

Original Research Article

Creating Positive Classroom Climate for Secondary School Goal Attainment in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examined the strategies for creating positive classroom climate for secondary school goal attainment. The descriptive research design was adopted. The population comprised all the 6,956 teachers in the 278 public secondary schools in Rivers state. The sample of 250 teachers was selected using purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. A 20 item questionnaire titled 'Creating Positive Classroom Climate for Secondary School Goal Attainment Questionnaire' (CPCSSGAQ) structured on a four point modified likert type scale of Strongly Agreed (4points), Agreed (3points), Disagreed (2points) and Strongly Disagreed (1point) was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using mean to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that creating positive classroom climate can be done by building relationship between teachers and students, organising the physical environment, developing and reinforcing rules to guide the class and promoting collaboration among students by creating groups based on different skills and interest. It concludes that when these strategies are adopted to enhance positive classroom climate, that good teaching and learning leading to attainment of secondary school goals will be achieved. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made; that teachers should be given adequate orientation on the strategies for creating positive classroom climate so that they can adequately apply them in their classes, the government should provide teachers with good incentives to motivate them relate and interact well with the students to enhance effective teaching and learning and finally that the principals should engage in adequate supervision of teachers encouraging them to adopt the strategies to create positive classroom climate to achieve effective teaching and learning leading to attainment of secondary school goals.

Keywords: Classroom, Climate, Classroom Climate, School Goal, attainment.

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INTRODUCTION

Secondary education is the type of education given to children who have successfully passed through the primary education. It is the education that leads the students to higher or tertiary education. The goal of secondary education according to NPE (2014) is to prepare the learners for useful living within the society and higher education. Specifically, the goals of secondary education are to;

- Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background.

- Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles.
- Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades.
- Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world cultural heritage.
- Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence.
- Foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.

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- Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and lives as good citizens.
- Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

It is observed that to achieve these goals largely depends on how well the teacher is able to manage the class in a way to enhance effective teaching and learning. Teaching and learning especially when it has to be done physically or face to face, takes place in the classroom. The purpose for this teaching is for the students to learn. The way the classroom is conducted has a long way to contribute to students learning. Every classroom has its own unique tone or climate. The social relations that exist in the classroom can mar or promote learning. There have to be a pattern of relationship existing in the classroom for effective teaching and learning to take place. This unique interaction and relationship makes one classroom different from the other. The unique characteristics that distinguish one class from the other is what is known as classroom climate. No wonder Peretomode (2012) sees organisational climate as term used to describe the psychological structure of the organisation in terms of the 'feel', 'personality' and 'character or the organisation environment. Helliregel and Slocum in Peretomode (2012) also see organisational climate as a set of attributes that can be perceived about an organisation and for its units and may be described by the practices, processes and ways of dealing with members of the unit and its environment.

Like other organisations, Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro & Loveth (2010) see classroom climate as the classroom environment, social, emotional and physical aspects of the classroom in which the students learn. It can be seen as a compilation of factors including social interactions between students and teachers, behavioural and academic expectations as well as the physical environment of the classroom. Classroom climate refers to the prevailing mood, attitudes, standards and tone that you and students feel when they are in classroom. A lot of factors are there that may influence classroom climate ranging from interpersonal relationships, learner-teacher relationship, peer relationships, teachers' beliefs and behaviours, teachers' communication style, classroom management and group processes. Abraham (2006) rightly posits, as these social structures develop within the classroom and among members, a set of belief, attitudes and orientations which members of the class share emerge forming the culture of classroom.

Classroom climate can be negative or positive. A negative classroom climate can feel hostile, chaotic, and out of control. In a negative classroom climate, students may feel uncomfortable, confused unsupported and afraid to make mistakes. The environment does not encourage students to put more efforts. On the other

hand, a positive classroom climate feels safe, respectful, welcoming and supportive of student learning (Kamb, 2012). A positive classroom climate is that in which the students feel comfortable and sharing their thoughts, taking risks, asking questions and confronting challenges in their learning. (<https://www.indeed.com/classroom>). According to (Ellis, 2004) a positive classroom climate is linked to positive student's outcome such as promoting student motivation. Graham and Gisi (2000) posit that a positive classroom climate will lead to improvement in learners' satisfaction, motivation, class participation, engagement in group tasks and activities, over all wellbeing and reduce their anxiety and internal sense of fear. Positive classroom climate is marked by responsive teachers who manage behaviours and attention, challenges as well as the social and emotional needs of individual children.

However, to achieve a positive classroom climate the teacher as the leader of the classroom organisation has a lot to do. He is in the best position to influence the climate or tone of the classroom. Kamb (2012) posits that a positive classroom climate can be achieved in various ways such as building positive relationship, arranging the physical environment, setting high academic expectations, provide positive reinforcement, be open to feedback, encourage collaboration and the use of current curriculum and teaching methods. Others are use of behaviour approving language more frequently, eliminating damaging forms of redirection. The extent to which each of these methods would lead to the achievement of secondary school goals in terms of effective teaching and learning is the focus of this paper.

Statement of the problem

Teaching in all levels of education takes place in the classroom especially when it has to do with physical contact. To achieve the effective teaching and learning demands adequate management and effective management of the classroom. The classroom ought to be managed in a way that the climate is conducive enough for students to learn. Most often, teacher' relationship with students are so bad that learning in such situation becomes difficult. Sometimes it is so bad that some students keep away from class, becoming stubborn and at times become drop out if care is not taken. In such situation students cannot learn. One is therefore posed to ask if there is no way a teacher can create positive classroom climate that will breed effective teaching and learning. The researcher is of the assumption that if the teacher creates positive classroom climate that students will be motivated to learn and learn better. Therefore, the problem of this study is bothered on the strategies that the teacher can adopt to create positive classroom climate that will lead to achievement of secondary school goals in Rivers state, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the ways of building positive classroom climate that will lead to secondary school goal attainment in Rivers state. The specific objectives are to;

1. Examine the ways to build positive relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning.
2. Examine the ways to organise physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state.
3. Examine the ways to develop and reinforce rules that can enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. Examine the ways to encourage collaboration among students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state.

Research Questions

1. In what ways will positive relationship be built with students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in rivers State?
2. What are the ways of organising physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state?
3. What are the ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State?
4. In what ways can collaboration among students be encouraged to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the

ways of building positive relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in rivers State.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers the ways of organising physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State
4. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways collaboration among students be encouraged to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state.

METHODOLOGY

The design for the study was a descriptive survey. The population comprised all the 6,956 teachers in the 278 public secondary schools in Rivers state. The sample was 250 teachers which was selected using purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. A 20 item questionnaire titled ‘Positive Classroom Climate for Secondary School Goal Attainment Questionnaire’ (PCCSSGAQ) structured on a four point modified likert type scale of strongly agreed (4points), Agreed (3points), Disagreed (2points) and strongly disagreed (1point) was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using mean to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results of findings

Research question 1: in what ways will positive relationship be built with students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean analysis on the ways of building positive relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state

S/N	ITEMS	MALE Mean	FEMALE Mean	Mean Set	Decision
1.	Building rapport with the students	3.56	3.21	3.39	Agreed
2	Taking time to interact with the students	3.24	3.11	3.18	Agreed
3.	Relating with students individually	2.84	3.18	3.01	Agreed
4	Giving attention to students’ problems	2.72	2.78	2.75	Agreed
5.	Greeting students by their names	2.67	2.75	2.71	Agreed
6	Using warm and inclusive behaviours and words each day	3.15	3.04	3.10	Agreed
7.	Looking at students and notice their positive behaviour and reinforcing with encouraging words	2.95	3.06	3.01	Agreed
8	Asking students personal questions to get to know them more	3.33	2.98	3.16	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	3.06	3.01	3.04	Agreed

Table 1 indicates that items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 8 have mean scores of 3.29, 3.18, 3.02, 2.75, 2.71, 3.10,

3.01, and 3.16 which are greater than the criterion Mean of 2.50. This shows that the respondents agreed with all

the items as ways to build positive relationship between the teachers and the student to enhance effective teaching and learning.

Research question 2. What are the ways of organising physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state?

Table 2: Mean analysis on the ways of organising physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state?

S/N	ITEMS	MALE Mean	FEMALE Mean	Mean Set	Decision
1.	Assigning seats to students	2.88	3.11	3.00	Agreed
2	Arranging all desks to face the front of the class	3.20	3.16	3.18	Agreed
3.	Arranging the class in a way that the teachers move freely round the class	3.03	3.10	3.07	Agreed
4	Arranging seats in rows and columns	3.18	3.09	3.14	Agreed
5.	Proper arrangement of seats	2.95	2.87	2.91	Agreed
6	Proper provision of ventilation	2.99	2.69	2.84	Agreed
7.	Establishing routines for movement in the class	3.07	3.04	3.06	Agreed
8	Adding aesthetic in the class	3.02	2.96	2.99	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	3.04	3.00	3.02	Agreed

Table 2 indicates that items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and 8 have mean scores of 3.00, 3.18, 3.07, 3.14, 2.91, 2.84, 3.06, and 2.99 which are greater than the criterion Mean of 2.50. This shows that the respondents agreed with all the items as ways organising physical classroom

environments can enhance effective teaching and learning.

Research Question 3: What are the ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean analysis on the ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State

S/N	ITEMS	Male Mean	Female Mean	Mean set	Decision
1	Prescribing and establishing set of rules to guide the class	3.25	3.00	3.13	Agreed
2	Stating the dos and don'ts to control the class	3.12	3.18	3.15	Agreed
3	Establishing code of conduct	3.07	3.14	3.11	Agreed
4	Using punishment when necessary to maintain class control	2.58	2.66	2.62	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	3.01	3.00	3.00	Agreed

Table 3 indicates that items 1,2,3 and 4 have mean scores of 3.13, 3.15, 3.11, and 2.62 which are greater than the criterion Mean of 2.50. This shows that the respondents agreed with all the items as ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning.

Question 4: In what ways can collaboration among students be encouraged to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state?

Table 4: Mean analysis on how collaboration among students can be encouraged to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state

S/N	ITEMS	Male mean	Female mean	Mean Set	Decision
1	Creating groups based on different skills	2.98	3.01	3.00	Agreed
2	Creating groups based on interest	3.05	3.13	3.09	Agreed
3	Building activities that encourage interactions	3.12	3.22	3.17	Agreed
4	Have class meetings where students can discuss	3.20	2.97	3.09	Agreed
5	Assigning projects to students in groups	3.18	3.11	3.15	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean	3.11	3.09	3.10	Agreed

Table 4 indicates that items 1,2,3,4 and 5 have mean scores of 3.00, 3.09, 3.17, 3.09 and 3.15 which are greater than the criterion Mean of 2.50. This shows that

the respondents agreed with all the items as ways collaboration among students can be encouraged to enhance effective teaching and learning.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways of building positive

relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in rivers State.

Table 5: z-test analysis on the significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways of building positive relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in rivers State

Respondents	n	X	SD	DF	Sig lev.	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	150	3.06	1.34	248	0.05	0.34	1.96	Accepted
Female Teachers	100	3.01	1.48					

The result on Table 5 showed the z-calculated value of 0.34 which is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 indicating the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the ways of building positive relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers the ways of organising physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state.

Table 6: z-test analysis on the significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways of organising physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state

Respondents	n	X	SD	DF	Sig lev.	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	150	3.04	1.53	248	0.05	0.19	1.96	Accepted
Female Teachers	100	3.00	1.64					

The result on Table 6 showed the z-calculated value of 0.19 which is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 indicating the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the ways of organising physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 7: z-test analysis on the significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State

Respondents	n	X	SD	DF	Sig lev.	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	150	3.01	1.82	248	0.05	0.043	1.96	Accepted
Female Teachers	100	3.00	1.75					

The result on Table 7 showed the z-calculated value of 0.043 which is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 indicating the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective

teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways collaboration among students be encouraged to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state.

Table 8: z-test analysis on significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways collaboration among students can be encouraged to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state

Respondents	n	X	SD	DF	Sig lev.	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	150	3.11	1.49	248	0.05	0.11	1.96	Accepted
Female Teachers	100	3.09	1.45					

The result on table 8 showed the z-calculated value of 0.11 which is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 indicating the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the

mean scores of male and female teachers on the ways of building positive relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The findings of research question one revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items as ways of building relationship between teachers and students to achieve effective teaching which are; building rapport with the students, relating with students individually, giving attention to students' problems, using warm and inclusive behaviours and words each day, looking at students and noticing their positive behaviour and reinforcing with encouraging words and asking students personal questions to get to know them more. It is true that relating and interacting with students individually as well as using warm and inclusive behaviours as a way of building relationship between the teacher and the students will make them learn better than when the teacher is far from the students. This agrees with Abraham (2006) who posits that the teacher can define or shape the classroom situation through speech, mild command and subtle pressure. It also agrees with Abrose, Bridges, Diprieto and Loveth (2010) who posit that instructors can influence the tone of the class environment through their interactions with students and other models of communication. It also agrees with Smith, Fisher and Frey (2015) who posit that developing a non-confrontational rapport with even the most challenging students leads to relationship building and mutual understanding. The hypotheses tested revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers on the ways of building positive relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State.

The findings in research question 2 revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items as ways to organise the physical environment to achieve effective teaching which are assigning seats to students, arranging all desks to face the front of the class, arranging the class in a way that the teachers move freely round the class, arranging seats in rows and columns, proper arrangement of seats, establishing routines for movement in the class and adding aesthetic in the class. On establishing routines for movement in the class, the finding agrees with Tachelle (2014) who posits that teachers can establish routines for distributing using returning and storing materials in an effort to prevent confusion and that seating arrangements have implications for teacher directed instruction. Hypotheses 2 revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers the ways of organising physical classroom environment to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state.

Research question 3 revealed ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning which are; prescribing and establishing set of rules to guide the class, stating the dos and don'ts to control the class, establishing code of conduct and using punishment when necessary to maintain class control. This agrees with Abraham (2006)

who sees the teacher as the most influential in the classroom and can achieve positive climate through the use of 'dos' and 'don'ts' to maintain control in the classroom. It also agrees with Tachelle (2014) who posits that developing rules is a critical step towards increasing positive interaction and communication in advancing the expectations for classroom behaviour and consequences. That rules help teachers identify which behaviour to positively reinforce. The finding is also in line with Carol (2008) who posits that teachers can strengthen intrinsic motivation by recognising and positively reinforce positive actions when they do them. Test of hypothesis 3 revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the ways of developing and reinforcing rules to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research question 4 revealed ways of promoting collaboration among students to enhance effective teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers state which are; creating groups based on different skills, creating groups based on interest, building activities that encourage interactions, having class meetings where students can discuss and assigning projects to students in groups. The test of hypothesis 4 showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the ways of building positive relationship with students to enhance effective teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

Creating positive classroom climate is a necessary factor that will lead to the attainment of secondary school goals through effective teaching and learning. To create positive classroom climate, the teachers can adopt some strategies among which are building positive relationship with students, organising the physical environment, developing and reinforcing rules to guide the class and promoting collaboration among students by creating groups based on different skills and interest. It is believed that when these strategies are adopted to enhance positive classroom climate, that good teaching and learning leading to attainment of secondary school goals will be achieved. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made;

- 1) Teachers should be given adequate orientation on the strategies for creating positive classroom climate so that they can adequately apply them in their classes.
- 2) The government should provide teachers with good incentives to motivate teachers relate and interact well with the students to enhance effective teaching and learning.
- 3) The principals should do adequate supervision of teachers encouraging them to adopt the strategies to create positive classroom climate.

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