

DISRUPTIVE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOURS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS: INTERVENTION IMPERATIVE

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ABSTRACT

It seems that at all levels of education especially primary school level, classroom disruptive behaviors are considered to be a very serious problem to their educators. This is because the society attached great value to discipline and this discipline must be imparted into the children at very tender stage in life. These disruptive behaviours which exist within the classrooms if viewed closely are normal developmental behaviors of children but if not addressed properly will pose a great problem to teaching and learning. This is the challenge that faced this study which examined the causes of classroom disruptive behaviours among primary school pupils in Nsukka East Local Education Authority and intervention measures needed. It is expected that the result of this study would be useful to all stakeholders in education in their efforts to put an end to the problems of pupils' indiscipline in the society in general and classroom disruptive behaviours in particular for the achievement of national educational goals. The study used descriptive survey research design. A sampled population of *ninety*- nine (99) teachers was drawn using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for collection of data was a 30 item researchers constructed questionnaire titled "Disruptive Classroom Behaviour Questionnaire" (DCBQ). The questionnaire was validated by two professionals in department of Early Childhood and Primary Education of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Mean and standard deviation were used for the collation of data generated. The study found out that all the stake holders in education contributed in one way or the other in causing classroom disruptive behaviours among primary school pupils. The findings among others indicated that administrators lack of provision of conducive learning environment, the teachers not using age appropriate teaching methods, the pupils not modeling the required conduct and parents not providing required learning materials for the children among others are some of the causes. The researchers therefore concluded that for classroom disruptive behaviours to be prevented and controlled, all stake holders should join hands together. The researchers in line with the findings recommended among others that, the government through the school administrators should provide conducive learning environment for both the pupils and the teachers and the parents should ensure that their children are provided with adequate learning materials.

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KEYWORDS: Destructive, Classroom, Behavior, Children, Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Every human sphere exhibits a particular behaviour that emanates from it. Classrooms have their own expected behaviours. Such classroom behaviors vary from class to class and they are of two parts: Negative and Positive behaviours. Negative when it affects the easy flow of teaching and learning. Some examples of negative behaviors are disobedient to teachers, fighting, cheating in class, pranks, stealing etc while positive behaviors when it promotes teaching and learning. Some examples are completing home work, being attentive in class, obedience, attending school on time, paying attention in class, modeling the expected conduct among others. Such negative classroom behaviours could be called different names, ranging from classroom misbehaviours, maladaptive behaviours or disruptive

behaviours or negative classroom behaviours. For this study, such misbehaviours will be called disruptive classroom behaviours.

Surveys have generally indicated that the issue of disruptive classroom behaviours has become progressively more important to schools (Hood and Hood 2001, Arbuckle and Little 2004 and Coombe, 2000). This is because teachers, dealing with students disruptive behaviors in the classrooms take up a considerable proportion of teaching time, which in turn affects the quality of the student's learning outcome. In order to solve a problem, the root of the problem is the key to the solution. That is to say that if the reasons why students disruptive behaviours are understood, there will be a better position to create conditions in which there is less need or fewer

opportunities for such behaviour (Robertson, 2004).

Teachers are the managers of the classrooms and the issue of controlling such disruptive behaviours depends on the teacher's knowledge on classroom management. Classroom management is teacher centered. The extent and frequency of classroom disruptive behaviours depends on the teacher's ability to manage the class. This shows that efficient or poor management of the classrooms during teaching and learning depends on the teacher. In other words the teacher's lack of effective classroom management can lead to increase in classroom disruptive behavior which affects teaching and learning. Classroom management involves management of pupils' behaviour to prevent or control disruptive behaviours. Disruptive classroom behaviours according to Arbuckle and Little (2004) are the myriad activities which disrupt and impede the teaching and learning processes and intimidate others or oversteps society's standard of moral, ethical and legal behaviour. They are such negative disruptive attitudes of students that affect the smooth running of teaching and learning. Such disruptive behaviors are, showing off, pranks, inappropriate noise, playing with objects, note passing, excessive lateness, alcohol abuse, sleeping in the class, promiscuity, dodging class, riots, smoking, off task and many others.

Children disruptive behaviors cannot be restricted to the classrooms alone, it has to be linked up to all the experiences the child has been exposed to such as the home, environment, society, school, peer group and many others. This is why McManus (2000) points out that troublesome behaviour cannot be understood without considering it in several spheres: individual, family, classroom, school, community and the society at large. Pupil's disruptive behaviour in the classroom cannot be isolated from the fact that they originated from the society. This is because children who have not formed a proper judgment about right behaviour because of their age and social experience normally tend to imitate the behaviours around them. Social learning theory proposed that much behaviour develop as a result of imitating what other people do, which is a key concept in understanding how children develop their knowledge of social role and their sense of identity in school (Arbuckle and Little, 2004). This could be seen in the area of children viewing of violent programmes in the television. This can link to their subsequent aggressive behaviours which they carry to the classrooms.

When the causes of such problems are traced, the suitable actions the teachers will take to prevent or control the misbehavior will be easier. The aim of this paper is to discuss the factors responsible for student's classroom disruptive behaviors. The paper will also examine the strategies the teachers will use to prevent and control such disruptive classroom behaviours for positive learning outcome. The

findings of the study will help the teachers to exercise good classroom control which will help them to achieve the millennium development goal of "Education for All" come 20-20-20.

Causes of pupils' classroom disruptive behaviours;

There are certain factors that contribute to children misbehaviors in the classrooms. Such factors could be traced to different areas that build up the child's learning experiences as earlier mentioned. Such factor as nature of classroom environment is very important. A classroom not designed for optimal learning may contribute to a student's disruptive behaviour. Poor setting arrangement, high temperature in the classroom, size of the classroom, and nature of the furniture provided for the children may contribute to discipline issues in the classroom. As Kohn (2006) and Lewis (2001) suggested that teachers should take time to evaluate the classroom climate that they have created. They added that teachers should create a caring and safe learning environment for this provides the teacher with a better opportunity to enhance learning and less chance for discipline issues. The school administrators should ensure that conducive learning environment is provided for the children to learn. When the children are comfortable in class, the occurrence of such disruptive behaviours will be minimal if not controlled.

Problems associated with curriculum may be another cause of disruptive behaviours in the classrooms. When the child is not provided with age appropriate curriculum that will be challenging to the child, it may make the learner to be mentally withdrawn out of frustration and boredom may set in resulting to manifestations of such disruptive behaviours. Heward (2003) advised that a slow pace of instruction can actually cause significant behaviour problems, because the pupils become bored and distracted. He further added that teachers led instruction should be delivered at a sufficiently brisk pace to hold the pupils' attention. This will help the pupils to cover more academic materials more quickly, accelerating their learning. The teacher has to ensure that the curriculum is age appropriate to avoid the pupils finding the assigned work too easy or too difficult (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).

Another factor that can cause classroom disruptive behaviours is learning difficulties among the children. This is because there is a strong connection between learning difficulties and behavior problems. Long (2000) is of the views that early behaviour problems that prevent children from being involved with school work will limit their progress with literacy skills. This issue has been proved from the result of study carried out by McGee et al (1986) as cited by Long (2000), where he used 925 boys from 5-11 year old pupils. The main finding was that those

children who had early behaviour problems at age 5 years particularly had poor concentration and attention. As they become older, the type of their behaviour difficulties changed and they become more anti social. Sometimes the pupils will experience lack of confidence on their own part. This if not attended to by the teacher will cause a disciplinary issue in the class.

The teacher's actions in the classroom could be another cause of disruptive behaviours. When a teacher fails to evaluate himself as it concerns the teaching methods used, the mastering of subject matter and the person of a teacher, these things might not be acceptable to the pupils and such disruptive behaviours might start off. To put it in a more plain language when the teacher's action does not suit the children, this might be a serious issue of indiscipline in the classroom. Hood and Hood (2001) acknowledged that teachers may be the problem when management issues exits in the classrooms. Ashley(2008) added that teachers self evaluation help them to articulate their teaching strategies and approaches to classroom management. Kyriacou (2002) suggests that "all teachers need to be aware of how their behaviors can hinder rather than facilitate good behavior in the classroom. Fontana (2008) gives six issues which influence the degree to which a teacher is able to exercise the necessary class control. These are: Physical appearance, voice, the way in which the teacher present the lesson, lesson preparation and organization, the way in which teacher talk to children, the way in which threats, rewards and punishments are administered.

The teachers' personality also plays an important role in the classroom. A teacher who is kind, warm and judges the pupils behavior fairly can easily earn the respect from the pupils and build a positive relationship with the children. On the other hands, a teacher unfair or inappropriate action can provoke pupils disruptive behaviour .The teacher with the help of the pupils should set the class limit of acceptable conduct regarding lateness to class, sleeping in class, use of cell phone, eating in class and others . This will make the pupils to comply with the set limits thereby limiting the occurrence of disruptive behaviours. According to Clement et al(2006),student welcome the opportunity to participate in setting class limit and this empowers them to take control of their learning environment .

Another important issue to consider as one of the causes of disruptive classroom behaviour is poor teacher pupil relationship. Kyriacou (2000) further explained that in other to control discipline in classrooms, a teacher must try to make his authority be acceptable by the pupils. A positive friendship must be built upon the respect of the pupils. The right way is trying to build a positive relationship after teacher's authority has been accepted by the pupils.

Statement of the Problem

It seems that at all levels of education especially primary school level, classroom disruptive behaviors are considered to be a very serious problem to their educators. This is because the society attached great value to discipline and this discipline must be imparted into the children at very tender stage in life .These disruptive behaviours which exist within the classrooms if viewed closely are normal developmental behaviors of children but if not addressed properly will pose a great problem to teaching and learning .This is the challenge that faced this study which examined causes of classroom disruptive behaviours among primary school pupils in Nsukka East Local Education Authority and intervention measures needed. It is expected that the result of this study would be useful all stakeholders in education in their efforts to put an end to the problems of pupils' indiscipline in the society in general and classroom disruptive behaviours in particular for the achievement of national educational goals .

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of classroom disruptive behaviours among primary school pupils in Nsukka north local education Authority?
2. What are the intervention measures to classroom disruptive behaviours among primary school pupils in Nsukka north local education Authority?

METHODOLOGY

This study which investigated the disruptive classroom behaviours among primary school pupils in Nsukka east local education authority used descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was made up of all the 225 public primary school teachers in 38 primary schools within Nsukka east local education authority. A sample of sixty (60) teachers and head teachers were drawn from 38 primary schools using stratified random sampling technique. this is to ensure equal representation. The instrument used was a 30 item researcher's constructed questionnaire titled "Disruptive Classroom Behaviour" (DCB). The questionnaire was arranged in two sections of 15 items each to answer the two research questions that guided the study. Section A sought information on causes of classroom disruptive behaviours while section B addressed the intervention measures for preventing and controlling such disruptive behaviours. The instrument was validated by two professionals in Early Childhood and primary Education Department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Their comments were used in modifying the instrument. The instrument was tested for reliability in Nsukka north local education authority not used in this study. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the items of the questionnaire and the reliability coefficient obtained

was 0.81% which shows that the questionnaire was reliable for what it was designed for. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard

deviation. A mean of 2.50 and above indicated acceptance while a mean below 2.50 indicated rejection.

Presentation of data

Table 1: Teachers ‘mean ratings on the possible causes of pupil’s classroom disruptive behaviours in Nsukka local education Authority

	Mean	SD	Decision
Classroom disruptive behaviours occur when there is :			
1	3.12	0.94	A
2	3.04	0.81	A
3	2.73	1.01	A
4	2.90	1.07	A
5	2.87	0.93	A
6	3.04	0.81	A
7	3.11	0.88	A
8	2.81	0.93	A
9	2.91	0.97	A
10	2.62	0.95	A
11	3.38	0.71	A
12			
	3.27	0.75	A
13	3.06	0.95	A
14			
	3.25	0.95	A
15	3.04	0.91	A
	2.81		

The teachers’ average mean score of 2.81 which is above the decision rule of 2.50 shows that the teachers agreed that all the items listed above contribute to classroom disruptive behaviour in

primary schools in Nsukka local education authority. The SD scores attest to that

Table 2: Teachers’ mean ratings on the intervention measures to pupil’s classroom disruptive behaviours in Nsukka north local education Authority

	Mean	SD*	Decision
To control and prevent pupils classroom disruptive behaviours,the teacher should :			
16	3.39	0.77	A
17	3.42	0.76	A
18	3.13	0.98	A
19	3.06	1.00	A
20	3.33	0.70	A
21	3.25	0.89	A
22	3.39	0.85	A
23	3.32	0.81	A
24	3.37	0.77	A
25	3.20	0.87	A
26	3.21	0.85	A
27	2.79	0.87	A
28.	3.16	0.90	A
29	3.12	0.88	A
30	3.48	0.69	A
	3.24		

*SD= Standard Deviation

The teachers’ average mean score of 3.24 which is above the decision rule of 2.50 shows that the teachers agreed that all the items listed above from no 16-30 are possible intervention measures to classroom disruptive behaviour in primary schools in Nsukka north local education authority .The SD scores also attest to that

behaviour among primary school pupils. Such factors as poor teacher- pupil relationship, no class limit of acceptable conduct set, use of poor teaching method ,use of age inappropriate curriculum and when the pupils find the assignment given to them too difficult or too easy. This assertion is in support of the findings of Gettinger &Seibert(2002) and Heward(2003) who is of the view that the teacher has to ensure that the curriculum is age appropriate to avoid the pupils finding the assigned work too easy or too difficult .

DISCUSSIONS

The teachers ratings on table 1 with average mean score of 2.81 shows that they agreed that all the items from 1-15 are possible causes of classroom disruptive

The researchers discovered lack of positive classroom environment, partiality in the treatment of the pupils by the teacher and boredom in the classroom as some other causes of disruptive classroom behaviours. This is line with the earlier findings of Kohn (2006) and Lewis (2001) who suggested that teachers should take time to evaluate the classroom climate that they have created. Other discovered causes of pupils disruptive behaviours by this study are lack of care and safety for students, poor class room control by the teacher, and when the teacher is not a master of content, negative role model of required behaviour and poor use of punishment and reward .This finding is in line with the views of Hood and Hood (2001) that teachers may be the problem when management issues exits in the classrooms. Ashley(2008) added that teachers self evaluation help them to articulate their teaching strategies and approaches to classroom management.

The teachers ratings on table 2 with average mean score of 3.24 indicated that all the items which include among others role modeling the required behaviour for the pupils to emulate, stating class limit of acceptable conduct with the pupils, use of active learning techniques to prevent inattentiveness, use of age appropriate curriculum to teach, establishing good relationship with the pupils, creating a warm classroom atmosphere, applying the use of humors in the classroom when necessary, being approachable, use of good and appropriate teaching methods, learning the names of students, showing interest in pupils' lives and learning and the teacher being knowledgeable are possible intervention measures to prevent and control pupils classroom disruptive behaviours. This findings is in support of the earlier findings of Gettinger &Seibert(2002), Kohn (2006) , Lewis (2001) and Heward(2003) who are of the views that when the teachers ensure that the curriculum is age appropriate to avoid the pupils finding the assigned work too easy or too difficult, classroom conducive for the pupils, teachers being good role models of acceptable conduct, teachers being approachable, teachers showing interest in pupils' lives and learning and occasionally assessing their teaching methods to make sure they are age appropriate classroom disruptive behaviours could be prevented and controlled. Kyriacou (2000) further explained that in other to control discipline in classrooms, a teacher must try to make his authority be acceptable by the pupils. A positive friendship must be built upon the respect of the pupils.

CONCLUSION

From this study, the researchers discovered that classroom disruptive behaviours give teachers lots of problems to combat and this leads to in effective teaching and learning especially in the primary schools. Such disruptive behaviours are caused by all the stakeholders in education in one way or the other. The administrators not providing conducive

classrooms and lack of age appropriate curriculum, by the teachers not using age appropriate teaching methods and poor teacher pupil relationships , by the pupils not modeling the required conduct and lack of confidence on themselves and by parents not providing required learning materials for the children among others are possible causes of classroom disruptive behaviours . To prevent and control these misbehaviours and achieve the national educational objectives, the researchers concluded that all the stakeholders in education should join hands together to bring an end to such ugly problems. This if effectively done will help in achievement of millennium development goal of ensuring quality education for sustainable development of every child.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommended that:

- ◆ Both the home and school environment should be made exciting and conducive for learning to the children.
- ◆ Cordial relationship should exist between parents and school authorities through active membership of parent's teachers association (PTA) ,this will ensure a close monitoring of the pupils behaviours with the teachers .
- ◆ All primary schools should have a competent professional guidance counselor.
- ◆ Classroom management could form part of the major themes in teachers' annual workshops to be organized by ministry of education.
- ◆ The government through the administrators should provide adequate teaching learning facilities.
- ◆ The parents should ensure that their children are provided with adequate learning materials to avoid further distractions.

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