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Research

## **Teachers' Socio-Economic Status and Classroom Management in Public Secondary Schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** The study examined teachers' socio-economic status and classroom management in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was based on two specific objectives. Two research questions and null hypotheses guided the study. A survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 1, 674 teachers in public secondary schools in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 335 teachers representing 20 percent of the study population. An instrument titled "Teachers Socio-economic Status and Classroom Management Questionnaire (TSESCMQ) was used to collect data. The instrument was validated by two experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The data generated was analyzed with Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and an independent t-test. Results revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' socio-economic status and classroom management effectiveness, and that there is a significant difference in the mean score between high and low socio-economic status teachers in classroom management. Thus, it was recommended that teachers' income level should be improved by the government to boost their socio-economic status for effective classroom management. Secondly, teachers should see the need to improve their education level for effective classroom management.

**Keywords:** Teachers, Socio-economic Status, classroom management, income level, education level.

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### **Introduction**

Schools as formal organisations are made up of many elements. One of the most important elements in the school system is the classroom. The classroom is a space within

the school environment where all educational plans and programmes designed to educate individuals take place. It is a place where teachers and learners meet for the purpose of teaching and learning. The classroom is very important in every school system, without which schools cannot function to deliver educational services and programmes. Classroom management means the process of planning, organising, directing and coordinating all the classroom resources and activities during lessons with a view to achieving the objectives of the lesson. Owan, cited in Nwonkwoala (2021), defined classroom management as an orderly and professional arrangement and coordination of classroom activities in order to provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the classroom is properly managed. Classroom management ensures quality teaching, delivery, and the acquisition of knowledge among the students. It enables learners to comprehend lessons taught, thereby improving their academic performance. In line with this, Oliver (2007) opined that the ability of teachers to organise classrooms and manage the behaviour of their students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes. Classroom management involves exercising managerial control over activities within the classroom. It has to do with supervising, controlling, directing and coordinating students and classroom activities in order to achieve educational objectives (Nwonkwoala, 2021). Bassey, cited in Nwonkwoala (2021), stated that classroom management increases student engagement, reduces inappropriate and disruptive behaviour, promotes student responsibility for academic work and improves academic performance. Classroom management effectiveness refers to the ability of teachers to effectively coordinate students and classroom activities in a way that will ensure the achievement of the lesson.

However, one of the most challenging tasks of secondary schools is poor classroom management. Personal observation revealed that while some teachers can coordinate classroom activities effectively, many are ineffective in classroom management, thereby making it difficult to achieve lesson objectives. Many teachers, especially in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria, lack classroom management skills to maintain a conducive classroom environment where effective teaching and learning can take place. Poor classroom management has been identified as a major problem in the secondary school system, affecting both students' academic performance and the achievement of school goals. Teachers' classroom management has shown efficacy in reducing behavioural problems and improving social skills among children experiencing poverty (Gaspar & Judy, 2023).

There are many factors that can influence teachers' classroom management. Among these factors is teachers' socio-economic status. Socio-economic status refers to the combined social and economic status, such as education level, occupation and income level of an individual or household. According to Wikipedia (2026), socio-economic status is a combination of an individual's social and economic situation in relation to others, which is consequently more changeable over time. Hart, cited in Olujuwon, Jegede and Omilaye (2025), viewed socio-economic status as an individual's degree of education, income and work obsession that affects the education system. On their part, Ogunbamowo, Akeredolu, Ashon, Ligali and Ukpong (2022) referred to socio-economic status as social and economic variables such as income, education and employment status of an individual.

Teachers with high socio-economic status are able to dedicate sufficient time to the formulation of materials and media needed for tomorrow's teaching and learning processes compared to teachers with low socio-economic status (Wey-Amaewhule, Barineka & Okere, 2022). According to the authors, teachers with low socio-economic status are not only unable to fulfil their family's basic needs but also lack the time and opportunity at home to improve their skills and knowledge, which are essential for addressing daily teaching challenges.

Dimensions of teachers' socio-economic status include education level and income level. Teachers' education level refers to the level of education a teacher has attained. It is the degree of educational attainment an individual acquires. It can also be referred to as the level at which an individual stopped schooling. Kebbie (2022) referred to educational status as the best qualification obtained by educators. Emangha and Udedeh (2018) report that educational qualifications influence administrative effectiveness. This means that teachers' education level can influence their job performance. Teachers require advanced education and specialised training to function effectively in terms of teaching and classroom management. Teachers' higher education qualifications enhance pedagogical and classroom management skills, which are crucial to students' academic performance. Teachers with good education create more active learning time with fewer interruptions, actively observe students from afar, and use more non-verbal corrective feedback through the use of encouragement (Okenwa-Ojo & Yusuf, 2023).

On the other hand, teachers' income levels refer to the sum total of gross earnings of individuals or households received from various sources such as wages, salaries, bonuses and profits from investments. Teachers' income levels, therefore, refer to the sum total of all

the money accrued to the teacher at a point in time. High-income teachers often have better preparation, leading to higher job performance. An increase in teachers' income leads to an increase in job performance. In other words, the higher the income level of teachers, the higher the performance level. Teachers whose income is high are likely to concentrate on their jobs and improve their performance. Adanweli (2024) revealed that there is a clear connection between fair teachers' wages and enhanced performance. According to the report, teachers who are fairly paid are more inspired, contented and dedicated to their duties.

From the background of the study, it appears that teachers' socio-economic status has a role to play in classroom management. Hence, the study examined teachers' socio-economic status and classroom management in public secondary schools in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The academic achievement of students depends to a large extent on the classroom environment where teaching and learning take place. However, one of the problems besieging secondary education in Cross River State, and in Ikom Education Zone in particular, is poor classroom management among teachers. It has been observed over the years that many teachers operate in a crowded, noisy and poorly arranged classroom. On many occasions, students have been seen moving in and out of the class, sleeping and distracting others while instruction is ongoing. Students are left to behave as they like during classroom teaching, without supervision and discipline from the teachers. This situation adversely affects the academic performance and achievement of students and contributes to the failure to attain educational goals.

In an attempt to salvage this situation, government and school managers have been making efforts to improve teachers' classroom management skills. Among these efforts are the training and development of teachers, the imposition of disciplinary measures, and the supervision of instructional activities, among others. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, poor management of classrooms remains unabated in public secondary schools in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. A critical observation revealed that teachers with high socio-economic status appear to be more effective in classroom management than those with low socio-economic status. It is against this backdrop that this study examined teachers' socio-economic status and classroom management in public secondary schools in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To investigate the relationship between teachers' socio-economic status and classroom management.

ii) To find out the difference in the mean score between high and low socio-economic teachers in classroom management.

### **Research questions**

What is the relationship between teachers' socio-economic status?

The phrase is already correct as it stands. However, if you are looking for a complete sentence or context, you might consider rephrasing it. For example: "What is the status of classroom management?" If you have a specific context in mind, please provide it for further assistance.

ii) What is the difference in the mean score between high and low socio-economic teachers in classroom management?

### **Statement of hypotheses**

i) There is no significant relationship between teachers' socio-economic status and classroom management.

ii) There is no significant difference in the mean score between high and low socio-economic teachers in classroom management.

### **Method**

A survey research design was adopted in the study. This research design was used to enable the researchers to sample a proportion of the teachers' population in the study area for the investigation and to generalise the results of the study. The study was carried out in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The zone is located in the central part of Cross River State and comprises six Local Government Areas, including Abi, Boki, Etung, Ikom, Obubra and Yakurr. The population of the study comprised 1,674 teachers in public secondary schools in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 334 teachers as the sample and respondents of the study.

An instrument titled "Teachers Socio-Economic Status and Classroom Management Questionnaire (TSESCMQ)" was used to collect data. The instrument has three parts: A, B and C. Part A contains demographic data of the respondents. Part B comprised 12 items to measure teachers' socio-economic status, including education level and income level. Part

C also comprised 12 items to measure classroom management in terms of classroom arrangement and supervision. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Management. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument. Its coefficients ranged from 0.68 to 0.82, indicating that the instrument was reliable. Data for the analysis were obtained by the researchers. The analysis was conducted using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and an independent t-test for hypotheses one and two, respectively.

**Results**

*Table 1*  
*Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis between Teachers' Socio-economic Status and Classroom Management (N=335)*

Variables	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$	$\Sigma XY$	r-value
	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$		
Teachers	4061	84743	85203	0.7386
socio-economic status				
Classroom Mgt	4117	86821		

Significant at 0.05, r-critical = 0.194, df = 333

The r-value of 0.819 indicates a positive correlation between teachers' socio-economic status and classroom management. This means that as teachers' socio-economic status increases, classroom management also increases. In addition, the significance of this correlation is determined by the r-critical value, which is 0.194 at a significance level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) of 182. Therefore, since the calculated r-value (0.7386) is greater than the r-critical value (0.194), the correlation is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis, which states that teachers' socio-economic status does not have any significant relationship with classroom management, is rejected. Consequently, it is accepted that teachers' socio-economic status has a significant relationship with classroom management.

*Table 2*  
*The Summary of t-test Analysis of the Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of High and Low Socio-economic Status of Teachers in Classroom Management (n = 335)*

Group	N	Mean	Std.dev.	Std Error	Mean Diff	t-value	P-value

Low	3.309	17.2036	4.63166	.35841	1.65002	3.309	.001
High	3.309	15.5536	4.49319	.34666	1.65002	3.309	.001

As shown in Table 2, the p-value of 0.001 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of high and low socio-economic status of teachers in classroom management.

## **Discussion**

### **Hypothesis one:**

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' socio-economic status and classroom management. This result implies that teachers' socio-economic status, in terms of education and income level, is an important factor that determines teachers' classroom management effectiveness. This result is in line with the findings of Adanweli (2024), who revealed that there is a clear connection between fair teachers' wages and enhanced performance.

### **Hypothesis two:**

The results of hypothesis two revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean score between high and low socio-economic teachers in classroom management. This result indicated that teachers with high socio-economic status are at variance with those in low socio-economic status in terms of classroom management. The result also indicated that high socio-economic teachers are more effective in classroom management than low socio-economic teachers. This finding agrees with Wey-Amaewhule et al. (2022), who report that teachers with high socio-economic status are capable of providing sufficient time for the formulation of materials and media needed in the teaching and learning process compared to teachers with low socio-economic status.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that teachers' socio-economic status determined their classroom management, and that teachers with high socio-economic status are more effective in classroom management than those with low socio-economic status.

## **Recommendations**

Government and school principals should improve teachers' income levels to boost their socio-economic status for effective classroom management.

ii) Teachers should improve their educational level by obtaining additional qualifications to boost their socio-economic status for effective classroom management.

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