

Classroom Management Competencies of Intern-Teachers in Nigeria Secondary Schools

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The purpose of the study was to find out the adequacy of the current classroom management training program for intern teachers in Nigerian Universities. Two hundred and six respondents were used for the study. A structured questionnaire was administered to seventy males and one hundred and thirty-six females drawn from Arts, Science, Technical and Social Science programmes. Data were analyzed using frequency, mean scores and analysis of variance. Major findings revealed no significant difference in classroom management competencies of male and female interns as regards leadership and discipline but there is significant gender difference in communication competencies. There is variability in classroom management competencies of intern teachers from Arts, Science, Social Science and Technical Education programmes. The intern teachers see classroom discipline as a major problem confronting them.

Introduction

A near universal administrative problem confronting beginning teachers is inability to effectively manage classroom (Hamerness, 2003; Miller March, 2003, Ralph, 2004, Ikoya, 2007). Yet, effective classroom management is an essential precursor to creating an enabling environment for proper teaching and learning. Empirical and related studies by Akinseinde (1998), Badmus (2001) and Mayer (2002) reveal that classroom management problems encountered by newly employed teachers ranged from poor classroom discipline, ineffective class coordination and control to dearth of

leadership and poor communication. Mayer (2002) and Hammerness (2003), for example observed that, many beginning teachers lacked the ability to understand different classroom situations and to accordingly deal with them as problems or not.

In addition, many newly certified teachers are reportedly inconsistent in their enforcement of classroom disciplinary codes among students (Richardson and Fallon, 2001; Lasley, 1994; Ikoya, 2007; Lam 2005). A situation, which reportedly creates a pseudo-discriminatory atmosphere among class pupils and students: these and other reported inefficiencies (Ohiambo, 2005; Park, Henkin and Egley 2005) seem to create negative impact on effective classroom management by newly employed teachers. Accordingly, schools administrators, parents and other stakeholders in education are beginning to show great concern about how to improve classroom management competency of teachers, particularly the newly certified and employed (Onu, 2006; Omorogie, 2006; Yakubu, 2006).

In recent times, the Committee of Deans of Faculties of Education in Nigerian Universities deliberated on the need for an extended (from 4 years to 5years) teacher education program. The assertion is premised on the assumption that the extra one year could enable teacher interns acquire more practical teaching based experience, including effective classroom management.

Conceptual Framework

Our review of current literature on classroom management problems encountered by intern-teachers reveals two fundamental but contradictory assumptions. The first

argument put forward by (Pigge and Marso 1997) and supported by Gheith and Shaaban (1999) submits that beginning teachers could be more effective classroom managers, if their pre-service training incorporates a well articulated, properly implemented and adequately supervised classroom management training program. In line with this view, interns should be well-trained in classroom management skills before graduation. But contrary to this assertion, are the views of Good and Prophy (2000) Hausego, (1992), Smith and Sanche (1993), that the complex social-psychological issues in classroom management for teenagers and adolescents cannot be exhaustively imparted in a four or five year teacher education program. This latter school of thought recommends that beginning teachers should be patiently allowed to acquire appropriate classroom management technique over time, through mentorship, in-service training and other similar professional development programs.

Despite these divergent opinions among scholars and practitioners, there is appreciable measure of consonance that students undertaking teacher-education programs acquire appropriate training in:

- classroom leadership,
- classroom communication; and
- management of classroom behaviour and discipline

Current studies in the literature seem to show that many intern-teachers lacked these fundamental frameworks for effective classroom management. For example,

Okoroafor (2006) observed that many final year teacher education students lacked basic classroom leadership skills. Some are unable to carry their students along in major classroom decisions. In affirming intern-teachers classroom leadership weakness, Hall and Hord (1987), Onu, (2006) observed that student teachers require more training in classroom motivational skills. A well motivated child, as the authors point out, is better prepared for learning than one poorly motivated.

Research findings in the literature, regarding intern's management skills in classroom co-ordination, communication and discipline show no significance difference from what is reported regarding classroom leadership. But what appears novel from these reviews, regarding communication is that over the years, university students' ability to effectively communicate continue to whittle down. The deplorable level of depreciation is revealed by the number of final year education students who are unable to meet their faculties' graduation requirements because of poor written and verbal communication skills. Data available show that over 13 percent of graduating students fall into this category. In a related study, Ikoya, (2005) reported that the free use of "Pidgin English" and local vernacular languages in schools negatively impacted on students communication skills in the class. Thus, many students, including interns, are unable to master basic oral and written communication skills for effective classroom management.

These inadequacies appear to compound the problem of classroom discipline. In a school wide classroom disciplinary studies, Cotton (2006) reported a high incidence

of poor management related problems such as cheating, truancy, bullying and insubordination. In addition to these reported disciplinary problems, are others such as poor dressing, lateness to school and class, including other misdemeanor which disrupt regular flow of classroom activities (Brophy, 1986).

A thorough appraisal of these studies reveals that intern-teachers require proper training in the management of classroom disciplinary problems. In proffering solution to classroom disciplinary problems, some school districts have recommended the use of Awards and Certificates, Behavioral Contracting, Behavior Management, Antagonism with Authority et al, as tools for classroom management. To what extent are interns in Nigeria universities exposed to these and other related classroom management tools? And how adequate are current pre-service classroom management training programs at meeting the needs of teacher education graduates? This research was designed to empirically address these crucial problems.

Statement of Problem

Teacher education training institutions, pride themselves with providing pre-service training programs that adequately cater for students' competency in classroom management. Yet, principals, as well as school administrators, continue to complain of poor classroom management abilities of newly employed teachers. A survey of some teacher-training institutions reveals that student teachers obtain high grades in practical-teaching yet, on-the-job performance in classroom management are rated low by their employers. Could there be defects in current classroom management and assessment

programs of these institutions? Attempt is, accordingly, made in this study to assess the adequacy of current classroom management training program for intern-teachers in Nigerian universities.

Research Questions

Arising from the stated problem are two research questions and two hypotheses.

Questions:

RQ 1: How adequate is Current Intern-Teacher Classroom Management.

Training (CITAMAN) at enhancing classroom leadership for male and female interns?

RQ 2: Is there any difference among Arts, Science, Social Science and Technical Education interns' classroom

management competencies?

Hypotheses:

H_0 1: There is no significant gender difference in classroom management competencies of intern teachers.

H_0 2: There is no significant difference in classroom management competencies of Arts, Science, Social Science and Technical Education interns.

Study Objectives and Related Issues

The present study was undertaken to find out whether or not Current Intern-Teacher Classroom Management Training (CITAMAN) was adequately meeting the pedagogical needs of intern-teachers in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are manifold. First the authors argued that effective and appropriate classroom management training could enhance leadership skills in intern-teachers. The question, therefore, is to what extent is CITAMAN enhancing future teachers, classroom leadership skills? Closely related is the second objective, which focused on classroom communication. Effective teaching and learning is strongly anchored not only on teachers' effective communications skills, but also on the ability of teachers to create an enabling environment, in the classroom for effective communication. Does the present classroom management-training program (CITAMAN) meet these needs adequately?

The Third issue examined is classroom discipline. Societal decadence continue to aggravate indiscipline in schools today, yet the monster responsible for indiscipline must be tamed, particularly in the classroom setting. How adequately prepared are intern-teachers through CITAMAN at meeting these challenges of various classroom disciplinary problems? These issues were examined taking into consideration gender and disciplines of interns.

Method

The researchers are teacher-trainers in state universities. In this survey study, interns were asked to rate themselves in key classroom management areas of leadership, communication and discipline. They were also to identify, how effective the

universities/faculty programs on classroom management enhanced their competencies in the identified areas of leadership, communication and discipline.

Participants

The interns who participated in the program were those who enrolled for the program in 2003/2004 academic session. Our work with them lasted for two years, March, 2005 to February, 2007. Participants comprised male and female interns drawn from Arts, Science, Technical and Social Science Education Departments. Seventy Male and 136 female respondents were used for data analysis.

Results

Results of data analyzed are presented in Table 1.

Data presented in Table 1 reveal no significant difference in classroom management competencies of male and female interns as regards leadership and discipline. However, male and female interns differ in their communication competencies.

Analysis of variance on classroom management competencies of intern teachers in the Arts, Science, Social Science and Technical Education departments are presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Gender Difference in Intern-Teachers' Classroom Management Competencies.

	SEX	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std error mean	F	Sig
Classroom Leadership	Male 1	70	22,7000	4,24384	.50724	.122	
Competence	Female 2	136	22,2794	5,13476	.44030	2,410	
Classroom Communication	Male 1	70	28,9429	3,09692	.37015	9,469	.002
Competence	Female 2	136	28,3309	5,14538	.44121		
Classroom Discipline	Male 1	70	34,6571	4,30667	.51475		
Competence	Female 2	136	33,6176	5,51235	.47268	,562	.454

Table 2: Analysis of Variance on Intern-Teacher Classroom Management Competencies

		Classroom Management Competencies				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Classroom Leadership Competence	Between Groups	773,916	3	257,972	12,910	.000
	Within Group	403,262	1	403,262	20,181	.000
Total	(Combined)	4810,257	205	19,982		
Classroom Communication Competence	Between Groups	387,734	3	129,245	6,754	.000
	Within Group	233,768	1	233,768	12,216	.001
Total	(Combined)	3865,455	202	19,136	3,782	.024
	Total	4253,189	205			

Table 2: Analysis of Variance on Intern-Teacher Classroom Management Competencies
(Continued)

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Classroom Discipline Competence	Between Groups	(Combined) Linear Term	128,023 119,140 96,688 31,335	3 11 1 2	42,874 119,140 96,688 15,668	1,625 4,538 3,682 597	.185 .034 .056 .552
	Within Group		5303,8022 5431,825	202 205	26,256		
	Total						

Mean scores of sampled participants reveal clear variability in classroom management competencies of intern teachers from the Arts, Science, Social Science and Technical Education Departments. Participants significantly differed in leadership and communication competencies. Variability in sample scores regarding classroom discipline was however not significant indicating some similarity in interns' perception of classroom disciplinary problem. Further analysis of collected data shows that intern-teachers see classroom discipline as a major problem confronting them.

Discussion

The study examined intern-teacher classroom management competencies taking into consideration the gender and departments of interns. The different disciplines or departments examined were the Arts, Science, Social Science and Technical Education Departments. On gender, the mean scores reveal that male interns demonstrated higher competencies in classroom leadership, communication and classroom discipline. The t-test analysis again revealed significance between male and female interns in classroom communication competencies. These findings are significant and have implication for effective training of interns in classroom management.

The Arts, Science, Social Science and Technical Education Departments were used in the study because these are the key areas where students undergoing teacher-education programs are mostly admitted into. Results of data analyzed reveal disparity in classroom management competencies of these departments. Science education

student appear to demonstrate higher competencies when compared with other departments in leadership ability. Science education department also has a higher mean score in communication while Arts education students appear superior in managing classroom discipline.

Findings from this study lay credence to findings by other authors (Lam, 2005; Park Henkin and Egley 2005) that is a need for a more comprehensive training program to enhance intern-teachers' classroom management competency.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The deficiencies identified in the classroom management competencies are considered as needs for effective performance of teachers' task in schools and colleges. It is expected that adequately planned and implemented teacher education programs should provide training in classroom leadership skills, classroom communication and management of classroom behaviour and discipline. At present, many intern-teachers lack these skills which are required for effective classroom management. The findings of the study have important implications for the administrators, teacher educators and students undergoing teacher education programs. The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Arts, Social Science and Technical Education Students should receive training in classroom leadership skills.
2. Social Science and Technical Education Students require training in managing classroom discipline.
3. The curriculum planners should incorporate classroom management skills which are identified

as deficient into the existing curriculum for preparing teachers in Nigeria universities.

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