they can only be put in check through classroom management practices adopted by the teacher. Nwankwoala (2016) defined classroom management as an effective and efficient organization and utilization of the educational resources (human and non-human) available to the teacher for the purpose(s) of achieving the set goal(s) of the class (productive teaching and learning/instructional outcomes).

Several researchers have highlighted classroom management as a major variable that affects students' academic performance (Marzano, 2018). The most obvious reason for this assertion is that, effective classroom management sets the stage for teaching and learning. It sets a tone in the classroom that captures students' attention as a necessity for effective teaching and learning (Nwankwoala, 2021). This statement is obvious since a classroom which is chaotic and disorganized as a result of poor classroom management is highly unlikely to enhance expansive learning and students' academic performance and might, indeed, inhibit it.

The need for classroom management is informed by several reasons. Students come into the classroom with varieties of challenges that undermine the effectiveness of instruction. Different characters and personalities converge in the class; childish behaviours and intrinsic restlessness and lack of self-discipline are usual of children. All of these and more pose as distractions to instruction. Teachers' efficiency is therefore measured by their ability to adopt the right model for managing the classroom.

There are several classroom management practices that have been advanced both in literature and in practice over the years. Some of these include positive and negative reinforcement, discipline, record-keeping, timetabling, delegation of authority to students, etc. Investigating the efficacy of these practices for improved instructional outcome within the context of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State therefore becomes the crux of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Experiences and complaints from teachers in public primary schools reveal that a lot of teachers are seriously struggling with being able to effectively manage their classrooms. Various dimensions of students' deviant behaviours, excessive workloads, overcrowding, etc. with their attendant effects have largely undermined teachers' efforts towards achieving instructional success. Students' outcomes end up not reflecting the amount of efforts put in by teachers in most cases. Studies have indicated the existence of relationship between teachers' classroom management strategies and students' behaviours at different levels of education (Gacheri, 2017; Nwankwoala, 2021). Moreover, majority of the classroom management strategies adopted by teachers are only able to ensure that the classroom is coordinated and quiet during teaching sections, but have not really translated into improved teaching and learning outcomes. Teachers end up having their way in controlling the class but the expected results in students' learning outcome is rarely seen. It is against this background that this paper examined how the use of

classroom management strategies such as classroom discipline, use of reward, delegation of authority, and effective teaching can enhance the instructional outcomes of public primary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate effective classroom management strategies for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives included to:

- Ascertain the extent various classroom management strategies are deemed effective for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Determine the extent teachers utilize disciplinary strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Investigate the extent teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Examine the extent teachers utilize positive reinforcement (reward) strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent are various classroom management strategies deemed effective for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- To what extent do teachers utilize disciplinary strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- To what extent do teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- To what extent do teachers utilize positive reinforcement (reward) strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 5% significance level to guide the study:

- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent various classroom management strategies are deemed effective for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize disciplinary strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize positive reinforcement (reward) strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Classroom management

Classroom management refers to the orderly and professional arrangement and coordination of classroom activities in order to provide an environment conducive for teaching and learning (Owan cited in Nwankwoala, 2021). Ahmad et al. cited in Nwankwoala (2021) opined that classroom management procedures assume an indispensable part in upgrading learners' learning. Again, Nwankwoala (2018) defined classroom management as all the effects the classroom teacher puts using the available human and material resources in the classroom to achieve set educational objectives and goals.

In the view of Omenka and Otor (2015), classroom management is the orderly control of the students, the class environment and teaching materials in order to obtain the desired learning objectives which can enhance the academic achievement of students. Mgbodile cited in Omenka and Otor (2015) saw classroom management and administration as the process of creating favourable conditions to facilitate instructions as well as that of regulating social behavior of students. He viewed classroom management and organization as a function of proper knowledge, dedication, skill and training for which they are called. The behaviour and the reaction of students are much related to the degree of teachers' proper management of the classroom. For Akpakwu (2023), classroom management is the orderly control of the learners, teaching materials and teaching aids in order to obtain the desired learning objectives. Classroom management considering the above mentioned views, could be conceptualized as the planning, management and execution of the school programmes as it affect 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.

Classroom management is a significant part of effective teaching and learning process. Due to an effective classroom management, pupils flourish in a positive class climate and a compassionate environment. From a pupils' perspective, effective classroom management provides them the opportunities to socialize themselves while learning. From a teacher's perspective, effective classroom management involves precautionary discipline and fruitful teaching. Furthermore, classroom management is the process of organizing and conducting the business of the classroom, many perceive it as the preservation of order through teacher control. Classroom management is much more than that; it also involves the establishment and maintenance of the classroom environment so that educational goals can be accomplished (Savage & Savage, 2020).

Instructional Outcome

Instructional outcomes refer to the performance of both teachers and students in the teaching-learning process that takes place in the classroom. It is about the achievements of the teachers and the students. Teachers have instructional goals to achieve both on short term and on long term basis. The short term goals may be related to the instructional plan contained in the lesson plan. They could be students' assessment goals or anything at all. They are often achievable within a short time and they contribute to the success of teachers' long term goals which often take longer time to achieve, such as covering the scheme of work for the term. The achievement of these goals is dependent on many factors, one of which is what happens in the classroom. A well-managed classroom will lead to effective achievement of the short-term goals of teachers. When the classroom continually supports the attainment of the teacher's short term goals, it sums up to the timely attainment of long-term goals, too.

On the part of the students, learning outcome is often measured by students' performance in formative and summative tests. The summative tests in particular give the perfect picture. They are the assessment of learning, which assesses how well students have been able to master the lessons and learning experiences that have gone on in the classroom. A well-managed classroom will always support students' learning outcomes.

How Effective Classroom Management Improves Instructional Outcomes

Effective classroom management is crucial for improving instructional outcomes. Several studies have been carried out in this regard at all levels of education in Nigeria and in other countries. Gacheri (2017) examined the influence of classroom management practices on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Tharakanithi County, Kenya and found that classroom discipline management practices had an impact on learners' achievement, and teaching methodologies however, were not effective and therefore leading to little impact on the learners' achievement. The study further found that Instructional supervision done by principals had a positive impact towards learners' achievement as this made sure teachers were able to complete the class syllabus. In the same vein, Bayefa-Asaowei (2024) found that the adoption of innovative classroom management practices by teachers brought about improvement in students' learning outcomes. The obvious ways found in literature in which classroom management strategies improve instructional outcomes include:

- **Increased Student Engagement:** A well-managed classroom fosters a positive learning environment, encouraging students to engage actively with the instructional material.
- **Improved Academic Achievement:** Effective classroom management helps to minimize distractions, allowing students to focus on their academic work and achieve better grades.
- **Enhanced Teacher-Student Relationships:** A positive classroom environment promotes strong teacher-student relationships, which are essential for effective instruction and student success.
- **Reduced Disruptions:** Effective classroom management strategies help to minimize disruptions, creating a more stable and productive learning environment.
- **Increased Time on Task:** By minimizing distractions and disruptions, effective classroom management enables students to spend more time on task, leading to improved instructional outcomes.

- **Better Use of Resources:** Effective classroom management helps to optimize the use of resources, including time, materials, and technology.
- **Improved Student Behavior:** A well-managed classroom promotes positive student behavior, reducing the likelihood of misbehavior and improving overall instructional outcomes.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Effective classroom management fosters a collaborative learning environment, encouraging students to work together and support one another.
- **Increased Parental Involvement:** A positive classroom environment can encourage parents to become more involved in their child's education, leading to improved instructional outcomes.
- **Improved Teacher Morale:** Effective classroom management can reduce teacher stress and improve morale, leading to a more positive and productive teaching environment.

Classroom Management Strategies for Improved Instructional outcomes

Several studies have identified commonly utilized classroom management strategies in primary and secondary schools. Gacheri (2017) found that the use of disciplinary measures and instructional supervision were effective to some extent at ensuring that the instructional delivery environment and process met expectations in Kenya. Omenka and Otor (2015) identified classroom discipline and motivation as management strategies that influenced students' academic achievement in Science and Mathematics in Benue State, Nigeria. Bayefa-Asaowei (2024) identified some modern classroom management practices such as student-centred instructional approach, active learning classroom management approach, collaborative instructional delivery techniques, and contemporary positive reinforcement practices to be very effective for 21st century education delivery in secondary schools in Nigeria. This present paper examined classroom management strategies such as use of disciplinary strategies, delegation of responsibilities, use of rewards, and effective teaching as classroom management strategies with a view to understanding how they improve instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Use of Classroom Disciplinary Strategies for Improved Instructional Outcomes

Discipline refers to the use of “strong hand” to make students do what they ought to do, when they ought to do it and how they ought to do it. The strong hand could mean outright punishment, verbal coercion, or stringent measures applied to enforce compliance with acceptable behaviours in the classroom. According to Webster's New encyclopedic dictionary, discipline connotes training that corrects, molds or perfects the mental faculties or moral character. It is a control gained by enforcing obedience or order. Galabawa cited in Nwankwoala (2021) viewed it as an activity of subjecting someone to a code of behaviour. This is an important classroom management practice as there is wide spread agreement that an orderly atmosphere is necessary in schools for effective teaching and learning to take place, and this can be achieved through the use of disciplinary measures by the teacher.

The use of disciplinary measures by teachers in the management of classroom helps to prevent students' behaviours which interfere with the teaching and learning process. Some of these misbehaviours were identified to include bullying, lateness, vandalism, alcohol consumption and substance abuse, truancy and inability or unwillingness to do class work at

home (Nwankwoala, 2021). In the view of Gacheri (2017), disciplinary measures popularly adopted by teachers against erring students in the class includes flogging, kneeling down, washing of toilets, clearing of refuse, manual labour, working in the school farm, clearing the school fields, suspension from school, among others. Bayefa-Asaowei (2024) argued that the right kind of discipline for pupils is the type that helps them improve in their behaviour, and as such, discipline should not be done with the aim of inflicting pains, injuries or losses on the learner.

Studies on effective disciplinary measures for classroom management have identified various ways in which discipline improves instructional outcomes in classrooms (Nwankwoala, 2021; Ochai & Ivagher, 2021). Some of these ways include:

- Establishing a positive learning environment: A well-disciplined classroom fosters a positive and respectful learning environment, which is essential for effective instruction.
- Minimizing distractions: Discipline helps to minimize distractions, allowing students to focus on their academic work and reducing disruptions.
- Promoting student engagement: A disciplined classroom encourages students to engage actively with the instructional material, leading to improved academic achievement.
- Encouraging respect for authority: Discipline helps students develop respect for authority figures, including teachers, which is essential for effective instruction.
- Supporting time management: Discipline helps students develop time management skills, which are critical for completing assignments and meeting deadlines.
- Fostering a sense of responsibility: Discipline encourages students to take responsibility for their actions and their learning, leading to improved academic achievement.
- Reducing misbehaviour: Discipline helps to reduce misbehavior, creating a more stable and productive learning environment.
- Improving teacher-student relationships: A disciplined classroom promotes positive teacher-student relationships, which are essential for effective instruction and student success.
- Enhancing collaboration: Discipline fosters a collaborative learning environment, encouraging students to work together and support one another.
- Supporting academic achievement: Discipline is positively correlated with academic achievement, as it helps students develop the skills and habits necessary for success.

Enforcing discipline in the classroom is a veritable way of improving instructional outcomes as it establishes a positive and respectful learning environment that is supportive of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Viewing from the angle of accountability, Cotton cited in Nwankwoala (2021) opined that punishment in the school system are expected to teach students accountability for their mistakes, that is, to teach them the relationship between their behaviours and the outcome. One good reason why this is needed is that when a student is disciplined for an action, he most likely desists from repeating that action knowing that it will attract similar punishment and other students desist from doing the same thing for fear of facing such disciplinary measures. A well-disciplined classroom implies more quietness, more coordination and less interference to teaching and learning. This leads to improved instructional outcomes.

Use of Delegation of Responsibilities in Managing Classrooms for Improved Instructional Outcomes

Delegation involves entrusting work, responsibility and authority by a leader or a head of a team to a subordinate in the bid to hold them accountable for the outcome of the performance. This implies assigning a level of decision making autonomy and encouraging performance of a given task to achieve a desirable outcome. Delegation is also an important function in every organization and in the educational setting. Delegation enables management to make the best use of their time and skills as well as ensuring that staff and subordinates are assisted in their growth and development whilst building trust and confidence as well as increasing the amount of expected work to be completed cited in Nwankwoala (2021).

Risgaard et al. cited in Nwankwoala (2021) explained that effective delegation of authority provides several benefits to the educational setting as managers are able to mobilize resources, share responsibilities and also focuses on doing a few tasks well, rather than many things less effectively resulting in increased management and leadership potential. Delegation of responsibilities in the classroom to class prefect, subject representatives or even to normal students in the class is a veritable classroom management mechanism. It saves time for the teacher who is able to focus on some more important aspects of the teaching-learning process.

On how delegation of responsibilities as classroom management strategy of teachers improves instructional outcomes, Abiona (2022), Amos et al. (2022), and Seth and Ntirandekura (2022) highlighted some very important points. These include:

- Increased student autonomy: Delegation of responsibilities encourages students to take ownership of their learning, promoting autonomy and self-directed learning.
- Developing of leadership skills: By delegating responsibilities, teachers can help students develop leadership skills, such as decision-making, problem-solving, and communication.
- Fostering collaboration: Delegation of responsibilities promotes collaboration among students, encouraging them to work together to achieve common goals.
- Enhancing time management: Delegation of responsibilities helps students develop time management skills, as they learn to prioritize tasks and manage their workload.
- Promoting accountability: By delegating responsibilities, teachers can hold students accountable for their actions and their learning, promoting a sense of responsibility and ownership.
- Supporting differentiated instruction: Delegation of responsibilities allows teachers to differentiate instruction, providing students with tasks that are tailored to their needs and abilities.
- Encouraging active learning: Delegation of responsibilities promotes active learning, as students are engaged in hands-on activities and projects that require critical thinking and problem-solving.
- Developing problem-solving skills: By delegating responsibilities, teachers can help students develop problem-solving skills, as they learn to navigate challenges and obstacles.
- Fostering creativity: Delegation of responsibilities encourages students to think creatively and develop innovative solutions to problems.
- Supporting teacher productivity: By delegating responsibilities, teachers can free up time to focus on high-priority tasks, such as lesson planning and assessment.

Use of Positive Reinforcement in Managing Classrooms for Improved Instructional Outcomes

Nothing motivates as much as rewards and positive feedbacks on our actions. As a matter of fact, we do virtually everything we do because of what we get from doing them. This means where there is no hope of getting a positive outcome, whether tangible or intangible, we may most likely not be motivated to carry out actions in such directions. The positive reinforcement system works most assuredly for children and adolescents. The promise of a reward or the giving of rewards has very positive impact in eliciting desired behaviours in students. Although it is good to encourage students to become intrinsically motivated, it is also worth noting that extrinsic motivators are important, too. It will save your sanity to accept that external rewards such as money, grades, prizes, and praise will drive most of the behaviour of students in the classroom.

Rewards are a positive way to encourage students to be motivated in learning. Teachers can give rewards to students as a form of appreciation for their composure and their participation in learning, which can encourage students' motivation to stay controlled and participate more actively in the learning process (Sudirman et al., 2023). Thus it can be concluded that rewards aim to provide positive encouragement to people who perform expected actions so they are more likely to repeat them.

Bayefa-Asaowei (2024) succinctly captured the idea of using positive reinforcement for classroom management. In his view, positive reinforcement is a technique to elicit and to strengthen new behaviours by adding rewards and incentives instead of eliminating benefits. It is a traditional classroom management strategy that can be innovatively and creatively repackaged in the light of 21st century student realities in the classroom. When done appropriately in ways that appeal to students' fancies and fantasies, it can have a significant impact on student behaviour, motivation, and academic performance.

Some innovative and potential effective ways to implement positive reinforcement in schools can include:

- Recognition programs: Recognize students' achievements and good behaviour through awards, certificates, or public acknowledgement; Student of the Month/Year awards;
- Honour rolls and academic achievement recognition;
- Positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS);
- Teacher feedback and encouragement;
- Peer recognition and feedback;
- Incentive programs: Offer rewards or privileges for good behaviour, academic achievement, or community service;
- School-wide recognition events;
- Personalized praise and acknowledgement;
- Student-led recognition programs

When positive reinforcement practices are effectively implemented in the classroom, literature identifies some benefits that could accrue to the instructional delivery process in the class. Some of these include: (a) improved student behaviour and discipline; (b) increased motivation and engagement; (c) enhanced self-esteem and confidence; (d) better academic performance; (e) positive school culture and climate; (f) improved teacher-student relationships; (g) increased

student participation and engagement; (h) reduced bullying and conflicts; (i) improved attendance and punctuality; and (j) preparing students for future success (Lynnette et al., 2021; Tahir et al., 2019).

Lynnette et al. (2021) remarked that it is important for teachers to bear in mind that positive reinforcement must possess some crucial attributes, which include genuineness, specificity, immediate application to the deserving action or performance, consistency, meaningfulness, and appropriateness. By implementing positive reinforcement strategies, teachers can create supportive and encouraging classroom environments that promote quality instructional delivery hallmarked by students' success and well-being.

Barriers to Effective Classroom Management in Public Senior secondary Schools in Rivers State

Some potential barriers to effective classroom management in secondary schools in Nigeria:

- **Inadequate Teacher Training:** Many teachers lack adequate training on effective classroom management strategies, leading to difficulties in managing student behavior.
- **Large Class Sizes:** Overcrowded classrooms can make it challenging for teachers to manage student behavior and provide individualized attention.
- **Limited Resources:** Public secondary schools often face resource constraints, including limited access to textbooks, technology, and other educational materials.
- **Poor Infrastructure:** Many public secondary schools have inadequate infrastructure, including dilapidated buildings, inadequate lighting, and insufficient seating.
- **Cultural and Socio-Economic Factors:** Students in public secondary schools may come from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, which can impact their behavior and learning styles.
- **Teacher Burnout:** Public secondary school teachers may experience burnout due to heavy workloads, limited resources, and inadequate support, and this can affect their classroom management practices.
- **Cultural Attitudes towards Discipline:** Cultural attitudes towards discipline can impact how teachers manage student behavior.
- **Limited Access to Technology:** Limited access to technology can make it challenging for teachers to use technology-based classroom management strategies.

Addressing these challenges may help boost teachers' classroom management for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Nwankwoala (2021) carried out a study that focused on classroom management and academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Rivers state. The Study adopted correlation research design. The population of the study was 8,432 teachers in public primary schools in Rivers State. The sample size was 1,554 respondents drawn by stratified simple random sampling techniques. This was about 18.5% of the population. A self-structured instrument titled Classroom Management Questionnaires (CMQ) and Pupils Academic Performance Questionnaire (PAPQ) were used for the data collection. The reliability of the instruments were

determined by the use of pilot study conducted on 30 teachers outside the sample of the study and the data collected were analyzed by the use of Pearson Product Moment correlation (PPMC) which yielded 0.77 and 0.79 reliability indexes. The data collected were analyzed by using mean and standard deviation to answer the research Questions while Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was employed in testing the null-hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The study revealed that: classroom discipline influences pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Rivers State; effective teaching enhances pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Rivers State; teacher reward influences pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Rivers State; and delegation of duties influences pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Rivers State. The study relates with the present study in focus but differs from it in design, in population, and in method of data analysis.

Gacheri (2017) carried out a study that sought to assess the influence of the classroom management practices on the learners' academic achievements in public secondary schools in Meru South Sub-County, Kenya. The descriptive survey design was used to carry out this study. The target population for the study was 55 principals, 102 teachers and 3150 students. Out of these 355 subjects were sampled using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling methods. To ensure the validity of the instruments, both face and content validity was used. A reliability of 0.67 and 0.69 was obtained with the teachers and students' questionnaires. Data was collected by use of structured questionnaires and interview schedule. Data was grouped, coded, cleaned and analyzed using SPSS version 21. Both content and descriptive analysis was used. Content analysis was used to analyze the interview responses while descriptive analysis was used to analyze the students' and teachers' questionnaires. The study established that classroom discipline management practices had an impact on learners' achievement; teaching methodologies however, were not effective and therefore leading to little impact on the learners' achievement. Instructional supervision done by principals had a positive impact towards learners' achievement as this made sure teachers were able to complete the class syllabus. Supportive feedback through encouragement of learners by teachers played a crucial role towards ensuring that learners were motivated hence improving learners' achievement. The study relates with the present study in focus but differs from it in scope, population and partly in method of data analysis.

George et al. (2017) carried out a study to investigate effective classroom management and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area. Four research questions and four null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The survey design was adopted for the study. The population of 2044 Senior Secondary School One (SS1) students with a sample of 200 students selected from 5 public secondary schools in 4 clans within the study area. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to elicit data from respondents. The research instrument had a 4-point rating scale and 25 items based on the study variables. The Pearson Product Moment (PPM) Correlation Coefficient of 0.94 ascertained the reliability of instrument for use in the study. After the administration, scoring and collation of the instrument, the data obtained were subjected to the chi-square (X^2) analysis. All the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the result of this study, it was concluded that SS1 students in the public Secondary Schools in Uyo Local Government Area differ significantly in terms of academic performance based on verbal instruction, corporal punishment, instructional supervision, delegation of authority to learners. This study relates with the present study in focus and design but differs from it in population and method of data analysis.

Omenka and Ottor (2015) similarly carried out a study that investigated the influence of classroom management on students' academic achievement in Science and Mathematics in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State. Two Research Questions and Two Null Hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey Design was adopted for the study. A structured four point scale questionnaire titled influence of classroom management on students' academic achievement in Science and Mathematics was constructed by the Researchers and used to collect data for the study. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the Research Questions while chisquare (χ^2) was used to test the Null Hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that classroom discipline and motivation significantly influence students' academic achievement in science and mathematics. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teachers should always maintain discipline in their classroom; Teachers should endeavour to introduce innovative ideas to motivate learning so that students' behavior and academic achievement can be positively influenced. This study relates to the present study in design and method of data analysis but differs from it in focus and in population and study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This design sought to identify and describe the classroom management strategies of teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State with a view of accessing the extent they were utilized for improved instructional outcomes. The population of the study was the 5,833 teachers of the 333 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This comprised of 2,844 male and 2,989 female teachers based on data sourced from the Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board in 2024. The sample size of the study was 200 teachers comprising 100 males and 100 females, and selected through stratified random sampling of the study population. The three senatorial districts of Rivers State (Rivers East, Rivers West, and Rivers South-East) were taken as the strata for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher and titled "Enhancing Effective Classroom Management Strategies for Improved Instructional Outcomes Questionnaire (EECMSIIQO). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.81 which was determined using test-retest method of data collected through a pilot study on the population, and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation statistics while the hypotheses were inferentially tested using independent samples t-test at a significance level of .05.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Information

Table 1: Instrument distribution and retrieval and respondents' demographic information

Instrument Distribution and Retrieval			
Respondents	Size sampled	Size utilized	Return rate
Male teachers	100	100	
Female Teachers	100	100	
Total	200	200	100%
Respondents' Years of Experience			
Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cum. Percentage (%)

6-10 years	24	12	12
11-15 years	126	63	75
16-20 years	33	17	92
Above 20 years	17	8	100
Total	200	100	

Table 1 shows information on the distribution and retrieval of the instrument and on the respondents' demographic statistics. As revealed in the table, out of 200 respondents that were sampled (100 male teachers and 100 female teachers), all the questionnaires were duly retrieved and found fit for the data analysis. This represented 100% return rate.

Concerning the years of working experience of the respondents, it was revealed that 24(12%) of them had worked for 6-10 years in public senior secondary schools, 126(63%) of them had worked for 11-16 years, 33(17%) of them had worked for 16-20 years, and 17(8%) of them had worked for more than 20 years in public senior secondary schools. This means majority of the respondents had been in the school system for a considerable period of time (at least 10 years) and as such would be very conversant with the subject matter of the study. By implication, they were very fit to give responses that could be regarded as highly reliable for the study.

Answers to the Research Questions

Research Question 1: To what extent are various classroom management strategies deemed effective for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent various classroom management strategies were deemed effective by teachers for improved instructional outcomes

s/n	Items	Male teachers (N = 100)		Female teachers (N = 100)		Mean set (N = 200)		Dec
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	$\frac{\bar{X}_1 + \bar{X}_2}{2}$	SD	
1	Use of discipline	3.58	.498	3.57	.506	3.57	.503	HE
2	Delegation of responsibilities	3.52	.505	3.57	.504	3.56	.504	HE
3	Positive reinforcement	2.79	.743	2.72	.822	2.73	.808	HE
4	Effective teaching strategies	2.94	.727	2.74	.826	2.77	.812	HE
5	Supervision of instruction	3.69	.468	3.64	.489	3.65	.485	HE
6	Use of ICT in the classroom	3.79	.410	3.70	.480	3.71	.469	HE
7	Use of rules and regulations	3.77	.425	3.75	.443	3.76	.439	HE
8	Active learning strategies	3.79	.410	3.74	.440	3.75	.435	HE
9	Encouraging student participation	3.69	.552	3.64	.557	3.65	.555	HE
10	Cordial teacher-student relationships	3.69	.468	3.69	.481	3.69	.478	HE
	Grand Mean	3.53	.520	3.51	.715	3.52	.569	HE

Legends:

\bar{X}_1 and SD₁ = Mean score and Standard Deviation respectively of Male teachers;

\bar{X}_2 and SD₂ = Mean score and Standard Deviation respectively of teachers;

SD = Average standard deviation of Male and female teachers

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent various classroom management strategies are deemed effective for improved instructional delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Ten items (Item 1 to item 10) were examined in this regard

against a criterion mean score of 2.50. As shown in the table, all the items had mean sets higher than the criterion mean; implying that majority of the respondent deemed all the items on the table highly effective at improving instructional outcomes when adopted as classroom management strategies.

Research Question 2: To what extent do teachers utilize disciplinary strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize disciplinary strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes

s/n	Items	Male teachers (N = 100)		Female teachers (N = 100)		Mean set (N = 200)		Dec
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	$\frac{\bar{X}_1 + \bar{X}_2}{2}$	SD	
11	Teachers use physical punishment such as flogging and this helps in controlling the class for improved teaching and learning.	3.53	.571	3.56	.539	3.54	.541	HE
12	Teachers administer extra assignments to students who misbehave and this improves instructional outcomes.	2.40	.563	2.54	.552	2.47	.554	LE
13	Teachers seek to meet with deviant students' parents to discuss student misbehaviour and develop a plan to improve behaviour for improved instructional outcome.	2.43	.504	2.56	.539	2.49	.537	LE
14	Teachers use verbal warning to enforce discipline for improved instructional outcome.	2.57	.568	3.02	.554	2.80	.554	HE
15	Teachers enforce loss of privileges such as participating in extracurricular activities for improved instructional outcomes.	2.75	.504	2.56	.539	2.65	.537	HE
Grand Mean		2.74	.542	2.85	.548	2.79	.545	HE

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize disciplinary measures in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes. Items 11 to 15 were examined in this regard against a criterion mean of 2.50. As seen in the table, Items 11, 14 and 15 had mean sets that were higher than the criterion mean; implying that majority of the respondents agreed that they were utilized to a high extent by teachers. These include: the use of physical punishment like flogging, the use of verbal warning, and enforcing loss of privileges of students who show deviant behaviours in class. Items 12 and 13 on the other hand were used to a low extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent do teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4: Mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes

s/n	Items	Male teachers (N = 100)		Female teachers (N = 100)		Mean set (N = 200)		Dec
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	$\frac{\bar{X}_1 + \bar{X}_2}{2}$	SD	
16	Teachers appoint pupils into official positions such as class prefects and assistants for managing classrooms and this improves instructional outcomes.	2.80	.407	2.86	.539	2.83	.533	HE
17	Teachers group students and engage them with projects and responsibilities for improved instructional outcomes.	2.57	.568	2.54	.552	2.56	.553	HE
18	Teachers assign students to help with tasks, such as distributing materials and this brings about classroom management.	2.60	.498	2.56	.539	2.58	.535	HE
19	Teachers assign classroom jobs to students, such as cleaning the board, tidying up the classroom, etc. for better classroom management	2.57	.568	2.52	.554	2.55	.541	HE
20	Teachers pair students with peers who can provide support and guidance for improved instructional outcomes.	2.60	.563	2.56	.539	2.57	.541	HE
Grand Mean		2.63	.521	2.61	.545	2.62	.541	HE

Table 4 shows the mean ratings of male and female teachers the extent teachers delegate responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes. Item 16 to item 20 were examined in this regard against a criterion mean of 2.50. As revealed by the table. All the items had mean sets that are higher than the criterion mean. This implies that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that teachers utilized delegation of responsibilities to a high extent in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes. The means utilized include: appointment of students into official positions in the class, such as class prefects and assistants; grouping students and engaging them with group projects and responsibilities; assigning students to help with tasks such as distributing materials; assigning classroom jobs to students such as cleaning the board; and pairing students with peers to provide support and guidance. The grand mean set which is 2.62 with a standard deviation of .541 shows that majority of the respondents agree that delegation of responsibilities was utilized by teachers to a high extent in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 4: To what extent do teachers utilize positive reinforcement in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 5: Mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize positive reinforcement in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes

s/n	Items	Male teachers (N = 100)		Female teachers (N = 100)		Mean set (N = 200)		Dec
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	$\frac{\bar{X}_1 + \bar{X}_2}{2}$	SD	
21	Teachers recognize and acknowledge good conducts and performance of students and this makes students behave well in the class for improved instructional outcomes.	3.73	.450	3.61	.532	3.62	.526	HE
22	Teachers offer feedback and encouragement to students as classroom management strategy for improved instructional outcome.	3.63	.556	3.56	.539	3.57	.540	HE
23	Teachers offer rewards and privileges for good behaviour and this enhances instructional outcomes.	2.60	.498	2.58	.537	2.59	.533	HE
24	Teachers offer personalized praise and this elicits positive classroom behaviour for improved instructional outcomes.	3.50	.572	3.54	.547	3.53	.548	HE
25	School-wide recognition is held for impressive behaviours and this makes students behave well in class for improved instructional outcomes.	2.43	.556	2.40	.539	2.42	.540	LE
Grand Mean		3.18	.528	3.14	.540	3.15	.538	HE

Table 5 shows the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize positive reinforcement in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Of all the items that were examined, only item 30 (school-wide recognition) had a mean set that was lower than the criterion mean. The rest of the items were each higher. The grand mean set was 3.15 with a standard deviation of .538. This means majority of the respondents were of the opinion that teachers utilized positive reinforcement to a high extent in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Testing of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: various classroom management strategies are deemed effective for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: Independent samples t-test of the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent various classroom management strategies were deemed effective for improved instructional outcomes

Respondent's Portfolio	N	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Std. Error	t-cal	DF	Sig.	Decision
Male teachers	100	3.530	.383	.0552	.881	198	.379	H ₀₁ Accepted
Female teachers	100	3.510	.407	.0269				
Total	200							

Significance level of .05

Table 6 shows the output of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether there was significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent various classroom management strategies were deemed effective for improved instructional outcomes for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The results indicated that the male teachers had a mean score of 3.530 with standard deviation of .383 and the female teachers had a mean score of 3.510 with standard deviation of .407. The result further revealed that $t(200) = .881$, $p = .379 > .05$. Since the obtained p value of .379 is greater than the significance level of .05, H_{01} is accepted and its alternate rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize disciplinary strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 7: Independent samples t-test of the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize disciplinary strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes

Respondent's Portfolio	N	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Std. Error	t-cal	DF	Sig.	Decision
Male teachers	100	2.743	.316	.0456	.802	198	.048	H_{02} Rejected
Female teachers	100	2.852	.336	.0222				
Total	200							

Significance level of .05

Table 7 shows the output of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize disciplinary strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The results indicated that the male teachers had a mean and standard deviation score of $2.743 \pm .316$, while that of female teachers was $2.852 \pm .336$. Furthermore, it was revealed that $t(200) = .802$, $p = .048 < .05$. Since value of p is less than the significance level of .05, H_{02} is rejected and its alternate accepted. This means that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent disciplinary strategies were utilized in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: Independent samples t-test of the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes

Respondent's Portfolio	N	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Std. Error	t-cal	DF	Sig.	Decision
Male teachers	100	2.63	.350	.0506				

Female teachers	100	2.61	.334	.0221	-.148	198	.420	H ₀₃ Accepted
Total	200							

Significance level of .05

Table 8 shows the output of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes. The results indicated that the male teachers in this regard had a mean score of 2.63 with standard deviation of .350 and the female teachers had a mean score of 2.61 with standard deviation of .334. The result further revealed that $t(200) = -.148$, $p = .420 > .05$. Since the obtained p value of .420 is greater than the significance level of 0.05, H₀₃ is accepted and its alternate rejected. By implication, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize positive reinforcement strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 9: Independent samples t-test of the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilize positive reinforcement strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes

Respondent's Portfolio	N	Mean \bar{X}	SD	Std. Error	t-cal	DF	Sig.	Decision
Male teachers	100	3.663	.367	.0530				
Female teachers	100	3.653	.319	.0210	.182	198	.856	H ₀₄ Accepted
Total	200							

Significance level of .05

Table 9 shows the output of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent teachers utilizes positive reinforcement (reward) strategies in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes. The results indicated that the male teachers in this regard had a mean score of 3.663 with a standard deviation of .367 while the female teachers had a mean score of 3.653 with standard deviation of .319. Furthermore, $t(200) = .182$, $p = .856 > .05$. The p value is obviously greater than the significance level value of .05, and as such, the null hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The first research question of the study sought to ascertain the extent various classroom management strategies were deemed effective in improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Its corresponding null hypothesis tested the existence of significant difference in mean ratings of male and female teachers to that regard. The results are respectively shown in Table 2 and Table 6. The strategies deemed effective by the teachers

included: the use of discipline, delegation of responsibilities, positive reinforcement, effective teaching methodologies, supervision of instruction, use of ICT, rules and regulations, active learning strategies, student participation, and cordial teacher-student relationships. The male and female respondents did not express significant difference in views about the effectiveness of these strategies. These findings are in line with literature on effective classroom management such as Nwankwoala (2021), Gacheri (2017), Bayefa-Asawei (2024) and George et al. (2017) who made similar discoveries on classroom management strategies and their effectiveness at improving instructional outcomes in schools.

The second research question sought to determine the extent teachers utilize disciplinary measures as classroom management strategies for effective instructional outcomes, and the corresponding hypothesis tested the existence of significant difference in the positions of male and female teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The results are found on Table 3 and Table 7 respectively. Table 3 reveals that disciplinary strategies were utilized to a high extent, while Table 7 shows the existence of significant difference on their extent of utilization by male and female teachers. Disciplinary measures in this regard refer to stringent measures applied by teachers in the classroom to ensure that compliance with expected codes of conduct. As seen in the table, the disciplinary measures commonly utilized by teachers include the use of punishment, verbal warnings, and enforcing loss of privileges such as participating in extracurricular activities.

These findings are in agreement with Gacheri (2017) who found that the most commonly used disciplinary measures of teachers against erring students in the class include flogging, kneeling down, washing of toilets, clearing of refuse, manual labour, working in the school farm, clearing the school fields, suspension from school, among others. The findings however differ from Maxwell cited in Gacheri (2017) who insisted that disciplinary measures for students in the school system should not be aimed at inflicting physical pains on or injuries on them, but should be such measures that help them develop academically, which they would naturally want to avoid. The difference in opinion between male and female teachers about the use of disciplinary measures is not unexpected. Females tend to be more emotional and tender than males when it comes to disciplining children. However, some student will always err unless they are disciplined, and the fear of such stringent measures deters others from erring, thereby bringing about the needed control in the classroom which supports instructional outcomes.

The third research question sought to investigate the extent teachers utilize delegation of responsibilities in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The corresponding hypothesis tested the existence of significant difference in the opinions of male and female teachers to that effect. The results are presented on Table 4 and Table 8 respectively. Table 4 shows that teachers utilized delegation of responsibilities to a high extent while Table 8 reveals that there was no significant difference in mean ratings of male and female teachers on extent of utilization of delegation of responsibilities in the classroom. The findings of the study are in accord with several other literatures which advance delegation of responsibilities as one of the best organizational practices of leaders which enhance organizational performance and productivity (Amos et al., 2022; Obulor, 2024). Delegation of responsibilities in the classroom to class prefect, subject representatives or even to normal students in the class is a veritable classroom management mechanism. It saves time for the teacher who is able to focus on some more important aspects of the teaching-learning process, and this brings about improved instructional outcome.

The fourth research question sought to examine the extent teachers utilize positive reinforcement in managing classrooms for improved instructional outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The corresponding hypothesis tested the existence of significant difference in the opinions of male and female teachers to that effect. The results are presented via Table 5 and Table 9 respectively. Table 5 shows that teachers utilize positive reinforcement to a high extent in managing classrooms, while Table 9 reveals that there is no significant difference in mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent of utilization of positive reinforcement in managing classrooms. Positive reinforcement as described by Bayefa-Asaowei (2024) is a technique to elicit and to strengthen new behaviours by adding rewards and incentives instead of eliminating benefits. The study reveals that teachers utilize this strategy through: recognizing and acknowledging good conducts and performance of students; offering feedback and encouragement to students; offer rewards and privileges for good behaviour; and offering personalized praise. These findings are in line with Lynnette et al. (2021) who made similar findings as those of the study and highlighted several positive ways in which the use of positive reinforcement as classroom management strategy brings about instructional productivity in the school system.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study reveals that effective classroom management is crucial for promoting student learning and achievement. Not only does it benefit the learners, but it also helps improves teachers' instructional delivery effectiveness and brings about teachers' self fulfillment in the classroom. The study highlights the importance of teachers using a range of classroom management strategies, including disciplinary strategies, delegation of responsibilities, and positive reinforcement. Effective management of classrooms is therefore one of the ways of ensuring and assuring quality in the instructional delivery process.

Recommendations

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

- Teachers should in addition to the commonly utilized classroom management strategies, be innovative in coming up with new strategies that can most effectively be used within their own classroom contexts.
- Teachers should ensure the disciplining of students is targeted towards students' betterment and instructional improvement, and not based on teachers' emotional outrage.
- Teachers should endeavour to always delegate and assign responsibilities to students in the classroom to give everyone a sense of responsibility, and this would help in ensuring that classroom sessions are more coordinated and more purposeful.
- Teachers should be supported by principals in the provision of incentives for students' positive reinforcement, as this solicits desirable behaviours from students which improve instructional outcomes in the school system.
- The Ministry of Education in collaboration with principals should periodically organize teacher training programs to up-skill teachers on current best practices in classroom management for improved instructional outcomes.

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