

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study examined classroom management practices as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study consists 21,272 SS2 students in 267 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of 1,064 SS2 students was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. The instrument 'Classroom Management Practices Questionnaire (CMPQ)' was used for data collection while Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was used to measure students' academic performance for this study. The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. The face validation was done using three experts while construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help SPSS v.26. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha technique and the average coefficient values of 0.83 for CMPQ was obtained and considered highly reliable and suitable for the study. Simple linear regression statistical tool was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that instructional methods and classroom motivation positively and significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded that teachers' classroom management practices are positive and significant predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State because it motivates students to learn, increases study engagement, promotes collaborative learning and improves teaching strategies for students to understand. Based on the findings, the study recommended that Post Primary School Service Commission in Anambra State should training and retraining teachers in classroom management to ensure that students and teachers are properly cultured on effective classroom activities that will bring up positive, inspiring, motivating and friendly practices in order to improve students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Keywords: Classroom Management Practices, Students' Academic Performance

Introduction

Secondary school education is the stage of learning that students undergo after primary school and before entering tertiary education. Its significance lies in its role as a bridge between primary and tertiary education, and in preparing individuals for productive lives within society. The realization of the goals of public secondary education is reflected in the academic performance of students.

Academic performance refers to a student's success in meeting short or long-term goals in education. Adinna and Anene (2024) noted that academic performance is knowledge attaining ability or degree of competence in school tasks usually measured by standardized tests and expressed in a grade or units based on students' performance. Okaforcha (2024) submitted that academic performance pertains to an individual's achievement in specific academic areas, such as Mathematics, English, or science. It signifies the learning outcomes of students who engage in education and practice and is evaluated by their cumulative grade point average which represents the average of their grades or marks (Ohamobi & Ezeaku, 2018). Through problem-solving in exams using questions and answer options, students engage in cognitive and mental processes of learning.

Academic performance is crucial for students as it influences their ability to accomplish their goals. Onyekwelu (2024) defined academic performance as the extent to which students, teachers or institutions achieve their educational goals. Nwanze et al. (2022) opined that academic performance was linked to the percentage of marks obtained by students in their most recent examinations. Academic performance signifies the knowledge gained and skills developed in school subjects, often assessed through test scores or grades assigned by teachers. Onyekwelu and Onuorah (2024) noted that academic performance can be measured using various types of tests, either verbal or written. Onyekwelu (2025) credited that academic performance is students' level of success in their educational pursuits. It reflects their mastery of subject content, application of acquired knowledge and overall commitment to learning. To determine academic performance, students must be regularly assessed and evaluated through tests and examinations to determine their knowledge and competence in various subjects. Although, Ezeaku and Obunike (2024) noted that examinations are not the sole means of assessing and evaluating knowledge, they have become the primary and most practical method of assessment in schools.

The field of academic performance covers a wide variety of educational outcomes that depends on the indicators used to measure it. Ilo and Unachukwu (2022) stated that there are very general indicators of academic performance such as procedural knowledge acquired in an educational system, more curricular-based criteria such as grades or on an educational test, and cumulative indicators of academic performance such as educational degrees and certificates. In almost all societies, either developed, or developmental, academic performance plays a vital role in every person's life. In Anambra State, academic performance for all educational systems goes through a general measure, that is, grades or (example, GPA) performed on several test or examinations (Adinna & Anokwute, 2023). Therefore, academic performance defines how one can take part and succeed in every educational system. Academic performance has become an index of child's future in this highly competitive world.

In Anambra State though it is an educationally advantaged state, yet some schools are not living up to expectations as some students perform poorly academically in Mathematics which they may lose confidence in themselves, become discouraged, feel isolated and disconnected from school, scores low in tests, and put in less effort in their studies and increase the risk of antisocial behaviours in the school which continues to worsen the situation.. This can lead to a cycle of failure in Mathematics. In support, Ohamobi et al. (2025) submitted that students who are frequently absent from school may feel anxious about falling behind or fitting in when they return to school. This anxiety can make it difficult for them to engage in Mathematics lesson. Students' academic performance in Mathematics was used because it is one of the compulsory subjects in school. Students who have difficulties with basic concepts may not function effectively, not only in Mathematics as a subject but in all their academic endeavours leading to poor academic performance among students.

Contextually, students' academic performance is a student's success in meeting academic expectations, such as getting good grades, participating in class and understanding the material. It is a measure of a student's ability to apply knowledge, engage with their studies and master subject matter. The responsibility of imparting knowledge revolves around the teacher who plans, organizes and implements the teaching learning process. Thus for teachers to hold learners together, they require proper skills in classroom management.

Classroom management is described as procedures that stimulates and maintains an orderly learning environment. Indeed, the most crucial objectives of a teacher are to organize the classroom well (Onyekwelu, 2025). Classroom management refers to actions taken to create and maintain a learning environment conducive to successful instruction through arranging the physical environment, establishing rules and procedures, maintaining students' attention to lessons and engagement in activities (Okafor & Enemuo, 2024). The purpose of classroom management is to encourage students towards learning and to promote their positive behaviours. Okafor and Enemuo (2024) further argued that positive classroom management contributes to enhanced academic performances of students, increased teacher efficacy, improved students behaviour and teachers teaching. Mbanugo et al. (2024) considered classroom management not only related to management of students' behaviour but also to lesson planning of teacher, organizing of the materials, controlling of behaviours, goal based learning process, supportive atmosphere and maintaining a highly effective teaching and learning experiences within classrooms.

Teachers' classroom management is significant in determining students' academic success. In a view of Ogundeji et al. (2024), teachers' classroom management referred to actions and strategies that teachers use in the classroom to solve the problem of order in the classrooms creditably by preparing good lesson notes, making judicious use of available learning resources, making use of appropriate teaching methodology, maintaining discipline and assessing or evaluating students with the target of achieving objectives. Ogundeji et al. (2024) further stated that classroom management is the most neglected area in our secondary schools, and that the success or failure of any teaching and learning process depends to a large extent on the way classrooms are managed. Failure to effectively manage the classroom could have an overall negative influence on the entire school, most especially in terms of sound academic performance of the school. When teachers talk about classroom management, one of the first things that comes to mind is what characterized classroom orderliness and objectives attainment in term of maintenance of discipline, teaching methodology, instructional material, lesson plan, and student evaluation (Nwipko et al., 2024). The way a teacher successfully manages these characteristic would go a long way in the academic performance of students.

For effective teaching and learning and excellent academic performance the teacher adopts certain classroom management practices. Obiekwe (2020) noted that classroom management practices is a set of strategies used by teachers to increase students' cooperation and engagement and to decrease disruptive behaviour, thus keeping an appropriate learning environment. Classroom management practices according to Nwankwoala (2022) refers to all the things a teacher must do and the expected ways and procedures of doing them to Foster students involvement and cooperation in classroom activities and to establish a productive working environment. Assimonye et al. (2023) in his contribution sees classroom management practices as the methods adopted by teachers to ensure decorum in the classroom thus creating a healthy and conducive atmosphere for learning. There are many classroom management practices used by teacher to effectively teach and manage students. Ekwelunde et al. (2023) enumerated classroom management practices to include classroom arrangement, classroom communication, instructional method, disciplinary measures/ punishment and classroom motivation. Nwipko et al. (2024) included class sitting arrangement, instructional method, students' engagement, time management, classroom communication, sustenance of students' interest and classroom motivation as teachers' classroom management practices. Okafor and Enemuo (2024) outlined classroom management practices to include classroom communication, class control, sitting arrangement, time management, instructional method, instructional supervision and classroom motivation.

Contextually, the classroom management practices are actions taken by teachers in the classroom to help students behave well in the classroom and to facilitate teaching and learning process in the classroom. It is the practices and techniques that teachers use to facilitate instructions and make sure that students are learning effectively in a smooth classroom environment. It is the actions that a teacher takes to create and maintain a learning environment that is conducive to successful instruction. In this study, the classroom management practices were delimited to instructional method and classroom motivation.

Instructional methods are referred to the methods teachers use in the classroom to teach the desired learning to students. Nwankwoala (2022) noted that instructional methods are strategies that teachers use to create learning environments and specify the activities that will take place during a lesson. They can help teachers create dynamic learning environments. Ekwelunde et al. (2023) stated that the selection of a teaching method is determined by many causes which include the content, the objectives teacher aims to achieve, availability of instructional materials and the ability of the teacher to improvise teaching materials. Instructional methods used change from school to school, depending on the knowledge or skills that are being taught which can be influenced by the attitude and interest of the students. Akuezilo and Egenti (2024) opined that instructional methods are kinds of instructional ways or activities used to guide the facilitation of learning in each phase of the instructional process. It is an important aspect of teaching and learning to determine the activities of teachers and students. Appropriate instructional methods influence many motivational variables of learners such as a tendency to think critically. For instructional methods chosen to be effective the students should be eager and motivated to learn.

Motivation plays a significant role in students' learning. Students with high motivation levels tend to have the best learning outcomes. Okafor and Enemuo (2024) disclosed that motivation in the classroom is the willingness and desire of a student to learn. It can be measured by a student's effort, choice, persistence, and level of achievement. The higher these indicators are, the higher a student's motivation. Motivation gives insight into what drives students to behave the way they do and spurs them to attain a goal. It equally signifies a driving force, a kind of stimulus, an incentive or interest that spurs a teacher into action. Mbanugo et al. (2024) submitted that students may be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to do well in school. If they are intrinsically motivated, they have an internal desire to learn something and are not learning it for a reward of any kind. Extrinsically motivated students are motivated to learn by an outside reward-this may be praise, allowance, gifts among others. These measures could be in the form of gifts of different kinds, praises and words of encouragement to induce participation and improved academic performance.

Academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State seems to be dwindling. Information gathered from Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC), Awka showed a decline in the performance rate of students in both internal and external examination from 2018-2020 as 40%, 36% and 32% respectively (Obidile et al., 2022). Similarly, Okafor and Enemuo (2024) stated that the academic performance of students in Mathematics among public secondary schools in Anambra State has consistently been low over a period. The low academic performance in Mathematics translates to low academic performance generally since Mathematics is one of the core subjects required for students to be promoted into a higher class and to further their education.

The prevalence of fluctuating performance of some secondary school students in some subjects has dimmed the hopes and aspirations of some students in progressing into higher institutions. The direct fallout of this is dashing the great expectations of parents and other stakeholders in education. Accusing fingers have been pointed at the school system for being responsible while the school shifts the blame to the students, government and parents. Despite the laudable initiatives by Anambra State government to improve the standard of education both in the area of human and material resources, it seems the efforts have proved to be counterproductive as decline in academic performance of students still persists and this has become a source of worry to educational stakeholders. One suspects that this unsatisfactory academic performance of student may be attributed to teachers' lack of requisite competencies especially in the area of classroom management. Teachers' deficiency in good classroom management practices manifests in students' disruptive behaviours such as noise making, sleeping in class, irrelevant discussions, lack of interest in lessons, all these has led to poor learning which negatively affects their performance in test and exams. The fluctuating performance of some students often experienced in some public secondary schools in Anambra State might be attributed not only to teachers' classroom management practices. In view of the above problems, the researcher examined classroom management practices as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary school in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine classroom management practices as predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the predictive value of instructional method on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. ascertain the predictive value of classroom motivation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of instructional materials on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of classroom motivation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Instructional methods do not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Classroom motivation does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Method

The study was carried out in Anambra State. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study consist 21,272 SS2 students in 267 public secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of 1,064 SS2 students was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure comprising proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used for the

study. The instrument 'Classroom Management Practices Questionnaire (CMPQ)' was used for data collection while Students' Academic Performance Scores (SAPS) was used to measure students' academic performance for this study. The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. The face validation was done using three experts while construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help SPSS v.26. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha technique and the average coefficient values of 0.83 for CMPQ was obtained and considered highly reliable and suitable for the study. Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researcher together with six research assistants. Out of 1,064 copies of the instrument administered, 836(79%) of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Simple linear regression statistical tool was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

Research Question One: What is the predictive value of instructional method on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of simple regression analysis on the predictive value of instructional method on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β
Constant	27.413	5.326	
Instructional Methods	0.591	0.375	0.548
R	0.548		
R ²	0.509		
Adj. R ²	0.476		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 1 indicated that the regression line has a positive intercept as presented by the constant value of 27.413. This means that if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero) at the expense of teachers' instructional methods, students' academic performance will be valued at 27%. The analysis showed that instructional methods positively predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.548$). However, the standardized beta is also values at $\beta = 0.548$ which revealed that teachers' instructional method is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in teachers' instructional method led to 0.548(55%) increase in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Thus, the positive prediction of teachers' instructional methods on students' academic performance means that students' academic performance moderately depends on teachers' instructional methods in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.509 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 51% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in teachers' instructional method. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.476 indicating that 48% of the total variation in students' academic performance was explained by teachers' instructional method. Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of teachers' instructional method is moderately depends on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Two: What is the predictive value of classroom motivation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of simple regression analysis on the predictive value of classroom motivation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β
Constant	30.882	4.758	
Classroom Motivation	0.634	0.325	0.618
R	0.618		
R ²	0.532		
Adj. R ²	0.496		

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 3 indicated that the regression line has a positive intercept as presented by the constant value of 30.882. This means that if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero) at the expense of classroom motivation, students' academic performance will be valued at 31%. The analysis showed that classroom motivation positively predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ($R = 0.618$). More so, the standardized beta is also values at $\beta = 0.618$ which revealed that classroom motivation is a positive predictor of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit rise in classroom motivation led to 0.618(62%) rise in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Thus, the positive prediction of classroom motivation on students' academic performance means that students' academic performance highly depends on classroom motivation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.532 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 53% of the variations in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in teachers' classroom motivation. The adjusted R^2 supported the claim of the R^2 with a value of 0.496 indicating that 50% of the total variation in students' academic performance was explained by classroom motivation. Thus, adjusted R^2 supports the statement that the explanatory power of classroom motivation is moderately depends on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Instructional methods do not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Test of significance on the simple regression analysis on significant predication of instructional methods on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β	t-value	p-value
Constant	27.413	5.326		22.531	0.000
Instructional Methods	0.591	0.375	0.548	20.832	0.000

R	0.548	
R ²	0.509	
Adj. R ²	0.476	
F	36.584	0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 3 showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.548 while the R² is 0.509 and Adjust R² is 0.476. The F-ratio associated with regression is 36.584, the t-test is 20.832 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that instructional methods do not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that instructional methods significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Classroom motivation does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Test of significance on the simple regression analysis on significant predication of classroom motivation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State

	Unstandardized β	Std. Dev. β	Standardized β	t- value	p- value
Constant	30.882	4.758		24.906	0.000
Classroom Motivation	0.634	0.325	0.618	21.351	0.000
R	0.618				
R ²	0.532				
Adj. R ²	0.496				
F	38.527				0.000

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 4 showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.618 while the R² is 0.532 and Adjust R² is 0.496. The F-ratio associated with regression is 38.527, the t-test is 21.351 and the P-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that classroom motivation does not significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that classroom motivation significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of the Findings

Findings on the predictive value of instructional methods on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that instructional methods has a positive predictive value of 0.548(55%) on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that increase in instructional methods will bring about 55% increases in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed that instructional methods significantly predict students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding is in consonance with the findings of Ayoro et al. (2023) that teachers' application of instructional methods in the classroom by making use of discussion and demonstration methods in delivering lessons enable students understands each lesson and invariably, improve their academic performance. Similarly, Nwankwoala (2022) findings indicated that teachers' use of instructional

methods help to positively shape the academic performance of students in secondary schools. Ekwelunde et al. (2023) in their findings added that instructional methods by teachers encourage collaborative learning in the classroom learning which has significant impact on academic performance of students in secondary schools. Akuezulo and Egenti (2024) findings revealed that teachers' use of teaching aid in delivering lessons enable students have practical knowledge of the lesson. Akuezulo and Egenti (2024) further unveiled that teachers making use of questioning during teaching and learning help to check students' understanding of lessons being taught. Teaching methods help students: master the content of the course, learn how to apply the content in particular contexts. Nwikpo *et al.* (2024) also corroborated that students' academic performance is affected by study methods and the relationships established with teachers. Nwikpo *et al.* added that for this reason, relationship management is becoming increasingly important in schools as it help students to learn from others and make them to actively participate more in classroom activities for improved academic performance.

Findings on the predictive value of classroom motivation on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State revealed that classroom motivation has a positive predictive value of 0.618(62%) on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that increase in classroom motivation will bring about 62% increases in students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed that classroom motivation significantly predicts students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The findings are in line with the findings of Okafor (2022) that academic motivation has a positive relationship with the academic performance of students. This is because motivated students are more likely to succeed, and are less likely to drop out. In the words of Assimonye et al. (2023), classroom motivation helps students to develop critical thinking and creativity skills, and build self-confidence. Nwikpo et al. (2024) findings also indicated classroom motivation will increase students' persistence, enhance cognitive processes and lead to improved performance in the schools. Similarly, Mbanugo et al. (2024) findings showed that students who are motivated are more likely to set goals and work toward achieving those goals. Students are more likely to have higher performance and learn more when they are motivated. Hence, classroom motivation adopted by teachers in school towards the students can spur students into developing interest in both the curricular and extra-curricular activities presented to them at their school. The ripple effect of the interest will lead to academic performance of the students.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, teachers' classroom management practices are driving forces that determine the academic performance of students. Hence, the study concluded that teachers' classroom management practices are positive and significant predictors of students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State because it motivates students to learn, increases study engagement, promotes collaborative learning and improves teaching strategies for students to understand.

Recommendations

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

1. Post Primary School Service Commission in Anambra State should training and retraining teachers in classroom management to ensure that students and teachers are properly cultured on effective classroom activities that will bring up positive, inspiring, motivating and friendly practices in order to improve students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

2. Secondary school teachers should be allowed to involve in the curriculum planning and implementation, in order to make them bring in students centered methods/strategies as it is more likely to produce self reliant students than the traditional approach.

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