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ASSESSING THE NEXUS BETWEEN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between classroom management strategies and academic performance of students in public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between classroom discipline strategy, motivational strategy, and academic performance of students. Two research hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted. The population comprised 239 primary school students in 24 public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area. Census method was used to involve the entire population. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled "Classroom Management Strategies and Students Academic Performance Questionnaire (CMSSAPQ)." The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Management and the Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Faculty of Educational Foundations Studies, University of Calabar. Its reliability coefficient of 0.80 was established using Cronbach's Alpha method. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between classroom discipline strategy, motivational strategy, and academic performance of students in public primary schools in the study area. The study concluded that effective classroom management strategies are significantly associated with improved academic performance among primary school students. The findings underscore the importance of supportive classroom management practices in promoting positive learning outcomes. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other measures, that primary school administrators should provide adequate guidance to teachers in maintaining fair, consistent, and appropriate

disciplinary practices in the classroom. Such practices will greatly enhance students' academic performance.

Keywords: Classroom Management Strategies; Classroom Discipline; Motivational Strategy; Academic Performance; Primary Schools

Introduction

Globally, education is regarded as an important instrument for individual development and national progress. In Nigeria, primary education is structurally divided into two broad categories: lower primary education, which covers Primary One to Primary Three, and upper primary education, which comprises Primary Four to Primary Six. Under the current 9-3-4 educational structure, primary education spans six years and serves as the foundation of basic education in the country. According to the *National Policy on Education* (2013), primary education is designed to facilitate a smooth transition from home to school, provide adequate care and supervision for children, and promote cooperation and teamwork among learners. One of the goals of primary education is to ensure literacy and numeracy among the learners. As such, Ejilibe and Ebeh (2026) maintain that educational institutions are increasingly adopting digital learning facilities to enhance instructional delivery, improve communication, facilitate collaboration, and support evidence-based decision-making. Beyond classroom instruction, primary education seeks to stimulate children's creativity and inquisitive nature through activities such as nature exploration, music, art, and the use of instructional materials, including toys, letters, colours, and shapes (Madukwe et al., 2024). Consequently, parents and guardians expect improved academic performance from their children as a reflection of the substantial financial investments they make in their education.

Academic performance in the context of this study refers to the extent to which learners demonstrate the knowledge, skills, competencies, and understanding expected to be acquired through the teaching–learning process. It is an important indicator of the extent to which primary education achieves its intended aims and objectives. Akinboye, as cited in Nwankwoala (2021), conceptualised academic performance as the overall level of a student's scholastic achievement as demonstrated through achievement tests. Similarly, Akosubo-Ogori et al. (2020) defined academic performance as the degree to which a student, teacher, or educational institution achieves its short-term or long-term educational goals. At the primary school level, learners' academic performance may be evaluated through tests, assignments, continuous assessment, and examination results.

These assessment methods provide evidence of learners' level of understanding, competence, and ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills in relevant situations. Several educational and environmental factors may influence learners' academic performance. These include the quality of instruction, availability and adequacy of instructional materials, classroom conditions, and the overall conduciveness of the school

environment. Therefore, academic performance provides a useful basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching–learning process and determining the extent to which primary education equips learners with the foundational knowledge, skills, and competencies required for subsequent levels of education and lifelong learning.

Students' academic performance has remained a major concern among education stakeholders, particularly because many learners continue to perform below expected academic standards. Studies have reported persistent challenges in pupils' achievement in core subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, and Basic Science in Nigerian primary schools. Poor reading habits have also been identified as an important factor contributing to low academic achievement among primary school pupils (Adeyemi, 2014; Akosubo-Ogori et al., 2020; Chizoba, 2024; Egodi & Ebere, 2016). These challenges are particularly significant at the primary school level because weaknesses in foundational literacy and numeracy can affect pupils' ability to cope successfully with subsequent stages of education.

The concern over pupils' poor academic performance is particularly evident in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Observations suggest that some pupils experience difficulties with basic learning tasks, such as reading simple texts, pronouncing words correctly, writing coherent sentences, solving elementary mathematical problems, and expressing themselves clearly at a level appropriate to their classes. In some cases, pupils are promoted to higher classes without adequately developing essential foundational skills in literacy and numeracy. Parents have also expressed concerns that, despite their efforts to ensure that their children attend school regularly, many pupils continue to record unsatisfactory examination results. If these challenges persist without appropriate intervention, they may diminish pupils' interest in schooling and leave them inadequately prepared for secondary education. In an attempt to address the problem, measures such as extra lessons, supervision of teachers, regular assessments, provision of instructional materials, and workshops for teachers have been introduced. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, the problem of poor academic performance among pupils still persists in the study area.

The persistent nature of these challenges suggests the need to examine factors within the school environment that may influence pupils' academic performance. One such factor is classroom management strategies. When appropriately implemented, effective classroom management strategies may enhance learners' engagement, concentration, participation, and ultimately their academic performance. Given this background it becomes necessary raise this question: what is the relationship between classroom management strategies and students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. Therefore, examining the relationship between classroom management strategies and students' academic performance in public primary schools in the study area is considered important.

In the context of this study, classroom management strategies refer to the techniques and practices teachers employ to organise the classroom environment. It helps teachers to establish appropriate rules and routines, sustain pupils' attention, manage disruptive behaviour, encourage active participation, and create a supportive atmosphere that promotes effective teaching and learning. Owusu et al. (2021) describe it as the range of techniques and skills teachers use to maintain organised, orderly, attentive, focused, and academically productive classrooms. The responsibilities of school teachers have become increasingly complex due to continuous educational reforms, technological innovations, globalization, and the changing expectations of society (Ejilibe & Ebeh, 2026). Effective classroom management is essential for creating an environment in which teaching and learning can take place successfully. Ekere, as cited in Owusu et al. (2021), observed that poorly managed classrooms can disrupt the teaching–learning process and negatively affect pupils' academic performance.

Similarly, Oppong-Sekyere and Akpalu (2013) emphasised the importance of effective classroom management in achieving successful teaching and learning outcomes. Efficient management processes usually have profound effect on productivity levels of an organization (Achilike & Ejilibe, 2025). So, when teachers fail to adopt the right management practices, they will not be able to maximize potential and the output will be reduced. Some classroom management strategies identified in the literature include reinforcement, punishment, antecedent strategies, and the development of positive teacher–pupil relationships (Owusu et al., 2021). However, the present study focuses specifically on classroom discipline strategies and motivational strategies as key classroom management approaches that may influence pupils' academic performance.

Literature review

Classroom Discipline Strategy and Students' Academic Performance

Classroom discipline strategy refers to the practices teachers employ to establish order, regulate students' behaviour, minimise disruptive conduct in the classroom environment. Proper classroom discipline helps students maintain attention and participate actively in academic activities. Empirical studies have generally established a relationship between classroom discipline or classroom management and students' academic achievement, although the direction and strength of the relationship vary across contexts. Benjamin and Femodein (2018) investigated classroom control techniques and students' academic performance in Basic Science and Technology among Primary Five students. The findings revealed a low negative relationship between teacher classroom discipline and students' academic performance. In contrast, Nicholas et al. (2016) examined the relationship between student discipline and academic performance in public primary schools in Muhoroni Sub-County, Kenya. The study employed descriptive survey and correlational research designs and involved 817 students selected from 34 randomly chosen schools. Data were collected using questionnaires, with reliability established through the test-retest

method and validity determined by experts. The findings showed that most students exhibited high levels of discipline and that student discipline had a significant positive relationship with academic performance, accounting for 23% of the variance in students' achievement.

In a similar study, Akosubo-Ogori et al. (2020) investigated classroom management and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and involved 450 teachers selected from a population of 24,320 teachers through stratified sampling, with 400 completed questionnaires used for analysis. The findings indicated a significant relationship between classroom discipline and students' academic performance, further suggesting that effective management of classroom behaviour is important for creating conditions conducive to learning. Jabi and Ishi (2026) also examined the influence of classroom management techniques on students' academic achievement in selected secondary schools in Buruku Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between classroom management practices and students' academic performance, with classroom management accounting for 52% of the variance in academic achievement.

Further evidence was provided by Kausar et al. (2022), who investigated the effect of classroom management techniques on the academic performance of secondary school students in District Narowal, Pakistan. Using a quantitative descriptive survey design, the researchers collected data from students in public secondary schools through questionnaires. The findings revealed a highly significant positive effect of effective classroom management and discipline on students' academic performance. Juniati et al. (2022) examined the relationship between teachers' classroom management and students' English academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative correlational design and collected data through questionnaires and achievement tests from a cluster-random sample of 36 students. The findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between effective classroom management and students' academic achievement in English.

Motivational Strategy and Students' Academic Performance

Motivational strategy encompasses the approaches teachers use to stimulate, sustain, and direct students' interest to participate in learning activities. Such strategies may include praise, rewards, encouragement, positive reinforcement, and the creation of supportive learning environments that strengthen students' confidence and commitment to learning. When appropriately applied, motivational strategies can increase students' engagement and persistence, thereby contributing to improved academic performance. Existing empirical studies have generally reported positive relationships between different motivational strategies used by subject teachers on students' academic performance across different educational contexts (Joseph et al. 2024; Zoya and Saima (2024; Muhammad et al., 2015).

Similarly, Athirathan (2024) investigated the influence of academic motivation on the academic performance of senior secondary school students using a descriptive survey design. The findings revealed significant relationships between both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and students' academic performance.

In a related stud, Dramanu and Mohammed (2017) examined academic motivation and academic performance among Junior High School students in Ghana using a correlational design. The researchers concluded that strengthening students' motivation could contribute to improved academic achievement. Mahama et al. (2022) investigated motivational processes among 652 college students in Ghana using a cross-sectional survey design and multivariate multiple regression analysis. Data were collected using validated scales measuring self-regulated learning, academic engagement, and personality traits. The findings showed that students with stronger self-regulatory and engagement characteristics demonstrated more favourable learning outcomes and greater academic involvement. Similarly, Tadesse et al. (2022) employed a cross-sectional design and structural equation modelling to examine self-regulated learning strategies among undergraduate students in Ethiopian public universities. The study found that motivational and self-regulatory learning strategies were significant positive predictors of perceived learning gains.

Overall, the reviewed studies have provided substantial evidence of a relationship between classroom discipline, motivation and students' academic performance in different national contexts. However, most of the reviewed studies were conducted outside Akpabuyo Local Government Area and many focused on secondary or tertiary education rather than primary schools. Therefore, there is a need for context-specific evidence on how teachers' discipline and motivational strategies relate to the academic performance.The present study therefore filled the context-specific evidence gap on the relationship between classroom management strategies and students' academic performance among primary school pupils in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State, thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between classroom management strategies and students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out whether:

i. Classroom discipline strategy relates to students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State.
ii. Motivational strategy relates to students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to direct the study

1. There is no significant relationship between classroom discipline strategy

and students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State.

2. Motivational strategy does not significantly relate to students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Research Method

The study adopted a correlation survey research design. This was considered appropriate because the design allowed for the collection of data from a population to examine the relationship between classroom management strategies and students' academic performance. The population comprised 239 primary school students in 24 public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area. Census method was used to involve the entire population. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled "Classroom Management Strategies and Students Academic Performance Questionnaire (CMSSAPQ)." The instrument was designed on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It was validated by experts in Educational Management, as well as the Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Faculty of Educational Foundations Studies, University of Calabar. Its reliability coefficient index of 0.80 was established using Cronbach's Alpha method. The researcher recruited 5 research assistants who were trained and motivated to assist in the exercise. Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. Permission was sought for from the head teachers to allow the teachers and students to participate in the exercise. Then pparticipants were informed about the purpose of the research, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Anonymity was ensured, and respondents were assured of their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Next, the questionnaires were administered to the respondents in each school in the study area.

At the end, the questionnaires were collected, sorted, coded, and then organized in the order of the variables they were designed to measure. Positively worded items were scored as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 point, Agree (A) = 3 point, Disagree (D) = 2 point and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 point. But the pattern was reversed for all the negatively worded items. The scores of respondents on the respective sub-scales were summed and used for analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance and result presented in tables.

Presentation of results

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between classroom discipline strategy and students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are classroom discipline strategy and students' academic performance. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of correlation between classroom discipline strategy and students' academic performance in public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State. (N=239)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r	Sig.
Classroom discipline strategy	15.05	2.92		
			.53*	.000
Students' academic performance	14.56	2.46		

*Significant at p<.05 df=237

The result in table 1 showed the correlation coefficients between classroom discipline strategy and students' academic performance. The correlation coefficient was statistically significant for students' academic performance (r = .53, p<.05). Since *p*(.000) is less than *p*(.05), hypothesis one is rejected in terms of students' academic performance. The result of the analysis implied that there was a significant positive relationship between classroom discipline strategy and students' academic performance in public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Hypothesis two

Motivational strategy does not significantly relate to students' academic performance in primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are motivational strategy and students' academic performance. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of correlation between motivational strategy and students' academic performance in public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area Local Government Area, Cross River State. (N=239)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r	Sig.
Motivational strategy	14.99	2.67		
			.73*	.000
Students' academic performance	14.56	2.46		

*Significant at p<.05 df=237

Table 2 showed the correlation coefficients between motivational strategy and students' academic performance. The correlation coefficient was statistically significant for students' academic performance (r = .73, p<.05). Since *p*(.000) is less than *p*(.05), hypothesis two is rejected in terms of students' academic performance. The result of the analysis implied that there was a statistically significant relationship between motivational strategy and students' academic performance in public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government

Area Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of hypothesis one showed that there was a significant relationship between classroom discipline strategy and students' academic performance in primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State. The finding may possible because primary school teachers encouraged punctuality and regular attendance, and effectively enforced classroom rules and regulations. They also monitored students' behaviour, controlled distractions and addressed misconduct promptly. Teachers may have also encouraged the pupils to actively involved in classroom activities. Of course, such disciplinary measures can enhance learners' concentration, participation, and completion of academic tasks, thereby improving their academic performance. The implication of this finding is that the level of discipline maintained in the classroom can either promote or hinder the performance and learning outcomes of the learners. The finding of this study is supported by previous research such as that of Benjamin and Femodein (2018), who found that effective classroom control techniques had a significant relationship with students' academic performance. Similarly, Akosubo-Ogori et al. (2020) reported a significant relationship between classroom discipline and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Rivers State. In addition, Jabi and Ishi (2026) revealed a strong positive relationship between classroom management practices and students' academic performance.

The finding of hypothesis two showed that there was a significant relationship between Motivational strategy and students' academic performance in public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State. The finding may be possible because teachers applied various motivational strategies including praise for good performance, encouragement to stimulate seriousness, as well as rewards for good deeds among the learners. These practices can increase learners' attitude toward learning. The implication is that the level of motivation provided by teachers can determine the learners' academic performance. The finding is supported by similar findings of of Joseph et al. (2024) that students exposed to effective motivational strategies, particularly refreshment-based motivation, performed better academically. Similarly, it is corroborated by the findings of Zoya and Saima (2024) who reported a positive relationship between academic motivation and academic performance among university students, with intrinsic motivation emerging as a strong predictor of achievement. The present finding is in tandem with that of Muhammad et al. (2015) who established a strong positive relationship between students' motivation and academic performance.

Conclusion

This study specifically examined whether classroom discipline strategy and motivational strategy relates to students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State. The finding revealed that a significant positive relationship between classroom discipline strategy, motivational strategy and students' academic

performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State. Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that there was a significant relationship between classroom management strategies and students' academic performance in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State-Nigeria. This means that classroom management strategies can significantly enhance students' academic performance.

Recommendations

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

1. Primary school administrators should provide adequate guidance to teachers in maintaining fair, consistent, and appropriate disciplinary practices in the classroom. Such practices will greatly enhance students' academic performance.
2. Teachers should regularly employ appropriate motivational strategies, including praise, encouragement, rewards, and recognition of students' efforts and achievements. Consistent use of these strategies can stimulate students' interest in learning and encourage active participation in academic activities.

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