

Influence of Overcrowded Classrooms on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted to find out the influence of overcrowded classrooms in teaching and learning process on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Sokoto South local government area, Sokoto state. A sample of four principals, eight vice principals, one hundred and forty teachers, three hundred and thirty-eight students were selected for the study. A self-constructed questionnaire was used. Data obtained was analyzed using simple frequency and percentage to answer research questions, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Results indicated a positive correlation between teacher/students ratio and students' academic performance; and there is a weak negative correlation between availability of instructional materials and students' academic performance. Study concluded that, teacher/students' ratio demand has a great influence on students' academic performance. Thereby allowing the teacher to render what is expected of him/her to the students, availability of instructional facilities has no any bearings with students' academic performance. The study recommends among others that, government should device means of obtaining qualitative, competent, and competent teachers so as to meet teacher/students ratio of 1:35/40 for primary and secondary school respectively, not only matter of quantity.

Keywords: *Students assessment, quality teaching, academic performance, Sokoto, space, crowded classrooms.*

Introduction

Teaching is characterized by number of factors in 21st century that hinder its effective delivery in almost all the levels especially in developing countries Nigeria inclusive, upon which overcrowded classrooms is amongst. From all tiers, governments ensure that more reasonable number of citizens have gotten their right and opportunities to be formally educated for better progress of all (Sulaiman, 2020). Some reports have it that, Nigeria is equally on track to achieve one hundred percent enrolment at primary and post primary levels of education through Universal Basic Education, hence, Sokoto state is not left out in the bid to achieve this. For the world and its parts to attain progress there is need for enrolling people to schools as a form of investment with huge result in human capital in diverse societies of the world (Aliyu & Bichi, 2019). Because, investment in humans serve as a catalyst that speed up development in any nation whatsoever across the globe. Therefore, it is pertinent to lay policies that make humans developed to have potentials for discharging their jobs efficiently. People that are educated have been traversed into a system that make them grounded with proper values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, and competence as well (Sarkingobir et al., 2022). Certainly, many countries that have seen boosted economic and societal growth as a result of their developed humans owing to their education they obtained. Therefore, education is a pivotal tool that harness and elicit development processes (Cheema, 2021; Zendah et al., 2021).

Education is believed to be a major instrument that develop groups, individuals, nations, regions, and the whole world entirely. Therewith, governments, and private individuals have taken so much efforts to form schools that deliver sound and quality education to the people. However, despite all efforts made by various stakeholders in education sector, there is general outcry about its falling standard which some attributed to students' enrolment mostly in metropolitan areas (Inuwa & Yusof, 2014). According to Aliyu & Bichi (20019) in recent years, the number of students' enrolment in the school system has increased tremendously, and these led to the overpopulation of several educational facilities. The federal

Republic of Nigeria in the year 2004 for instance, recommends a teacher/students ratio of 1:35/40 for primary and secondary levels of education respectively. These ratios are considered adequate and reasonable to ensure an effective teaching-learning process in the classroom. It is however, regrettable to state that the current average teacher/students ratio in most Nigerian public schools is put from 1:100 to 1:150 (Aliyu & Bichi, 2019). This clearly confirms the phenomenon of students' enrolment in Nigerian schools and it is believed to be posing untold professional challenges to teachers and students in Nigeria. Some of these challenges include making teaching learning process awkward and boring for both teachers and students. Teachers are having too many test scripts to mark, home works and examination scripts to mark. On the other hand, some students do receive lessons on the bare floor and writing on their laps.

Kanayochukwu et al (2020), posited that, overpopulation of learners in educational facilities spurred a poor standard of education in many respects across states, and the country at large. In turn, the situation has led to some teachers been hesitant on their work and in turn can lead to brain drain and in many respects had caused teachers to lost interest in their teachings and make poor performance noticeable among students. This unsavory situation stated is an issue that seek for immediate attention by the leaders and other related actors in education to surf for ploys to address the problem in the state. Therefore, it is imperative to carry out this study in the secondary schools in Sokoto south local government area.

Rationale of Study

A study environment has an overwhelming influence on academic performance of students as well as other school actors (Sarkingobir et al., 2019; Bello et al., 2022). However, in the Sokoto state there is a couple of experience characterized with schools that have some challenges including that of infrastructures; and the government and well-meaning people are calling for more enrollment of wards to schools. In the same vein, the state is facing poor performance been recorded by students. Thus, it is utmost to unveil the factors behind this using an empirical study to help solve the problem of the state pertaining education.

Objectives

This study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- i. To find out the influence of students'/teacher ratio demand on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area.
- ii. To examine how availability and the use of instructional materials affects learners' academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in order to achieve the above research objectives:

- i. What is the effect of students'/teacher ratio on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area?
- ii. How do availability and use of instructional materials affects students' academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses tested at 0.05 alpha level guided the study:

- i. Ho1: there is no significant relationship between students'/teacher ratio demand and students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Sokoto south local government area.
- ii. Ho2: there is no significant relationship between availability and use of instructional facilities in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area and students' academic performance.

Literature Review

For sound and qualitative education to be obtained, there is the need for quality control of our formal institutions of learning. The teacher is the life wire of the classroom learning program. He is planner and the implementer of schools' learning process at the classroom level. This is perhaps hinted why Federal Republic of Nigeria maintains that, no system of education

can rise above of its teachers. However, there are certain conditions that characterize the teacher work environment for him to deliver well in his professional responsibility (Sarkingobir et al., 2019; Nanbak, 2020; Casian et al., 2021). This can be demonstrated in situation where the teacher is forced to work in a school with overcrowded classes. Under such conditions the teacher's task is very enormous and such would be faced with number of challenges. In recent years, records have shown that a huge rise in number of people entering schools has led to overpowering the capacity of facilities and turning to overcrowding situation nowadays (Sarkingobir et al., 2017; Dange & Dange, 2019). There is no problem with the rise in the number of students' intake into schools, in fact, it is a welcome development to witness increase in student's enrolment on one hand, and existing human and material resources needed to cater and accommodate these students on the other hand (Kaur, 2019; Umar et al., 2017; Umar et al., 2018).

The problem of overcrowded learning facilities has an effect to put much load and challenge on the teachers above their normal capacities. It has manifested in putting more tests, assignments, and examination booklets for the teachers to handle far better than their normal capacity in the timeframe. Under this condition, it often seldom for the teacher to remain objective and consistent with regard to the manner he/she awards marks to students (Sarkingobir et al., 2022; Nair, 2022). This scenario also affects marking and lead to delay in marking and recording student's examination. An overcrowded class also not conducive for ensuring effective classroom management (Bello et al., 2022) which according to Kanayochukw et al (2020), is prerequisite to effective learning as no meaningful learning can take place in a chaotic and rowdy classroom environment.

In this situation the teacher cannot easily monitor and identify problem behavior from students since many of such students may easily hide in the midst of other students. According to Aliyu & Bichi (2019), students' overpopulation is that population which does not fall into profitable use and which include students who are taken care of by the students'/teacher ratio demand or the users infrastructure ratio level. In this situation, there exist science students who have no access to the laboratory/library, technical students who have no access to the workshops and computer students who have no access to the computer to practice. These

shortcomings mentioned are detrimental to the issue of quality control in our educational system (Jalili & Mal-Amiri, 2015; Nair, 2022).

Significance of the Study

This study will be helpful the government to be alerted on the exact nature of the effect of overcrowding in classrooms in the state to take measures to salvage the situation. It is also a noteworthy thing for the education advocators to seek the hands of donors and wealthy people to put up measures to support the education sector in the state.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design of correlational type conducted in four secondary schools in Sokoto south local government area. The population of the study comprised of four principals, eight vice principals, two hundred and thirty teachers and three thousand, two hundred and sixteen students as depicted in the table 1 below:

Table 1

Population of the study

s/no	Category	Population
1	Principals	4
2	Vice principals	8
3	Teachers	230
4	Students	3216
	Total	3458

Source: Field data, (2022)

A sample of four principals, eight vice principals were purposely selected respectively, a sample of one hundred and forty-two were randomly selected from teachers and a sample three hundred and thirty eight students were selected proportionately guided by research advisor table of sample size determination.

The instruments for data collection was a researcher designed Likert type four scale questionnaires titled “questionnaire on students’ enrolment in selected secondary schools of Sokoto South local government area (QSESSS”, “questionnaire for teachers on students’ academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area of

Sokoto state (QTSAP)”, an interview guide was also developed by researchers on the availability of instructional facilities.

The instruments were validated by experts and other colleagues and validity index was arrived at 0.76 and 0.72 respectively and reliability coefficient was obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistics at 0.68 and 0.71 for the instruments. Data obtained from the respondents were analyzed using simple frequency and percentage to answer the research questions and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. analysis.

Results

H01: there is no significant relationship between Teacher/Students ratio demand and students’ academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area.

Table 2:

Teacher/students ratio demand and students’ academic performance

		Ratio Demand	Students’ Academic Performance
Ratio Demand	Pearson correlation	1	.574
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	142	140
Students’ Academic Performance	Pearson correlation	.574	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	140	140

Source: Field data (2022)

In Table 2, Pearson correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between students’/teacher ratio demand and academic performance, result revealed that, there is a significant relationship between teacher/students ratio demand considering p-value (sig) $001 < 0.05$. It also means that there is positive moderate relationship as results shows $r = .0574$. hence null hypothesis not accepted. Implying that for students to effectively perform in their classes teacher/students ratio demand has to be put in place and this concur with a recent finding in Anambra state Nigeria, that reveals overcrowding in pupil’s classrooms as a negative factor on their academic achievement (Ndubueze & Chinasa, 2021). As shown by tables of this

study, it has listed many negative issues due to overcrowding in schools in the affected study area. They include possibility/ encouragement of examination malpractice, reduced use of facilities, possibility of results omission, poor room for assessment of students, delay in result release, un-comfortability of students and teachers, and poor performance.

Ho2: there is no significant relationship between availability of and use of instructional facilities and students academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area.

Table 3

Availability and use of instructional facilities and students’ academic performance

		Availability and use of Instructional Facilities	Students’ Academic Performance
	Pearson correlation	1	.109
Ratio Demand	Sig. (2-tailed)		.200
	N	142	140
	Pearson correlation	-.109	1
Students’ Academic Performance	Sig. (2-tailed)	.200	
	N	140	140

Source: Field data (2022)

Table 3 depicted the result of correlation between availability and use of instructional facilities and students’ academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area. Result shows that there is no significant relationship between availability and use of instructional facilities and students’ academic performance considering p-value of .200>0.05 level of significance. In the same vein, there is weak negative relationship judging by r-value of -.109. implying that null hypothesis has been retained. Meaning that, there is no significant relationship between availability and use of instructional facilities and students’ academic performance. This is in contrary to the findings of

(Sarkingobir et al., 2017; Sarkingobir et al., 2019; Dange & Dange, 2019; Bello et al., 2022).

Table 4

How do you feel when teaching large classes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Fairly comfortable	85	53.1	59.9	59.9
Comfortable	29	18.1	20.4	80.3
Not comfortable	28	17.5	19.7	100
Total	142	88.8	100	
Total	160	100		

Source: Field survey (2022)

Data presented in table 4 indicated that 85(59.9%) of the teachers expressed that they were fairly comfortable with large classes while 29(20.4%) were comfortable of large classes, in the same vein, 28(19.7) were of the view that they are not comfortable.

Table 5

Classes of large number of students affect teachers' method of marking

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	42	26.3	29.6	29.6
Agreed	86	53.8	60.6	90.1
Disagreed	14	8.8	9.9	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022)

Result presented in table 5 shows that 42(29.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that classes of large number of students affects their marking method, 86(60.6%) agreed that large classes affect their marking method of marking, also 14(9.9%) disagreed with the statement.

Table 6

Classes of large number of students cannot be assessed effectively

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	29	18.1	20.4	20.4
Agreed	43	26.9	30.3	50.7
Disagreed	28	17.5	19.7	70.4
Strongly disagreed	42	26.3	29.6	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022).

Table 6 depicted that, 29(20.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that classes of large number of students cannot be assessed effectively, 43(30.3) were of the view that they agreed with the statement, also 28(20%) disagreed with postulation, in the same vein 42(29.6%) were strongly disagreed.

Table 7

Its take long period of time for teachers to mark scripts if classes are overcrowded

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	43	26.9	30.3	30.3
Agreed	57	35.6	40.1	70.4
Disagreed	42	26.3	29.6	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing System	18	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022)

From table 7, result indicated that, 43(30.3%) of the respondents were strongly agreed that its take teachers long period of time to mark scripts of overcrowded classes, also 57(40.1%) agreed on the statement, similarly 42(29.6%) disagreed on the statement.

Table 8

Teachers teaching large classes are likely to omit students result

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	30	18.8	21.1	21.1
Agreed	28	17.5	19.7	40.8
Disagreed	56	36.0	39.4	80.3
Strongly disagreed	28	17.5	19.7	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing System	18	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Primary data (2022)

Table 8 presented result of teachers teaching large classes are likely to omit students result, it indicated that, 30(21.1 %) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 28(19.7%) agreed, 56(39.4%) disagreed with postulation, also 28(19.7%) strongly disagreed.

Table 9

Government provided available classrooms for instruction

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Highly available	10	6.3	7.0	7.0
Moderately available	35	21.9	24.6	31.7
Fairly available	45	28.1	31.7	63.4
Not available	52	32.5	36.6	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing System	18	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022).

Table 9 presented that government provided available classrooms for instruction were 10(7%) of the respondents were of the view that available classrooms are highly available, 35(24.6%) viewed that classrooms are moderately available, 45(31.7%) were of the view that classrooms are

fairly available, also 52(36.6%) believed that classrooms for instruction were not available.

Table 10

Government provided spacious instructional classroom

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	11	6.9	7.7	7.7
Agreed	21	13.1	14.8	22.5
Disagreed	64	40.0	45.1	67.6
Strongly disagreed	46	28.8	32.4	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing System	18	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022)

From the data presented in table 10 shows that 11(7.7%) strongly agreed that government provided spacious classrooms for instruction, 21(14.8%) agreed on the statement, 64(45.1%) disagreed and 46(32.4%) strongly disagreed.

Table 11

There are available chairs and desk in my school

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	14	8.8	9.9	9.9
Agreed	39	24.4	27.5	37.5
Disagreed	45	28.1	31.7	69.0
Strongly disagreed	44	27.5	31.0	100.0
Missing System	18	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022)

Data presented in table 11 shows that 14(9.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there are available chairs and desks in schools, 39(27.5%) agreed on the postulations and 45(31.7%) disagreed on the statement, in the same vein 44(31%) strongly disagreed.

Table 12

There are adequate required teaching and learning facilities in my school

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	11	6.9	7.7	7.7
Agreed	28	17.5	19.7	27.5
Disagreed	56	35.0	39.4	66.9
Strongly disagreed	47	29.4	33.1	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing System	18	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022)

In table 12, data presented shows that, 11(7.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there are required teaching and learning facilities in schools, 28(19.7%) agreed on the statement, while 56(39.4%) of the respondents agreed, 47(33.1%) strongly disagreed on the statement.

Table 13

The required teaching and learning facilities are optimally put to use

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	14	8.8	9.9	9.9
Agreed	16	10.0	11.3	21.1
Disagreed	52	32.5	36.6	57.7
Strongly disagreed	60	37.5	42.3	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing System	18	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022)

Data presented in table 13 indicated that 14(9.9%) strongly agreed that, the required teaching and learning facilities are optimally put to use, 16(11.3%) agreed, 52(36.6%) disagreed while 60(42.3%) strongly disagreed on the statement.

Table 14

Average classes students perform better than large classes

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	14	8.75	10.0	10.0
Agreed	13	22.5	9.3	19.3
Disagreed	36	8.1	25.7	90.0
Strongly disagreed	77	8.8	55.0	100.0
Total	140	87.5	100.0	
Missing System	20	12.5		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022)

Table 14 presented data on average classes students perform better than large classes upon which 14(10%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 13(9.3%) agreed, 36(25.7%) of the respondents disagreed and 77(55%) strongly disagreed.

Table 15

Do you agree that overcrowding can bring about examination malpractice in schools?

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	28	17.5	19.7	19.7
Agreed	86	53.8	60.6	80.3
Disagreed	14	8.8	9.9	90.1
Strongly agreed	14	8.8	9.9	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing System	18	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: field data (2022).

Data presented in 15 on overcrowding in classrooms may bring examination malpractice shows that 28(19.7%) strongly agreed, 86(60.6%) agreed, 14(9.9%) disagreed and 14(9.9%) strongly disagreed.

Table 16

Students population has implication on teaching/learning process

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agreed	58	36.3	40.8	40.8
Agreed	14	8.8	9.9	50.7
Disagreed	56	35.0	39.4	90.1
Strongly disagreed	14	8.8	9.9	100.0
Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing System	14	11.3		
Total	160	100.0		

Source: Field data (2022)

Result from table 16 indicated that, 58(40.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that population has implication on teaching learning process, 14(9.9%) agreed on the statement, also 56(39.4%) disagreed and 14(9.9%) strongly disagreed.

Discussion

The role of education in being a catalyst for various forms of development which every nation desired cannot be overstated, that is what has spurred the Sokoto state government and other agencies to try and advocate for enrollment of every child to school for the state to move forward and be in tandem with its peers and achieve development (Waheed, & Gilani, 2015; Waheed, 2016; Bello et al., 2017). However, despite the struggling of the state government, and parents to educate the people of the state, there is still an issue of poor performance that is been recorded over the years. However, this poor academic outcome being notice from the students in schools of the state is not unconnected with the diversity of problems bedeviling the education system of the state. One major problem that is taming the academic performance in the state is the issue of poor infrastructures, lack of enough classes and other related structures to contain the students in a conducive environment for profitable learning; which was an issue divulged by the findings of this study that was conducted in local government area of Sokoto metropolis (Bello et al., 2017; Gado & Alkammawa, 2017; Sarkingobir et al., 2022). Therefore, an issue causing poor performance was revealed and for improvement it has

to be remedied through putting all hands on deck. Community participation, especially the wealthy hands has to be taken very serious for achieving meaningful progress (Boyi, 2013; Ndubueze & Chinasa, 2021). Likewise, private schools are to be empowered to provide the needed services and buttress the efforts of government overwhelmed schools (Bello et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Based on the results analyzed on the research questions, the researchers arrived at the following conclusion:

Findings from research question one on; what is the influence of teacher/students ratio on students' academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto South local government area? It is concluded that teacher/students ratio has a great influence on students' academic performance. Thus, if good result is expected from students the number of students per teacher should be relatively small. Thereby allowing the teacher to render what is expected of him to the students.

Findings from research question two on; how do availability and use of instructional facilities affect students' academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sokoto south local government area? It is concluded that, availability of instructional facilities has no any bearings with students' academic performance as clearly indicated in the analyzed data. Implying that, if students receive lessons in or outside classrooms can perform provided the teacher is competent and productive.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. That, the government and philanthropists should partner in recruiting teachers annually so as to fill the vacuum left by teachers running from teaching profession so as to meet the target set aside the Nigerian government of teacher/students ratio of 1:35/40 primary and secondary students respectively.
2. That, not only the matter of quantity, quality should be the yardstick when it comes to recruitment exercise of teachers, thereby recruiting competent, qualitative and productive teaching personnel into teaching job.

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