

Teachers' Knowledge and Application of Classroom Management Techniques in Business Education

Dr. Joy Amesi^{1*} Dr. Margaret E. Akpomi^{1*} Dr. Ndubuisi S. Amadi²

1. Business Education Department, Faculty of Technical & Science Education, Rivers State University of Science & Technology, P.M.B. 5080 Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

2. Science and Technical Education Department, Faculty of Technical & Science Education, Rivers State University of Science & Technology, P.M.B. 5080 Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

*E-mail of corresponding author: Joy.amesi@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study investigated teachers' knowledge and application of classroom management techniques in business education. Two research questions were posed to guide the study while one hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A total of 86 teachers were studied, purposive sampling was employed for the study. The instrument for the study was named Teachers' Knowledge and Application of Classroom Management Techniques in Business Education Questionnaire (TKACMTBEQ), with a four point modified Likert scale of highly extent to no extent. 6 teachers validated the instrument and a reliability coefficient test using test-retest method yielded a correlation of 0.89. Mean rating was used to answer the research questions while T-test for large group mean was used to test the hypothesis. Findings revealed that teachers' knowledge in classroom management and the application of classroom management techniques is not significantly different from each other and that most teachers are yet to be knowledgeable on issues relating to classroom management techniques. Conclusion drawn from the study is that where teachers manage their classrooms effectively, students will certainly gain from every lecture and will be happy to find themselves in such teachers' class and also be proud of such teachers wherever they may be found. Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from the study, recommendations made amongst others were that teachers should be well equipped and knowledgeable on classroom management and ensure that techniques such as counselling approach, rote discipline, addressing the needs of students both in terms of what they teach and how they teach, facial expressions and gestures, and devoting time to each individual learner are employed in the classrooms.

Keywords: Teachers Knowledge, Application, Classroom Management, Techniques, Business Education.

Introduction

Knowledge about how students learn, and understanding about what constitutes effective teaching and classroom management has increased considerably over the past decades. Knowledge is the state of knowing about or being familiar with something. It can also be seen as the understanding of or information about a subject which a person gets by experience or study, and which is either in a person's mind or known by teachers generally as the case may be (Amesi, 2010). Institutions and teachers can dramatically influence the extent and quality of learning for all students. The emphasis must be on success, rather than on imperfections and shortcomings (Amesi, 2011). To make this possible, a learning environment needs to be created in which all students feel safe and understood, and can reach their potential (Akpomi & Amesi, 2013; Shavinina, 2001). To develop such a learning environment, education officials, school administrators, teachers (lecturers), students, parents as well as School Management Committees (SMCs) may need to reflect on the following and similar quality issues by asking themselves:

- Do all teachers and students seem happy?
- Do teachers know their students and where they come from?
- Is there a sense of enthusiasm and joy in teaching?
- Are differences in teachers' teaching styles, developmental levels, and interests recognized and celebrated?
- Is there evidence - in both verbal and nonverbal interaction - that students have mutual respect and regard for their teachers?
- Is there evidence that the processes of teaching, as well as the outcomes, are valued?
- Is there time in the teachers' schedules for relaxation and using their imagination in information and communication technology, arts, music, and for just pondering about problems to be solved?

Knowledgeable teachers have learned and experienced that behaviour problems are relatively rare in classrooms where students are actively involved and interested, and in which they are appreciated for who they are, where they come from and what they are able to contribute. Knowledgeable teachers have also learned that they need to know their students' background to be able to understand non-academic factors that may impact their behaviour, participation and learning (Akpomi, 2011; Smith, 1989). It is obvious that not all students' learn at the same pace or in the same way. Institutions and teachers may have to consider the extent to which education policies and practices lead to the labeling of students or to promoting the view that learning capacities are either

limited or fixed. Educating the whole person is an important goal of education in itself and teachers play their part in this process, by taking into account and responding to individual differences in development and learning needs in each classroom (Amesi & Akpomi, 2013; Anao, 2003).

According to Amesi & Akpomi, and Anao, how a teacher perceives behaviour management while teaching depends on how he or she sees his or her job as a teacher and the extent he or she believes that all students can learn. Learning outcomes and behaviour are aspects of education which are very much influenced by teachers' quality. A teacher has control over many factors that influence motivation, achievement and behaviour of students. Factors such as a classroom's physical environment, a student's level of emotional comfort and the quality of communication between teachers and students are important factors that enable or disable optimal learning of individual students. To be able to manage problems of students, it requires insight into where these difficulties may come from and why and when they arise. A teacher has to care for many different students, including those from poor, disadvantaged families, students who may have to work before or after school, students from different ethnic, religious or language minority groups and those with a variety of learning difficulties or disabilities. Students may come to school hungry or tired, they may not have been able to do assignments because of lack of electricity or parents who are illiterate and not able to help them with their school assignments. It is important for a teacher to know a student's socio-economic and family background to be able to understand these non-academic or social factors that influence learning and behaviour. These factors cannot directly be altered, but understanding them will enable a teacher to place a student's "learning failure" or "misbehaviour" in perspective and create learning environments that reduce rather than increase the effects of such. Students may be at risk of negative and meaningless school experiences if a teacher does not understand the whole student and his or her background, and is not ready with responsive, effective instruction and classroom strategies (Amesi, 2014, Akpomi, 2013; Bingimlas, 2009).

Classroom Management Explained

Classroom management is a term used by teachers to describe the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behaviour by students. The term also implies the prevention of disruptive behaviour. It is possibly the most difficult aspect of teaching for many teachers; indeed experiencing problems in this area causes some to leave teaching altogether. A major reason was "negative student attitudes and discipline". According to Akpomi & Amesi (2013) and Vipene & Akpomi (2009), once a teacher loses control of their classroom, it becomes increasingly more difficult for them to regain that control. They further stated that the time a teacher takes to correct misbehaviour caused by poor classroom management skills results in a lower rate of academic engagement in the classroom. From their perspective, effective classroom management involves clear communication of behaviour and academic expectations as well as a cooperative learning environment. Classroom management is closely linked to issues of motivation, discipline and respect (Amesi, 2010). Methodologies remain a matter of passionate debate amongst teachers; approaches vary depending on the beliefs a teacher holds regarding educational psychology. A large part of traditional classroom management involves behaviour modification, although many teachers see using behavioural approaches alone as overly simplistic (Amesi, 2011). Many teachers establish rules and procedures at the beginning of the school year. According to Barbetta, Norona & Bicard (2005), rules give students concrete direction to ensure that our expectation becomes a reality. There are newer perspectives on classroom management that attempt to be holistic. One example is affirmation teaching, which attempts to guide students toward success by helping them see how their effort pay off in the classroom. It relies upon creating an environment where students are successful as a result of their own efforts. By creating this type of environment, students are much more likely to want to do well. Ideally, this transforms a classroom into a community of well-behaved and self-directed learners (Amesi & Akpomi; 2013).

Proper Knowledge and Behaviour of Teachers in Classroom Management

According to Wheeler (2000), when seeking explanations for lack of achievement or for behaviour problems, a teacher needs to be prepared to consider inadequacies in the learning content, process and environment rather than inadequacies in the child. The teacher needs to reflect on what he or she teaches and how he or she teaches it. What does the teacher say and do in the classroom to develop understanding? How does the teacher introduce new topics? Does the teacher spend enough time explaining purpose and relationship to previously taught information and skills to enhance developmental learning? A teacher must however not only look at social backgrounds, but also at what happens inside the classroom. How students behave is often a reaction to factors within the school. To Akpomi & Amesi (2013), a teacher needs to reflect on the learning environment he or she has created and whether this engages all students actively and meaningfully by ensuring that:

1. It is important for a teacher to investigate how his or her style of teaching can affect progress and behaviour of different students.
2. Timing of teaching-learning interactions is an essential part of classroom management and many behaviour

problems can be avoided by improved management of the classroom environment and timing of classroom activities (Amesi & Akpomi, 2013; Vipene & Akpomi, 2009).

3. Knowledgeable teachers are classroom managers who address the needs of students both in terms of what they teach and how they teach. Though teaching is generally a group activity, learning is very individual.
4. Knowledgeable teachers are sensitive to these differences and take actions to accommodate them so that, ideally, each student is provided an optimal learning experience. Teachers for example decide where students sit in the classroom. This may appear an unimportant decision, but it is not.
5. The seating arrangement in a classroom can enable or disable interaction, as well as impact student behaviour and attitudes. Thus, it is important to decide who will sit where and during which activity, based on the teacher's knowledge of his or her students. Research shows that students sitting farthest away from the teacher have the fewest interactions with them, are the least involved in classroom activities, and have the lowest achievement scores. Implications of such findings are obvious: teachers need to find ways to be physically close to their students, especially those who experience problems with learning (Amesi & Akpomi, 2013).
6. A teacher who manages his or her classroom by walking around can be close to every learner at different times. Therefore, a pair of comfortable walking shoes may be a necessary teaching tool. Apart from imparting knowledge and skills, teachers also help children to define who they are. From daily interactions with teachers, students learn whether they are important or insignificant, bright or slow, liked or disliked (Amesi, 2011).
7. Teachers transmit these messages by the way they speak to students, their facial expressions and gestures, and by the amount of time they devote to each individual learner. Often teachers point out students' deficiencies more than praising them for their efforts and (small) improvements. To most students this is very discouraging, and may result in feelings of inferiority and failure. A teacher needs to realize this. From the messages that students receive, they decide whether they are willing to risk participation in classroom activities or not. Knowledgeable teachers recognize that such involvement does not always come easy - it requires a trusting, psychologically comfortable learning environment (Amesi, 2014).

A quality, essential to a psychological comfortable classroom environment is mutual respect. Too often, discussions related to respect focus mainly on the necessity of students respecting teachers. However, teachers and students must respect each other and respect has to be earned by both. It has to do with the way teachers and students interact. Students may have negative classroom experiences because they are ridiculed by teachers or peers, or they repeatedly hear that they are disruptive or slow or "dumb". These and other negative messages telling students that they are not valued or respected, often result in students giving up on classroom participation. Research on teacher-student interaction shows that teachers often behave differently towards individual students based on their own perception of what a student can or cannot do. Students labeled as "low-achievers" get less opportunities to participate, and those perceived as "disruptive" are treated as such, even when behaving (Akpomi & Amesi, 2013; Burnett, 1994). To be successful as a student, the student must attend to what teachers do, what they say and how they perform. Teachers should observe student's reactions in class to find out whether they are 'getting across' to them. Thus, teaching is not a matter of reading from a textbook, or dictating notes, but a participatory process. According to Amesi & Akpomi (2013); Akpomi (2011) and Yusuf (2005), teachers rely on a variety of 'signals' from their students.

- 'Eyes on' behaviour means students are paying attention.
- Squirming behaviour means they are tired or bored.
- Affirmative nods of the head means they follow and understand.
- Puzzled looks means they are confused and so on.

Anao (2003) viewed that the major decision that teachers make on the basis of their observations of students is when it is appropriate to move on to the next topic, problem or issue. Some teachers though are 'clock or calendar watchers' more than 'student watchers' and feel compelled to cover a certain amount of material within a certain time. To Anao, teachers need to reflect on their assumptions and expectations by asking students for feedback on the teaching-learning process and on what happens in the classroom in general. Teachers can learn from students. It is important for teachers to know what makes a good teacher in the eyes of his students. Such characteristics of quality teachers almost always have to do with a teacher's ability to relate to students as individuals in a positive way, treating them with respect, making lessons interesting and varied, providing encouragement and telling them to believe in themselves and their own abilities. This means that positive teacher-student relations and classroom climate must be important factors influencing how students experience school.

For teachers who care, the student as a person is as important as the student as a learner. Caring teachers know their students in both ways. Such teachers model understanding and fairness. These are qualities most often mentioned by students in their assessments of good teachers, in addition to qualities displayed in everyday social interactions like listening to and taking into account what students say, having a good sense of humor,

encouraging students to learn in different ways, relating learning to earlier experience, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning, being knowledgeable about their subject, creating learning environments that actively involve students and stimulate in them an excitement to learn. In that regard, checking that homework is done, that the curriculum is covered, and testing and grading may be minor aspects of real education (Akpomi, 2013; Hess & Leal, 2001).

Motivation to learn and to behave is contingent on interest. If a teacher's teaching can harness the curiosity of students, he or she can also elicit a willingness of students to learn and behave. Interest-satisfying teaching motivates students far more effectively than coercing them into tasks they consider irrelevant and boring. This implies that the execution of the tasks of a teacher and what a teacher models is, is crucial in the prevention of misbehaviour. However, despite such efforts to practice positive interaction, behaviour problems may occur.

Some of the Techniques Teachers Need to Apply in Classroom Management

1. A teacher needs to be prepared for teaching with techniques ranging from a counseling approach, focusing on understanding and mutually solving a problem to behaviour modification or ignoring inappropriate and reinforcing appropriate behaviour. What is crucial though is that teachers always clarify that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the child. These are the times that count most. After all, the teacher is the adult. The issue here is whether the teacher can look beyond a student's immediate misbehaviour and see a person worthy of respect. Passing such a test will make teachers more credible in the eyes of their students, not only as teachers but also, and more importantly, as genuine caring human beings (Amesi & Akpomi, 2013).
2. Teachers may have focused too much on what to do when students misbehave and therefore perceive discipline techniques as something separate from teaching techniques, only to be employed if and when problems arise (Akpomi & Amesi, 2013).
3. However, classroom management is an integral part of effective teaching, as it helps to prevent behaviour problems through improved planning, organizing and managing of classroom activities, better presentation of instructional material and better teacher-student interaction, aiming at maximizing students' involvement and cooperation in learning. Disciplinary or behaviour control techniques are in the end less effective as they do not promote the development of a self-concept or a degree of responsibility and autonomy (Okwudishu, 2005; Akpomi, 2002).
4. Corporal punishment: Until recently, corporal punishment was widely used as a means of controlling disruptive behaviour but it is now no longer fashionable, though it is still advocated in some contexts by researchers such as Amesi & Akpomi (2013).
5. Rote discipline: Also known as "lines," rote discipline is a negative sanction used for behaviour management. It involves assigning a disorderly student sentences or the classroom rules to write repeatedly. Among the many types of classroom management approaches, it is commonly used (Amesi & Akpomi, 2013; Bear, 2008 and Akpomi, 2002).

Teachers Preventative Techniques in Classroom

Preventative approaches to classroom management according to Bear, Cavalier & Manning (2005) involves creating a positive classroom community with mutual respect between teacher and student. Teachers using the preventative approach offer warmth, acceptance, and support unconditionally - not based on a student's behaviour. Fair rules and consequences are established and students are given frequent and consistent feedback regarding their behaviour. One way to establish this kind of classroom environment is through the development and use of a classroom contract. The contract should be created by both students and the teacher. In the contract, students and teachers decide and agree on how to treat one another in the classroom. The group also decides on and agrees to what the group will do should there be a violation of the contract. Rather than a consequence, the group also decide on a way to fix the problem through either class discussion, peer mediation, counseling, or by one on one conversations leading to a solution to the situation (Akpomi & Amesi, 2013). Preventative techniques also involve the strategic use of praise and rewards to inform students about their behaviour rather than as a means of controlling student behaviour. In order to use rewards to inform students about their behaviour, teachers must emphasize the value of the behaviour that is rewarded and also explain to students the specific skills they demonstrated to earn the reward. Teachers need to also encourage student collaboration in selecting rewards and defining appropriate behaviors' that will earn rewards. Students do not become self-disciplined by means of rewarding, controlling or coercion. Values and social skills have to be taught and modelled by teachers. Learning to become responsible human beings and make responsible choices requires practice, including making mistakes to learn from without punitive consequences. That is what quality teaching and classroom management is about and that, rather than just delivering a curriculum, is the purpose of education (Tingstrom, Sterling-Turner, & Wilczynski, 2006).

Classroom Management and Time Management

The goal of classroom management to Amesi (2014) Akpomi & Amesi (2013) is not only to maintain order but to optimize students learning. They divided classroom management and time management into four overlapping categories, namely allocated time, instructional time, engaged time, and academic learning time.

Allocated time: Allocated time is the total time allotted for teaching, learning, and routine classroom procedures like attendance and announcements. Allocated time is also what appears on a student's schedule, for example teaching accounting subject or typewriter and shorthand with less than half an hour.

Instructional time: Instructional time is what remains after routine classroom procedures are completed. That is to say, instructional time is the time wherein teaching and learning actually takes place. Teachers may spend three or five minutes taking attendance, for example, before their instruction begins.

Engaged time: Engaged time is also called time on task. During engaged time, students are participating actively in learning activities asking and responding to questions, completing worksheets and exercises, preparing skits and presentations, and so on.

Academic learning time: Academic learning time occurs when students (1) participate actively and (2) are successful in learning activities. Effective classroom management maximizes academic learning time. It is in this regard that this study is investigated to find out teachers' knowledge and application of classroom management techniques in business education.

Research Questions

Two basic questions answered in this study are:

1. What extent are teachers knowledgeable in classroom management techniques?
2. What extent do teachers in business education apply classroom management techniques?

Hypothesis

Only one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significant. (1) There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers on their knowledge and application of classroom management techniques.

Method

The study area was Rivers State. The design of the study was a descriptive survey research. The population of the study was 86 teachers (lecturers) in three institutions in Rivers State that offer business education. Due to marginable number of the population, purposive sampling was employed for the study. Data for the study was collected using an instrument (questionnaire) named Teachers' Knowledge and Application of Classroom Management Techniques in Business Education (TKACMTBE). The TKACMTBE was a modified four point Likert scale designed as Highly Extent = 4 points, Extent = 3 points, Moderately Extent = 2 points and No Extent = 1 point, with 12 question items to elicit answers to the research questions. Test-retest method was used to test the reliability of the items with face and content validity. The validity was done by six teachers other than those used for the study and a reliability co-efficient of 0.89 was obtained. Mean rating was used to analyze the research questions and t-test for large group mean was used to test the hypothesis.

Results

The results obtained from the study are shown in the tables below:

Table 1: Extent Teachers are Knowledgeable in Classroom Management Techniques (N = 86)

S/n	Item	HE	E	ME	NE	X	Remarks
1.	Caring for students from poor, disadvantaged families and different ethnic is necessary	-	30	20	36	1.93	No Extent
2.	Behaviour problems are rare in classrooms where students are actively involved	20	15	21	30	2.29	No Extent
3.	Knowing students background to be able to understand factors that may impact behaviour, participation and learning	10	15	31	30	2.06	No Extent
4.	Teachers quality are influenced by teaching outcomes and behavior	30	10	20	26	2.51	Extent
5.	Socio-economic and family background of students are known by teachers	6	20	22	38	1.98	No Extent
6.	Responding to individual differences in development and teaching needs in each classrooms is necessary	18	21	22	25	2.37	No Extent
	Total Mean	=				13.09	
	Grand Mean	=				2.18	

Table 1 shows that only one item in the table is what teachers apply as knowledge in the classroom management

technique. This is based on their mean responses of 2.51 in item four, showing that teachers quality are influenced by teaching outcomes and behaviour only, while other items in the table are not applied by the responses of the respondents. It shows that most teachers are yet to be knowledgeable in issues about classroom management techniques as it relates to caring for students from poor, disadvantaged families and different ethnicity, behaviour problems are rare in classrooms where students are actively involved, responding to individual differences in development and teaching needs in each classrooms and socio-economic and family background of students, all of these items prove that most teachers are yet to be knowledgeable on classroom management with the grand mean of 2.18.

Table 2: Extent Teachers Apply Classroom Management Techniques in Business Education (N = 86)

S/n	Item	HE	E	ME	NE	X	Remarks
1.	Counselling approach is used as techniques	20	18	22	26	2.37	No Extent
2.	Improved planning, organizing and managing of classroom activities	16	17	20	33	2.19	No Extent
3.	Rote discipline is essential	25	21	22	18	2.62	Extent
4.	Timing of teaching-learning interactions is essential part	15	18	23	30	2.21	No Extent
5.	Addressing the need of students while teaching	26	20	22	18	2.63	Extent
6.	Strategic use of praise and reward is essential	20	22	16	28	2.40	No Extent
Total Mean						= 14.42	
Grand Mean						= 2.40	

Table 2 shows that only two items are techniques teachers in business education consider as being used to an extent, with mean scores of 2.62 and 2.63 respectively. The two items applied by teachers are addressing the need of students while teaching and rote discipline as essential. Other four items in the table were not considered by the teachers as part of techniques to be used in teaching. This is based on the mean response of the respondents as it clearly shows that these four items were less than 2.50. The result of their mean responses shows that most teachers are ignorance of the techniques used in classroom management.

T-test of Difference between Knowledge of Teachers and Teachers Application of Classroom Management Techniques

Respondents	Mean	S.D	Num.	Df	Std. Error	T-Cal	T-Crit.	Remarks
Teachers Knowledge	29.40	3.79	86	85	0.53	1.81	1.96	Accepted
Teachers Classroom Mgt. Techniques	28.44	3.05						

Since the calculated T-value of 1.81 is less than the T-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is therefore accepted that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers with regard to their knowledge in classroom management and that of application of classroom management techniques in business education.

Discussion

The findings show that teachers' knowledge in classroom management and the application of classroom management techniques is not significantly different from each other and that most teachers are yet to be knowledgeable on issues about classroom management techniques. This was as a result of the acceptance of hypothesis. This finding is in agreement with Amesi & Akpomi (2013) and Shavinina (2001) who depicts that teachers can dramatically influence the extent and quality of learning for all students but that lack of knowledge of the teachers in the classroom management learning environment meant to be created in which all students feel safe and understood, and can reach their potential are no more. In line with the view of Amesi & Akpomi and Shavinina; Akpomi and Amesi (2013), portrayed that many teachers are not knowledgeable about classroom management, hence teachers today teach while students are not paying attention nor concentrating in the lessons. To buttress the findings Amesi (2014) and Bingimlas (2009) noted that Students may be at risk of negative and meaningless school experiences if a teacher does not understand the whole student and his or her background, and is not ready with responsive, effective instruction and classroom management techniques. To the

researchers it is necessary for the teachers to be knowledgeable about classroom management and all aspect of the techniques that has to do with classroom management as to enable the teacher become the authority in the class and to make students look at him or her as one person that is different from other teachers they have ever met. Techniques such as seating arrangement, counselling approach, rote discipline, addressing the needs of students both in terms of what they teach and how they teach, walking around the class to be close to every learner at different times, facial expressions and gestures, and by the amount of time devoted to each individual learner is essential for teachers so as to enable them become managers of their classrooms.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Where teachers manage their classrooms effectively, students will certainly gain from every lecture and will be happy to find themselves in such teachers' class and be proud of such teachers wherever they may be found. Knowledge of teachers and classroom management is very necessary and should be taken very serious by teachers in various institutions of learning. At this juncture, the researchers concluded that the developed TKACMTBE is a valid and reliable rating instrument that could be used in assessing teachers' knowledge and application of classroom management techniques in business education. Based on the findings of the study and conclusion made, the following recommendations were put forward by the researchers:

1. School managers should make provisions for teachers employed to be given detailed orientation on techniques of classroom management techniques.
2. Resources to make classroom management possible should also be provided to make teachers apply them. In as much as autonomy is encouraged, supervision should also be provided.
3. Teachers on their own should make efforts to equip themselves with the knowledge of classroom management and apply the techniques involved. Teachers should ensure that techniques such as seating arrangement, counselling approach, rote discipline, addressing the needs of students both in terms of what they teach and how they teach, walking around the class to be close to every learner at different times, facial expressions and gestures, and devoting time to each individual learner are employed in the classrooms.

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