

**CLASS SIZE AND TIMETABLE LOADS AS DETERMINANTS OF TEACHERS'  
JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS  
STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*Every professional teacher is usually saddled with some teaching and administrative workloads. However, the weight of these loads could affect the teacher's job performance which is often a source of argument among stakeholders in education. The study investigated the extent to which class size and time-table loads influenced teacher job performance in Lagos State public secondary schools. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A total of 2808 respondents from 117 public secondary schools were proportionately selected for the study. This comprised 20 classroom teachers and four (4) heads of departments from four core subjects. The Teaching Workload Questionnaire (TWQ,  $r=0.75$ ), The Administrative Workload Questionnaire (AWQ,  $r=0.70$ ) and The Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ,  $r=0.75$ ) were used for data collection. Three hypotheses were formulated while six research questions were answered. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, path analysis, ANOVA and multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance. Class size and time-table loads had significant positive contributions to teachers' job performance. However, class size made a significant negative contribution. The implications of this study for curriculum development and policy making are that class size and time-table loads might be reviewed so that adequate manageable loads would be carried by teachers in secondary schools. Class size should be reduced through construction of more classrooms to improve teachers' job performance.*

**Keywords:** Class size, Time-table, Teachers' job performance, Public secondary schools in Lagos State.

### **Introduction**

A manageable workload is likely to keep any hardworking teacher motivated and satisfied. It could equally enable him or her to perform his or her duty to the best of his or her ability and become more productive. However, due to the continuous upward trend in school enrolment, prompted by the growing demand for education by most citizens of school age, school population has increased tremendously and this has impacted on the population of individual classrooms. Public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Southwest of Nigeria have presumably been stretched beyond their workload carrying capacities resulting in over-bearing tasks and responsibilities for the teaching staff. This has probably led to the poor performance of these teachers in their teaching and administrative duties since the teaching and learning process, which is the hub of students' academic performance, may not have been vigorously pursued (Okiemute, 2012). Every ministry of education is concerned about the job performance of its teachers (Ubom and Joshua, 2004), because teacher job performance is pertinent to the long-term growth and success of any educational system around the world (Ololube, 2007). Teacher job performance is the ability of a teacher to combine relevant inputs for the enhancement of the teaching and learning process. It is the behaviour of a teacher which is directly related to effectiveness in the process of teaching (Salamat, 2013). Job performance which is the only true determinant of an employee's effectiveness can be measured by comparing actual production with target production (Akintola, 2007). A teacher's performance is therefore measured from the angle of his output as seen from the students' achievement in all domains of learning. This performance which is equally determined by the teacher's level of participation in the day to day running of the school enables the teacher to achieve the ultimate goal of preparing and presenting learners to pass well at both the internal and external examinations. In addition, teachers help learners to develop their intellect and acquire various skills which are necessary to see them through life.

Siniscalco (2002) reported that relentless population growth is

overcrowding the world's classrooms at an alarming rate. She reasons that "growth in the number of school-age children has outpaced growth in the number of teachers worldwide in the new millennium packing classrooms with as many as 100 students per teacher in some countries." Classrooms which are overcrowded create challenges in ensuring quality education and satisfactory learning achievement. Cases of over-enrolment of students in a single classroom are no longer a rare phenomenon in some states of the federation. The crowding complexity in terms of enrolment explosion, resources mobilization and organization of the educational system and the increasing societal demands for more result-oriented schools, have made the duties of staff in schools more difficult (Uchefuna, 2001). This has also seriously diminished the student/teacher ratio and has mounted undue pressure (workload) on the available teaching staff (Nkweke and Dollah, 2011).

Overcrowded classrooms have apparently become a permanent feature of academic settings in many states due to inadequate planning for unexpected population explosions. Increased school population has also led to a situation where facilities earmarked for few students are utilized by students up to five times the number for which the facilities were earlier designed. The consequent uncomfortable physical proximity gives rise to disruptive behaviours and interpersonal squabbles among students. Class control becomes difficult, noise level, intolerable and communication between teachers and students difficult (Ijaiya, 1999). Where the classroom is overcrowded, teacher's performance could be seriously affected. Thus, class size constituted an important area for investigation in this study. Closely related to class size is the time-table load allocated to most subject teachers. The number of arms determines the number of periods to be taught. The load is sometimes so heavy that a teacher may not find it easy to cover all the periods assigned to him or her for the day. When he or she manages to cover them, he or she might be left exhausted by the end of the day.

Joint commentaries by the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (1984) on the conditions for effective teaching and learning state that: the teacher is a valuable specialist, so his work should be so organized and assisted as to avoid waste of his time and energy. In fixing hours of teaching, account should be taken of all factors, which are relevant to

the teacher's workload such as:

- i. The number of pupils with whom the teacher is required to work. Class size should be such as to permit the teacher to give the pupils individual attention.
- ii. The necessity to provide time for adequate planning and preparation of lessons and for evaluation of work.
- iii. The number of different lessons assigned to be taught each day.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The seeming decline in teacher job performance depicted by the unsatisfactory performance of students in public secondary schools in Lagos State has become an issue of concern to most stakeholders in education. This could be attributed to the excessive workloads which teachers are compelled to carry in most public secondary schools. These public schools are faced with population explosion and this leaves a lot of responsibilities in the hands of the teacher, to the extent that even the best of teachers cannot perform optimally. Classes appear to be overcrowded. Timetables are overloaded. There are many class arms to teach and many (test and examination) scripts to mark and record.

The inability to cope with work schedules often leads to frustration, engender feelings of inadequacies and cynicism on the part of the teacher. This sometimes gives rise to various deviant behaviours that appear to worsen the problem of students. It is in the light of the foregoing that this study examined the causal relations that exist among the workloads variables and teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Lagos State. Answers were sought to find out the extent to which identified variables directly or indirectly determined the job performance of teachers in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

### **Research Questions**

In view of the stated problem, the following research questions were raised.

- (i) What are the relative contributions of class size, timetable loads to teacher job performance in the public secondary schools in Lagos State?

- (ii) What is the joint contribution of class size, timetable loads, to teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Lagos State?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The design was adopted because it described “what is” by recording, analyzing and interpreting conditions that existed.

### **Population of the study**

The population for the study comprised all teachers in government-owned public senior secondary schools in Lagos State. There is a total of nine thousand, nine hundred and forty-five teachers (9945), in the two hundred and ninety three (293) senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

A sample of one hundred and seventeen public secondary schools (40%) was drawn using the multi-stage sampling procedure. The first stage involved the stratification of Lagos State into 20 Local Government Areas, using the old Local Government Areas in the Nigerian constitution.

A total of two thousand, three hundred and forty (2,340) classroom teachers were selected for the study. In addition, four (4) heads of four different departments namely – English Language, Mathematics, Biology and Economics were administered a different type of questionnaire, since they were in a better position to assess the teaching performance of teachers in their department. In all, a total of two thousand eight hundred and eight (2,808) respondents were involved in the study.

### **Research Instruments**

Three sets of questionnaires were designed for the study: these are:

- (i) Teaching Workload Questionnaire – TWQ for classroom teachers.
- (ii) Administrative Workload Questionnaire – AWQ for classroom

teachers.

- (iii) Teacher Job Performance Questionnaire – TJPQ for Head of Departments.

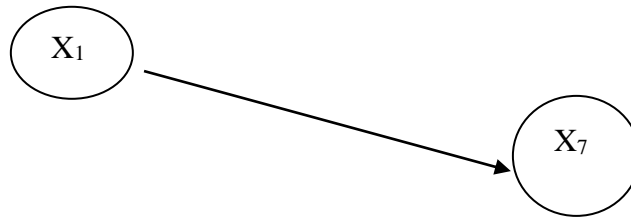
#### **Procedure for Data Collection**

With a letter of introduction from the department, to the various schools, the instruments for this research were administered personally, by the researcher who met teachers “in audience” in some schools. In order to ensure effective administration and the turning in of a large number of questionnaires, six (6) trained research assistants, were also given letters of introduction to the school administrators, requesting for permission and cooperation. Each research assistant covered 3 LGAs. Instruments were administered simultaneously.

#### **The hypothesized causal sequence is as follows**

Class size ( $x_1$ ) is determined by government policies and the current population of the school, vis-à-vis the number of teachers and classrooms available in the school. Fadipe (2000), Adeyemi (2008), Arkin, Black and Coffey (2001) agreed that a reasonable outcome with regards to class size and composition is sometimes achieved through the process of collective bargaining. Thus class size is not influenced by any of the variables in the model and so no arrow goes to it. Rather it is considered as an exogenous variable to all other variables, .

Due to over population in schools, classrooms could be oversized (Siniscalco, 2002; Omoregie, 2005; Garuba, 2005). Such large classes could render teaching and learning ineffective. Edem (1990) posited that a teacher would feel demoralized if he found his class too large or if he had too many lessons to teach daily. Osim, Uchendu and Ubi (2012), Afemikhe (2005), Faleye and Ojerinde, (2005), all agreed to the fact that the average class size in most public educational institutions in Nigeria is larger than what is manageable by a teacher. Teachers reported that in smaller classes, they were more able to concentrate on teaching. They spent less time on behavior monitoring and control of disruptions (Nelson, 2008). They were more able to use a wider variety of instructional methods and strategies (Zahorik, 1999; Osim, et al, 2012, Arkin, Black and Coffey, 2001). From the foregoing, it can be deduced that class size affects teacher job performance.

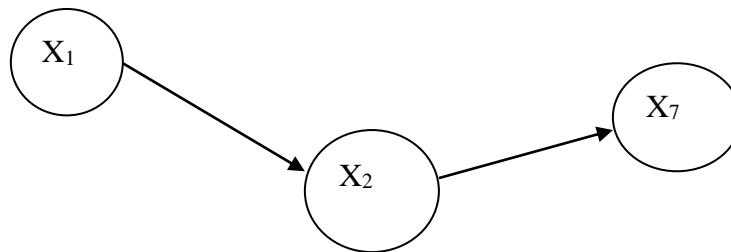


X<sub>1</sub> – Class size

X<sub>7</sub> – Teacher Job Performance

**Hypothesized causal path for X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>7</sub>**

Where these classes are many, it is logical to agree with Oyeka (2002) that the time table (x<sub>2</sub>) will be loaded. She discovered that teachers in urban secondary schools had an average weekly workload per teacher of 20 periods while those in rural secondary schools had an average weekly workload of 24 periods. In some secondary schools, teachers teach as many as 30 periods a week. This could sap the teacher’s energy and leave him exhausted after covering all classes for the day (Naylor, 2001). Hence class size (x<sub>1</sub>) influences time table load (x<sub>2</sub>) which invariably affects (x<sub>7</sub>) teacher job performance.



X<sub>1</sub> – Class size

X<sub>2</sub> – Time table load

X<sub>7</sub> – Teacher job performance

**Research Question One**

What are the relative contributions of class size, timetable loads to teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Lagos State?

**Table 4.1: Relative Contributions of the Six Factors to Teachers Job Performance**

Factors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	37.632	1.439		26.150	0.000
Class size	-.443	0.217	0.045	-2.046	0.041
Time tab	0.353	0.046	0.177	7.625	0.000

The beta weights (B) of the paths (path coefficient) representing the strengths of causation and relative contributions revealed that timetable loads had a beta weight of  $B = 0.177$  which shows a meaningful contribution to the explanation of teachers job performance. However, class size did not satisfy the criterion of statistical significance with a beta weight of  $B = .041$ .

### Research Question Two

What is the joint contribution of class size and time-table loads to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Lagos State? The multiple regression analysis involving the variables showed that jointly, the two variables taken together correlated positively with teachers' job performance.

### Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study revealed the extent to which class size and timetable loads are shown by the values of teachers' job performance.

### Class size

In terms of strength of causation, statistical significance and meaningfulness, **class size** is very low. Thus as an individual variable, class size had slight significant contribution to teacher job performance. This finding suggests that though large classes are cumbersome to manage, teachers in the study have probably devised a way to adjust and circumvent the problems that emanate from there. Large classes could not be considered as impediments to effective teacher job performance, though with large classes, some teachers still produce good results in examinations. The fact that students still learn under a



teacher teaching in such unfavourable conditions, attests to the resilience of teachers in Nigeria (Garuba, 2004). However, there are many other factors which could be responsible for high or low performance in teaching. Class size in this study weakly satisfied the criterion of statistical significance (.045). This indicates that though it affects teacher job performance, its influence is minimal.

This research outcome does not corroborates the finding of Azeez (2007) who found out that there is a significant relationship between class size and teachers' sense of efficacy, implying that class size gives teachers challenges in relation to self-efficacy. It was also found out that class size condition affected the quality of the teachers' performance. The study on "class size pressure" by Osim et al (2012) revealed a significant influence of class size on teachers' work quality. Class size exerted significant influence on teachers' task performance in terms of teaching, assessment of students' academic performance and classroom management. Adeyemi (2008) also found out in his study on the influence of class size on the quality of output in secondary schools that schools having an average class size of 35 and below obtained better results in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) than schools having more than 35 students per class.

Some other research studies, Maduagwu, et al (2006), Nkweke, et al (2011) concluded that smaller classes result in increased teacher-student contact, more learning activities, high teacher morale and reduced stress. However, this does not agree with Akinsolu, et al (2009) who found that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' disposition of teaching large classes. This study, however, disagrees with this assertion and also disagrees with the result of Brewer, Krop, Gill and Reichardt (1999) who reported no relationship between class size conditions and teacher efficacy.

**Time Table Load (X<sub>2</sub>)** ranked second among the six variables in terms of strength of causation. The beta weight was .177. This shows that time-table loads had a high impact on teachers' job performance. This also means that its statistical significance and meaningfulness in relation to teacher job performance is quite high and as an individual variable, time-table load highly affected teacher job performance. Nkweke, et al (2011) found in their study that the period per teaching staff in a week showed that 17% of the schools put in between 18-23 periods of 40

minutes per period for a class, while 83% put in 24-30 periods per week. This, they asserted, seriously affected the performance of the teachers in their study and Ibadin (2010) in his study on "Analysis of teachers' utilisation in urban and rural secondary schools found that in some urban secondary schools, teachers had an average of weekly workload of 16 periods while in some rural secondary schools teachers had an average weekly workload of 26 periods. However, Oyeka (2002) in Ibadin (2010), discovered that urban secondary school teachers had an average weekly workload of 20 periods.

### **Conclusion**

This work set out to find out if class size and timetable loads impacted directly or indirectly on teacher job performance. Findings from this study proved that teacher job performance was undoubtedly affected by class size and timetable loads

### **Recommendations**

- i. It is recommended that an average class size of 40 students per class would be manageable. The teacher-students ratio could be 1:25 in the senior secondary schools. Teachers could be encouraged to spend more time on one-on-one instructions, addressing minor issues before they become major problems.
- ii. Students' enrolment into secondary schools increases sporadically year after year. This increase has to be matched with increased recruitment of teachers to meet the demands of the teeming population of students. More classrooms should therefore be provided to accommodate this growing population.
- iii. Adequate provision for seats especially in urban schools should be made to ease the problem of overcrowded classrooms and poor sitting arrangement that presently make teaching and learning difficult in public secondary schools.

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