

## **Students Population and Effective Instructional Management: A Status Survey of Urban Secondary Schools in Edo State.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined students population and effective instructional management: a status survey of urban secondary schools in Edo State. Using stratified random sampling technique, 160 secondary school teachers were selected from eight secondary schools in Edo State. The study was designed along the line of descriptive survey. The researcher constructed a 30 items instructional management scale specifically centered on the issue of classroom population. The collected data were analysed by summing up the scores on each item divided by the number of respondents. The findings of the study include the following: a. That overpopulation has impacted negatively on the ability of the teachers to manage instructions in classrooms. b. That both male and female teachers have virtually the same level of perception as far as the management of instruction in classrooms is concerned. They differ on only four items. c. That experience and inexperience teachers have almost the same perception in terms of managing instruction in overpopulated classrooms. They however differ on two items which experienced teachers claimed do not affect instruction due to overpopulation of classes. d. Also, professional and non-professional teachers have the same view regarding the effects of overpopulation on instructional management in schools. They both agreed that overpopulation is a problem in managing instructions in our schools. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which include among others the need for teachers who teach large classes to discard the notion that effective instructional management is not possible with large number of students in a class. The use of appropriate technology and teaching skills can as well enhance effective instructional management in large classes. There is need to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff in our secondary schools by way of motivating them. It is also recommended that the state government should build more classrooms in highly populated schools. Also, approved teacher quota of one and half teacher per class and ratio 1:40 should be allowed to remain but should be properly used in the distribution of teachers to schools amongst others.

### **Introduction**

Since Western education became firmly rooted in Nigeria, it has faced myriads of problems. Most of these problems are hardly lost on the various governments, whether during colonial or post-independence era. It has resulted in the setting up of various commissions such as Ashby Commission of 1960 and the Curriculum Conference of 1969 to examine Nigeria's educational problems and make recommendations. These problems pertained to the quantity and quality of teachers, educational facilities, curriculum planning and development (Adesina, 1990).

Most governments today accept in principle that the provision of education is a basic human right as embodied in article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights (Osim, Chike and Isaac, 2012). Through education, peace, good international relations, better prospects for economic developments and improvement of human resources are possible (Omohan and Maliki, 2007). Despite this awareness, most governments cannot fulfill this requirement of education due to large population sizes, rapid growth and competition for scarce financial resources.

In recent times, there has been increase in the population of our schools especially in terms of students enrolment in Edo State. Some schools have as many as 60, 70 or above students per class as against the teacher student ratio of 1:40 recommended by the National Policy on Education (FGN 2004). This has undoubtedly affected teaching and learning negatively as well as students academic performance. This is evidence in the failure rates recorded by students in external examinations in virtually all subjects (Ajayi, 2000). The situation we have in some of our schools in Edo state is that teachers find it difficult moving round the classroom because of the large class size.

In view of the divergent opinions expressed by different scholars on this issue, there is need to adopt a different perspective. The focus of the present study therefore is to find out from secondary school teachers how classroom population affects their ability to manage instruction or teach effectively

### **Research Questions**

1. What do teachers think are the effects of overpopulation of classrooms on their ability to manage instruction?
2. Are the effects of overpopulation in classroom on the management of instruction the same for inexperience and experienced teachers?
3. Are the effects of overpopulation in classroom on the management of instruction the same for professional teachers and non-professional teachers?

### **Significance of Study**

The study of students population and its effect on instructional management is very important to our educational system. This is because of the population growth rate being experienced in Nigeria today. It is hoped that the result of this study will equip both the private, corporate organizations and government who are major stakeholders in the educational system with the way to match students population with teachers and available facilities in schools. The study will no doubt add to the existing literature in our educational system. Also, the findings in this study will be useful to educational planners and designers of curriculum in all respect.a

### **Methodology**

This study was designed along the lines of a descriptive survey. This is a type of survey that is conducted for the purpose of making descriptive assertions about some populations. According to Gay (1996), it can be regarded as a collection of data from members of a population in order to determine the status of a population with regards to one or more variables.

The main reason for choosing the descriptive method is because of the limited time and scarce resources for this research work by the researcher. Also, the questions raised in this research work can be answered with descriptive survey method.

### **Population and Sampling Procedure**

The research respondents for this study were Junior and Senior Secondary School (JSS and SSS) teachers in the selected urban areas of Edo Central and Edo South Senatorial Units of Edo State. The sample for this study was 160 teachers drawn from the JSS and SSS teachers in Edo State. They were randomly selected through stratified random sampling technique putting into consideration the location of the schools.

### **Instrumentation**

The instruments used to collect data for this study were the teachers perception questionnaire. The instruments were designed on 5 point Likert type scale of SA, A, NS, D and SD. The instrument consists of two sections. Section A consists of 7 items about teachers personal details while section B consists of items on population and instructional management. The respondents were expected to simply tick any of the response options considered appropriate. A total of one hundred and sixty (160) usable questionnaires were administered and collected for analysis.

#### **Validity and Reliability**

Reliability of the instrument was carried out with 20 sampled questionnaires administered at Ujoelen Grammar School, Ekpoma. Using the split-half reliability method, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed along side with Spearman's Brown Prophecy formula for correction. The result showed that the test was reliable with  $r$  of 0.88.

#### **Data Analysis**

The analysis was based on data collected from the questionnaires administered to the subjects. The scores for each item range from 1-5 with higher values corresponding to a greater quantity of a particular attributes. The teachers scores were scaled from 1-5 based on the Likert Scale point scores. For positively worded statement, the scoring was 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 not sure, 2 disagree and 1 strongly disagree. For negatively worded statement the scoring would reverse as follows: Strongly agree 1, agree 2, not sure 3, disagree 4 and strongly disagree 5.

The rank order of each item was calculated by summing up the total score for that item divided by the number of respondents. However, the data collected were grouped together, tabulated and analysed in accordance with items in the questionnaires.

#### **Research Question 1:**

What do teachers think are the effects of over-population of classrooms on their ability to manage instruction?

**Table 1: The Most Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation in Managing Instruction**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE SCORE
1	No matter how well I prepare my lesson, I find it difficult to present effectively because of the class size	3.42
2	Getting enough learning materials for my students is always difficult	3.41
3	Getting students attention is one of the problems I have teaching my class	3.24
4	Learning through homework is made less effective because of the size of my class	3.24
5	The classroom where I teach is not conducive for learning	3.24
6	I find that I would need more time than is usually allocation to lesson to teach effectively	3.22
7	Up till now, I do not know the names of all the students in my class	3.16
8	Maintaining discipline is a serious problem in my class	3.15
9	Asking oral questions during lesson is not an effective learning strategy because less than 10% of the students are ever reached	

		3.14
10	It is difficult for me to interact effectively with students during lesson	3.13

These items 1-10 are considered by teachers as the most significant result of overpopulation in classroom management. They are numbered from the most significant item 1 to the 10<sup>th</sup> most significant item. The average score range from 3.42 to 3.13.

However, the items they considered less significant as a result of overpopulation in instructional management in the classroom are represented in Tale 2.

**Table 2: The Least Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation of Classrooms in Managing Instruction.**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE Score
1	There is enough space in the classroom for students to move around without interfering with other students	2.73
2	Housekeeping activity like distribution and collection of student materials does not take much time in my class	2.70
3	I think most of my students know why they are in school	2.66
4	Effective use of teaching aid is possible in my class	2.65
5	My students like asking questions until they understand the topic of instruction	2.61
6	The students I teach often meet my expectations in their achievement	2.57
7	I find it easy to monitor and record the academic progress of my students	2.47
8	I usually do not have problems determining previous knowledge of my student	2.40
9	Organising seatwork or class assignment during lesson is relatively easy in my class	2.19
10	I find it easy to prepare lessons for my class	1.78

Table 2 shows the 10 least significant effects of overpopulation in managing instruction in secondary schools in Edo State. The average score range between 2.73 and 1.78.

**Research Question 2:**

Are the effects of overpopulation in classroom on the management of instruction the same for inexperience and experience teachers?

In this study, the inexperience teachers are considered to be those who have only taught for less than 10 years. On the other hand, experience teachers are those teachers who have been teaching for over 10 years. Table 3 shows the most significant effects of overpopulation in classroom on the management of instruction by inexperience teachers.

**Table 3: The Most Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation in Managing Instructions in Classrooms by Inexperience Teachers.**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE SCORE
1	It is difficult for me to interact effectively with students during lesson	3.63
2	No matter how well I prepare my lessons, I find it difficult to present effectively because of the class size	3.58
3	Getting students attention is one of the problems I have teaching my class	3.47
4	Up till now, I do not know the names of all the students in my class	3.45
5	Maintaining discipline is a serious problem in my class	3.33
6	I find that I would need more time than is usually allocated to lessons to teach effectively	3.32
7	Learning through homework is made less effective because of the size of my class	3.28
8	The classroom where I teach are not conducive for learning	3.24
9	Getting enough learning materials for my students is always difficult	3.14
10	Teaching effectively is almost impossible in my present class(es)	3.13

Table 3 shows 10 most significant items on the effects of overpopulation in managing instructions in secondary schools by inexperience teachers in Edo State. The average score range between 3.63 and 3.13. They are numbered from the most significant item to the 10<sup>th</sup> most significant item. All the items as contained in the instrument were accepted by the respondents as factors that are affecting negatively instructions in our secondary schools as a result of overpopulation of classes.

**Table 4: The Least Significant Items on the Effect of Overpopulation on Instructional Management by Inexperience Teachers.**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE
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		SCORE
1	The effective use of teaching aids is possible in my class	2.61
2	There is enough space in the classroom for students to move around without interfering with other students	2.61
3	I think most of my students know why they are in school	2.59
4	I find it easy to monitor and record the academic progress of my students	2.55
5	I find that I always enjoy teaching my classes	2.53
6	My students like asking questions until they understand the topic of instruction	2.47
7	Housekeeping activity like distribution and collection of student material does not take much time in my class	2.36
8	I usually do not have problems determining previous knowledge of my students	2.26
9	Organizing seatwork or class assignment during lesson is relatively easy in my class	1.66
10	I find it easy to prepare lesson for my class	1.58

Table 4 shows the 10 least significant effects of overpopulation in managing instructions in secondary schools in Edo State by inexperienced teachers. The average score range between 2.61 and 1.58.

**Table 5: The Most Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation on Instructional Management by Experience Teachers.**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Getting enough learning materials for my students is always difficult	3.50
2	No matter how well I prepare my lessons, I find it difficult to present effectively because of the class size	3.37
3	Learning through homework is made less effective because of the size of my class	3.23
4	The classrooms where I teach are not conducive for learning	3.23
5	I find that I would need more time than is usually allocated to lessons to teach effectively	3.19
6	Asking oral questions during lesson is not an effective learning strategy because less than 10% of the students are ever reached	3.17
7	Getting students attention is one of the problems I have teaching my class	3.17

8	I find it easy to mark and return students assigned	3.09
9	Maintaining discipline is a serious problem in my class	3.09
10	I am able to complete my scheme of work each term	3.09

**Table 6: The Least Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation in Instructional Management by Experience Teachers.**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE SCORE
1	The classrooms where I teach have enough seats for students	2.77
2	There is enough space in the classroom for students to move around without interfering with other student	2.77
3	I think most of my students know why they are in school	2.68
4	My students like asking question until they understand the topic of instruction	2.66
5	Effective use of teaching aids is possible in my class	2.66
6	The students I teach often meet my expectations in their achievement	2.51
7	I find it easy to monitor and record the academic progress of my students	2.45
8	I usually do not have problems determining previous knowledge of my students	2.42
9	Organizing seatwork or class assignment during lesson is relatively easy in my class	2.35
10	I find it easy to prepare lessons for my class	1.84

Table 6: shows the 10 least significant effects of overpopulation in managing instruction by experience teachers. The average score range between 2.77 and 1.84. They are numbered from the least significant item to the 10<sup>th</sup> least significant item.

### **Research Question 3**

Are the effects of overpopulation in classroom on the management of instruction the same for professional teachers and non-professional teachers?

In this study, those who have educational qualification are considered as professional teachers. While those teachers without educational qualifications are considered as non-professional teachers.

**Table 7: The Most Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation in Managing Instructions in Secondary Schools by Professional Teachers.**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Getting enough learning materials for my students is always difficult	3.79

2	No matter how well I prepare my lessons, I find it difficult to present effectively because of the class size	3.67
3	The classrooms where I teach are not conducive for learning	3.53
4	Learning through homework is made less effective because of the size of my class	3.50
5	Asking oral questions during lesson is not an effective learning strategy because less than 10% of the students are ever reached	3.48
6	Getting students attention is one of the problems I have teaching my class	3.48
7	I find that I would need more time than is usually allocated to lessons to teach effectively	3.42
8	Maintaining discipline is a serious problem in my class	3.35
9	I find it easy to mark and return students assignments	3.33
10	Up till now I do not know the names of all the students in my class	3.32

Table 7 shows the 10 most significant effects of overpopulation in managing instructions in secondary schools by professional teachers in Edo State. The average score range between 3.79 and 3.32. Virtually all the items apart from serial No 9 agree that overpopulation in our secondary schools is now a serious problem. The items are numbered from the most significant to the 10<sup>th</sup> most significant item.

**Table 8: The Least Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation in Managing Instructions in Secondary Schools by Professional Teachers**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE SCORE
1	It is difficult for me to interact effectively with students during lesson	3.01
2	I think most of my students know why they are in school	2.92
3	My students like asking questions until they understand the topic of instruction	2.91
4	The classroom where I teach have enough seats for students	2.91
5	Effective use of teaching aids is possible in my class	2.88
6	The students I teach often meet my expectations in their achievement	2.72
7	I find it easy to monitor and record the academic progress of my	



	students	2.67
8	I usually do not have problems determining previous knowledge of my students	2.62
9	Organizing seatwork or class assignment during lesson is relatively easy in my class	2.56
10	I find it easy to prepare lessons for my class	2.00

In Table 8 represents the 10 least significant effects of overpopulation in managing instruction by professional teachers in secondary schools in Edo State. The average score range from 3.01 to 2.00. They are numbered from the least significant item to the 10<sup>th</sup> most significant item.

**Table 9: The Most Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation in Managing Instruction in Secondary Schools by Non-Professional Teachers.**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Asking oral questions during lesson is not an effective learning strategy because less than 10% of the students are ever revealed.	3.65
2	No matter how well I prepare my lessons, I find it difficult to present effectively because of the class size.	3.44
3	The classrooms where I teach are not conducive for learning	3.43
4	I find out I would need more time than is usually allocated to lessons to teach effectively	3.39
5	Getting enough learning materials from my students is always difficult	3.33
6	It is difficult for me to interact effectively with students during lesson	3.26
7	Learning through homework is made less effective because of the size of my class	3.22
8	I find it easy to mark and return students assignments	3.19
9	Up till now I do not know the names of all the students in my class	3.15
10	I am able to complete my scheme of work each term	3.09

Table 9 represents the 10 most significant items of the effects of overpopulation in managing instructions by non-professional teachers in secondary schools in Edo State. Virtually all the items show that overpopulation of our secondary schools have impacted negatively on the system. The average score range from 3.65 to 3.09. The items are numbered from the most significant to the 10<sup>th</sup> most significant item.

**Table 10: The Least Significant Items on the Effects of Overpopulation Managing Instruction in Secondary Schools by Non-Professional Teachers.**

S/N	ITEMS	AVERAGE SCORE
1	I often feel satisfied every time I complete each term	2.65
2	Effective use of teaching aids is possible in my class	2.62
3	I think most of my students know why they are in school	2.57
4	Housekeeping activity like distribution and collection of students materials does not take much time in my class	2.54
5	The classrooms where I teach have enough seats for students	2.49
6	The students I teach often meet my expectations in tier achievement	2.49
7	I find it easy to monitor and record the academic progress of my students	2.46
8	I usually do not have problems determining previous knowledge of my students	2.44
9	Organizing seatwork or class assignment during lesson is relatively easy in my class	2.27
10	I find it easy to prepare lessons for my class	1.75

Table 10 represents the 10 least significant effects of overpopulation in managing instruction in secondary schools in Edo State by the professional teachers. They are numbered from the least significant item to the 10<sup>th</sup> most least significant item.

### **Discussion of Results**

The findings in Table 1 on what the teachers think are the effects of overpopulation of classrooms on their ability to manage instruction. This indicates that the problem of overpopulation in classes has impacted negatively on instructional management. The items include among others effective presentation of lesson is difficult, getting enough learning materials to go round the students is difficult, getting students attention and effective learning through homework has become less effective. Also, the classrooms are unconducive, the time allocated for lessons is not always enough, to know the names of the students in the class by teachers is difficult, maintaining discipline is a serious problem, asking oral questions and effective interactions with the students is very difficult during lessons.

The findings seem to confirm Olonisakin (2002) and Raheem (2003) works that enrolment into secondary schools is still on the increase and that the development has impaired effective teaching and learning in the system due to large number of students in various classes. The findings is also in line with Adesina (1977), Yara, (2010) submission that overcrowding in public schools has resulted in overstretching of human and physical resources on ground and hence, the reason for teachers ineffectiveness.

The least significant items regarding what teachers think are the effects of overpopulation of classrooms on their ability to manage instruction are represented in Table 2. These items do not affect instructional management in our secondary schools as a result of overpopulation.

The findings with regards to whether or not the effects of overpopulation in classrooms on the management of instruction is the same for inexperience and experience teachers. The result of the findings shows that they are more or less the same. As for the inexperience teachers in Table 3 all the most significant items stressed that overpopulation in classrooms on the management of instruction is impacting negatively on the educational capability of the teachers to deliver. The items include among others difficulty in interacting effectively with students during lesson by teachers, no matter how well a teacher may prepare they find it difficult to present effectively because of class size. Also, getting students attention is a problem in teaching, up till now, the teachers do not know the names of all the students in their classes and maintaining discipline in classes is a serious problem. Also, more time is required for lessons as a result of overpopulation, learning through homework is also made less effective, the classes are not conducive, getting enough materials for students is difficult and teaching effectively is now almost impossible because of class sizes.

As for the experience teachers, all the items in Table 5 also show that overpopulation has impacted negatively on instructional management in our secondary schools. However, item on serial number 8 is at variance which states that experience teachers find it easy to mark and return students assignments. Also, item on serial number 10 also shows overpopulation of classes does not affect negatively experience teachers ability to complete their scheme of work.

As for the 10 least significant items, all the items for experience teachers has nothing to do with the overpopulation of classes as shown Table 6. These items range from effective use of teaching aids, enough space in classes, easy to monitor and record academic work of students, teachers enjoy teaching their classes and that there is no problem determining the past knowledge of students among others. Also, for the 10 least significant items for experience teachers in Table 6, all the items shows that overpopulation does not affect instructional management in classes.

On the findings regarding research question 3 as to whether the effects of overpopulation in classrooms on the management of instruction the same for professional and non professional teachers. It was discovered that both the professional and non professional teachers have the same view regarding the effects of overpopulation on instructional management in secondary schools in Edo State. This is represented in Tables 7 and 9 which shows the 10 most significant effects of overpopulation on instruction in large classes. As for the professional teachers, only one item on serial number 9 does not affect negatively overpopulation in instructional management. This states that it is easy to mark and return students assignment. This is the same with non-professional teachers with this same item on serial number 8. Also, non-professional teachers claimed that they can complete their scheme of work each term. This is at variance with professional teachers.

For the least significant effects of overpopulation on instructional management, the professional and non-professional teachers claimed it is difficult to interact effectively with students during lessons and effective use of teaching aids is possible in their classes as shown in Tables 8 and 10. This means that the professional and non-professional teachers have the same opinion as far as the 10 least items affecting overpopulation on instructional management in secondary schools is concern. Other items are as spelt out on Tables 8 and 10.

The findings of this study include the following:-

- (1) Overpopulation has impacted negatively on the ability of the teachers to manage instructions in classrooms.
- (2) That experience and inexperience teachers have almost the same perception in terms of managing instruction in overpopulated classroom environment. They however differ with two

items which experienced teachers claimed do not affect instruction due to overpopulation of classes.

- (3) Also, professional and non-professional teachers have the same view regarding the effects of overpopulation on instructional management in schools. They both agreed that overpopulation is a problem in managing instructions in our schools.

## 5.2 Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that students population in classrooms has negative effect on the ability of the teachers to manage instructions. Also, whether professional or non-professional teachers, experience or inexperience teachers, all have agreed that overpopulation is a problem in our secondary schools in Edo State.

Despite these findings, class size is a critical factor in managing instructions and it goes a long way in determining the quality of output from our secondary schools in Edo State. Therefore, the ratio of 1:40 per class should be adhered to.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings enumerated in the summary of this research work, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers who teach large classes should discard the notion that effective instructional management is not possible with large number of students in a class. The use of appropriate technology and improved teaching skills can as well enhance effective instructional management in large classes.
2. There is need to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff in our secondary schools by way of motivating them.
3. It is also recommended that the state government should build more classrooms in high populated schools.
4. Also, approved teacher quota of one and half teacher per class and ratio 1:40 should be allowed to remain but should be properly used in the distribution of teachers to schools.
5. Seminars and workshops should be organized for teachers periodically to sharpen their teaching skills especially in teaching large classes.
6. Shortage of classrooms and teachers in Nigerian secondary schools need to be treated as a national crisis worthy of serious attention from states and Federal Government.

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