

School Population and Teachers' Effectiveness in Kwara State Basic Schools, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was carried out to determine the relationship that exists between school population and teachers' effectiveness in Kwara State Public Basic Schools in Nigeria. School population was examined in terms of small and large schools, while teacher effectiveness was examined through effective lesson delivery, effective classroom management and students' academic performance as in junior secondary school examinations. A descriptive research design of correlational type was used in the study. Four hundred and twenty five teachers were randomly selected as sample in the study. Two instruments titled: "School Population and Teachers' Effectiveness Questionnaire" (SPTEQ) and "Students' Academic Performance Proforma" (SAPP) were used to obtain relevant data. Four research hypotheses were formulated in the study and tested using Pearson product-moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The finding revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between school population and teachers' effectiveness in Kwara State public basic schools. It was recommended, among others, that educational planners, administrators and evaluators should supervise, monitor and co-ordinate the activities of the school heads, teachers and students in order to bring about teachers' effectiveness.

Keywords: Population, teacher effectiveness, administrators, evaluators.

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Introduction

Many factors have been adduced by different researchers such as Ajao (2001), Blumende (2001) and Ekwesili (2006). Among them are educational facilities, Teacher competency, student enrolment and even students' attitude. Important among these is student enrolment which constitutes the school population. Societal awareness as to the benefit of education is on the increase. Population refers to the entirety of a given subjects. In the school system, it represents total number of students enrolled in a given academic session. It is necessary to study school population in this study due to its great influence on teachers' effectiveness. The teacher tends to be effective where the class is not overpopulated because classroom management will be effective. The Nigeria population according to National Population Commission (NPC) (2004), continues to grow. The Federation Census in 1996 was 107 million, 140 million in 2006 and 170 million in 2014 (NPC 2014). The increase in the population figures is not without having effects on the states of the Federation as well as all the sectors of the economy, education inclusive thereby putting extra pressure on educational facilities.

All education stakeholders are aware that population explosion or congestion exists in the classroom at all levels of the educational institutions especially at the basic level in the public schools in towns and cities in Nigeria. There is increase in school enrolment without proper planning to adequately meet the increase in school population. Poor and insufficient fund for the management of public schools by government both at the Federal and State levels have greatly affected students' enrolment trend and teachers' effectiveness in basic schools (Kolade, 2007 and Adeyemi, 2007). The issue of school population and teacher effectiveness has become a challenge to managers of education who has the responsibility to ensure that teachers' activities positively yield good results especially in terms of students' academic performance.

Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2004) specified that the teacher student ratio at secondary school level of education shall be 1:35. Educational planners are yet to determine what number is considered large or small. Slate and Jones (2012) defined optimal school size as a range in which economic efficiency and educational outcomes both show positive relationship to large school size. Large schools according to Leithwood and Jantzi (2009) have been justified on the grounds that they provide increase variety of classes for students and provide increased specialization of teachers through division of labour. It carries power and rightness. It can be run at lower per pupil costs, draw a more diverse population and can have high dropout rate, high level of disorderliness, drug use and violence, low level of attendants and participation in school activities. Whereas small school size helps to develop relationships with other

students, better chance for teachers to know their students well. Blumende (2001) submitted that small schools can improve education by creating small, intimate learning communities where students are well known, reduce discrepancies in the achievement gap that plagues poor children, Schneider, Teske and Marschall (2000) added that small schools often encourage parental involvement, which benefits students and the entire community and higher achievement.

Fadipe (2000) opined that the right type of atmosphere required for effective teaching and learning is that consisting of a better or average population of student and a better conducive environment. Oyedeji (2000) observed that with recent population explosion in basic schools, they are not well equipped and therefore makes teaching of less quality.

Determinants of teachers' effectiveness include classroom management, effective lesson delivery and students' academic performance. There determinants are enunciated as follows:

Classroom management: This can be regarded as the orchestration of classroom life which includes: planning curriculum, organizing procedures and resources, setting the tone of the class environment to maximize learning, anticipating potential problems, preventing latent misbehaviour and remedying overt disruption. Classroom management involves many interrelated and interdependent activities in management of physical resources such as desk, chairs, ventilations and many others must be properly and efficiently utilized, students must be properly arranged and carried along in the teaching-learning process. Effective classroom deals with how things are done, such as structure, procedure and routine to the extent of becoming rituals (Oyedeji, 2000).

Assessment of student learning: Students' academic performance remains essential in the school system. Students' assessment major goals are, to document what learning is taking place and to use the result of assessment activities to improve student learning. The role of the teacher in education process is central to learning especially in the basic school level. While in the advanced countries, there may be close-substitutes for teachers' role in the form of teaching like machines with programmed instruction, but in Nigeria, the teacher remains the manager of knowledge as the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2004) sub-section 57 recognises that "no education system can rise above the quality of its teacher" students assessment which is one of the major activities embarked by the teacher involves marking, recording and grading are means to determine teachers' effectiveness in the school system. Assessment facilitates goal achievement. There are formative and summative purposes of assessment, while the formative purposes involve structuring, guiding and enhancing students learning, the summative purpose involve certifying, reporting students achievement and admitting students to subsequent learning opportunities (Lambert and Lines, 2000).

Effective lesson delivery: Over time pupils' academic had been used to determine excellence in teachers and teaching (Ajao, 2001). There is a need to focus on teachers' adequacy and competency in respect to their pedagogical practices and strategies and mastery of the curriculum and subject (Stuart, 2004). In this line Ekwesili (2006) institutionalized the Private Public Partnership (PPP) and School Based Management Committee (BSMC) to manage secondary education and to promote school effectiveness. Thus, raising educational standard depends largely on the teacher who plans and delivers the lessons or instruction in such a way that objectives can be achieved. An uncertified teacher, for instance, cannot prepare students for their examination because it is unlikely they would pass.

Hence, this study examined the extent to which school population affects teachers' effectiveness in terms of effective delivery of lesson, classroom management and students' academic performance in public basic schools in Kwara State.

Research Hypotheses

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between school population and teacher effectiveness in Kwara State Basic schools.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between school population and effective delivery of lessons in Kwara State Basic schools.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between school population and effective classroom management in Kwara State Basic schools.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between school population and students' academic performance in Kwara State Basic schools.

Methodology

Descriptive research design of correlational type was used for this research. The population for this study consisted of all teachers in the entire 407 public basic schools in the 16 Local Government Areas of Kwara State. For the purpose of this study, stratified random sampling technique was used to select 45 basic schools out of the 407 in the 16 Local Government Areas of Kwara State. Two Local Government Areas were selected from each of the three senatorial districts of Kwara State. The sampled Local Government Areas were Ekiti, Ifelodun, Ilorin-East, Ilorin-West, Kaima, and Edu. A total of 425 respondents were randomly selected among 1,225 teachers in Kwara State representing 30% of the entire population. The teachers were used because they could provide required information for the conduct of the study.

Two instruments, a questionnaire and proforma. The questionnaire was titled “School Population and Teachers’ Effectiveness Questionnaire” (SPTEQ). It had two parts. Part A contained the personal/school data of the respondent and part B elicited information required on school population and teachers’ effectiveness. The rating was four-point Likert scale which are Strongly Agree (SA) 4 - point, Agree (A) – 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point. The Student Academic Performance Proforma (SAPP) was used to collect students’ results of 2009 to 2013 Junior Secondary School Examination in Mathematics, English, Integrated Science, Business Education and Social studies. The instruments were both face and content validated by Four experts who were Senior Lecturers and above in the area of Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

Reliability is the extent to which an experiment, test, or measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument used in the study, test re-test method of reliability was applied through a pilot study undertaken to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire, that is, SPTEQ. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on 20 teachers in two basic schools that were excluded from the sampled basic schools within a time interval of three weeks. The data obtained were subjected to Pearson product moment correlation statistic in order to determine the reliability of the instrument. This yielded 0.75 for SPTEQ. Thus, the instrument was adjudged reliable for the pursuance of the study.

The researchers administered copies of the questionnaire and the proforma designed on the participants in the public basic schools. Twenty trained research assistants who were teachers in the sampled basic schools were used to complement the efforts of the researchers.

Data obtained on school population and teachers’ effectiveness were statistically analysed, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20. Inferential statistic of Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1

School Population and Teachers’ Effectiveness

	N	df	School Population	Decision
Teachers’ Effectiveness	425	423	.418*	Ho rejected
Effective Lesson Delivery	425	423	.312*	Ho rejected
Effective Classroom Management	425	423	.218*	Ho rejected
Students’ Academic Performance	425	423	.202*	Ho rejected

* $p < 0.05$

Table 1 shows that all the hypotheses were rejected. Thus, a positive significant relationship existed among the study variables.

Discussion

Hypothesis one which is the main hypothesis showed that a positive significant relationship existed between school population and teachers' effectiveness. It can be affirmed that school population, whether small or large affect teachers' effectiveness. According to Stuart (2004), teachers' adequacy and competency in respect of their pedagogical practices and strategies affect students' performance. Students' enrolment is a good determinants of teachers' lesson delivery, classroom management and students' outcome in both internal and external examinations at a given point in time.

In hypothesis two where the result states that a positive significant relationship existed between school population and effective lesson delivery. It is cumbersome for the teachers to modify the behaviours of the learners in an overcrowded classroom. Gordon (2013) expressed that the population rise is putting extra pressure on educational facilities and that there has been population explosion in schools especially in towns and cities. This explosion in many places affects lesson delivery as many classes in cities number from 60-150 students. Teachers many times find it difficult to move in between rows of students in the classroom. Assignment given to students cannot be marked and checked by teachers as the number makes the teacher ineffective.

Hypothesis three states that there is no significant relationship between school population and effective classroom management. This hypothesis was rejected and the finding is that there was a positive significant relationship between classroom management and teachers' effectiveness in Kwara State basic schools. Fadipe (2000) stated that the right type of atmosphere is required for effective teaching and learning. This type of good atmosphere is better achieved in a small or average population of students.

In hypothesis four, the result revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between school population and students' academic performance. In Kwara State public secondary schools, the study revealed that in large population schools, many students play truancy, and a lot of indiscipline exist, therefore affecting the academic standard of the students. Many times personal contacts between the teacher and students are not there as students hide under the large population.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that significant relationship exist between school population and teachers' effectiveness. This implies that the teachers' effectiveness in terms of effective lesson delivery, classroom management, and students' academic performance positively improved students' academic performance. In Kwara State Basic schools, there are small size schools mostly found in the rural areas and large size schools in the towns and cities (Federal Ministry of Education, 2005).

Research Limitations

This study is limited to Kwara State basic schools and available teachers in the schools. The questionnaire and proforma used served as the limitation of the study. The time frame, dearth of relevant literature and nonchalant attitude of the respondents constituted the limitation of the study.

Recommendations

In view of the results emanating from this study and conclusion reached, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Concerted effort should be made by school administrators to maintain an average school population.
- ii. Very large school population like 80-150 students in a class should be discouraged as a teacher may not be effective under this situation.
- iii. Facilities such as functional school building, libraries, textbooks, good blackboard and other visual aids should be available to aid teaching and learning.
- iv. Teacher effectiveness in terms of classroom environment and good management, lesson delivery should be monitored by the school manager.
- v. Government should plan to build more schools especially in the towns and cities to accommodate the teeming children at the basic level of education. Likewise, dilapidated structures in the rural areas because of small population should be repaired and made attractive to the small population available in the rural areas.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The present study involved public basic schools in Kwara State in Nigeria. Teachers were used as the subjects for the study. Considering the limitations of the present study, further studies should be conducted which would incorporate Private basic schools in Kwara State. Population and teachers' effectiveness should be considered in senior secondary schools in Kwara State. Similar study should be conducted in the Nigerian Polytechnics and Colleges of Education.

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