

INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' SIZE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of students' size on the academic performance in colleges of education in Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to find out the extent at which large students' size affects their academic achievement, to examine whether staff-students' ratio enhances academic achievement of the students and to determine the extent to which government policy of 'Education for All' influences the students' size in colleges of education. Three research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Respondents of the study were made up of 200 students. The research instrument used in data collection was a structured questionnaire. The findings revealed that large class size does not encourage students' participation; it encourages development of social vices among students. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that the college should appoint more lecturers in the general courses to minimize the use of large classes, ensure resources are channeled to areas that are more important, such as provision of lecture halls, seating places, teaching and learning equipment and other infrastructural facilities for learning to take place. The government should resource the existing colleges to ensure quality delivery.

Keywords: *Students' size, academic performance, lecturers, students*

Introduction

Education is an essential means for the transformation of individuals, community and society. It is also used for establishing sustainable growth and development of any nation. For individual to be able to contribute meaningfully to the social, economic and political developments in the society, relevant skills, values, attitudes and knowledge must be impacted on them. In building individuals, teachers play important roles in inculcating the relevant skills. Hence, the place of teacher education cannot be overemphasized. The major objective of teacher education is to produce qualified teachers that are capable of handling the basic level of education in Nigeria.

Colleges of education are the tertiary institutions saddled with the responsibility of producing qualified teachers. These

institutions are owned by the federal or state governments, corporate bodies or individuals. The phenomenon of globalization, which has changed various sectors of world economy, has also had some remarkable impact on education as students' option for tertiary education has increased, and it is no longer limited by national boundaries. In Nigeria, there is an increased recognition of the economic potential of higher education. On the importance of tertiary education, the New World Bank Report (2002) observed that, tertiary education is necessary for the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge as well as for building technical and professional capacity. Tertiary education indeed has been identified to be central to the creation of the intellectual capacity on which knowledge production and utilization depend and to the promotion

of lifelong learning practices. Globalization and the growth of education at primary and secondary school levels have implications for tertiary education. Nigeria's being a signatory to world conventions on Education for All gave birth to the National Policy on the Universal Basic Education. With these, all school age children are expected to be in schools, and the progressive pupils' population in both the primary and secondary school levels has increased.

The provisions of the Universal Basic Education (Education for All) which was launched in September, 1999, make for all school aged children to be in the Nigerian classrooms for nine years duration. It is however unfortunate that, not much corresponding preparation and provision of resources is made for tertiary level as it is being done for the primary and secondary levels. There are a rapidly increasing number of students in Nigeria's higher institutions and the trend is now approaching what is common in mass education system elsewhere. As a result of large number of students, the space requirements of classrooms, lecture theatres; laboratories and workshops are hardly met in over 70% of the tertiary institutions (Okebukola, 2000). Facilities are overstretched thus, presenting a recipe for rapid decay in the face of dwindling funds for maintenance. A preliminary report on the state of equipment in workshops and laboratories of tertiary institutions documents a sorry state of affairs in terms of number and operational status. The more worrisome aspect is that the method of delivering courses and the assumptions underpinning these methods remained the same. Many people are entertaining the fear that this increase in student numbers without a corresponding increase in fund and physical facilities may result in a decline in quality. In these days of increased costs and large classes, institutions of higher learning have found it increasingly

difficult to cope with large classes and at the same time maintain quality. The teething problem is how to create a system of higher education that balances the twin demands of excellence and mass access.

This case is the same in other parts of the world as Rui Yang (2002) reported that, Chinese higher education has expanded rapidly over the past decade with gross enrolment rates increasing from 3.4 percent in 1990 to 7.2 percent in 1995 and 11 percent in 2000. Jiangsu one of China's provinces, is expected to be the first to start the transiting from elite to mass tertiary education. In OECD countries, the proportion of adult with tertiary education almost double between 1975 and 2000 from 22% to 41%.

Ocho (2006) observed that most universities, polytechnics and colleges especially the federal and states enroll far more students than the available qualified lecturers, facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, desks, reading materials and equipment. Higher education in Nigeria is in crisis and characterized by the decline in quality of teaching, research, decay in library, infrastructural facilities, equipment in the arts and science laboratories and frustrated human resources. Carrying capacity, which is defined as the maximum number of students that an institution can sustain for qualitative education, based on available human and material resources has been over shot severally. Of the 25 federal owned universities, 18 were found to have over enrolled, and Obe (2007) reported that 13 out of the 19 state universities over enrolled while only one of 7 private universities over enrolled. It was also reported that of the top 10 over crowded universities, federal has 5 and states have 5. This is the case of Nigerian tertiary institutions most especially colleges of education today.

According to Dror (1995), student size has become a phenomenon often mentioned in the educational literature as an influence on student's feelings and achievement, on administration, quality and school budgets. In his words he noted, that student size is almost an administrative decision over which teachers have little or no control. Most researchers start from the assumption that size of the class would prove a significant determinant of the degree of success of students. In fact, many studies have reported, that under ideal situation, students size in itself appears to be an important factor.

Many researchers have found out that, there is a serious negative influence of large student size explosion on the academic achievement. According to Jordan (1964) in Owoeye and Yara (2011), in his analysis of the inter-relationship of intelligence, achievement and socio-economic status of high schools, concluded that school location, among other variables, was directly related to mean achievement level of students in all the sampled subjects. However, the report by some researchers on elementary school pupils revealed that, the size of school and length of attendance have little or no effect upon pupils' achievement when educational opportunities are comparable. In his conclusion, he asserted that, teachers generally, have definite preference for the size of schools in which they wish to teach and that the larger the size, the lower the level of students' achievement will tend to be. Adeyela (2000) found in her study that, large students' size is not conducive for serious academic work. In the same vein, Yara (2010) in his study on students' size and academic achievement of students in mathematics in Southwestern Nigeria found out that, the performance of students in large classes was very low (23%) compared to those students in smaller classes (64%).

Academic performance refers to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies (Scott's, 2012). Grades are certainly the most well-known indicator of academic performance. Grades are the student's "score" for their classes and overall tenure. Grades are most often a tallying or average of assignment and test scores, and may often be affected by factors such as attendance and instructor's opinion of the student as well. Grading systems vary greatly by county and school; common scales include a percentage form 1-100, lettering systems from A-F, and grade point averages (GPA) from 0-4.0 or above. According to Ward, Stocker and Murray-Ward (2006), academic performance refers to the outcome of education; the extent to which the student, teacher or institution have achieved their educational goals. Academic performance is the ability to study and remember facts and being able to communicate one's knowledge verbally or written on paper (Answers, 2010). In the context of this study, academic achievement refers to the extent to which students have achieve mastery of the objectives of the subjects they are exposed to in school. According to Aremu and Sokan (2003), academic achievement has been observed in school subjects especially mathematics and English language among secondary school students.

The trend of poor academic achievement of students in colleges of education is alarming. For example, in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, the performance of the graduating students at the end of their three-year programme is not encouraging. In 2014/2015 academic session, the students that supposed to graduate was 2422, the number of students that passed eventually was 1509 (62.3%), while 913 (37.7%) failed. In 2015/2016 session, the expected number of graduating students was 2662 out of which 1708

(64.2%) passed while 954 (35.8%) failed. The case was like the previous session in 2016/2017 session where the expected graduating students were 2113 from which 1365 (64.6%) passed and 748 (35.4%) failed. Several factors have generally been identified as causes of poor academic performance. Morakinyo (2003) believes that the falling level of academic performance is attributable to teachers' non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy. Welsh (2007) also found that the attitude of some teachers to their job, poor teaching methods among others influence students' academic performance. The blame for poor academic performance among colleges of education students could be attributable to a variety of factors such as un-conducive learning environment, inadequate teaching-learning facility, student-lecturer ratio; social media influence, peers influence, and the likes.

This state of affairs has called for an empirical study to come out with views of lecturers and students on the influence of students' size on the academic achievement in Colleges of Education, a case of Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo.

Statement of the Problem

Colleges of education are currently enduring a thunder storm of changes so fundamental in that the students' size is higher compare with the facility on ground. Most importantly, the problem of increased enrolment rate in colleges of education and the insufficient facilities in the institutions need urgent attention. In the minimum standards for general education courses prepared by the National Commission for Colleges of Education, it was stated that the recommended staff/student ratio is 1:25 for Education in view of the fact that all students in the college offer the programme (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012). In Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, the number of academic staff in the School

of Education does not take care of the number of students in the three levels of the programme (which is 90:5984 or 1:67).

This situation has resulted in one lecturer handling over 500 students in one lecture session. The large students' size makes it impossible for the lecturer to manage and teach effectively, since some students neither pay attention to nor participate in class activities. This does not augur well for the training of well qualified teachers for the development of the education system in the country, and therefore, should be a source of worry to all well-meaning educators of Nigeria teacher training institutions. This study, therefore, sought to examine the influence of students' size on the academic achievement in Colleges of Education, a case of Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study is to examine the influence of students' size on the academic achievement in Colleges of Education a case of Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo. Specifically, the following purposes guided the study:

- (a) To find out the extent to which large students' size affects the academic achievement of students.
- (b) To examine whether staff-students ratio enhance academic achievement of the students
- (c) To determine the extent that government policy on 'education for all' influence the students' size in colleges of education.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

- (1) To what extent does large students' size affect the academic achievement of students?

- (2) How would staff-students ratio enhance academic achievement of the students?
- (3) To what extent does government policy of 'education for all' influence the students' size in colleges of education?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between increased students' size and academic performance.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between staff-students' ratio and academic achievement of the students.

H0₃: There is no significant relationship between government policy of "education for all" and students' enrollment in colleges of education.

Scope

The scope of this study was limited to Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo with data used from five schools in the College.

Delimitations

This study is limited to Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo because of the time limit.

Significance of the Study

The study would provide important information for the government, college authorities, policy-makers and other stakeholders of education in Nigeria. The findings from this study would also add to the existing literature in education in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The research design for this study is descriptive survey design. This is because the researcher will not be able to manipulate the variables for simple reason that they have already occurred. The population for this study was Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Nigeria. The subjects for the study were drawn from five schools at Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. A simple random sampling technique was used to select two hundred respondents from five schools out of six schools in the College. In this study, the instrument used for data collection was a structured items questionnaire. The questionnaire titled "influence of students' size on academic performance in colleges of education (QISSAPICE)". The questionnaire has section A and B. Section A contains the personal data of the respondents such as sex, age and so on. While section B comprises of the items related to the topic.

The questionnaire was developed based on the research questions. Again, a close format questionnaire with four-point likert rating scale was used. The researcher made use of content validation method to validate the instrument.

The researchers ascertained the reliability of this instrument by using test-retest method and the score got was 0.78. This indicated that the instrument has internal consistency. Data collected were analyzed using frequency tables and percentage to answer research question one while chi-square was employed to test the hypotheses two and three in order to establish the relationship between students' size and academic performance.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3.1.1: Frequency Distribution of Age Group of Students

VARIABLE	AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
I	16-20	106	53
II	21 – above	94	47
TOTAL		200	100

Table 3.1.1 showed that 106 representing 53% of the respondents are 16-20 years while 94 representing 47% of the respondents are 21- above years.

3.1.2 Frequency Distribution of Respondents Gender

VARIABLE	GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
I	Male	82	41
II	Female	118	59
TOTAL		200	100

Table 3.1.2 shows that most of the respondents are females with 118 representing 59% while 82 representing 41% are male.

3.1.3 Frequency Distribution of Respondents Class Level

VARIABLE	TYPE OF SCHOOL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
I	100 level	0	0
II	200 level	118	59
III	300 level	82	41
TOTAL		200	100

Table 3.1.3 revealed that 118 representing 59% were in 200 which is the highest on the table while 82 representing 41% were in 300.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: To what extent does large students' size affect the academic achievement of students?

Table 3.2.1: Showing descriptive analysis on the extent that large students' size affects the academic achievement of students?

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	Contributions in the class were done by few students while other students tended to disturb	110	30	30	30
2	Students found it difficult to hear from lecturers and this result into mass failure of general courses	80	60	40	20
3	Inadequate public address system and power fluctuations	80	60	20	40
4	Inadequate time for questioning	60	60	40	40
5	Inadequate siting and writing places lead to the problem of obnoxious attitude among students	70	50	50	30

Table 3.2.1 showed the extent that large students' size affects the academic achievement of students. The result displays that (110 and 30) of the respondents in item 1 strongly agreed and agreed that contributions in the class were done by few students while other students tended to disturb, while (30 and 30) strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. In item 2, (80 and 60) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that increase in students' size makes students found it difficult to hear from lecturers and this resulted in mass failure in general courses while (40 and 20) strongly disagreed and disagreed in turn. Furthermore, in item 3, (80 and 60) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there is inadequate public address system and power fluctuations while (20 and 40) strongly disagreed and disagreed. Also, in item 4, (60 and 60) of the respondents

strongly agreed and agreed that there is inadequate public address system and power fluctuations while (40 and 40) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. Finally, in item 5, (70 and 50) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there is inadequate siting and writing places which lead to the problem of obnoxious attitude among students while (50 and 30) strongly, disagreed and disagreed. The result showed that, problem of obnoxious attitude among students, gross failure in general courses and uncondusive learning environment of the overpopulated schools have negative impact on teaching/learning process as well as students' academic performance. It can be concluded that, large class size has a great negative effect on the academic performance of students in colleges of education.

Analysis and Interpretation of Research Hypotheses

3.3.1 Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between increased students size and academic performance.

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1	110	30	30	30	200
2	80	60	40	20	200
3	80	60	20	40	200
4	60	60	40	40	200
5	70	50	50	30	200
TOTAL	400	260	180	160	1000

Table 1: Chi-Square table on the significant relationship between increased students size and academic performance in colleges of education.

GROUP	FREQUENCY	Df	A-level	X ² Cal	X ² tab	DECISION
SA	400					
A	260	12	0.05	53.77	21.0	Rejected
D	180					Ho
SD	160					

Degree of freedom = 12. Level of Significant = 0.05

From the chi-square table 1, it was revealed that calculated-value (53.77) is greater than table-value (21.0) at the level of 0.05 significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected while alternative hypothesis (Ho¹) is accepted since $X^2_{cal} >$

X^2_{tab} . Then, it can be concluded that, there is significant relationship between increased students' size and their academic performance. This revealed that, the more the increase in number of students, the lower the performance of the students.

3.3.2 Hypothesis two: There is no significant relationship between staff-students ratios and academic achievement of the students in colleges of education.

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1	100	20	60	20	200
2	76	54	30	40	200
3	60	60	60	20	200
4	20	60	20	100	200
5	80	40	20	60	200
TOTAL	336	234	190	240	1000

Table 2: Chi-Square table on the significant relationship between staff-students ratios and academic achievement of the students in colleges of education.

GROUP	FREQUENCY	Df	A-level	X ² Cal	X ² tab	DECISION
SA	336					
A	234	12	0.05	28.9	14.52	Rejected
D	190					Ho
SD	240					

Degree of freedom = 12. Level of Significant = 0.05

From the chi-square table 2, it was revealed that calculated-value (28.9) is greater than table-value (14.52) at the level of 0.05 significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected while alternative hypothesis (Ho¹) is accepted since $X^2_{cal} >$

X^2_{tab} . Then, it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between staff-students ratio and academic performance of the students. This revealed that 25 students per staff will have significant effect on the performance of the students.

3.3.3 Hypothesis three: There is no significant relationship between government policy of "Education for all" and students' enrolment in colleges of education.

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
11	30	30	30	110	200
12	80	60	40	20	200
13	60	20	80	40	200
14	40	40	60	60	200
15	50	30	70	50	200
TOTAL	260	180	280	280	1000

Table 3: Chi-Square table on Government Policy of "Education for all" and students' enrolment in colleges of education.

GROUP	FREQUENCY	Df	A-level	X ² Cal	X ² tab	DECISION
SA	260					
A	180	12	0.05	17.919	16.919	Rejected
D	280					Ho
SD	280					

Degree of freedom = 12. Level of Significance = 0.05

From the chi-square table 3, it was revealed that calculated-value (17.91) > table-value (16.91) at the level of 0.05 significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected while alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted since $X^2_{cal} > X^2_{tab}$. Then, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between government policy of "Education for all" and students' enrolment in colleges of education. This divulged that, many secondary school leavers are willing to further their education, those that were not given admission in the university resolve to come to the college of education. Government policy of "education for all" influences students enrolment in colleges of education. The management of colleges enrolled more students in order to generate funds and every parent wants their children to further their education beyond secondary education. And this is the result of "Education for all" policy.

Discussion of Findings

This study was carried out to investigate the influence of students size on academic performance in colleges of Education in Nigeria. The study found out that, majority of the respondents from research hypothesis one (1) exposed that, contributions in the large class were done by few students while other students tended to disturb; that increase in students' size makes students found it difficult to hear from lecturers while lesson is going on and this results into mass failure in general courses. Furthermore, it was revealed that, there is inadequate public address system and power fluctuation in the classrooms; that there is inadequate siting and writing places which lead to the increase of obnoxious attitude among students. This is in line with the belief of Beshavien (1992) who lamented that large class with its many problems range from indiscipline to lack of dedication to duty by the teachers, lack of student

control, lack of serious studies on the part of students, etcetera. Academic environments of overpopulated schools in the colleges are not conducive for learning from the result obtained. However, the analysis of the response of the respondents to research hypothesis two revealed that, staff-students' ratio of 25 students per staff will significant affect the performance of students. This means that, students tend to perform brilliantly when the number of students in the class is very minimal. From the research hypothesis three, it can be concluded that, there is a significant relationship between government policy of "Education for all" and students' enrolment in colleges of education. This was in line with the assumption of Benbow, Mizrachi, Oliver, and Said-Moshiro (2007) who believe that, growth of large classes in the developing world is as a result of global initiatives for universal education and rapid population growth. Many secondary school leavers are willing to further their education. Those that were not given admission in the university resolve to come to the college of education, government policy of "education for all" influence student enrolment in colleges of education, the management of colleges enrolled more student in order to generate funds and every parent wants their children to further their education beyond secondary education. The policy stimulates the entire citizenry to thirst after education and this increases the enrollment in all higher institutions without improving the existing facilities.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations Summary

This study was carried out to investigate the influence of students Size on academic performance in Colleges of Education, a case of Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo. It was basically designed to find out the influence of the increase in students' size on the academic

performance of students, identify the extent to which students-teacher ratio in colleges of education affects the performance of the students. One research question was raised and three hypotheses were formulated in the research work. Questionnaire was used to gather data and they were analyzed and interpreted. A lot of findings were made in the course of the research. It was discovered that, the population of students is on the increase, with limited lecturers, both in number and qualifications in colleges of education. From the analysis of data collected through the research work, it could be deduced that students whose schools are overpopulated scored very low in the general education, and they also involve themselves in social vices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was carried out to investigate the influence of students' size on Academic Performance in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. It aimed to know if there is any difference exists between the performance of students whose schools are overpopulated and those that have normal population. It was discovered that large class size is associated with lack of dedication to duty by the teachers, lack of student's control, and lack of serious studies on the part of the students.

The result obtained after analyzing the data revealed that the ratio of staff-students is far beyond 1:25. A lecturer teaches up to 600 students in a class. Although there are some departmental courses where the population of students are very small but these are few compare to the departments with large number of students. The study also showed that students whose schools are overpopulated perform poorly in the general education courses compared to students whose schools have normal population. Based on the result of the

findings, the following recommendations were made:

- a) The Ministry of Education should give quota on the students' enrolment in colleges of education. The class size should be limited to 25 students per class to ensure academic excellence of the students.
- b) The minimum requirements for admission into college of education should be upgraded like that of University.
- c) Trained and qualified teachers should be employed in colleges.
- d) Government policies on education should be made stable as frequent change in the policy will affect proper teaching and learning that will address the negative impact of large class size in government secondary schools.
- e) Government should give more funds to colleges in order to make necessary provisions for teaching and learning facilities in the school
- f) The college should take steps to appoint more lecturers in the general courses to minimize the use of large classes.
- g) The college must set its priority right to ensure resources are channeled to areas that are more important, such as provision of lecture halls, seating places, teaching and learning equipment and other infrastructural facilities to ensure easy teaching and learning.
- h) Government must expand and resource the existing colleges to ensure quality delivery of their mandate instead of establishing more colleges which amounts to adding to the problem.
- i) Lecturers should be given refresher courses on managing large classes from time to time.

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