

EFFECT OF CLASS SIZE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ZARIA, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The need to get every individual educated in Nigeria necessitate the introduction of the Universal Basic Education, (UBE), which led to expansion in the school enrollment rate in primary schools in Nigeria, Also, this high expansion in the school enrollment rate in Nigeria and Zaria in particular was compounded by the federal and state government's free feeding programmes in recent years. It was against these problems that this study investigates the effect of class size on academic performance in the core subject of English Language. the study adopted quasi experimental research design. The population of the study were thirty-six thousand nine hundred and eighteen (36,918) primary six schools' pupils; out which one hundred and ninety-three (193) pupils, were purposively selected. Self-formulated English Language performance test (ELPT) was used for data collection. The instrument had the reliability index of 0.78. Mean and standard deviation, were used to analyze the data obtain. While t-test was used to test hypotheses. The findings show that there was significant difference in academic performance between the pupils taught in small and large class size in English Language. The study concludes that small class size have positive and significant effect on academic performance of pupils in English Language. The study recommends that the correct ratio of one teacher per 35 pupils should be encouraged as stipulated by the NPE. For effective communication and assessment.

Keywords: Class size; Academic Performance; public primary schools; English Language; UBE

Introduction

The need to get every individual educated in Nigeria necessitate the introduction of the Universal Basic Education, (UBE), which led to expansion in the school enrollment rate in primary schools in Nigeria, Also, this high expansion in the school enrollment rate in Nigeria and Zaria in particular was compounded by the Federal government's free feeding programme in recent years. As the result of the demand for education today most classes become overpopulated, this increases in number of pupil affect classroom management, pupils' performance, control and engagement (Yusuf, 2015). Researchers agreed that, class size could affect academic performance and quality of education of learner at all levels especially at the primary school level (Osaro, 2014). Academic performance is an important parameter in measuring success in pupils (Akumbuiro, 2008). As a result, pupils' academic performance has been of great concern to educationist government and public in general. English language is a very important means of communication among Nigerians of different ethnicity. It was introduced in Nigeria in the earlier 19th century by British colonial masters it is the language of administration, business and other professional career (Nwachukwu, 2000; Njoku & Izuagba, 2001). English language is used as an official medium of expression in our primary schools. Is for this reason, English is made one of the major subjects' study in Nigeria. (Nwachukwu 2000). Class size is the number of pupils per teacher in a given class room (Ajayi, et al, 2017). Is the number of pupils a teacher supervised or attends to during a given period of instruction (Aliyu, 2015). For effective teaching at the

primary school level. The National policy on education (2013). State that teacher to pupil's ratio shall be 1:25 at the pre-primary education; 1: 35 at primary and junior level (NPE, 2013). Academic performance refers to how pupils deal with their studies and accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers (Steinmayr et al., 2014). In educational institutions, success is measured by academic performance, or how well a pupil meets standards set out by the institution (Steinmayr et al., 2014).

The increased in class population in Nigeria is also a function of general increase in the nation's population, this assertion is backed up by the findings of (Babalola, 2009) that as population is growing in an alarming rate, so was the desire for education increases. large class size as earlier stated has negative impact on academic performance of primary school pupils at the later stage, as English is among the major subject taught at the primary level to equip pupils with the techniques of reading, listening, writing and speaking which are the four basic skills needed in language learning, and these can be achieved in a well conducive environment (Blactchford Edmonds, and Martins, 2003). In a moderate English Language class, teachers can be able to identify pupil's linguistic problems and gives prompt assistance. This cannot be achieved in large class. When teachers give the needed attention to pupils, frustrating linguistic problems are solved and language learning become exciting and pleasurable. Against this problem the study tends to investigate the influence of class size on English Language academic performance of public primary school pupils in Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Many literatures are written on class size and academic performance of pupils. A study carried out to investigates the effect of class size on pupils' attitudes and academic performance in English language Ekiti State, Nigeria. findings from his study reveals that large class size has negative effect on the attitude and academic performance of pupils in the English language while the effect of small class size is positive on the pupils' attitude towards the learning of the English language and consequently on their academic performance Babalola (2020). Also study conducted to examine class size and pupil's academic performance in the English Language in Borno State. Result of the findings shows that large class size contributes to poor academic performance of pupils, result to poor teaching method and communication while small class size performed better as it allows good communication between teacher and pupils (Muhammad, 2021).

Also (Esther Chepsior, James Kingen & Jenifer 2020). Investigated the influence of class on pupil's performance in English Language. Findings Shows that large class size formed an impediment resulted to difficulty of teachers to interact with pupils effectively led to negative performance of pupils in large class than small class size. The findings support other researchers, which that schools have as high as 50 or more leaners in a class. This implies that class size issues were extensive. A study by (Obiakor & Oguejioffor, 2020) ascertain impact of class size on academic performance of pupils. Result of the study shows that large class size contributes to poor academic performance, resulted to poor teaching methods and improper use of instructional material to show the pupils in large class, especially those at the back while small class size has positive impact on pupils' academic performance.

Objective of the Study

To determine the difference in English Language performance between pupils taught in small classes and those taught in large classes

Research Question

What is the difference in English Language performance of pupils taught in small classes and those taught in large classes?

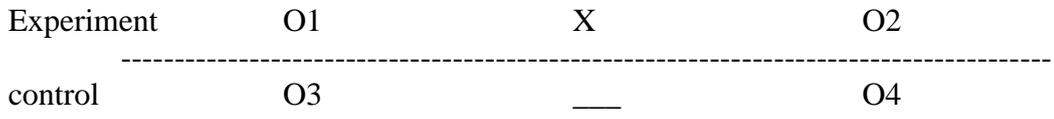
Research Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in English Language performance of pupils taught in small classes

and those in large classes

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental of pretest and posttest research design because it is aimed at establishing a relationship between two variables in order to determine a cause and effect relationship. Diagrammatic Presentation of the Data



- Key:
- Experimental Group
- Control Group
- O1 and O3 = Pretest given to the experimental and control groups before treatment
- X= Treatment
- = indicated absence of randomization
- = No treatment
- O2 and O4= posttest given to the experimental and control groups after treatment

The population of the study were thirty-six thousand nine hundred and eighteen (36,918) primary six schools’ pupils in Kaduna State; while a sample of 193 pupils was drawn from four primary schools. Purposive sampling was used to select four intact classes from the selected schools in Zaria Kaduna State. The researchers used two primary schools with two intact class as small class, with 32 and 34 pupils. At the same time two primary schools was purposely selected with two intact class as large class, with 65 and 62 pupils. The pupils in small class made up the experimental group while those in large class made up the control group. As a result, 127 pupils were therefore assigned into control group while 66 pupils fell in the experimental group.

The instruments used for the study was a self-formulated English Language academic performance Test (ELAPT), designed by the researchers. It consists of a 10-item multiple choice question with options A-D. The instrument was validated by two experts in the department of adult education and extension service Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. In order to determine its reliability, a pilot test was conducted in a different school by trial testing method, and a reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. This made the instrument reliable. The instrument was administered by the researchers after successfully teaching the pupils. The test lasted for 20 minutes, making it two minutes per question since the multiple choice questions are 10 The researchers collected all the booklets after the test for final analysis.

The statistical tools used was mean and standard deviation meant to answer the research questions; while t-test analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question one:

What is the mean difference in English Language performance of pupils taught in small classes and those taught in large classes?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of English Language Performance of Pupils taught in small classes and those taught in large classes

Class	Number	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference
Small	66	10.61	2.25	4.96

Large	127	5.65	2.60
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Table 1 shows the mean difference in English Language performance of pupils taught in large class and those taught in small class. From the result, the mean performance on small and large Class was 10.61 and 5.65 respectively. The mean difference was 4.96; while the standard deviation was 2.25 and 2.60 respectively. The experimental group with higher mean performed better than the control group. This shows that pupils in small classes performed better than those in large classes.

Testing of Hypotheses:

There is no significant difference in English Language performance of pupils taught in small classes and those in large classes.

Table 2: t-test of the mean Performance Difference of pupils taught English Language in small class and those taught in large class

Class	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Small	66	10.61	2.25	191	13.15	.000	H0 Rejected
Large	127	5.65	2.60				

Table 2 shows the t-test analysis of the difference between the mean performance of pupils in small class and those in the large class. Results on the table revealed that calculated t-value (13.15), at 191 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that a significant difference exists in the mean scores of pupils taught in small class and those in the large class. Moreover, figure 1 also shows that pupils in small class

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that pupils in small class performed better than those in the large class. This finding was presented on table 1 by answering the research question one, where small class size performed better than the large class size. The t-test analysis used to test null hypothesis 1, as presented on table 2, revealed that there is a significance difference in mean scores of pupils taught in small class and those taught in the large class. This finding was in line with the findings of Babalola (2020). In Ekiti which investigates the effect of class size on pupils' attitudes and academic performance in English language, findings from his study reveals that large class size has negative effect on the attitude and academic performance of pupils in the English language while the effect of small class size is positive on the pupils' attitude towards the learning of the English language and consequently on their academic performance.

The result was also in line with (Muhammad, 2021) in Borno which examine class size and pupil's academic performance in the English Language. The findings show that large class size contributes to poor academic performance of pupils, result to poor teaching method and communication while small class size performed better as it allows good communication between teacher and pupils. Findings was also in consonant with (Esther Chepsior, James Kingen & Jenifer 2020). Investigated the influence of class on pupil's performance in English Language. Result Shows that large class size formed an impediment resulted to difficulty of teachers to interact with pupils effectively led to negative performance of pupils in large class than small class size.

The result was also in consonant with (Obiakor & Oguejioffor, 2020) on impact of class size on academic performance of pupils in Enugu. Findings shows that large class size contributes to poor academic performance, resulted to poor teaching methods and improper use of instructional material

to show the pupils in large class, especially those at the back while small class size has positive on pupils' academic performance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that class size surely influences pupils teaching and learning. The findings revealed that large class size has negative effect on pupil's academic performance in English Language as it contributes to poor teaching method and inadequate learning environment while small class size was found to have positive and significant effect on academic performance of pupils in English Language. This shows that when class size is small, the positive effect it has on performance of pupils compared to larger class size.

Recommendations

Kaduna State policy makers, administrator and government agencies should ensure that class size is adhered to as recommend by the National Policy on Education (NPE) so as to ensure effective communication, assessment and feedback in teaching and learning.

Head teachers in Kaduna State should liaise with the authorities concerned with practicing of primary education to ensure that normal class sizes are operated in all public primary schools. This will make classrooms spacious enough to enable teachers of English Language to set up activity areas (reading corners) in the class for effective teaching of English Language as a core subject.

Teachers in Kaduna State should employ innovative teaching strategies and methodology that will promote teacher support to pupils during teaching and learning for better performance in the classroom. More also, positive reinforcement should be employ by the teachers to encourage good behaviors during lesson period.

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