



Teachers Perception On The Impact Of Large Class Size On The Academic Performance Of Students In Kebbi Central Senatorial Zone, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated Teachers' Perception on the Impact of Large Class Size on the Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Kebbi Central Senatorial Zone, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to find out; the extent to which large class size affects students' academic performance, the extent to which large class size affects teaching and learning in public junior secondary schools. The study used survey research design to probe the opinions of the respondents, the study population consisted of 71 public junior secondary schools with 542 teachers in Kebbi central senatorial zone. The study used Research Advisor (2006) to select 63 out of 71 public junior secondary schools and 217 out of 542 teachers using purposive, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. The study used two (2) self-designed questionnaires titled: Large Class Size and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (LCSSAPQ) and Academic Performance Rating Scale (APRS) to collect data. The content validity of the research instruments was done by experts in the field of Education and other experts in Research Methodology in the Faculty of Education, Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero. The study obtained 0.81 for Large Class Size and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (LCSSAPQ) and 0.71 for Academic Performance Rating Scale (APRS) which made the research instruments reliable for data collection. The study used descriptive statistics to answer the research questions while corresponding hypotheses were tested using independent t-test. The results of the analysis indicated that large class size causes distractions and uncontrollable behavior which seriously affect students' academic performance. The study recommended that Government through ministry of education should ensure that with an increase in students population, arrangements should be made for increase in infrastructure as well as number of qualified teachers, also to increase the number of secondary schools or expand the capacity of the existing schools to reduce number of students per-class class size in order to improve the management of students behavior.

Keywords: Large Class Size, Academic Performance, Teaching and Learning

INTRODUCTION

Education is a crucial factor in the development and progress of any society. Education is severally viewed as the process through which knowledge, skills, ideas, values and attitudes are transmitted from one generation to another. That is to say, through education, individuals or young citizens acquire knowledge, skills, capacities and character that would help them to develop into well-adjusted adults who would be useful to themselves, their families and the society at large Aduku, Zakari and Oluwatosin (2022). Consequently, the education sector is pivotal to the actualization of our current national and

global government policy and objectives (Opeyemi, 2013). Meanwhile, the type of education (learning) which aids an individual in the process of self-discovery and self-actualization is one that occurs in a school system. It is generally believed that, the achievement of the objectives of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) fundamentally depends on the quality of education available in the particular society especially at the upper basic nine class. Class size of the schools is one of the aspects of school variable that could affect the quality of education received by students in any school system. The impact of class size among other variables on the academic performance of secondary school students especially at the upper basic nine level (J.S.S. 1,2, and 3), have been issue of concern and ongoing to researchers.

However, the quality of education can be influenced by various factors, one of which is the size of the classroom, Class size can be defined as the total number of students in the class or the number of students to each teacher (Ajayi, Audu and Ajayi, 2017) In Kebbi State, Nigeria, like many other regions, large class sizes have become a prevalent issue in the educational system. Large class sizes refer to classrooms that accommodate a significantly high number of students, surpassing the ideal teacher-student ratio recommended for effective learning, in many educational systems around the world, including Kebbi State in Nigeria, overcrowded classrooms have become a prevalent issue. Large class sizes occur when there are too many students assigned to a single teacher in a classroom, surpassing the recommended student-teacher ratio. This situation poses numerous challenges for both teachers and students and can have profound consequences on the quality of education provided.

The academic performance of students is a crucial indicator of educational effectiveness. It encompasses their achievements, understanding, and mastery of subject matter, as well as their ability to apply knowledge and skills. Several factors contribute to academic performance, including the quality of instruction, curriculum, student engagement, and individualized attention. However, the size of the class itself plays a significant role in shaping these factors. Class size have a significant effect on the educational quality and academic performance of students. Students-teacher ratio and per-student expenditures are, without a question, essential resource inputs for every academic institution. The lower the class size, the greater the likelihood of increasing the quality of education and achieving the academic objectives of secondary schools (Cuban 2016).

Statement of the Problem

The recommended student-teacher ratio in secondary schools is 1:40 (FRN,2004), but most of the public secondary schools in Kebbi state today, the teacher–student ration has gone far beyond the stipulation of the national policy on education. Number of students in each class exceeded the recommended teacher-student ratio by National policy of Education, seating arrangement are altered, thereby making teaching and learning difficult. For years now there has been an increase in enrolment population of students in the state, which has been consistent without an increase in facilities, adequate teachers and infrastructure etc. With the decline in the quality of education and output, it therefore becomes imperative to find out whether the increase in population of students have any impact on their academic performance and what could be done to the situation at hand.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the extent to which large class size affects students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi State, Nigeria.
2. To determine the extent to which large class size affects teaching and learning in secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi State, Nigeria

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do teacher's perception on the impact of large class size affects students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, Kebbi State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do teacher's perception on the impact of large class size affects the teaching and learning process in secondary school in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance to answer the research questions.

H₀₁: There is significant difference in the teachers' perception on how large class size affects students' academic performance in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi state, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the teachers' perception on how large class size affects teaching and learning in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi state, Nigeria

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Class-size and student-teacher ratio has a great impact on the quality of education and academic success of students. There is no doubt that pupil-teacher ratio and per-student outgoings are some of the important resource inputs for any academic institution. Lesser the ratio of student and teacher in the class better is the probability of improving the quality of education and accomplishing the academic goals of institutions. Quality of education is very crucial for strategic planning of academic goals and tag along with the pace of developed world. However, the problem at stake is whether student-teacher ratio has any implication for the quality of education (Cuban 2004).

There are many literatures about the concept of class size and the academic performance of students. Harfitt (2012b, 2013, 2014) conducted three studies in Hong Kong secondary schools. In Harfitt's first study, Harfitt (2012b) examined student perspective on class size. Harfitt (2012b) interviewed a total of 191 students about their experiences in their English classes. Even after controlling statistically for the confounding variable of teacher teaching ability, Harfitt (2012b) found that students reported smaller classes had better classroom management, more time on task, and better teacher-student relationships. Students felt a higher level of closeness and community, and felt more comfortable asking the teacher for assistance. Harfitt (2012b) conducted classroom observations after the interviews, and the data supported the perception that students in small classes had a higher level of participation. In the second study, Harfitt (2013) focused on teacher perceptions instead of student perceptions and came to the same conclusions. Harfitt (2013) conducted a case study of four English teachers, which included multiple interviews and classroom observations. The research team observed that teachers changed pedagogical practices in smaller classrooms and that their relationship with students was much closer. Teachers reported and observers confirmed that in smaller classes, teachers had a better understanding of their students and could customize lessons to individual needs much more than in larger classes. In the third study, Harfitt (2014) focused on the pedagogical changes made in reduced-size secondary classrooms. These changes were based on recommendations of 43 10th grade students as brokered by the researcher. Students suggested that teachers adopt more group work to take advantage of the smaller classroom and to engage more students by varying types of coursework. Observations showed that these changes created a greater sense of unity and belonging in the classroom that could directly relate to increases in student achievement.

Study conducted by Ruffina, Esther, and Anastecia (2018) on the impact of class size on students' academic performance in Biology in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State found that that large class size had negative effect on students' academic performance in biology. Another study by Yusuf, Onifade, and Bello (2016) on the impacts of class size on student's academic achievement revealed that students in small class had a higher mean and that large class has a negative effect on the achievement of students.

Anashie, Ebuta & Adie (2013) examined the influence of students' population pressure and class size on public secondary school students' academic performance in Cross River State. The Findings of the study revealed that students' population pressure and large class size negatively affect teaching/learning and make it difficult for teachers to administer and mark tests/assignments. Similarly, Shah and Inamullah (2012) found from their studies that overcrowded classes could have a direct impact on students' learning. They not only affected students' performance but the teachers had to face different problems such as discipline, behavioral problems, poor health and poor performance of students, put stress on teacher and increased in drop-out rate of student.

It was also observed that class size has psychological and social effect on students' academic performance. Where the class size cannot be reduced in a given time due to challenges beyond the control of the school authorities, it is recommended that teachers and management of the school should employ rotational students' group formation and study. State and Oyebanji (2020) further findings revealed that class size, school location and school environment had significant joint influences on academic achievement among secondary school students in Oyo South Senatorial District, Oyo State, Nigeria ($F(3,476) = 7.229; p < 0.05$).

METHODOLOGY

In this study, Descriptive research design was adopted to investigate Teachers perception on the impact of large class size on the academic performance of secondary school students in Kebbi central senatorial zone, because of its appropriateness and it involves fact findings. Descriptive survey is used in exploratory studies to gather information, summarize, present and interpret data for the purpose of clarification. The population of this study was drawn from seven local governments in Kebbi central senatorial zone which consists of Aliero, Birnin-Kebbi, Bunza, Gwandu, Kalgo, Koko/Besse, Maiyama Local Government Areas with a total of 71 public junior secondary schools which comprises a total number of 542 teachers. The Study selected 63 out of 71 junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, 217 out of 542 teachers using Research Advisors (2006) Table for determining sample size. Large Class Size and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (LCSSAPQ) had 24 item that were constructed based on the research questions. The Students' Academic Performance Rating Scale (APRS) had a 12 item questions which focused mainly on students' academic performance. The respondents were asked to respond to the item using four-point Likert rating scale, the items were rated as: strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A), strongly disagreed (SD), disagreed (D) which are coded 1,2,3,4 respectively.

To enhanced its validity, the instruments was discussed with the supervisors who are experts in the field of Educational psychology, sociology and also measurement and evaluation, as well as, other experts in Research Methodology in the Faculty of Education, Kebbi State University Science and Technology. Based on their expertise advice, some items in the research instruments were restructured and modified to be in line with the research questions and objectives. To determine the reliability level of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted and the result produced an index of 0.81 and 0.71 respectively. Once permission was obtained, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the respondents in the selected public junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone.

The data collected through the questionnaire was subjected to descriptive statistical techniques using mean, standard deviation, tables to summarize data percentage and frequency distribution to answer research questions while corresponding null hypotheses were tested using Independent Sample T-test statistical techniques at 0.05 level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software 20.0 versions to aid the analysis, which will determine any potential differences among the variables.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

RQ1: *To what extent do teacher’s perception on the impact of large class size affects students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, Kebbi State, Nigeria?*

Answered to the research question is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Effect of Large Class Size on Students’ Academic Performance

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Large class size influences your frequency of participation in class as a teacher	111	67	20	19	217	3.95	0.68
2.	The students’ population in your class negatively affects your attitude to teach	107	79	18	13	217	3.50	0.71
3.	Students in any large class are always constitute nuisance and generate much noise to disrupt teaching and learning	118	65	14	20	217	3.42	0.98
4.	Teachers always find it difficult to regulate behavior of students in any large class size make classroom management difficult	112	87	10	08	217	3.77	0.67
5.	Congestion in the classroom leading to frequent communication breakdown that disrupt teaching and learning	109	92	06	10	217	3.87	0.85
6.	Teachers always find it difficult to thoroughly control truancy, transgression and miscreant in any large size class	107	69	29	12	217	3.80	0.66
Average		111	77	15	14		3.72	0.76
Percentage (%)		51%	35%	8%	6%			

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 indicated that 51% of the total respondents strongly agree that large class size affect students’ academic performance in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, Kebbi State, Nigeria while 35% of the total respondents agree large class size constitute nuisance and lousy classroom. On the other hand, 8% disagree and 6% strongly disagree with the assertion. Therefore, it can be concluded that 86% (51%+35%) unanimously agreed that large class size constituted to unregulated behavior of students and overcrowding that affect students’ academic performance in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, Kebbi State, Nigeria.

RQ2: *To what extent do teacher's perception on the impact of large class size affects the teaching and learning process in secondary school in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi State, Nigeria?*

Answered to the research question is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Effect of Large Class Size on Teaching and Learning Process

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Large class size prevents thorough supervision of students to know their level of assimilation of classroom lessons	121	76	12	08	217	3.93	0.58	Significant
2.	Large class size can affect free flow of communication between teachers and students during lesson which has effect on their academic performance	109	89	10	09	217	3.33	0.79	Significant
3	Large class size constitutes nuisance and disruption of class room activities which has effect on their academic performance	112	67	20	18	217	3.92	0.46	Significant
4.	Congestion and overcrowded in the classroom could attributed to Large class size which has effect on students' academic performance	105	77	19	16	217	3.65	0.76	Significant
5.	Unregulated and indiscipline on the part of students could be ascribed to large class size that affect students' academic performance	117	69	11	20	217	3.50	0.71	Significant
6.	Large class size affects thorough teaching and learning which has negative effect on students' academic performance	108	91	11	07	217	3.77	0.67	Significant
Average		112	78	14	13	217	3.68	0.66	Significant
Percentage (%)		52%	36%	6%	6%				

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 indicated that 52% of the total respondents strongly agree that large class size affect the teaching and learning process in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, Kebbi State, Nigeria while 36% of the total respondents agree Large class size affects thorough teaching and learning which has negative effect on students' academic performance. On the other hand, 6% disagree and also another 6% strongly disagree with the assertion. Therefore, it can be concluded that 88% (52%+36%)

unanimously agreed that Large class size affects thorough teaching and learning process which has negative effect on students' academic performance in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, Kebbi State, Nigeria

Hypotheses Testing

This section tested hypotheses formulated earlier using independent t-test with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 20.0 version at 0.05 level of significance to determine whether to accept or reject hypotheses.

Ho₁: There is significant difference in the teachers' perception on how large class size affects students' academic performance in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi state, Nigeria.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and T-test Analyses on How Large Class Size Affect Students' Academic Performance

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Error	T	P-value	Decision
Large class size	217	19.98	0.20	5.447	0.000	Significant
Students' academic performance	217	21.71	0.25			

Table 3 indicated the descriptive statistics and t-test analyses of how large class size affect students' academic performance. The results indicated that large class size has mean of 19.98 with standard error of 0.20 while students' academic performance has mean of 21.71 with standard error of 0.25. The results of the t-test ($t= 5.447$, $P\text{-value}=0.000<0.05$) revealed that there is significant difference in the scores of teachers' perception on large class size and students' academic performance in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi state, Nigeria. These results imply that large class size scores are statistically significant on average higher than that of students' academic performance. This means that large class size affects students' academic performance significantly

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the teachers' perception on how large class size affects teaching and learning in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi state, Nigeria

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and T-test Analyses on How Large Class Size Affect Teaching and Learning

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Error	T	P-value	Decision
Large class size	217	19.98	0.20	7.644	0.000	Significant
Teaching and Learning	217	22.31	0.23			

Table 4 indicated the descriptive statistics and t-test analyses of large class size affects teaching and learning. The results indicated that large class size has mean of 19.98 with standard error of 0.20 while teaching and learning has mean of 22.31 with standard error of 0.23. The results of the t-test ($t= 7.644$, $P\text{-value}=0.000<0.05$) revealed that there is significant difference in the scores of large class size and teaching and learning. These results imply that large class size scores are statistically significant on average higher than that of teaching and learning. This means that large class size constitutes nuisance and disruption of classroom activities which has effect on students' academic performance significantly.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study indicated that large class size causes distractions and uncontrollable behavior which seriously affect students' academic performance in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, Kebbi State, Nigeria. The finding agreed with the result of Yusuf, Onifade, and Bello (2016) on the impacts of class size on student's academic achievement revealed that students in small class had a higher mean and that large class has a negative effect on the achievement of students. The finding also, was in

agreement with Ruffina, Esther, and Anastecia (2018) who found that large class size had negative effect on students' academic performance.

The finding indicated that large class size constituted congestion, poor class room management and overcrowding, which greatly affect the teaching and learning process in junior secondary school in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi State, Nigeria. The finding supported by Harfitt, (2012) who found that large class size affects thorough teaching and learning which has negative effect on students' academic performance and that large class size constituted nuisance, congestion and disruption of classroom activities which has effect on students' academic performance. The finding was in consonance with Anashie, Ebuta and Adie (2013) who found that students' population pressure and large class size negatively affect teaching/learning and make it difficult for teachers to administer and mark tests/assignments. Similarly, Shah and Inamullah (2012) found from their studies that overcrowded classes could have a direct impact on students' learning. They not only affected students' performance but the teachers had to face different problems such as discipline, behavioral problems, poor health and poor performance of students, put stress on teacher and increased in drop-out rate of student. Handal, Watson, and Maher (2015) reported similar results in a study of secondary school math teachers' perspectives on class size in New South Wales, Australia. They found that the preferred class size of nearly half of the respondents was 16–20 students. In addition, all of the teachers interviewed for the study believed that smaller class size was beneficial to student achievement. They believed that smaller class sizes led to a decrease in classroom management issues which would be particularly beneficial to lower achieving students. Similarly, Nakabugo, Albert, and Maani (2007) research conducted in Uganda revealed that teachers provided fewer exercises and practice to reduce the amount of marking when teaching in large classes. There was also limited space to conduct group work that would enhance adequate content coverage. Englehart (2007) conducted a qualitative study to gain a greater understanding about why a reduction in class size could have a significant effect on student achievement. Englehart found that students were able to transition from one task to another quicker in the small class and spent a greater amount of time engaged in the material presented.

Summary of the Major Findings

Based on the results of the analysis, the following are the summary of the major findings

1. The study found that large class size causes distractions, uncontrollable behavior and bullying which seriously affects students' academic performance in junior secondary schools in Kebbi central senatorial zone, Kebbi State, Nigeria.
2. The study also found that large class size constituted congestion, poor class room management and overcrowding, which greatly affects the teaching and learning process in junior secondary school in Kebbi central senatorial zone Kebbi State, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the significant negative impact that large class sizes have on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Kebbi Central Senatorial Zone. Through the research, compelling evidence were uncovered indicating that large class size creates substantial obstacles to students' educational progress. In large classrooms, it becomes challenging for students to actively participate in discussions, ask questions, and share their thoughts. The limited opportunities for individualized attention prevent teachers from effectively addressing the specific learning needs of each student. Consequently, students may struggle to grasp complex concepts and develop a deep understanding of the subject matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the study recommended that;

1. Government through ministry of education should provide adequate fund to the school management to renovate some dilapidated buildings and expend the capacity of the existing schools to reduce number of students to controllable class size and also to increase number of secondary schools per-class in order to improve the management of student behavior.

2. There is need for ministry of education to work together with school management, as well as policy makers to implement class size reductions that has over the years constituted congestion, poor class room management and overcrowding, which greatly affect the teaching and learning process.

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