

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY ACADEMICS (IJCA) ISSN
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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION OKENE, NIGERIA**

**BY
OLORUNTIMEHIN DAYO**

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**INFLUENCE OF CLASS SIZE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION
STUDENTS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION OKENE, NIGERIA**

BY

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Abstract

The issue of class size on the academic performance of students at all levels of education has attracted global attention. It is on this note that this study investigated the influence of class size on the academic performance of students of Business Education Department, Federal College of Education, Okene. A survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised all the 431 students in business education department, Federal College of Education, Okene. A sample of eighty students were selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaire and analyzed with simple percentage. The research instrument was validated by two experts in Department of Educational Foundation, Federal College of Education, Okene and the test-retest method was used to ascertain its reliability with coefficients of 0.88, 0.85, 0.83 and 0.89 respectively for the four sections of the instrument. The study revealed that large class size impacts negatively on the academic achievement of the students leading to low academic performance. The reasons among others being poor lecturer-students' relationship and lack of effective classroom management. Recommendations such as adherent to the policy of class size reduction and the introduction of some disciplinary measures in the classroom were highlighted to enhance a better academic performance.

Introduction

In an attempt to put sound education on ground worldwide, many factors have been identified to affect the performance of students. Among such factors is the issue of class size. This has become a phenomenon that has necessitated some investigations into the possible

influence of class size on students' performance. Obtaining credible estimates of the impact of class size on performance is challenging because both performance and class size vary with common variable like students' background.

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According to Monks and Schkmidt (2010), students receive adequate attention with smaller class sizes and that teachers are able to control their classes more effectively. However, this has not been universally supported by empirical evidence. Talking about large class size, Evarista (2010) observed that tertiary institutions in Nigeria have very large and over crowded classrooms resulting to low academic output. He further explained that, with the teachers students ratio of 1:50 at the lower level of education and 1:400 and above at the tertiary levels, the teachers' work becomes quiet enormous. This is more serious at the tertiary levels where lecturers have many students to teach, with many scripts to mark and many researches to be conducted within a short time, hence the possibilities of proper individual attention and effective curriculum implantation become learn.

Class size is an important issue because of its implication on individuals and the society at large. The output of educational activities within the classroom always result in learning that is, changes in the knowledge, skills and attitude of individual (Adeyemi, 2008). The acquisition of learning experiences serve as a means by which benefits of education are obtained by individuals and the society at large.

It is therefore of paramount importance to determine among other things, if the size of a class has influence in experience acquisition process of students.

Class size varies from one country to another. According to Adeyemi (2008), in some countries of the world like United Kingdome (UK), United State of America (USA), Japan, Canada and Ireland, the class size is between

15 – 20. While countries like France, Sweden, Denmark, Australia, Italy, Luxembourg and Belgium, the class is below 15. Turkey, Norway and Netherlands have class size of 20 and above. In Nigeria, it is clearly Stated in the National Policy on Education of 2013 that, for effective teaching and learning at the kindergarten level, the teacher-pupil ratio shall be 1:25, this is yet to be strictly adhered to. According to Ackers (2006) Teacher Pupil Ratio (TPR) at the primary level 151:40. There are wide discrepancies among States, e.g. ranging from as low as 1:19 in Enugu to a high 1:111 in Yobe state. The results are low levels of pupils' performance in the final primary and Jss examination.

A visit to Nigeria tertiary institutions reveals an over populated lecture hall. According to Evarista (2010), this has caused serious problems of management destitution, effective management, low academic output, examination malpractices and poor evaluation systems as it becomes imperatively impossible for teachers to administer periodic test, mark assignments as to effect necessary correction since there is no room for individual attention.

The above phenomenon is also a common sight in Colleges of Education in Nigeria in which Federal College of Education, Okene is not an exemption. Most departments have large students' numbers that lecture halls could hardly cope with and the lecturer-students' ratio is abnormally high. This study therefore is to find out the extent to which large class size in tertiary institutions influences students' academic performance, the focus being Business Education Students in Federal College of Education, Okene, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

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The notion held by some about the Nigerian educational system is that the quality of education is declining rapidly. This is sometimes measured by the general performance of students who often sit for both external and internal examinations. The situation may not be better off in some tertiary institutions in the nation especially, Colleges of Education. A visit to some of these Colleges shows that some students are having difficulty in securing seats during lectures because of overwhelming population. Since Federal College of Education, Okene is not exempted from this type of problem, this necessitates the study on the influence of class size on the academic performance of Business Education Students of Federal College of Education, Okene.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective for this study was to examine the influence of class size on the academic performance of the students in the Business Department, Federal College of Education, Okene. Specially, the study examined the influence of:

1. Class size on students' academic performance
2. Class size on students' grades on graduation
3. Class size on student-lecturer relationship
4. Class size on indiscipline during lecture

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for this study.

1. What is the influence of class size on students' academic performance?
2. Does class size influence students' grades on graduation?
3. Does class size influence students' to lecturers' relationship?
4. Does class size influence indiscipline during lecturers'?

Methodology

The research design employed for this study was the descriptive research of the survey type. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting students from Business Education Department being one of the largest departments in the College. A random sampling of eighty (80) NCE III were used as respondents in the study.

A researcher designed questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents based on the research questions raised in the study. The instrument was validated by two lecturers from the Department of Educational Foundation, Federal College of Education, Okene. Their comments and suggestions formed the basis of the final draft of the instrument. A reliability of the coefficient of 0.85 was computed from the result of a pilot conducted at College of Education (Technical), Kabba, Kogi State using Cronbach Alpha Correlation Coefficient.

The researcher visited the department, sort permission from appropriate authority for using their department and their students for the research. Thereafter, copies of the questionnaires were administered and collected immediately for analysis. The data obtained from

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the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Frequency and percentage were employed in the analysis.

Result and Discussion

TABLE 1: Influence of class size on academic performance

Items	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Pursuit of academic excellence can be achieved in a large class size.	26	32.5	54	67.5
Students performance is Adversely influenced by large class	38	47.5	42	52.5
Students individual ability influence their Academic performance	60	75.0	20	25.0
Lecturer's ability affects Students' academic performance rather than class size	52	65.0	28	35.0
Scope of the course content influence academic performance and not class size	54	67.5	26	32.5
Large class size is the main reason for poor performance	44	55.0	36	45.0

in examinations

Based on the responses of the respondents. Table 1 reveals that 57% agreed that large class size has negative effects on academic performance of students while 43% disagreed. This observation agrees with the finding of Walberg (2006) that a significant and consistent relationship exist in the achievement of students in small

classes of about 1-20 pupils that obtained higher scores in science tests than their counterparts in large classes. Also, Finn, Gerber, a Chillies and Boyd-Zakarias (2001) observed that students in small class out perform their peers in large classes.

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Table 2: Influence of large class size on student's grades on graduation

Items	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Student's grades depend on the quality of academic facilities	62	77.5	18	22.5
Quality skills of the Lecturers influence Students grades on Graduation	72	90.0	08	10.0
Capability of the lecturers determine student's grades rather than class size	63	78.8	17	21.2
Large class size has direct Impact on students' grades	50	62.5	30	37.5
Inability of students to discuss Academic challenges with Their lecturers influence their grades	57	71.3	23	28.7
Will small class size influence? your grade on graduation	46	<u>57.5</u>	34	<u>42.5</u>

From table 2, was discovered that 73% agreed that large class size has a great negative influence on students' grades on graduation while only 27% were of the opinion that it has no negative impact on student's grades. From this finding, it is obvious that large class size proves to be a significant determination of the degree of success of students at graduation and by extension, their grades.

Relating to this, Ackers (2006) observed that the results of a large class size show low levels of pupils' performance in the final primary and J S S examinations. Equally, the finding of Adeyemi (2008) reveals that schools having an average class size of 35 and below obtained better results (grades) in the senior secondary certificate (SSC) examination than those having more than 35 students per class.

Table 3: Influence of large class size on student's lecturer relationship

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<u>Items</u>	<u>Responses</u>			
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>	
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Student's receive prompt and personal attention from the lecturers	46	57.5	34	42.5
Large students population affect lecturer's interaction with the students	57	71.3	23	28.7
Students have the privilege of discussing their academic problems with their lecturers	48	60.0	32	40.0
Lecturer's interact with the cause leaders due to large class size	62	77.5	18	22.5
Close contact with lecturers is not possible during tutorial <u>due to large class size.</u>	50	<u>62.5</u>	30	<u>37.5</u>

From Table 3, it was observed that large class size has a great influence on the relationship between the lecturers any their students which eventually may affect their academic performance in their various careers. In respect of this 66% of the respondents agreed that large

class size does not give good relationship that could assist the students in their academic pursuits to achieve their desired goals. Grant (2008) also observed that when class has become increasingly unmanageable it is difficult for the teachers to reach out to the students individually.

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Table 4: Influence of the large class size on students' discipline

Items	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Is there discipline among students in the large class size?	42	52.5	38	47.5
Disciplinary related issues is difficult to handle by lecturers in the large class size	72	90.0	08	10.0
Disturbances and distractions of various types are experienced during lectures	72	90.0	08	10.0
Large class size does not allow effective classroom management	57	71.3	27	28.7
Noise makers distract the attention of other students during lectures	60	75.0	20	25.0
Students take advantage of large class size to sneak in and out during lectures	78	<u>97.5</u>	02	<u>02.5</u>

The influence of large class size on student's discipline as it reflects from table 4 shows that 79% on average agreed that large class affects students due to the overcrowded nature of the facilities used by the students. This could encourage art of indiscipline among students during lectures and also influence their academic performance. According to grant (2008), the challenge the teachers have in the large class size is how to maintain effective classroom management and engagement. That is to say that in a large class, students may suffer discipline problems as teachers cannot get to know the students very easily (Doyle, 2014). According to Monks and Schmidt

(2010), students receive adequate attention with smaller classes sized and that teachers are able to control their classes more effectively. Large class size has been incriminated as being responsible for the in conducive learning environment (Tobi 2013).

Conclusion

The issue of large class size is a big challenge in most public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. Large class size tends to impact negatively on the academic performance of students at all levels of education. Some of the reasons being that, it limits teachers' effectiveness in the classroom, breeds indiscipline and lecturer-students'

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relationship is adversely affected. All these lead to low academic performance. On the other hand, small class size is preferable as it promotes and creates a better classroom for teaching and learning thereby leading to better academic performance. It is therefore pertinent that tertiary institutions in Nigeria pay attention to the issue of class sizes to ensure good academic performance.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to ensure good academic performance among students:

- The federal government should build more lecture halls and classrooms to accommodate the teaming population of students in tertiary institutions
- More lecturers should be employed by the federal government to reduce the work load of lecturers
- Effective disciplinary measures should be put in place by lecturers to manage their classes for better academic performance
- To ensure teacher/lecturer effectiveness the policy of class size reduction should be strictly adhered to
- Lecturers should adopt group work technique so as to offer the students the opportunity of discussing their learning difficulties with their colleagues
- To enhance a better lecturer-students' relationship, lecturers should organize tutorial classes for their students.

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