ANALYSIS OF TEACHER REINFORCEMENT PRACTICES AND REPRIMANDS SYSTEM AT THE BASIC EDUCATION CLASSROOMS: AN OBSERVATION STUDY

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Abstract

Access and retention are key components of the basic education programme in Nigeria. However, despite progress in access, low retention rate remains a key issue. Addressing the retention problem requires a critical review of current teacher classroom management practices. While positive reinforcement (PR) and reprimands are tools used by teachers to reinforce classroom behaviour, research suggests that retention is enhanced when PR outweighs reprimands by a ratio of 4:1. Although research has consistently shown that the use of reprimands is prevalent in Nigerian classrooms, data regarding the level of PR emission is lacking. Using a systematic observation method, this study examined the types, rate, frequency and pattern of PR system currently in use at the basic education classrooms vis-à-vis levels of reprimands with a view to providing baseline data for decision-making. Subjects included 60 teachers drawn from 20 schools (10 primary/10 junior secondary) in Lagos, southwest Nigeria. They were observed for 4 weeks during regular classroom teaching. Data collected were coded into quantitative categories and analysed with the use of frequencies, ratios, percentages, and chi-square test. Results showed that teachers delivered a low rate of PR and a high rate of reprimands at the ratio of approximately 1:6, far below the recommended level. No significant differences were found when the data were analysed by grade level and years of teaching. The findings are discussed in terms of their practical implications. To boost student retention at school, the use of PR strategies needs to be more widespread in the basic education classrooms.

Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that the universal declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 guaranteed for the individual a whole range of basic freedom with

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education serving as a basic right necessary for the achievement of all other freedoms. The achievement of the right to education requires that young people be given the opportunity necessary for the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable them lead happy and productive lives as individuals and discharge their social duties for the betterment of life in the society.

Nigeria, having realised the effectiveness of education as a powerful instrument for national progress and development, adjusted her educational philosophy and methodology to march the ideals and challenges of changing economic and social structure of modern society (Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education, 2013). Consequently, the government introduced the 9-3-4 education system which provides for a 9-year continuous education comprising 6-year primary and 3-year junior secondary education levels known as basic education (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, 2008). In essence, basic education encompasses the first nine years of schooling from primary to junior secondary education. This policy is designed to ensure 100% transition from the primary to the junior secondary level and also to ensure that children remain long in school to acquire the basic competences and life skills (UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2006). Because basic education is the foundational level of Nigerian education system, efforts should be geared toward ensuring that barriers to education are completely removed or addressed, as any flaws not determined early enough and corrected at this level would negatively affect the entire educational system. Consequently, the drive to improve the quality of basic education in Nigeria has been given tremendous impetus over the last decade (Humphreys & Crawfurd, 2014).

Access and retention are key components of the basic education programme in Nigeria. However, despite progress in access, low retention rate (dropout) remains an issue. It has been reported that dropout is a common phenomenon in the basic education classrooms, particularly at the primary education level. In a report recently released by UNESCO (2015), Nigeria has the highest number of school dropouts. The report shows that only one out of every four children that do enroll, stayed in school and that many children have left school without completing primary education. This report is worrisome and a big challenge to educators and researchers. It is against this backdrop that this study aims to explore the internal threat within the basic education system that could lead to drop out tendencies of children in school. The researcher, after undertaking an extensive review of relevant literature, came to an understanding that addressing the drop-out problem requires a critical review of current classroom management practices in terms of how the teacher makes use of positive reinforcement strategies and reprimands in responding to learners' behaviour.

The classroom teacher is charged with many functions in the teaching and learning process. Research has found that one of the most challenging functions of the classroom teacher is classroom management and control (Asiyai, 2011). Researchers such as Duman, Gelişli and Çetin (2002) investigated the approaches adopted by teachers to reinforce classroom behavior in their classrooms and found that the approaches fall into two broad categories – the punitive approach and the non-punitive approach. Punitive approach relies on the use of aversive techniques such as corporal punishment and reprimands and other punitive methods to correct students' misbehaviour. Non-punitive approach embodies a positive approach and includes such strategies as positive reinforcement which comprises a wide variety of methods.

While positive reinforcement strategies and reprimands are tools used by teachers to reinforce classroom behavior, research suggests that positive behavior is enhanced when positive reinforcement emission outweighs that of reprimands by a ratio of 4:1 (Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, & Weaver, 2008; Trussell, 2008; Phelan, 2010). There is abundant evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of 4:1 positive to negative ratio as the optimal level needed to create a positive classroom atmosphere conducive to student retention at school (Walker, Cruz-Zuniga, & Adefeso-Olategu, 2014). The critical question remains to what extent have teachers in the basic education classrooms conformed to this standard?

While research has consistently shown that the use of reprimands and corporal punishment is prevalent in Nigerian classrooms (Walker et al., 2014; Mahmoud, Abdulkabir, & Salman, 2011; Boulton, Jackson, & Oliver, 2009), data regarding teacher positive reinforcement emission is lacking (Humphreys & Crawfurd, 2014). Also, little is known about the ratio of positive teacher comments to negative teacher comments. To address this gap, this study set out to assess teacher classroom management practices by examining the types, rate, frequency and pattern of positive reinforcement strategies currently in use at the basic education level vis-à-vis level of reprimands. Differences in teacher classroom management practices by grade level and years of teaching experience were also investigated. The purpose of the study was to establish baseline data on the situation of classroom management practices in basic education in Nigeria.

It is deemed necessary to define some terms as used in this study for consistent reference and understanding: It is worth noting that in the Nigerian education system, primary school children are often referred to as 'pupils' while secondary school children are referred to as 'students'. However, for the purpose of this study which focuses on both primary and secondary levels, we shall use the term 'school

children' or 'learners' interchangeably to refer to both pupils and students. Positive reinforcement as used in this study refers to techniques used to encourage positive behavior in children. Positive reinforcement includes a wide variety of methods such as verbal praise, thumps up, a nod, a smile, social recognition. 'Reprimands' is conceptualized to include all forms of corporal punishment and punitive techniques used by teachers to cause some degree of physical pain and psychological discomfort for the purpose of correcting or controlling a child's behaviour. It comes in various forms including beating, slapping, spanking, giving a knock on the head, painful body postures, threats, ridicule, verbal abuse, name calling and other harsh punitive practices.

The research question raised in this study relates to the types, frequency, and pattern of classroom management strategies (teacher PR emission versus teacher reprimands) used by teachers in their classrooms. It was hypothesized that teachers irrespective of grade level taught and years of teaching experience would emit similar rates of positive reinforcement strategies and similar rates of reprimands in basic education classrooms. The reason for this expectation was based on the recognition that teachers' classroom management practices tend to be strongly influenced by socio-cultural factors rather than by individual characteristics.

Methods

Participants

This study was conducted using the descriptive survey research design and data collection was through systematic observation method.

Sixty teachers participated in this study. They were randomly selected from across 20 public schools in Lagos state of Nigeria. The schools comprised 10 primary schools and 10 secondary schools –30 teachers were recruited from each school type. From each school, three classrooms were selected as follows: primary grades 4-6 and junior secondary grades 1-3 (JS 1-3). The teachers of selected classrooms were the focus of the study. Male teachers constituted 38% while female teachers made up 62%. The ages of the teachers ranged from 23-58 years with average age of 41.6 years. The number of years working as a teacher ranged from two years to more than 16 years. The primary classroom teachers possessed at least an NCE (National Certificate of Education) qualification – which is the minimum teaching qualification for teaching in Nigerian primary schools. In addition, twelve of them (40%) had a bachelor's degree. The secondary classroom teachers possessed at least a bachelor's degree. All selected teachers gave their consent to participate in the study.

Instruments

Apart from demographic questionnaire, the main instrument used for data collection was an observation checklist (OCL). The instrument was constructed by the researcher following a review of the literature as well as feedback from expert views. The OCL was designed to collect information on teacher classroom management practices. It was divided into three parts. The first part contained the positive reinforcement category comprising a list of seven typical reinforcement strategies commonly used by teachers. The second part contained the reprimands category comprising ten types of punitive techniques commonly used in Nigerian classrooms (Nakpodia, 2012). The third part of the instrument contained an open space in which to capture behaviour of teachers (if any) not specified. For purpose of clarity, the researcher developed a coding manual specifying the definitions for each target behavior. The specific codes and their operational definitions together with examples are provided in Table 1:

Table 1: Operational definitions of target behaviours

Classroom Management Category	Teacher classroom behaviour	Definitions
Positive Reinforcement	Verbal praise (general)	Any statement by the teacher directed toward an individual class member or whole class that indicates approval of a desired behavior without reference to the specific behavior that is being praised. That is the behavior being praised lacks behavioural description, e.g. awesome, good job, excellent, keep it up, nice work, thank you, very good.
	Verbal praise (specific)	Any statement made by the teacher directed toward an individual class member or whole class that conveys approval about a specific behavior. Here, the teacher specifically identifies the behavior for which the child/learner is being praised, e.g. "Thank you Jide for sharing your reading book with Tolu". "Thank you Mary for sitting quietly and listening to me". "You are able to score 85% in your Mathematics test that is awesome". "You located the book from the library, good job".
	Applause from class	Statement by the teacher directing the class to clap in recognition of the desired behaviour of an individual class member or whole class.
	Thumps up	An action made by the teacher indicating approval in response to a child's appropriate behavior or directed to a whole class with a raise of the right or left thump.

	Pat on the back	An action by the teacher indicating approval in response to a child's appropriate behavior or whole class by giving a pat on the back.
	A nod	A nod by the teacher indicating approval in response to a child's appropriate behavior or directed to a whole class.
	A smile	A smile made by the teacher indicating approval in response to a child's appropriate behavior or directed to a whole class.
Reprimands (Corporal punishment)	Beating	Using an implement such as a cane to inflict pain on child or whole class
	Slapping	Spanking slightly or aggressively with an open hand.
	Knocking a child's head	Knocking a child's head with the knuckles
	Asking child to kneel down	Asking child or whole class to kneel down as a form of punishment
	Threatening to punish but did not	Statements indicating intention of the use of corporal punishment that the teacher did not follow through with.
	Ridicule	Verbal comments directed at a child or whole class to ridicule or shame the child e.g. by booing
	Verbal abuse	Negative comments directed at a child or whole class e.g you are not meant for school, you should be at the market selling food items.
	Screaming/ yelling	Verbal comments directed at a child or whole class which indicate disapproval of behavior using a voice louder than typical.
	Name calling	Verbal comments directed at a child or whole class using negative names like lazy, idiot, naughty, silly, dullard, etc
	Sending child out of class	Sending child out of class

Procedure

Ten research assistants were recruited and trained as data collectors /observers. They were trained on the observational procedures and the coding categories prior to data collection. All study observers had

at least a bachelor's in education, psychology or related discipline and were found to have acquired previous experience conducting classroom observations.

To enhance quality, this study adapted a training procedure employed by Briesch, Volpe and Ferguson (2014) and modified to fit the research being conducted. First, the researcher conducted a 2-day training to familiarize the observers on the observation procedure. Part of the training package included written definitions of each target behavior to be observed and how to correctly use the data collection sheet to code each behavior. The training session also included practice observations with the observers taken through a series of practice sessions. During the practice sessions, the researcher and observers watched a video clip of a regular classroom instruction taken from a non-targeted class period. Examples and non-examples of the target behaviour were discussed and clarified. Once the observers felt sufficiently comfortable with the definitions as operationalized by the researcher, they then took a quiz developed by the researcher to test their understanding. Having given correct feedback with 87% accuracy, the observers were then shown a series of additional video clips and asked to independently code these on the observation sheet. Agreement was checked against the scoring template provided by the researcher. At this stage, six of the observers were only able to achieve 80% agreement. Therefore, training continued until each observer was able to achieve between 85% and 90% against the criterion. In all, seven practice observations were conducted prior to the observers meeting the set criterion.

To estimate the reliability of the observation measure, inter-observer agreement for the practice observations was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements with the disagreements and then multiplying the obtained value by 100%. Average inter-observer agreement obtained for this study was very strong: 91% agreement for positive reinforcement and 93% agreement for reprimands.

Subsequent upon training, the observers proceeded to observe and record the behaviors of teachers during classroom instructional interactions, whereby they observed teachers and record instances of the target behaviour as they occur by putting a mark in specific columns of the observation data sheet. In order words, event recording method was used to measure frequencies of target behaviors. It allowed the observers to record each event that meets the operational definition of each target behavior.

One methodological issue in systematic observation studies has been the issue of reactivity, which poses a threat to internal validity. Following the suggestion by Brown, Cosby, Kee, and Worden (1999), an attempt was made to reduce reactivity effect by extending the period of observation to allow enough time for the teachers to become used to the presence of the observers. As part of control measure, the ob-

servers conducted two preliminary visits to the schools prior to the start of data collection to establish familiarity with teachers, following which the observation sessions commenced. For the primary level, observations were conducted in grades 4- 6, and for the secondary level, JS 1-3. To ensure consistency, each of the teachers was observed during Social Studies instruction which is one of the compulsory sub-jects taught at the basic education level. Observations were conducted twice a week each lasting for 30 minutes for four consecutive weeks totaling four hours of observation per teacher and a total of 240 observation sessions for all teachers combined. During observations, the observers focused attention only on the teacher to record the teacher's behaviour and actions toward the learners. Both the positive comments and reprimands were recorded as frequency counts. An average of 240 minutes of observa-tional data was collected on each participating teacher, bringing to total an average of 14,400-minute observational data on all participating teachers.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were observed by the researcher throughout the study as all participating tea-chers were treated in accordance with the ethical principles of the American Psychological Association (2010). Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the National Open University of Nigeria. Also, prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the office of the local Education District, as well as from the head teachers of sampled schools. The participants gave their consent to participate in the study as they were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their participation.

Data analysis

The data collected were coded into quantitative categories and analysed with the use of ratios, frequen-cies, and percentages for descriptive analysis, as well as chi-square test (χ^2) for inferential statistical analysis. First, the frequency count for each behaviour category was summed separately for all teachers and analysed for each category. Percentages were then computed by dividing the average number of times in which the observed behaviour occurred by the total number of observed minutes and then multiplying the result by 100. This was done for each category of observed behaviour. Ratios were calcu-lated as the number of positive reinforcements emitted against the number of reprimands during ob-served time. Next, chi-square test was used to analyse group differences in the observed data by grade level and years of teaching experience. Significance levels were set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

The presentation of results is done into two parts – descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive anal-
ysis was used to answer the research question while the chi-square test was employed to test the null
hypotheses.

**Types, frequency and pattern of classroom management strategies used by teachers in basic educa-
tion classrooms**

Data collected on the types and frequency of current teacher reinforcement emission and reprimands in
basic education classrooms including their rankings are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Observed types and frequency of teachers' classroom management strategies (N=60)

Classroom Management Category	Classroom management practices	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3		Week 4		Total	Rank	%
		Ob 1	Ob 2	Ob 3	Ob 4	Ob 5	Ob 6	Ob 7	Ob 8			
Positive Re-inforcement	Verbal praise (general)	72	65	67	75	83	76	58	66	562	1	29%
	Verbal praise (behaviour-specific)	39	42	44	47	36	42	39	40	329	3	17%
	Applauding	75	83	65	61	65	53	59	77	538	2	28%
	Thumps up	2	8	4	6	6	4	5	8	47	6	2%
	Pat on the back	7	5	4	5	6	9	3	6	45	7	2%
	A nod	35	41	50	36	44	38	35	43	322	4	17%
	A smile	20	22	22	23	12	21	17	19	156	5	8%
Total										**1,999**		
Reprimands (Corporal punishment)	Beating/Caning	130	153	140	136	128	126	133	148	1,094	7	56%
	Slapping	104	97	101	107	120	118	107	121	875	9	46%
	Knocking child's head	87	95	180	165	133	115	96	102	973	8	51%
	Asking child to kneel down	165	178	185	148	193	177	155	198	1,399	6	73%
	Threatens to pu-nish but did not	281	283	276	286	275	248	277	285	2,211	2	99%
	Ridicule	217	222	200	209	167	202	176	206	1,599	4	83%
	Verbal abuse	231	208	211	238	231	245	221	268	1,853	3	96%
	Screaming	289	321	279	224	283	330	354	284	2,364	1	99%
	Name calling	198	187	203	177	194	219	175	187	1,540	5	80%
	Sending child out of class	90	97	111	97	86	93	105	88	767	10	40%
Total										**14,675**		

Key: Ob= observation; % = percentage frequency of total observations

A quick glance at the analysis of data presented in **Table 2**, reveals a pattern showing the category of reprimands occurring at a much higher frequency than that of positive reinforcement. Specifically, starting with the domain positive reinforcement, general praise seems to be the most prevalent form of positive reinforcement strategy used by teachers, followed by applauding, with behaviour-specific praise, nods, and smiles ranking third, fourth and fifth respectively, while thumps up and pat on the back ranked the least with sixth and seventh positions, respectively. A closer look at **Table 2** shows that in totality positive reinforcement strategies occurred at a relatively low rate ranging from 2% to 29%. This is a far cry from that of domain reprimands, which ranged from 46% to 99%, with screaming, threats, verbal abuse, ridicule, name calling, asking child to kneel down, beating, and knocking a child's head forming a greater percentage of reprimands used by teachers in that order. The least ranked were slapping and sending a child out of class.

A further inspection of **Table 2** indicates that positive reinforcement strategies were delivered at a total rate of 1,999 in four hours from all participating teachers. This means that positive reinforcements were delivered at an average rate of 4.2 in 30 minutes per teacher and 250 instances from all teachers. When calculated based per minute, the mean rate of total positive reinforcement emissions for all teachers was 8.3. With respect to reprimands, the total rate emitted in four hours was 14,675, which means each teacher delivered reprimands at an average rate of 31 per 30 minutes and 1,834 instances from all teachers. Per minute, the average rate of total reprimands for all teachers in the study was 61 reprimands. When converted to percentages, these results indicate that overall, 13.6% of the feedback observed was positive (positive reinforcement) as against 86.4% negative feedback (reprimands). From the analysis, the calculated ratio of positive reinforcement to reprimands was approximately 1:6. This is far below the recommended level of 4:1 positive-to-negative ratio (Trussell, 2008).

Group differences in the observed data based on grade level taught

The chi-square analysis was performed to see if there were differences in the distribution of the observed data based on grade level. For the purpose of analysis, the data obtained were grouped into two; data collected from primary classes 4-6, were combined to form the primary level data; and those collected from junior secondary classes 1-3, were combined to form the JS level data. The result of the analysis is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3: A 2x2 contingency table of teacher classroom management strategies (positive reinforcement and reprimands) by grade level (N=60)

		Teacher classroom management strategy		Total	χ^2cal	*P*- value
		PR	Reprimands			
Grade level category	Primary	1,013 (51%)	7,421 (51%)	8,434		
	JS level	986 (49%)	7,254 (49%)	8,240	0.0091	0.92400
Total		1,999	14,675	16,674		

Key: PR =positive reinforcement

The result is not significant

The result of the analysis as presented in **Table 3** was not significant (χ^2(1,N=60)=0.0091,*P*>0.05). The null hypothesis was supported. There were no significant differences found in teachers' use of positive reinforcement strategies and reprimands at the primary and junior secondary school levels. In other words, grade level taught did not impact teachers' use of classroom management techniques which implies that all teachers irrespective of grade level teaching used similar rates of positive reinforcement and similar rates of reprimands. Although, teachers at both primary and junior secondary levels used a relatively low rate of positive reinforcement strategies, a closer look at **Table 3** shows that teachers at the primary level emitted a much higher percentage of positive reinforcement (51%) compared to 49% that were emitted at the junior high level. A similar trend was found with the rate of reprimands.

Group differences in the observed data based on years of teaching experience

Years of teaching experience was grouped into four categories: 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16 years and above. The chi-square analysis was performed to see if there were group differences in the distribution of the observed data. The result of the analysis is presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4: A 2x2 contingency table of teacher classroom management strategies (positive reinforcement and reprimands) by years of teaching experience

		Teacher classroom management strategy		Total	χ^2cal	*P*- value
		PR	Reprimands			
Years of teaching	1-5	503	3,689	4,192		
	6-10	490	3,773	4,263		

					3.07	0.38095
	11-15	484	3,620	4,104		
	16 and above	522	3,593	4,115		
Total		1,999	14,675	16,674		

Key: PR =positive reinforcement

The result is not significant

The result of the analysis as presented in **Table 4** supported the null hypothesis (χ^2 (3,N=60)= 3.07, *P*>0.05) showing there were no significant differences in the use of positive reinforcement and reprimands based on years of teaching experience. In order words, the number of years working as a teacher did not impact teachers' use of classroom management practices which implies that all teachers, irrespective of years of experience, used similar rates of positive reinforcement strategies and similar rates of reprimands. However, as observed in **Table 4**, teachers within the range of 16 years of experience and above delivered a higher rate of positive reinforcement and teachers within the age of 6-10 delivered a higher rate of reprimands.

Discussion

The main finding of this study was that positive reinforcement occurred at a relatively low rate, while reprimands occurred at a high rate in basic education classrooms. The observed data indicated that only 13.6% of teacher-learner interactions involved positive reinforcement, as against 86.4% that which involved reprimands. The ratio of positive reinforcement to reprimands was found to be approximately 1:6, which is far below the recommended level of 4:1 positive-to-negative ratio (Trussell, 2008). This implies that the ratio of positive to negative interactions in basic education classrooms in Nigeria was less than optimal. The results of the study indicate that teachers provided more reprimands than positive reinforcement to school children. It can be implied from the results of this study that part of classroom instructional time is wasted on teacher reprimands.

The result of the study is consistent with findings from other researchers such as Walker et al., (2014), Nakpodia (2012), (Korb, 2011), Mahmoud, Adbulkabir, and Salman (2011), Boulton, Jackson and Oliver (2009) and Abrifor (2008), who described the Nigerian classroom as punitive, hostile and unfriendly. Results of the present study indicate that teachers provided more reprimands than positive reinforcement. Ideally, the ratio of positive teacher comments to negative comments should be 4:1 which means

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teachers are expected to provide four positive comments for every negative comment in any lesson period. However, this is far from being the case as evidenced from the findings of this study. It is worrisome to find that the ratio of positive to negative is approximately 1:6. Relating the findings to practical reality, given an average class size of 65-85 as characterised by most Nigerian schools, each child would receive less than one positive comment every six hours and more than six reprimands every one hour over the course of a school day. Research has shown that a classroom characterised by teacher reprimands can generate fear and anxiety in school children and create a negative classroom atmosphere which is detrimental to the teaching-learning process (Ekpo, Akpan, Essien, & Imo-Obot, 2009).

One of the key components of the basic education programme is 'access and retention' in line with the objectives of education for all (EFA). However, the use of reprimands can create fear in school children which may lead to truancy and as such put children at risk of leaving school before completing a cycle of basic education (Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seidu, & Hunt, 2007). The use of reprimands can instigate school avoidance and encourage truancy among students (Unachukwu & Nwasor, 2014). In one study, corporal punishment made some students to stop school (Addison, 2015). This clearly negates the principles of the programme and by extension poses a challenge to Nigeria's attainment of the global goal of education for all (EFA) and MDGs. The theoretical explanation underpinning truancy/drop-out tendencies is based on the principles of avoidance learning, which explains the nature of humans to avoid situations that pose threats to their well-being. Children want to come to a place where they feel wanted, respected, and valued, devoid of aversive practices. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case in most basic education classrooms as evidenced from the present study.

Again, the study did not reveal any significant difference in teachers' use of classroom management strategies based on grade level and years of teaching experience, respectively. This implies that reprimands occur at every grade level and is administered by virtually all teachers irrespective of years of teaching experience. One possible explanation for this finding could be that the teachers were equally influenced by the cultural belief 'spare the rod and spoil the child', which is deeply rooted in the Nigerian society.

A major limitation of the study is in relation to the sample size. This study was conducted using 60 teachers. They are certainly not a true representation of all teachers at the basic education level in Lagos state. The study is therefore limited in terms of generalisation of the research findings. Future work could build on these results by using a larger sample.

Conclusion

Findings of this study show that teachers in basic education classrooms tend to overuse reprimands and underuse positive reinforcement strategies in the management of classroom behaviour far below the recommended levels needed to create a positive classroom atmosphere conducive for student retention. Therefore, the use of positive reinforcement strategies needs to be more widespread in the basic education classrooms which represent the foundational level of education. Teachers should endeavour to give their learners four positive comments for every negative comment, ensuring to meet the goal of ratio 4:1 in every lesson period. However, teachers cannot give what they do not have. It appears many teachers lack knowledge/skills on how to incorporate positive a reinforcement system in their daily classroom routines. This calls for the need for classroom intervention to help teachers learn ways to increase the rate of positive reinforcement and decrease the use of reprimands. It is therefore critical that teachers receive training on positive reinforcement approaches and reprimand-reduction strategies. In essence, this study can be seen to be an important first step in helping to develop a broader area of research.

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