

# CLASS SIZE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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## **Abstract**

This study was designed to examine the influence of class size on teachers' job performance in Akwa Ibom State. A total number of 7031 secondary school teachers in the 229 public secondary schools in the state constituted the population for the study, while 3100 teachers randomly selected from the 31 Local Government Areas of the state made up the sample. Data were collected using the "Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire" (TJPQ) developed by the researchers and analyzed and tested at 0.05 level of significance using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Fisher's protected t-test statistics. Results revealed that teachers' job performance is influenced significantly by class size. Based on the findings, it was recommended that necessary facilities should be provided to avoid congested classrooms and large teacher - student ratio.

## **Introduction**

In consonance with the National Policy on Education that the "Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development" and the unambiguous declaration that "not only is education the greatest force that can be used to bring about redress, it is also the greatest investment that the nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources" (FGN 2004:5-8), governments at all levels have embarked on various strategies to achieve optimum education of its citizenry. While Akwa Ibom State has joined her counterparts in the Northern and South-Western States of the federation to offer free and compulsory education to its citizens from primary to senior secondary school levels, other states have come up with generous award of scholarships, Bursaries, and various other incentives to encourage education so as to derive all its attendant developmental benefits.

A corollary of free education and other means of encouragement towards mass education has been the unprecedented massive increase in students' enrolment in schools with, unfortunately, the same number of schools, teachers, classrooms, workshops and laboratories as they were before the recent influx of students into schools.

This unfortunate situation has led to a disproportionate class size in which a teacher is compelled to teach 90 or more students in a classroom meant for about 20 students.

This situation, without any reasonable doubt, has implications on the teachers' job performance, and also on students' academic achievement. It is against this background that the study was conducted to examine the influence of class size (large class size, medium class size and small class size) on teachers' job performance.

## **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is any significant influence of class size on teachers' job performance. Specifically this study sought to find out whether class size (herein classified into three categories, namely: small class size, made up of between 1-20 students, Medium class size, comprising between 21-35 students, and large class size, consisting of between 36 students and above), has any influence on the teachers' job performance. This means whether the teachers perform their teaching roles better in small, medium, or large classroom situations.

## **Method**

### **The Research Design and Study Area:**

The research design employed in this study was causal comparative (Ex-post facto). The research covered the thirty-one Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

## Population

The population for the study comprised all teachers in the 229 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The total population of teachers in these schools was 7031 during the 2007/2008 academic year.

## Sample and Sampling Procedure

Relevant data for the study were collected using a researchers-developed questionnaire, "Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire" (TJPQ). It was a 20-item rating scale with two parts. Part I elicited information from the teachers on their personal background such as whether professional teacher or not, number of years of teaching, etc. Part II measured the extent to which the respondents' job performance was influenced by his/her class size.

## Hypothesis:

The null hypothesis stated that there is no significant influence of class size on teachers' job performance.

**Table 1. Analysis of variability of teachers' job performance due to class size**

Groups	No. of Teachers affected N	Teachers' mean job performance IT	sd
Teachers with large class size	1520	28.22	5.20
Teachers with medium class size	1097	34.22	5.80
Teachers with small class size	483	36.42	5.02

Source of variation	ss	Df	ms	f
Between groups	509.20	2	254.6	8.64
Within groups (Error)	91190.21	3097	29.44	
Total	91699.41	3099	5,02	

From the table above, the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed that the obtained F value of 8.64 was found greater than the critical F value at 0.05 level. Hence the result was statistically significant, meaning that teachers' that teach small class size (1-20 students) have significantly higher mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) job performance than their counterparts in the medium class size (21- 35 students) and large class size (36 students and above).

**Table 2**

**Fisher's protected t-test analysis of influence of class size on teachers' job performance**

GROUPS	LARGE CLASS SIZE (n=1520)	MEDIUM CLASS SIZE (n=1097)	SMALL CLASS SIZE (n=483)
Large class size	A 28.22	b 6.0	8.20
Medium class size	2.111	34.22	2.20
Small class size	2.64*	2.26*	36.42

- a. Group mean along the diagonal
- b. Differences between mean above the diagonal

1 Significant t-values.

To further show which of the groups did the significant difference lie, Fisher's protected t- test analysis was used in the analysis of the mean difference which eventually showed that significant difference lies between

the large class, medium and small class size ( $t=2.64$ ).

## **Discussion**

The result of the analysis showed that there is a significant influence of class size on teachers' job performance to the advantage of teachers with small class size. This research finding agrees with Udo (2000) who noted that reduced class size enables teachers to give each student more individual attention and facilitates more flexible approaches, hence their higher job performance.

In Woodson's (1986) statistical comparison of students' achievement test which examined the effects of class size on pupils' achievement in 95 schools, his findings also noted that there is a small inverse relationship between academic achievement and class size, and that the relationship tends to be smaller for pupils of higher scholastic potentials. Vincent's (1986) research on optimum class size and their effect on educational achievement in primary and secondary schools grade, utilized data from 47 school districts (about 2106 elementary and 2181 secondary schools classrooms) showed a progressively larger difference between positive and negative rating as class size increases.,

Olson (1990) studied indicators of quality as a criterion for classroom variables that were highly predictive of a school system quality, one of which was class size. The result was predictive, confirming that smaller classes produce significantly higher scores than larger ones and that there were certain breaking points in the student-teacher ratio at which sharp drops in performance scores occur.

Ezewu (1987) made a pathetic observation that meaningful teaching and learning cannot take place in most classrooms in the southern part of Nigeria even if the teachers were "God-chosen" disciples, and the learners a pack of geniuses because, as he put it, the classrooms are overcrowded to the extent that rooms originally designed for between 30 to 40 pupils, now take between 50 to 80 pupils with majority of them sitting on windows. Ogunniyi (1987) observed with grave concern that overcrowded classrooms and laboratories play important part among the many problems of the schools in the country which lead to massive failure in external examinations such as WASC, NABTEB examinations, etc. It should be noted that students' academic achievement cannot be divorced, under normal circumstances, from teachers' job performance. Folajin (1987) and Eze (1983), have confirmed the havoc that large class size has wrecked on the Nigerian school system.

In Philadelphia, Collins and Furme (1997) reported a five-year study of the school districts which examined the relationship between class size and pupils' achievement in Reading and Mathematics. The study revealed that in 61 percent of the classes' comparisons, the smallest class size grouping (1-25) made significantly greater achievement gains, as measured on standardized test, than the large classes. The study further conforms to Umoinyang (2003) research finding that class size significantly influences teachers' job performance.

The above phenomenon could be explained in terms of the fact that small class size allows for inter-personal relationship between the teacher and the students, assessment of students' performance as the lesson progresses, casual observation of class attendance and rate of response, assessment of students' ability to copy correctly the teachers' chalkboard summary, and even regular marking of tests and providing the students with feed-back on their performances, among others.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of the above findings that class size has a significant influence on teachers' job performance, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should build more schools to decongest the existing classrooms;
2. More teachers should be employed to reduce the workload of the teachers who are already crippled by over-populated classes; and
3. Equal provision of educational facilities should be made to all schools to reduce the present-day over-concentration of students in schools where government vested interest is identified to lie.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion drawn in this study is that since class size has been identified as a significant factor in teachers' job performance, all necessary facilities should be put in place to ensure small class

size for teachers' optimum productivity.

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