

## Class Size and Teachers' Productivity in Primary Schools in Ekiti State

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**Abstract** This study examined the Class Size and Productivity in Primary Schools in Ekiti State using Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State as a case study. This is necessary because of the perceived primary school teachers ineffectiveness in the performance of their duties. A sample of two hundred teachers was drawn from twenty schools in the local government through the simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire tagged "Class Size and Teachers' Productivity" was used to collect the data for this study. The instrument was validated by using test re-test method of testing reliability and the reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained and this was considered high enough for reliability. The data obtained were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis. The study revealed that the level of teachers' productivity in primary schools in the local government under study was low. The study also revealed that teachers would prefer to teach small classes where they can easily manage their students and impart knowledge to them with little or no stress to large classes. The study further showed that, there is a significant relationship between class size and teachers' productivity. It is therefore recommended based on these findings that urgent steps should be taken by the government and all stakeholders in education to ensure proper funding of primary schools through the provision of essential infrastructures in order to reduce the ratio of students to a teachers to a manageable size. This is necessary in order to achieve appreciable level of teachers' productivity.

**Keywords:** Class size, teachers' productivity, Primary Schools, Ekiti State.

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### 1. Introduction

Primary education is the education given to children from age 6-11 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). It is the foundation of all education levels and also the bedrock of the entire educational system. The success of other levels of education depends on its success. This is because education can not be an instrument par excellence for achieving national development where primary education is not effectively managed to accomplish its aims and objectives (Ajayi and Adeosun, 2004). Teachers are the backbone of the entire education system. Their effectiveness is perhaps the most vital function affecting the future development of education process (Akudu, 2007).

The establishment of primary schools in Nigeria has witnessed tremendous growth since independence. Likewise, enrolment has been on the increase due to national population growth and the increased demand for education which has led to overcrowding in the primary school system, resulting in overstretching of human and physical resources (Ayodele, Oyebanji and Oyeniyi, 2009). Due to community and individual participation in education today, the numbers of primary schools have increased geometrically in view of the desire for primary school education (Ayodele, 1998). The astronomical increase in primary school seems to have led to congestion of primary schools in many states across the country and Ekiti State appears not to be left out of this problem. Raheem (2003) reported that admission into primary school gallops annually in spite of the decay and inadequate infrastructures in the system.

Ayodele (2000) also identified that the abolishing of shifting system of education (i.e. morning and afternoon class session) in Nigerian primary schools has brought about the establishment of more primary schools. In spite of this efforts, the congestion in primary schools appears not to be yet resolved as enrolment in primary school is still on the increase and this seems to have impaired effective teaching and learning most especially the teaching of virtually all the subjects in primary schools. With this development, it seems as if

primary school teachers will not, be able to give their best into the discharging of their duties. For instance, it seems typical to find some teachers in the State Primary school who do not prepare their lesson notes before teaching, some of them appear to believe that preparation of lesson notes on a daily basis is time-consuming, they therefore do this when it is convenient for them and this tends to jeopardize their productivity in terms of teaching what should be taught. Poor method of giving assignments to pupils appears to be rampant among some primary school teachers in the state. Some teachers do not give assignment to their pupils at all while in some situations, assignments given are not marked. Non-usage of variety of methods of teaching, lack of motivation of pupils to learn and non consideration of individual differences appear to be the order of the day among many primary school teachers in Ekiti state.

For instance, inadequate coverage of syllabus by some teachers seems to be the order of the day in many Ekiti State Primary schools, some teachers appear not to show personal commitment to their jobs due to non-challant attitudes of these teachers towards their works. All the observed problems appear to be endangering effective performance of primary school teachers in the State.

However, the observed teachers ineffective have been attributed to so many factors according to Ajayi and Adeosun (2004) prominent among them are lack of motivation, poor funding, poor leadership, class-size, inadequate facilities, low staff morale, inadequate supervision and so on and so forth but class size appears to be the greatest problem militating against the teachers productivity.

Experience has shown that class size is a major contributing factor to the assumed teachers' ineffectiveness in many primary schools in the State. For instance, in the recent years, Nigeria has witnessed rapid educational expansion especially at the primary school level without corresponding increase in the provision of essential facilities and this has resulted into large school size and eventually large class size; with its attendant problems of lack of facilities for teachers and also lack of good classroom management by the teachers. For instance, it has been observed that students may be too difficult to control by teachers in many of the large classes due to over congestion of students in these classes. Experience has also shown that teachers tend to lose the ability to attain or establish effective teaching in the overcrowded class than small class and this problem of large class size in primary schools has been attributed to several factors, such as the introduction of too many subjects on primary school time-table, which invariably has given birth to accommodation of all the subjects on the school time-table couple with the shortage of qualified teaching personnel to teach these subjects. Another problem is the problem of inadequate instructional materials such as graphs, pictures, charts and so on which are very germane for effective instructional delivery in primary schools. These materials are expected to compliment the process of teaching and learning, if they are adequately provided.

Even though teachers appear to vary in their attitudes towards teaching large classes, most of them seem not to be favorably disposed to the teaching of large classes, and as it is well known, teachers are the backbone of the entire education system, primary educational system inclusive. Teachers' Productivity therefore appears to be a function of class size among others. Against this background, this study attempted to investigate the impact of class size and teachers productivity in primary schools in Ekiti State, using primary schools in Ado Local Government area as a case study. Ekiti State was chosen for the study because it is a known fact that education is the main industry of this state and Ado Local Government was also chosen because it is the seat of the State Capital and it has the highest numbers of primary schools.

Adesina (1977) further opined that the alleged falling quality of education, (primary education inclusive) could be attributed to the prominence of over crowded classes in many of the schools in Nigeria. The concern over the growth of school and class size as a result of students population explosion productivity is directly linked with the possible influence of this explosion on teachers productivity. Encyclopedia of Education (1971) further emphasized that increase class size and population explosions in schools is a matter that requires urgent and adequate attention. The increase in class size may have some terrible implications for teachers productivity. This is particularly so because with a large class size, it becomes therefore difficult for teachers to enforce discipline on their students, quality and quantity of facilities or equipment available to teachers and

students for teaching and learning purposes may be affected, and this may in turn jeopardize teachers productivity and students academic performance.

Olonisakin (2002) further discovered in his study that, the larger the school and the class size, the lesser the teachers productivity but in Obayan's (1971) point of view, as the enrolment in schools is growing, there is therefore a need to establish schools within schools whereby a larger school is divided into small ones for effective administration and effective teaching and learning. Fakunle (2010) further maintained that adequate facilities and financial assistance should be provided for such schools so that teachers could perform their jobs well. It is in light of the above observations that the writer wants to find out whether the class size is related to the teachers productivity in primary schools in Ekiti State or not.

However, factors of inadequate funding of primary school, poor infrastructures, low staff morale, over enrolment of students, inadequate supervision of schools among others are, some- of the factors identified by Ajayi and Adeosun (2004) that can hinder primary school teachers effectiveness.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that primary schools in Ekiti State appear to be densely populated while classrooms seem to be over-congested. This situation seems to be impairing effective teaching and learning process in the primary schools in the state and hence the reason for embarking on this study. The following research questions and hypothesis have therefore been raised to guide the study.

- (1) What is the level of teachers' productivity in primary schools in Ekiti State?
- (2) What is the impact of class size on teachers' productivity?

## 3. Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between class size and teachers' productivity.

## 4. Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was used for this study. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers in the 40 public schools in Ado local government area of Ekiti State. The sample consisted of 200 teachers, both male and female randomly selected from twenty schools which were also selected through a simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire tagged "Class Size and Teachers Productivity" (CSATP) validated by research experts in Educational Management and Tests and Measurement in the University of Ado-Ekiti was used to elicit information needed for the study.

Test-retest method of testing reliability was used to test the instrument and the reliability co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained for the instrument. The questionnaires were personally administered with the help of research assistants which enhanced good and prompt response from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and Pearson product moment correlation and the result were presented here under.

## 5. Results

The following are the results based on the research questions and hypothesis generated.

**Research question 1:** What is the level of teachers' productivity in Primary Schools in Ekiti State?

Table 1. Level of teachers' productivity

Level	Frequency	Percentage(%)
High	63	31.5
Moderate	48	24
Low	89	44.5

Result in table 1 shows that 31.5% of the total respondents have high level of productivity, while 24% have moderate level of productivity and 44.5% have low level of productivity. Therefore, it can be concluded here that the level of teachers' productivity in the Local Government Area under study is relatively low.

**Research question 2:** What is the impact of class size on teachers productivity?

Table 2. Impact of class size on teachers' productivity

S/N	ITEMS	AGREE	%	DISAGREE	%
1	The number of students in your class affects your delivery of instruction?	141	70.5	59	29.5
2	Inadequate seats for students in your classroom and poor seating arrangement affect your teaching?	184	92	16	8
3	Effective use of teaching aids is visible in small class than in large class?	157	78.5	43	21.5
4	Students participate in small class than in large class during teaching	184	92	16	8
5	Teachers find it difficult to measure students' level of comprehension in large class than in small class?	121	60.5	79	39.5
6	Effective class management is easily achievable in small class than in large class.	154	77	46	23

From the table 2, the result showed that 70.5% of the respondents agreed that the number of students in their classroom affect their instructional delivery. However, 29.5% of the respondents disagreed with this position while 92% of the respondents agreed that inadequate seat for students and poor seating arrangement affect effective teaching, 8% of the respondents reacted in the contrary. In the same vein, 78.5% of the respondents affirmed that effective use of teaching aids is more visible in small class than large class while 21.5% objected to this position. Also, it can be seen from the table that 92% of the respondents agreed that students participate more in small class than big class during teaching while 8% did not.

To item 5, 60.5% of the respondents found it difficult to measure students level of comprehension in large class than small class while 39.5% did not. While 77% of the respondents agreed that effective class management is easily achievable in small class size than large class size, on the contrary, 23% of the respondents disagreed with this position.

**Research hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between class size and teachers' productivity.

Table 3: Test of relationship between class size and teachers' Productivity

Items	Number	Real	R tab
Class size	200	0.586	0.195
Teachers' effectiveness	200		

$P < 0.05$

Table 3 shows the relationship between class size and teachers' Productivity. It could be observed from the table that r-calculated of 0.586 is greater than the r-table of 0.195 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This then implies that there is significant relationship between class size and teachers' productivity.

## 6. Discussion

Result in table 1 showed that the level of teachers' productivity in primary schools is low. This may not be unconnected with large class size which teachers in primary schools have to grapple with in the course of performing their duties. This findings is in line with Adesina (1977) Ayodele, Oyebanji and Oyeniya's (2009) submission that overcrowding in the public primary schools has cumulated to overstretching of human and physical resources on ground and hence, the reason for teachers ineffectiveness.

It was also found out in the study that the impact of large class size on teachers' Productivity was not favourable. This finding is in agreement with Olonisakin (2002) and Raheem (2003) work that entries into primary schools are still on the increase and this development has impaired effective teaching and learning in the system due to large number of students in various classes in our primary schools which teachers have to cope with.

Another finding of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between class size and teachers' effectiveness. This study is in line with Ajayi and Adeosun (2004) work which says that school effectiveness (whether primary or secondary) is a function of school population, principal leadership style, funding over enrolment teachers' quality, educational facilities, teaching learning, environment among others.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has delved into the relationship between class size and teachers' productivity in Ekiti State, using primary schools in Ado Local Government as a case study.

The study showed that class size is a major contributory factor to ineffectiveness that is prevalent among primary school teachers in the State and the impact of large class size on teachers productivity was unfavorable. Also the relationship between class size and teachers productivity was highly significant.

It was therefore recommended that urgent steps should be taken by the government and all stakeholders in education in order to prume down the number of students in primary schools to manageable sizes so that effectiveness can easily be achieved on the parts of their teachers. This can be achieved by giving more financial support to primary education so as to ensure adequate funding of the system in order to boost the provision of infrastructures such as buildings, furniture and fittings and even human resources that would match the explosive students' population in our primary schools.

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