

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, CLASS SIZE AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN OYO WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE

Omobolaji Ganiyu Aimasiko

Abstract

The general objective of this study is to find out the relationship between classroom management, class size and teaching methodology as predictors of students' achievement in English grammar in Oyo West Local Government Area, Oyo State. The specific objectives include the following: Explore the relationship between class size and the effectiveness of English Grammar in Oyo West Local Government Area, Oyo State. Assess the effectiveness of the policy governing teacher-student ratio in enhancing secondary school classes in Oyo West local government area, Oyo State. The methodology employed for this study involves the use of a survey research design, carefully crafted to achieve the research project's objective through the collection of primary data. The study focuses on teachers from public secondary schools in Oyo West Local Government Area. Data processing was conducted using tables. The study's findings indicate that large class sizes negatively impact academic performance, hinder effective teaching methods, and impede the proper utilization of teaching materials, particularly those at the end. As a result, the study offers recommendations such as prioritizing increased funding for secondary education in Nigeria to address these performance issues. Additionally, school leaders and inspectors should pay close attention to class sizes and work towards avoiding overcrowding in classrooms.

Abstract: Classroom Management, Class Size, Teaching Methodology, Students' Achievement

Introduction

The rise in population has led to a migration towards urban areas in search of better opportunities. This migration has resulted in overcrowding in cities, including an increase in enrollment in the Nigerian education system. This surge in enrollment has given rise to what is known as an "educational explosion" (Okoye-Nebo, 2012). Today, researchers around the world are showing a keen interest in studying the factors that affect academic performance and achievement. One such factor believed to have an impact on teaching and learning in schools, particularly in public institutions, is class size. In Nigeria, class sizes vary across different levels of education and disciplines at the tertiary level. The National Policy on Education (2004) recommends a class size of 20 for pre-primary, 30 for primary, and 40 for secondary levels. Therefore, any class that exceeds these recommended numbers can be considered abnormal, and if the excess is more than 10, the class can be classified as large. A classroom is deemed overcrowded if it surpasses the specified benchmark. (UNESCO) suggests that a suitable ratio of teachers to students in primary and secondary schools is 1:30 to 1:35. According to current research, a class could be considered large when the teacher is unable to provide sufficient individual attention to students due to the size of the class.

Class size can affect learning in several ways. One such way is through the students' interactions, which can be influenced by the number of learners present. This can lead to disruptive behavior, affecting the types of activities the teacher can facilitate. Additionally, the class size affects the amount of individual attention the teacher can provide to students and their specific needs, as opposed to focusing on the group as a whole. In smaller classes, it is easier for the teacher to

concentrate and cater to each learner's requirements. Furthermore, the size of the class can also impact the teacher's time allocation and overall effectiveness. For instance, it can determine how much material can be covered within a given period (Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran & Willms, 2001). Likewise, an overcrowded classroom refers to a situation where there is an excessive number of students in a single classroom. Such crowded environments often lack adequate teaching materials, proper lighting, safety features, ventilation or air conditioning systems, low floors and foundations, and sufficient seating arrangements. As a result, teachers and students struggle to move freely within the limited space available. In some cases, the number of students in a class can be twice as large as the recommended amount. This poses significant challenges for even the most skilled educators. One of the main issues is the limited time available for curriculum activities, while the time required for grading increases. When faced with large class sizes, teachers often resort to using direct teaching methods. According to UNESCO (2006), approximately 84 percent of classrooms have fewer than 40 students per teacher. However, in Sub Saharan Africa and Asia, many countries exceed this ratio. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest median Pupil-Teacher Ratio, with countries like the Congo, Ethiopia, and Malawi having ratios of around 70:1. South and East Asia also experience high PTRs, with Afghanistan and Cambodia surpassing 55:1. In Nigeria, there have been reports of class sizes ranging from 40:1 to 100:1, which has had a detrimental impact on the education system.

The notion that reducing the number of students in a class can result in improved teaching and learning is widely supported by educators and parents (Kennedy, 2003). If given the option between a classroom with 20 students and one with 30 students, it is unlikely that anyone would argue that the larger class would provide a better learning environment for each student. However, schools are facing a significant challenge when it comes to funding these smaller class sizes. Many states

and school districts are struggling with limited or decreasing funds, which makes it difficult to implement smaller classes.

Advocates of smaller classes believe that reducing class size allows teachers to provide more personalized attention to students, effectively manage their classrooms, and deliver more impactful instruction that leads to improved student performance. In a smaller classroom, teachers have more time to establish a deeper understanding of each student's personality, strengths, and weaknesses. Students receive increased attention and are less likely to become disciplinary issues, as less time is spent on managing the classroom. This enables teachers to focus more on instruction and students' learning. According to Wasley (2002), the success of a teacher in effectively engaging with students heavily relies on the presence of small classes and small schools.

Despite some people's skepticism, there is debate about whether reducing class size actually leads to academic benefits. Johnson, a senior policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation's Center for Data Analysis, poses the question: do class size reduction programs consistently have positive effects, or are there potential drawbacks to hiring and placing more teachers in public schools? (Johnson, 2002). Due to state requirements for reducing class sizes, schools are forced to hire less experienced teachers, resulting in a shortage of qualified educators to fill the classrooms (Johnson, 2002). Critics argue that there is insufficient evidence to prove that class size directly impacts student performance, as there may be other factors at play. The connection between smaller class sizes and improved performance remains inconclusive, as different studies have varied in their definition of what constitutes a small class size.

The study delved into the correlation between classroom management, class size, and teaching methodology and their impact on students' achievement in English grammar in Oyo West local

government area, Oyo State. A classroom, whether physical or virtual, serves as a structured platform for interaction between students and teachers, aiming to enhance students' cognitive abilities. Effective classroom management involves organizing the classroom in a way that accommodates around 20-25 students, providing enough space for both teachers and students to move freely. Another classroom management strategy is grouping students into study groups consisting of 5 to 7 students. Implementing short class activities and closely monitoring students during lessons can also contribute to maintaining order in the classroom. However, in the majority of public secondary schools in Oyo state, the situation is far from ideal. Unfortunately, the class sizes are so large that teachers struggle to even recognize their students by name, and sometimes even by face. On average, the teacher-student ratio in most public schools is either 1:80, 1:100, or 1:120, making it extremely challenging for teachers to enforce classroom rules. The general objective of this study is therefore to find out the relationship between classroom management, class size and teaching methodology as predictors of students achievement in English grammar in Oyo West local government area, Oyo State.

Literature Review

The concept of class size refers to the number of students present in a particular course or classroom. This can refer to either the number of students being taught by an individual teacher in a specific subject or classroom, or the average number of students being taught by teachers within a school or educational system. The question of how many students a teacher can effectively educate in order to ensure optimal learning has been a topic of debate among educators, politicians, and the general public for many years. It is crucial for educators to determine whether there is a correlation between class size and students' academic success. This understanding is essential in order

to create the best possible learning environment for all students, while also making informed decisions about how to allocate limited funding. In the class size debate, stakeholders at every level of education require empirical evidence regarding the significance of the relationship between class size and academic achievement. This need is particularly pronounced in rural, economically disadvantaged areas where funding is even scarcer than in more affluent regions.

According to Flemming, Toutant, and Raptis (2012), class size is not as crucial as other factors in determining student academic achievement. Economist Eric Hanushek (2016) further examined the research on class size and concluded that any positive outcomes associated with smaller classes were due to flawed studies. Hanushek argued that reducing class size had minimal or no impact on students' academic performance based on his own investigations. However, other researchers (Biddle & Berliner, 2012; Gilman & Antes, 2015) criticized Hanushek for using student-to-teacher ratios instead of the actual number of students per teacher when assessing class size.

The historical background of class size in Nigeria has provided educational leaders with valuable insight into the need to justify per pupil expenses. Previous research on class size has primarily focused on the correlation between class size and teaching methods used by teachers in different class sizes. This research has also provided data on how class size impacts teachers' instructional practices. However, in order to fully comprehend the impact of class size on the learning environment, educational leaders must also consider the amount of time teachers spend on classroom management, as this directly affects the time available for instruction. Blatchford, et al. (2017) and Cakmak (2019) discovered through teacher surveys and interviews that larger classes are often more challenging for teachers to maintain discipline in, resulting in a shift in focus from academic achievement to student behavior. Additionally, Blatchford, Edmonds, and Martin (2013)

observed that students in smaller classes (averaging 19 students per class) allocated more time to instructional activities and less time to non-instructional activities, such as non-academic conversations with peers, compared to students in larger classes (averaging 32 students per class).

According to a study conducted by Ehrle, Zahorik, and Molnar (2011), larger class sizes hinder teachers from adequately covering content because they are forced to devote more time to managing student behavior. In contrast, teachers assert that smaller classes not only have fewer discipline problems, but also allow for the establishment of personal relationships with students, thereby preventing behavior management issues (Egelson, Harman, & Achilles, 1996; Halback et al., 2011).

According to the studies conducted by Asiyat (2004) and Nyiam (2012), classrooms that are overcrowded lead to the stretching of available school facilities, while examination halls that are overcrowded provide an opportunity for students to engage in cheating during exams. Agba (2010) argued that the overpopulation of students negatively impacts the overall atmosphere of the school, affecting both teachers and students. However, researchers have also pointed out that effective teaching and high academic performance can only be achieved when there are sufficient infrastructural facilities and a manageable class size. Additionally, Dillon, Kokkelenberg, and Christy (2002) found that large classes have a more negative impact on some students compared to others, with the effect of class size on grades varying across different student categories. Adeyemi (2008) discovered that schools with an average class size of 35 or lower achieve better results than schools with more than 35 students in senior secondary schools. When it comes to instruction methods, small classes may be more beneficial for students when discussions are the primary mode, as it allows for greater student participation and recognition, compared to lecture-

based instruction with seatwork. Smaller class sizes have proven to be beneficial for minority students and those attending inner-city schools. These classes have the potential to narrow the achievement gap and result in fewer grade retentions, disciplinary actions, dropouts, and an increase in the number of students taking college entrance exams.

According to Olatunde's (2010) study, positive outcomes were observed in small classes in terms of increased time dedicated to learning, personalized instruction, well-behaved classrooms, and teacher satisfaction. However, the impact on academic achievement was inconsistent, with small classes sometimes exhibiting better results while larger classes performed better in other instances. In a meta-analysis conducted by Glass and Smith (1979) that examined over 80 studies on class size, a correlation between class size and student achievement was identified. Although this research may be outdated, it signifies the historical association between class size and academic performance.

Additionally, several research studies have demonstrated the direct impact of larger class sizes on various aspects of students' experiences, including their academic performance, disciplinary issues, and overall classroom management (Shah & Inamullah, 2012). Overpopulated classrooms can significantly hinder students' ability to learn effectively, as reported by Carlson (2000) during his visits to schools in Florida, Santiago, and Dallas' Escuela Hogar. In these schools, classrooms designed for a maximum of 35 students were crammed with over 40 children, resulting in a lack of space for students to work or even move around comfortably. This not only led to problems with discipline and behavior, but also had negative implications for students' health, academic performance, and overall satisfaction with their educational experience. Additionally, Ijaiya (1999) found a weak positive correlation between teachers' and students' opinions on overcrowding, with both groups concurring that

it significantly diminished the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. To address this issue, it is crucial that educational planning at all levels prioritize the construction of additional buildings and provision of adequate furniture to accommodate the needs of students and promote better learning outcomes.

While the significance of classroom management, class size, and teaching methodology in predicting students' achievement in English grammar is recognized, there is a lack of comprehensive research that integrates these three factors. Most studies tend to focus on ones or two of these factors, leaving a gap in our understanding of how these factors interact and collectively influence student achievement. Furthermore, the specific mechanisms through which these factors affect student achievement in English grammar are not fully understood. For instance, how does classroom management influence the effectiveness of different teaching methodologies? How does class size interact with classroom management strategies and teaching methodologies to influence student outcomes? Addressing these questions requires a holistic approach that considers all three factors and their interrelationships. This paper aims to fill this gap by investigating classroom management, class size, and teaching methodology as predictors of students' achievement in English grammar.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is Class Size Reduction (CSR) theory propounded by Ready (2008), which is centered on the idea of reducing negative externalities, which include problematic behaviors and academic traits among students, through the implementation of smaller class sizes. It is widely believed that smaller class sizes can have a significant impact on student learning, transforming the learning environment into a more conducive setting for education. Some of the principle of this theory include the

following: Firstly, Individualized Attention: Ready, argues that smaller class sizes allow teachers to provide more individualized attention to students. With fewer students to manage, teachers can better understand the unique needs, strengths, and weaknesses of each student. This individualized attention enables teachers to tailor their instructional approaches and provide targeted support, leading to improved academic outcomes. Secondly, increased Student Engagement in smaller classes, students have more opportunities to actively participate in classroom activities. Ready, suggests that reduced class size fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment. Students can engage in discussions, ask questions, and receive immediate feedback, promoting deeper understanding and active learning. Thirdly, Enhanced Teacher-Student Relationships: Ready emphasizes that smaller class sizes facilitate stronger relationships between teachers and students. With fewer students to manage, teachers can establish rapport, build trust, and develop a deeper understanding of each student's strengths, interests, and challenges. This positive teacher-student relationship contributes to a supportive and nurturing learning environment. Lastly, Improved Classroom Management: Smaller class sizes allow for better classroom management and discipline. Ready argues that with fewer students, teachers can maintain a more focused and orderly classroom environment. This enables teachers to effectively manage behavioral issues, minimize disruptions, and create a conducive atmosphere for learning.

Pritchard (1999) further supports this argument, noting that smaller classrooms lead to improvements in the student-teacher dynamic, student-student dynamic, and teacher-parent dynamic. With fewer students in the classroom, teachers can give more attention to each student, providing personalized guidance and support that is tailored to their individual needs. This personalized approach to

teaching leads to greater engagement and motivation among students, who are more likely to participate actively in classroom activities and discussions. What's more, teachers in smaller classes have more time, resources, and motivation to develop enhanced lesson plans that cater to individual needs. They can take the time to understand each student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning style, making it easier to design lessons that are engaging and effective. This is a stark contrast to larger classes, where teachers often struggle to keep up with the demands of managing a large group of students.

Din (1999) corroborates these findings, confirming that students in smaller classes received more individualized assistance from their teachers. With fewer students to manage, teachers are better able to provide one-on-one support to students who are struggling, helping them to overcome academic challenges and build confidence in their abilities. This, in turn, leads to greater success in the classroom and beyond. The implementation of smaller class sizes has been shown to have many benefits for students, including improved academic performance, reduced problematic behaviors, and a more positive learning experience overall. By providing students with more personalized attention and support, teachers can create a more engaging and effective learning environment that benefits everyone involved.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the researcher opted for the survey research design. This methodology entails crafting a set of questions that delve into various facets of a particular subject matter and then administering these inquiries to a specific group of individuals drawn from a wider population (Enebe 2012). The study focused on the public and government-owned secondary schools located in the Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State. The researcher has selected this area as it is a vibrant hub of education, with numerous schools catering

to a diverse range of students. The survey questions will cover topics such as academic performance, student-teacher ratios, infrastructure facilities, and extracurricular activities. By using this approach, the study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the state of education in this region and identify areas that require improvement. The findings of this study will be invaluable in informing policy decisions that can enhance the quality of education in Oyo State.

Analysis and Data Presentation

What impact does class size have on the teaching and learning of English Grammar in Oyo West local government area, Oyo State?

Table 1: Mean responses on the impact class size have on the teaching and learning of English Grammar in Oyo West local government area, Oyo State? N=190

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	Large class size influences your classroom management technique as a teacher	3.58	Agreed
2.	The population of students in your class negatively effect your attitude to teach	3.35	Agreed
3.	A small class size positively impacts students' academic performance	3.43	Agreed
4.	Larger classes are consistently noisy	2.45	Agreed
5.	Managing a classroom is always challenging	2.55	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.20	Agreed

Source: Researchers Computation 2023

Table 1 outlines the presentation and analysis on the impact of class size on academic performance factors responsible for poor academic performance in secondary schools in Oyo West local government area, Oyo State. The table shows a high mean 3.58, 3.35, 3.43, 2.45 and 2.55 for items 1 to 5 respectively. The decision implies that Large class size influences your classroom management technique as a teacher, the students' population in your class negatively affects your attitude to teach and learn, small class size positively affect students' academic performance, Larger classes are consistently noisy and managing such classroom is always challenging. This is affirmed by the ground mean of 3.20.

The next question was to what degree is the policy regulating teacher-student ratio effective in secondary school classes in Oyo West local government area, Oyo State?

Table 1: Mean responses on the degree the policy regulating teacher-student ration effective in Oyo West local government area, Oyo State?
N=190

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1.	The ideal class size should not exceed 40 to 45	2.69	Agreed
2.	Combining classes A and B is not advisable and should be avoided.	3.43	Agreed
3.	Supervisors prioritize lesson notes over classroom size and student numbers	2.34	Agreed
4.	Insufficient learning environments and inappropriate class sizes leads to decreased student concentration during lessons.	3.50	Agreed

5.	Teachers lacking proper qualifications cannot effectively meet the required teaching standards for students.	3.45	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.89	Agreed

Source: Researchers Computation 2023

Table 2 shows the responses on how the factors affecting academic performance in secondary schools. The respondents agreed to the items implying that National policy on education approved 40 to 45 students per class, the respondents also confirmed that combining classes A and B is not good and not be done in anyway, Supervisors prioritize lesson notes over classroom size and student numbers, all they are after is lesson note, Insufficient learning environ nets and inappropriate class sizes leads to decreased student concentration during lessons., Teachers lacking proper qualifications cannot effectively meet the required teaching standards for students. This is affirmed by the ground mean of 3.89.

Discussion of Findings

The investigation has revealed the significant impact of class size on teaching and learning in secondary schools located in Oyo West local government area of Oyo State. A large class size can pose a challenge to teachers in managing their classrooms effectively, while also negatively affecting the students' ability to learn and the teacher's attitude towards teaching. Conversely, a small class size can positively impact students' academic performance and create a more conducive learning environment. Additionally, inadequate learning environments and class sizes can have a considerable impact on teachers' qualifications and their ability to deliver quality education. The study's findings are supported by a ground mean of 3.20, indicating the extent to which

class size affects teaching and learning in secondary schools in the region. Overall, the research highlights the crucial role of class size in promoting effective teaching and learning in secondary schools and emphasizes the need for policymakers to prioritize class size reduction as a means of improving educational outcomes.

The policy governing teacher-student ratios in Oyo West local government area, Oyo State, is a crucial aspect of the educational system that requires close examination. The respondents who participated in the study were in agreement with the items presented, which indicated that the National policy on education approved 40 to 45 students per class. However, the respondents also noted that combining two classes A and B was not a good idea and should not be done in any way. This is because such an arrangement can lead to overcrowding, which could negatively impact the quality of education that students receive. Furthermore, the supervisors were said to be unconcerned with classroom size and the number of students in the class, as all they were interested in was the lesson note. This is a worrisome development, as it suggests that the focus is more on the paperwork than on the actual learning experience of the students. An inadequate learning environment and improper class size can make students lose concentration during lessons. This is because students may be distracted by the noise around them or may not have enough space to move around freely. In addition, the respondents noted that teachers lacking proper qualifications were deemed incapable of meeting the required teaching standards for students. This is a critical issue, as teachers who do not have the requisite qualifications may struggle to impart knowledge effectively. This could lead to students not understanding key concepts and falling behind in their studies. Therefore, it is essential for the authorities to ensure that only qualified teachers are employed in schools. The policy guiding teacher-student ratios in secondary schools in Oyo West local government area, Oyo

State, is a critical issue that requires careful consideration. The respondents have highlighted some of the challenges that exist, such as overcrowding, inadequate learning environments, and unqualified teachers. It is essential for the authorities to take these issues seriously and work towards finding solutions that will improve the quality of education that students receive.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that the presence of large class sizes in secondary schools within Ekiti State is a reality. This reality has significant implications on both the students' and teachers' attitudes, as well as their academic performance. Many schools have classes exceeding 50 students, with some even reaching up to 70 students, particularly in the Junior Secondary levels. The detrimental effects of large class sizes include hindering teachers' ability to effectively educate students, assign tasks, provide individual attention, and maintain good classroom management and control. Although reducing class sizes may prove challenging due to limited school budgets and competing priorities, we must persist in our pursuit of this commendable objective. In order to address the ongoing decline in students' performance in English grammar and the overall discipline within our secondary schools, it is imperative that we take necessary measures to decrease the number of students per class. This entails hiring more teachers and establishing additional schools to accommodate the high demand for formal education in the state. According to a report by the NEA in 2008, it is crucial for us to prioritize higher graduation rates. Neglecting the reduction of class sizes will result in detrimental long-term effects on our children's future. These effects include increased drop out rates, diminished earning potential for undereducated individuals, as well as truncated

aspirations, dreams, and visions for students. Additionally, it will lead to poor self-esteem among students and a high rate of teacher attrition.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The issue of increased funding for secondary school education in Nigeria should be a top priority for policy makers. By allocating more funds, the problems affecting academic performance in secondary schools can be alleviated.
2. To prevent overcrowding in classrooms, school supervisors and inspectors should focus on the number of students in each class. It is important to ensure that classes are not overcrowded to maintain a conducive learning environment.
3. School administrators should consider inviting experts in classroom organization and management to provide training for teachers. This will equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively handle and manage large classes.
4. Implementing a well-designed reward program, including scholarships and prizes, is essential. Adequate funding, systematic coordination, and meticulous execution should be allocated to this program. This will significantly improve students' attitudes and enhance their performance in English grammar, which plays a vital role in their social lives.

References

- Adeyemi, T.O., 2008. The influence of class size on the quality of output in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *American-Eurasian Journal of Scientific Research*, 3 (1): 7-14.
- Agba, S. U. (2010). Students' overpopulation and its effects on their academic performance in senior secondary school certificate examination in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross

- River State. *Unpublished B.Sc. Ed. project Owerri: Imo State University.*
- Anashie, A. B. Ebuta, E. E. & Adie, L. (2013). Influence of Students' Population Pressure and Class Size on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Cross River State. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development Volume 22 No. 1.*
- Asiyai, R. I. (2004). Examination malpractice in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria: The way forward. *Journal of Research in Education 1(1), 20-24.*
- Bakasa, L. (2012). Effect of Class Size on Academic Achievement at a Selected Institution of Higher Learning. *Unpublished Master of Education Dissertation Submitted to the University of South Africa.*
- Ehrenberg, R.G., Brewer, D.J., Gamoran, A. and Willms, R.G. 2001. Class size and student achievement. *American Psychological Society, 2:1.*
- Eke, R.N. (1991) Large Class and Students Achievement in the English Language and Mathematics. *Unpublished M.Ed Thesis University of Nigeria, Nsukka.*
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) *National Policy on Education.* NERDC Press.
- Ifeanyichukwu, N. A. (2009). Effect of Class Size on Senior Secondary School Students' performance in Essay Writing in The English Language. *Master of Education Thesis submitted to the University of Nsukka.*
- Ijaiya, Y. (1999). Effects of Overcrowded Classrooms on Teacher-Student Interactions. *Ilorin Journal of Education. 0189- 6636, Faculty of Education. University of Ilorin, Nigeria.*
- Khan, P. and Iqbal, M. (2012). Overcrowded Classroom: a Serious Problem for Teachers. *Elixir International Journal.*