

Original Article

MANAGING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigates the complexities of classroom management in public secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria, and the relationship between classroom management strategies, patterns of engagement, participation, and academic performance. Classroom management quality, including teacher-student relationships, classroom organization, and available resources, among other factors, is crucial in fostering a productive and engaging learning environment. Unfortunately, and especially in Kogi State, shortcomings in the infrastructure of public secondary schools, overcrowded classrooms, and limited instructional materials have affected the ability to manage classrooms to provide the best learning conditions. However, the research identifies clear classroom management strategies that contribute to effective classroom management, including setting and communicating expectations, developing positive teacher-student relationships, utilizing active learning strategies, and promoting student participation and academic engagement in learning, which leads to improved outcomes. The research highlights the importance of targeted, specific interventions, finding time in a busy school calendar for teacher professional development training, and reforming public secondary school education policy to address the chronic regional infrastructure shortage and sustain teacher training and education improvement plans. The research concludes that by appropriately improving classroom management based on the needs of students in Kogi State, teachers can be more effective in maximizing student engagement, academic performance, and overall student development. The implications are critical for educators, researchers, policymakers, and any entities working towards improving educational standards and the quality of education for public secondary school learners in Kogi State.

Keywords: Managing, Classroom Environments, Students, Active Participation, Public Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

The classroom environment is a vital aspect of students' educational experiences and outcomes. In public secondary schools across Nigeria, including schools in Kogi State, the quality of the school's classroom environment has a direct connection to how students are engaged, how often they participate, and even their overall academic success. Effectively managed classrooms not only enable a safe and healthy learning environment, but effective management promotes active student involvement, which is integral to effective learning.

There are many challenges in the Kogi state educational landscape, including poor infrastructure, classroom overcrowding, and limited access to instructional materials. These challenges hinder the opportunity for teachers to develop an ideal classroom environment to support active participation from students, which may lead to passive, non-participatory, or disengaged students.

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with potentially poor learning outcomes. A multi-faceted approach to better understand and respond to classroom management strategies to support the unique experiences, learning, and culture of Kogi state students is essential for educational improvement [Ekundayo and Ekundayo \(2018\)](#), [News Central Africa. \(2020\)](#), [Adesokan et al. \(2023\)](#), [Adesokan et al. \(2023\)](#), [Jimoh \(2025\)](#), [Leonard et al. \(2025\)](#), [Federal University Lokoja. \(2025\)](#). There are many challenges in the Kogi state educational landscape, including poor infrastructure, classroom overcrowding, and limited access to instructional materials. These challenges hinder the opportunity for teachers to develop an ideal classroom environment to support active participation from students, which may lead to passive, non-participatory, or disengaged students with potentially poor learning outcomes. A multi-faceted approach to better understand and respond to classroom management strategies to support the unique experiences, learning, and culture of Kogi state students is essential for educational improvement.

Effective classroom management encompasses a range of strategies, including creating clear expectations, establishing systematic and orderly routines, and fostering productive relationships with students [Smith and Johnson \(2019\)](#). These classroom management strategies reduce disruptions and also create an environment that is inviting to students, encouraging engagement [Williams and Lee \(2018\)](#). Research recognizes a positive classroom environment with higher student motivation, academic success, and social-emotional progress [Brown et al. \(2020\)](#), [Peters and White \(2017\)](#).

The purpose of this study is to explore the dynamics of classroom management in public secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria, and how strategies support active student participation. The study intends to examine aspects of classroom management such as classroom design, social interaction with teachers and students, and the availability of learning resources to reveal productive strategies that can be used to improve student engagement. The findings from this research are expected to inform a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers and educators, policymakers, and education advocates, who are striving for improved educational experiences in the Kogi State educational community.

Expediting student involvement through appropriate mechanisms entails the ability to create and manage learning environments effectively in Kogi State public secondary schools, by engaging in proper techniques and making a positive (supportive) atmosphere helpful to engage students, enabling a conducive learning environment, but also enhancing academic performance and the development of the entire student.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Kogi State public secondary school system is challenged to create a conducive learning environment that fosters increased student engagement and participation in the classroom. A lack of facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient instructional materials hinder effective classroom management, leading to students becoming increasingly disengaged from the learning process. Consequently, students are less involved in academic activities and, therefore, likely to learn and perform at lower levels. Policymakers acknowledge that effective classroom management strategies directly impact student engagement and the probability of learning, as well as academic success; yet, limited research exists on the application of classroom management strategies specifically in Kogi State. Thus, the focus of this study is to investigate possible factors that influence classroom management in public secondary schools in Kogi State. One goal is to identify possibilities to increase student engagement and ultimately, academic performance and activity.

LITERATURE REVIEW: FACTORS INFLUENCING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Classroom management is an essential element to promote an environment conducive to student engagement and learning. Public secondary schools, especially in Nigeria, are influenced by many factors regarding the successful implementation of classroom management techniques. This article reviews recent literature to identify and discuss in detail the factors relevant to classroom management.

1) Teacher-Related Factors

The classroom management styles of teachers have a significant impact on student interest, involvement, and learning achievement [Olaitan \(2024\)](#). discovered that instructional materials, approaches to instruction, and interpersonal skills can enrich the learning achievement of students in Taraba State secondary schools. Likewise, [Ebimiere et al. \(2020\)](#) pointed out that classroom discipline, instruction, and reward systems were positively related to students' academic performance in Rivers State.

2) Student-Related Factors

Students' attitudes and behaviours are central to classroom dynamics. [Akinyemi et al. \(2024\)](#) considered classroom organization, use of instructional materials, and school climate as the dimensions of context that facilitate students' academic performance in Lagos State junior secondary schools. In another study, [Olayinka and Ridwan \(2025\)](#), studying Jos North Local Government Area, reported that the classroom management style used by teachers is one of the contributors to the performance of senior secondary students in the classroom.

3) Environmental and Structural Factors

The physical environment of the classroom, as well as where students are seated and what resources are available, is an essential component of classroom management. [Ebimiere et al. \(2020\)](#) found, in a study related to Rivers States, that when a teacher's approach to classroom discipline and practical teaching was favourable, students performed better academically. In Lagos State junior secondary schools, [Akinyemi et al. \(2024\)](#) found that classroom organization and students' use of instructional materials were statistically significant correlates of students' academic performance.

4) Administrative and Policy Factors

School leaders and administrators play an essential role in supporting classroom management efforts. For instance, [Kwaghmimi, and Shirga \(2021\)](#) affirmed that classroom management can be enhanced through appropriate facilities and conferences regarding classroom management, and can ultimately support teachers in creating safe and supportive learning environments. The National Policy on Education also stipulates specific training for teachers and the provision of resources to support teachers' classroom management efforts [Federal Ministry of Education. \(2014\)](#).

5) Socio-Cultural and Contextual Factors

Cultural norms and social expectations influence classroom behaviours and classroom management practices. The work of [Olayinka and Ridwan \(2025\)](#) on classroom management styles and their influence on performance by senior secondary students in Jos North Local Government Area integrates cultural and societal expectations, hence emphasising the need for contextual strategies relevant to cultural agents and agency.

Concerning classroom management in public secondary schools, the positive articulations are tied not only to teacher-related, student-related, and environmental influences, but also to administrative influences, behaviours advanced within socio-cultural contexts also contributed to the influences. Understanding how these influences are enacted or resisted is a first step towards developing strategies that promote a positive learning environment, student participation, and performance. Work should continue in the area to create an understanding of the influences and how they are enacted by teachers and students within the socio-cultural context of Kogi State, to inform and apply locally relevant interventions that consider relevant policies [MOE \(2014\)](#).

LITERATURE REVIEW: STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Effective classroom management is crucial in creating an atmosphere where students can engage actively, enabling better academic achievement. This literature review examines current practices in public secondary schools that comply with the goal of effective classroom management, recent research, and best practices.

1) Establishing Clear Expectations and Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

Setting specific behavioural and academic expectations provides a clear structure for learning. Studies show that when students understand the rules and the rationale behind them, they tend to be more engaged in learning [Jones and Smith \(2019\)](#). Moreover, developing intentional teacher-student relationships based on trust and respect can significantly impact student motivation and engagement [Brown and Green \(2021\)](#). When teachers express concern for their students and their learning, often the students' engagement time and learning reflect this [Williams et al. \(2020\)](#).

2) Implementing Active Learning Techniques

Various active learning pedagogies, such as think-pair-share, cooperative learning, and problem-based learning, have been effective in cultivating engagement in the learning process and understanding of the content [Jones and Smith \(2019\)](#). Active learning pedagogies allow students the opportunity to incorporate themselves in the learning process, which, in turn, will increase their understanding and comprehension of the content that is being taught [Brown and Green \(2021\)](#). For instance, teachers who incorporate authentic, real-world problems into their lessons can facilitate student applications of the theoretical knowledge they are learning to real-world problems, making the learning more significant and interesting to students [Williams et al. \(2019\)](#).

3) Utilizing Technology to Support learning

[Sigel \(2020\)](#) stated that utilising technology in the classroom can be a valuable method to increase student engagement. Sigel emphasised that interactive whiteboards, educational applications, and other online discussion forums allow for novel methods for student engagement through content and collaboration with other students. Technology could also find use in providing multiple learning styles and learning paces to facilitate individualised learning experiences, which could lead to improved achievement.

4) Incorporating Movement-Based Learning Activities

Integrating physical movement into lessons can increase student engagement and improve cognitive functioning. Incorporating a variety of movement activities, such as interactive games, role playing, and rotations, can change the tempo of instruction while also keeping kids engaged and less restless [Johnson and Brown \(2018\)](#). These strategies can help to focus and energise students over long periods of learning [Williams et al. \(2019\)](#).

5) Providing Timely and Constructive Feedback

Feedback is one of the most important aspects of learning. Providing timely, specific, and constructive feedback encourages students to think about their strengths and weaknesses [Hattie and Timperley \(2007\)](#). In addition, feedback helps develop students' confidence and influences their decision-making regarding changes to their learning strategies, which can enhance their overall academic performance [Black and Wiliam \(2009\)](#).

6) Implementing Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a positive behaviour strategy that focuses on developing positive behaviour and a favourable climate within the school [Sugai and Horner \(2002\)](#). The aims of PBIS are (1) to establish school-wide expectations (or rules); (2) to teach expected behaviours; (3) to acknowledge and reinforce appropriate behaviour; (4) to decrease expected but unwanted behaviours; and (5) to increase student engagement and achievement [Simonsen et al. \(2010\)](#). Some schools with PBIS frameworks, such as Safe and Caring Schools, have reported improvements in student behaviours and academic performance by doing so as a part of a PBIS framework [McIntosh et al. \(2020\)](#).

These strategies illustrate the critical role of a multi-faceted approach to classroom management that includes clear expectations, active learning, technology, movement, feedback, and behavioural interventions. These strategies foster a classroom environment where increased student participation can lead to enhanced academic learning. Further research and continuous professional development will be essential to develop these strategies, support learning, and adapt to changes in education.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON FACTORS INFLUENCING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Classroom management is a key factor affecting student engagement and academic performance in public secondary schools, and there is significant research conducted in various contexts across Nigeria that identifies factors that support effective classroom management. Below is a summary of recent research findings:

1) Teacher Competencies and Classroom Management

[Ifeoma \(2021\)](#) researched teachers' competencies in controlling a classroom and monitoring classroom instruction in Anambra State. The researcher indicated that teachers' competency in monitoring students' behaviour and discipline in the classroom is important for ensuring quality assurance in secondary schools. The reports on teachers' inconsistencies in behaviour monitoring and disciplining behaviours indicate the necessity for professional development for teachers to build their competencies [\(Ifeoma, 2021\)](#).

2) Classroom Environment and Academic Performance

[Akinyemi et al. \(2024\)](#) have studied the classroom context, particularly, as the most important way to explain and understand students' academic achievement among junior secondary schools in Lagos State. The research indicated positive relationships between class size, use of instructional materials, school climate, and classroom organization in relation to students' academic achievement. Therefore, a practical learning experience will depend on a structured approach to the classroom environment, more resources to support learning and teaching in those environments, and more focused management of the factors that affect students' academic performance.

3) Classroom Management Practices and Student Outcomes

[Ebimiere et al. \(2020\)](#) investigated the connection between classroom management and students' academic performance in Rivers State. The findings of their study suggest a link between classroom discipline, practical instruction, and reward systems and higher student performance. This relationship occurred in contexts where student misbehaviour was reduced, creating a context in which students felt valued and regarded, therefore reducing the desire for misbehaviour in favour of perceived rewarding behaviour.

4) Impact of Classroom Management Techniques

Research in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, focused on how different management techniques might impact teaching and learning [Adeyemi \(2010\)](#). The results indicated that techniques such as punishment, motivation, reward, participation, and time management play a significant role in students' academic performance. As a result, it added that educators need to incorporate the various techniques for effective implementation of resident learning.

5) Teacher-Student Relationships and Academic Performance

[Adeyemi \(2010\)](#) discovered that positive teacher-student relationships were foundational to the academic achievement of students in his study on teacher-student relationships and student achievement in Nigeria. In this study, the development of positive, caring teacher-student relationships enables teachers to set academic goals for their students, creating a positive learning environment that ultimately leads to improved student achievement.

A few common themes from the studies reviewed on classroom management reflected the complexity of classroom management and its relationship with student engagement and student academic achievement. Historically, effective classroom management has been attributed to factors such as teacher competencies, classroom environment, management styles and processes, teacher-student

relationships, and improving classroom management through professional development and intervention can lead to positive outcomes for students in public secondary schools.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

An increasing number of empirical studies demonstrate the importance of active learning strategies in increasing student engagement and improving academic achievement in public secondary schools. Below is a summary of recent studies related to effective instructional practices:

1) Interactive Teaching Methods

[Omojemite \(2025\)](#) completed a quasi-experimental study in Southwest Nigeria, investigating the effect of using an interactive teaching approach on the performance of students in Social Studies and Civic Education. Those who used an interactive teaching approach had significantly better performance than the students in the two control groups, who were taught using a centered, or traditional approach. This demonstrates that the power of using interactive instructional approaches can enhance students' engagement and learning.

2) Cooperative Learning Strategies

[Bilesanmi-Awoderu \(2012\)](#) studied the impact of cooperative learning strategies on the academic achievement of Nigerian junior secondary students in Basic Science. Its quasi-experimental methodology showed that students who received cooperative learning had better academic achievement than students in traditional learning conditions. The authors emphasized the importance of collaborative learning environments in fostering student engagement and academic performance.

3) Mastery Learning Strategies

The study conducted by [Thomas and Inyang \(2021\)](#) provided evidence for mastery learning approaches affecting the academic achievement of students' learning of Social Studies in Akwa Ibom State. The study found that mastery learning fosters students' academic learning, as evidenced by the high level of understanding students demonstrated after studying, before advancing to the next topic area. This promotes a complex understanding and application of learning content.

4) Experiential Learning Strategies

[Muogbo \(2025\)](#) studied the effect of experiential learning strategies on the students' academic performance in Computer Studies. The results of the study indicated that combining hands-on and real-world experiences, via experiential learning with the curriculum, significantly improved engagement and academic performance. Experiential learning strategies promote active participation and allow students to apply their knowledge, helping foster a deeper level of engagement.

5) Brain-Based Learning Strategies

[Okatahi \(2010\)](#) explored the role of Based Learning strategies on the academic performance of secondary school students in Abuja. The findings indicated that Brain-Based Learning strategies follow the natural processes of learning and have a significant impact on students' academic performance. The emphasis was on creating a learning environment to enhance cognitive development.

The studies examined in this paper demonstrated that adopting different instructional strategies can enhance students' participation and academic performance in public secondary schools. The authors in these articles present empirical evidence that techniques such as interactive teaching, cooperative learning, mastery learning, experiential learning, and brain-based learning actively engage students and improve their academic performance. Ongoing professional development of teachers and a supportive school environment are essential for creating an entirely conducive learning environment in which multiple instructional strategies can cater to all students, thereby promoting active participation and academic excellence.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the classroom environment is an essential aspect of students' learning experiences and academic achievement in Kogi State public secondary schools. Characteristics of inadequate classroom management, such as the relationship between teacher and student, poorly presented learning environments, and inadequate learning resources, hurt engagement. Classroom conditions, such as overcrowded classrooms and insufficient instructional materials, replicate barriers to optimal learning. Through classroom management techniques such as modeling expectations, enhancing teacher-student relationships, and creating a space for active learning opportunities to increase student engagement, the overall success and performance of students will be supported. The study highlights the importance of implementing purposeful interventions, enhancing teacher competence, and allocating resources to create a suitable learning environment. Future studies are still needed to identify further specific and purposeful strategies for student learning and success, while also contributing to improved educational outcomes in Kogi State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Policymakers and educational leaders should prioritize improving the infrastructure in public secondary schools in Kogi State. Part of the improvement requires addressing overcrowded classrooms, providing additional teaching and learning materials, and improving the school buildings themselves. Adequate funding for instructional materials like textbooks, technologies, and visual learning aids may support effective classroom management.
- 2) Teachers should be supported with learning opportunities (both formally and informally) such as professional development focused on classroom management, lesson delivery using active learning strategies, and building positive relationships with students as people. Regular workshops, training on addressing specific classroom issues, and informal professional development among teachers help develop and maintain effective classroom management.
- 3) Clearly defined behaviours expected of students and teachers should be developed and communicated to the school community. The expectations should take root in the school climate and be enforced to support productive learning. Students should be involved in creating behavioural expectations so they own the guidelines and understand how these expectations support positive learning in the school.
- 4) Active learning strategies, including cooperative, problem-based, and project-based learning, should be regularly used in classrooms. When students are engaged in the learning process through active collaborative learning and critical thinking, it provides a productive way to engage students and improve their understanding. Schools should provide teachers with the knowledge and tools to develop these processes.
- 5) Governments should standardize strong and supportive teacher-student relationships, which allow students to feel more comfortable in a learning situation. Part of teacher education should include instruction in social and emotional skills, as well as conflict resolution, as it enables teachers to manage the classroom environment effectively. The creation of mentorship programs and single-minded relationships, or more frequent one-on-ones, all contribute to teacher-student relationships.
- 6) Educational policy makers should consider the appropriate inclusion of classroom management skills in the curricular learning framework and the teacher certification program. This will ensure all teachers are ready when they encounter a classroom with diverse learners. Also, policies supporting smaller class sizes and the equitable distribution of resources across schools in Kogi State must be recommended.
- 7) More research is needed to look closely into the special challenges that schools in Kogi State, especially in rural parts, face in coming up with specific classroom management practices. This is mainly due to the contextual challenges originating from community culture, socio-economic status, and other factors that might influence classroom processes and student outcomes.
- 8) Schools should also encourage local communities, parents, and other stakeholders to get involved in their educational process. Involvement with the community is a valuable source of support and an applicable network for teachers and students. Parents should also be encouraged to actively support their children's academic process and foster a positive attitude towards education.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

1) Implications for Education

The findings suggest that classroom management plays a critical role in shaping students' experiences in a learning context. For education professionals, it is essential to employ effective classroom management strategies that foster a learning environment conducive to productive learning through student participation, engagement, and achievement. The findings suggested that educators in Kogi State, and perhaps in other contexts, need to be mindful not only of transmitting knowledge but also of creating a positive classroom culture where learners can engage practically and where their contributions matter. Schools should consider incorporating these strategies into their teacher education programs, so students can be fully equipped to respond to the various classroom management situations they will encounter.

2) Implications for Policy

In this study, many of the challenges were attributed to inadequate infrastructure and resources, which hindered effective classroom management. The challenge here is for policymakers to respond to these findings by allocating more resources to improve classroom infrastructure, purchasing learning materials, and supporting professional development for teachers, particularly in effective classroom management and engaging students. The kind of policies that are needed include taking action to renovate the crumbling buildings, reducing room size and class size to permit at least the same opportunities for every child to access learning. Additionally, support the development of policy for improved professional development and learning for teachers, focusing on classroom management and student engagement, which may enhance learning in a space where teachers can truly capitalize on what

they learned during their professional development. Policies like these can ameliorate the quality of learning achieved by teachers and address the challenges that were

3) Implications for Practice

For practitioners in the field of education, the recommendations indicate a pressing need for the establishment of context-specific classroom management approaches. Teachers should clearly communicate their behavioral expectations and promote positive teacher-student relationships as a proactive strategy to reduce disruptive behaviors and increase student participation. Using active learning strategies and student-centered teaching practices should help foster higher levels of engagement, and schools should continually evaluate the classroom context and make changes when necessary to create a supportive learning environment.

4) Implications for Social Impact

These results have social implications, as they demonstrate how classroom management practices can positively influence the social development of students. Moreover, a productive, well-managed classroom supports student achievement and students' social-emotional development. Promoting an environment where students feel valued and are inspired can contribute to developing responsible, engaged citizens who can contribute positively to their society. Moreover, highlighting educational shortfalls within the context of Kogi State means there are also social implications, which include overcoming inequities and ensuring every student, regardless of their socio-economic status, has equitable access to quality education.

5) Implications for Research

These suggestions demonstrate the importance of carrying out further research within the area of classroom management, especially considering Kogi State and similar contexts. Future research could explore the impact of different classroom management techniques on specific groups of students, including disadvantaged students or special needs students. Moreover, future studies should consider the role of the teacher's competencies, the school's climate, and available resources in impacting student participation and performance, to help shed light on factors that lead to effective classroom management in constrained resource contexts.

6) Implications for Society

At a societal level, it is clear that there are broad-reaching consequences. Effective classroom management and a warmer learning environment can significantly impact students' overall educational experiences. They can help in creating a more educated, skilled workforce and in supporting the long-term growth of Kogi State and ultimately Nigeria. Once classrooms become active learning spaces with collaborative and respected teams of students, active and responsible students are likely to thrive as new members of society. So, to invest in education and any improvements to classroom environments is to invest in the future of humanity.

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