

EFFECTS OF CLASS SIZE ON TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE MANAGING IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

The study was titled "Effects of Class Size on Teachers' Job Performance Managing in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria". The study had two main objectives; To assess how class size affects teachers' lesson delivery in public secondary schools in Niger State; and to determine the impact of class size on teachers' time management in public secondary schools in Niger State; The research was guided by two research questions, which were tested through a descriptive survey research design. A total population of 5449 was considered, with a sample size of 652 respondents but 640 was used as that was the number of questionnaires returned. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage and mean, were used to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that teachers and students perceive that larger class sizes affect their ability to engage all students effectively, provide individual attention, and manage lesson pacing (Mean = 1.70). Teachers and students perceive that effective time management helps in starting and ending lessons on time, allocating time for each part of the lesson, ensuring smooth transitions, minimizing disruptions, and providing adequate time for assessment and feedback. (Mean = 1.67). The study concluded that larger class sizes significantly affect teachers' ability to engage all students effectively, provide individual attention, and manage lesson pacing. Effective time management is essential for overcoming these challenges, as it helps teachers to start and end lessons on time, allocate time for each part of the lesson, and minimize disruptions. The study recommended among others that Government and school administrators should work towards reducing class sizes to allow for more effective lesson delivery, individualized attention, and better engagement of students.

Introduction

Many scholars and people, in general, have debated for some years back on the number of Students a teacher is supposed to handle effectively in the class to ensure students' adequate learning. Perhaps, many people agree that having a few students to teacher ratio would benefit the students' academics; but many also argue that it does not guarantee success and would cost the school a great deal of more money. Before reviewing the research, a clarification of terms associated with the research context is necessary. Students achievement applies to make sure all students have the necessary skills and knowledge of function in school so that they may also succeed as an adult (National Education Association, 2002), but others see a much broader, richer picture. Three areas that fit into the broader picture are academics, essential life skills, and responsibility to the community. Definitions vary across the research spectrum, but for this research, a small class size will be defined as class with approximately 30-35 students, while regular class will be defined as classrooms with approximately 35-40 or more students (Harris & Plank, 2021). The term average class size is a calculation of the total number of students in a grade level divided by the number of classroom sections in that school or school district.

The main problems schools facing are that funding for these small class sizes is not available, or decreasing. Advocates of small Class Size such as Nye, Hedges and Konstantopoulos (2020), believe that small class sizes allow teachers to give more individualized attention to students, manage their classrooms more effectively, and provide more effective instructions that lead to better students' performance. In a small classroom, a teacher has more time to get to know each student's personality and academic strengths and weaknesses, students received more attention and are less likely to become discipline problems with less time spent on classroom management; teachers focus more on classroom instructions and students' learning. Wesley, of the College of Education at the University of

Washington, writes “my teaching and research experiences have convinced me that both Small Classes and Small Schools are crucial to a teacher’s ability to succeed with students” (Wesley, 2020).

Many people are not convinced that reducing class size ensures an academic advantage for both teachers and students. Whether Class Size reduction programs uniformly positive or does a downside exists to hiring and placing more teachers in its Public Schools?” (Johnson, 2021). Schools are hiring more inexperienced teachers due to legislative restrictions about classroom reductions because they are experiencing lack of qualified teachers to fill the classroom (Johnson, 2021). Others argue that there is no substantive proof that class size makes a difference in students’ or teachers’ job performance and there may be other influences affecting students’ or teachers’ job performance. Evidence linking smaller classes to improved performance is inconclusive. For instance; different studies have varied in their definition of small class size. According to Haunshek (2020), of the Hoover Institution, only 15 percent of the studies were found that reducing class size has a statistically significant positive effect on teachers’ job performance. Moreover, almost as many studies (13 %) found that reducing class size has a statistically negative effect on teachers’ job performance. The remaining 72% indicate that reducing class size has no statistically significant effects on teachers’ job performance. Only 13 % of them found that reducing class size increases teachers’ job performance, and 120 % indicate that a reduction harms teachers’ job performance.

Therefore, in the words of Haunshek, “there are few reasons to believe that Smaller Class Sizes systematically yield higher teachers’ achievement “(Barcia, Fredua & kwarteng, 2021). Evidence linking smaller classes to improved Teachers’ Job Performance is therefore inconclusive. Researchers such as Stronger, Geddes and Hertling(2018), have long investigated whether smaller classes improve teachers’ job performance. These findings imply that smaller classes can lead to more in-depth subject coverage by teachers and improve teaching and learning (Geddes,2018). Hertling, Leonard, Lumsden and Smith (2020): Thompson and Guningharu (2021). Montagna and Toth (2022), has linked the poor work performance of teachers in topics at our public secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria, on the size of the classes. In assessing the possible effects of class size on teachers’ job performance, the issue of a good measure of academic performance has been called into question. The major problems schools are facing are that, funding for these class sizes is not available, or are decreasing (Gilma & Kiger, 2021). They promised that reducing class-sizes can lead to improved teaching and learning is one that most teachers and parents would readily endorse (Kennedy, 2021), given a choice between a classroom with 20 students and with 30 students, who want to argue that the larger class would be a better learning environment for each student in the class. Nevertheless, the results of studies surveyed conclude that the influence of class size on teachers’ job performance depends upon the measure of performance and that when measures of knowledge are used the large class-method is as effective as the small class-methods (Gentry, 2018).

However, when measures of transfer of knowledge to new situations, retention of information, problem solving, critical thinking and attitude change or motivation are used, small class size will not be necessary. The relationship between class size and job performance has been a perplexing one for educators. Studies such as Inamullah, Hussain and Din (2020), have found that the physical environment and class overcrowding are the variables that affect teachers’ job performance (Molnar, et al, 2020). Other factors are school population and class size. Gentry (2018) and Swift (2020), stated that, the issue of poor academic performance of students in Nigeria has been of much concern to all stakeholders and parents. The problems are so much that they have led to the decline in standard of education. Since the academic success of teachers and students depends largely on the school environment, it is imperative to examine the impact variables of Class Size and the academic performance of teachers in public secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Performance of Secondary Schools Teachers according to report made by office of the Statistics in Public and Private Schools Management Board (PPSMB, 2021), calls for proper investigation of causes of poor performance of teachers, Probably, the high level of teachers’ enrolment without adequate provision of corresponding teaching

facilities in our schools. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014), stipulates that a normal class size at crèche or kindergarten should be ten (10) children per class; nursery should be twenty-five (25) pupils per class; primary should be thirty-five (35) pupils per class; Junior Secondary School should be thirty-five (35) students per class; and Post Basic Education level should be forty (40) students per class. In practical work class should be twenty (20) students per class, for effective teaching and learning. However, prevailing conditions in most Nigerian Secondary Schools are that a single classroom has a population of about 80 or more students per teacher, yet the same classes to teach the class size of 40 students are also being used in teaching the class size of 80 students. It would be expected therefore, that the increase in teachers' enrolment would create problems for teachers' job performance and effective classroom management.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the Effects of Class Size on Teachers' Lesson Delivery in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria.
2. determine the Effects of Class Size on Time Management in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does Class Size affect the teachers' Lesson Delivery in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria?
2. How does Class Size have Effects on Time Management in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria?

Methodology

The design of this study was qualitative method of research. The population of this study covered some of the students and teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria. This study used convenience sampling to select the participating schools for the study. Here the researcher selected those who were available and likely to participate, perhaps over a specific period. The instrument that was used for the study was observation checklist. According to Ary et al (2010, P.431), 'Observation is a basic method for obtaining data in qualitative research. Meanwhile, he also classified observation into three kinds; they are participant observation, non-participant observation and naturalistic observation. In this study, there was a chance that the researcher made mistakes during the observation. To avoid any mistakes, the observation checklists was rechecked and prevented any mistakes and invalid data. A pilot study was conducted in Government Day Secondary School Salka using thirty(30) students. The Cutman Split half formular and used to determine the reliability coefficient. The researcher collected a letter of introduction from Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum to Ministry of Education Niger State, Nigeria.

Result

This section deals with the analysis of research questions raised for the study.

Research Question One: How does Class Size affect the teachers' Lesson Delivery in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria?

Data on Class Size effect on teachers' Lesson Delivery in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria were analysed using frequency and percentage.

Table 1: Class Size effect on Teachers' Lesson Delivery in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	YES		NO		Mean
		Freq	%	Freq	%	
1.	Teacher effectively engages all students	425	66.4%	215	33.6%	1.66
2.	Teacher provides individual attention to students	425	66.4%	215	33.6%	1.66
3.	Lessons objectives are clearly communicated	485	75.8%	155	24.2%	1.76
4.	Lesson pace is appropriate for all students	429	67.0%	211	33.0%	1.67
5.	Teacher uses questioning techniques effectively	477	74.5%	163	25.5%	1.75
Cumulative Mean						1.70

The analysis of data in Table 1 shows the extent to which class size affects teachers' lesson delivery in public secondary schools in Niger State. The mean scores of items 1–5 were more than the 1.5 benchmark, and the cumulative mean was 1.7. This indicates that class size has a notable impact on teachers' lesson delivery. Teachers perceive that larger class sizes affect their ability to engage all students effectively, provide individual attention, and manage lesson pacing.

Research Question Two: How does Class Size have Effects on Time Management in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria?

Data on Class Size effect on Time Management in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State, Nigeria were analysed using frequency and percentage.

Table 2: Class Size effect on Time management in Public Secondary Schools in Niger State

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	YES		NO		Mean
		Freq	%	Freq	%	
6.	Teacher starts and ends the lesson on time	429	67.0%	211	33.0%	1.67
7.	Teacher is allocated effectively for each part of the lesson (introduction, activity, review)	429	67.0%	211	33.0%	1.67
8.	Transitions between activities are smooth and time-efficient	420	65.6%	220	34.4%	1.66
9.	Teachers minimizes time lost due to class disruptions	429	67.0%	211	33.0%	1.67
10.	Teacher has adequate time for assessment and feedback	429	67.0%	211	33.0%	1.67
Cumulative Mean						1.67

The analysis of data in Table 2 shows the extent to which class size affects time management in public secondary schools in Niger State. The mean scores of items 6–10 were more than the 1.5 benchmark, and the cumulative mean was 1.67. This indicates that class size affects teachers' time management in lesson delivery. Teachers perceive that effective time management helps in starting and ending lessons on time, allocating time for each part of the lesson, ensuring smooth transitions, minimizing disruptions, and providing adequate time for assessment and feedback.

Discussion of Findings

Teachers and students perceive that larger class sizes affect their ability to engage all students effectively, provide individual attention, and manage lesson pacing (Mean = 1.70). The finding is in line with the report of Adeyemi (2008) who reported that larger class sizes significantly hinder teachers' ability to provide individualized attention, thereby limiting their capacity to ensure active engagement of all students. According to Adeyemi, the larger the

class size, the more difficult it becomes for teachers to interact with students on a personal level, assess their individual progress, and cater to their unique learning needs. This often leads to situations where some students become disengaged, particularly those who require additional support to keep pace with the lesson. Similarly, Blatchford, Bassett, and Brown (2011) explored the relationship between class size and teaching dynamics in their comprehensive study. They found that large class sizes negatively affect lesson pacing, making it challenging for teachers to address the varying learning speeds of students within the allotted time. Teachers are often forced to adopt a generalized approach to instruction, which may not adequately serve the needs of all learners. This compromise in instructional quality is particularly detrimental in contexts where students exhibit diverse academic abilities and require differentiated teaching methods. Furthermore, the UNESCO (2016) report underscores the importance of smaller class sizes for enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. The report highlights that smaller classes allow teachers to implement more personalized teaching methods, such as individualized feedback and interactive learning activities, which are often impractical in larger classrooms. With fewer students, teachers can monitor individual progress more closely, identify areas of difficulty, and provide targeted support, thereby fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment. Adding to this, Finn and Achilles (1999) in their seminal work on the student-Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) project demonstrated that smaller class sizes have a positive impact on both teacher performance and student achievement. They noted that teachers in smaller classes were able to dedicate more time to student engagement activities, such as discussions and hands-on learning, which are critical for fostering deep understanding and critical thinking skills. Moreover, Mulryan-Kyne (2010) examined the implications of large class sizes in secondary schools and highlighted how these classes tend to dilute the quality of teacher-student interaction. Teachers are often overwhelmed by the sheer number of students, which leads to surface-level interactions rather than the meaningful exchanges that are necessary for fostering academic growth and personal development.

Conclusions

The study concluded that larger class sizes significantly affect teachers' ability to engage all students effectively, provide individual attention, and manage lesson pacing. Effective time management is essential for overcoming these challenges, as it helps teachers to start and end lessons on time, allocate time for each part of the lesson, and minimize disruptions. However, these strategies require additional support, such as improved training, better infrastructure, and smaller class sizes, to be more effective.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Government and school administrators should work towards reducing class sizes to allow for more effective lesson delivery, individualized attention, and better engagement of students.
2. Regular professional development programs should be organized for teachers to improve their time management skills and equip them with effective class control strategies for large classes.

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