

# THE EFFECT OF CLASS SIZE IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN IZZI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE

BY

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research work is to investigate the effect of class size in effective teaching and learning of junior secondary students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The methodology used was the questionnaire which was administered on the respondents, the questionnaire were completed and transferred into frequencies with the use of mean statistics. Some findings were made. Recommendations were drawn out which, include that there is need for government to expand the existing infrastructure in the school so as to accommodate the numbers of students admitted in the junior secondary school. Teachers should be employed as soon as more students are admitted so that teaching learning process will be effective. There is need for government to realize the essence of bringing up the policy of teacher students ratio such policies should be strictly adhered to the idea of admitting students without recourse to the facilities available in inimical to teaching and learning irrespective of the universal basic education (UBE) goals.

**Keyword:** Class size, Effective teaching, Learning, academic performance, classroom management.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

For many years, educators, have debated on the number of students a teacher can work effectively to ensure students adequate learning. Although most people would agree that having a few student to teacher ratio would benefit the student academically. Many will also argue that it does not guarantee success and would cost school a great deal or more money.

Students achievement applies to making sure all students have the necessary skills and knowledge to function in school so that they may also succeed as adult (National Education

Association, 2002). But others see a much broader, richer, picture and the state standards as something to be met on the way to the broader picture. Three areas that fit into the broader picture are academics, essential life skills and responsibility to the community.

Definitions vary across the research spectrum, but for the purpose of this paper, small class size will be defined as classes with approximately 15 students, while large or regular class will be defined as classrooms with approximately 24 or more students (Harris and Plank, 2000), the term average class size is a calculation of the total number of students in a grade level divided by the number of classroom sections in that school or school district.

The relationship between class size and academic performance has been a perplexing one for educators. Studies have found that the physical environment, class overcrowding and teaching methods are all variables that affect students achievement (Molnal, et al 2000). Other factors that affect students achievement are school population and class size (Gentry, 2000, and Swift, 2000). The issue of poor academic performance of students in Nigeria has been of much concern to all and sundry. The problems is so much that it has led to the decline in standard of education. Since the academic success of students depends largely on the school environment, it is imperative to examine the impact variables of class size and school population on the academic performance of students in secondary school.

Overcrowded classrooms have increased the possibilities for mass failure and make students to lose interest in school. This is because large class size do not allow individual students to get attention from teachers which invariable lead to low reading scores, frustration and poor academic performance. In order to better understand the skill levels of students, it might be necessary to evaluate factors affecting their performance. These factors can include; school structure and organization, teachers quality, curriculum and teaching philosophies (Driscoill, Halcoussis and Sony, 2003). The idea that school population and class size might affect students performance is consistent with the growing literature on the relationship between public sector institutional arrangement and outcomes (Moe, 2003). The purpose of this study is to further examine the relationship of class size, school population and students academic achievement.

Class size reduction can be defined as reducing the number of students in a classroom. Classroom averages can be reduced by introducing more teachers. If a school has 120 students in first grade with five class room teachers, the average class size will be 24 students per class. That

number will be reduced if another teacher is utilized in that grade level. 120 students divided by six classroom teachers will result in average class size of 20 students per class.

The premise that reducing class size can lead to improved teaching and learning is one that most teachers and parents would readily endorse (Kennedy, 2003). Given a choice between a classroom with 20 students and one with 30 students, people of course choose smaller class for it is a better learning environment for students. The major problems schools are running into is that the funding for these small class sizes is not always available.

Advocates of small classes believes that small class size allow teacher to give more individualized attention to students, manage their classrooms more effectively and provide more effective instruction that leads to better students performance. In a smaller classroom, a teacher has more time to get to know each student personality and academic strengths and weaknesses, students receive more attention and are less likely to become discipline problems with less time spent on classroom management; teachers can focus more on classroom instruction and students learning. Patricia A Wesley of the college of education at the University of Washington writes “my teaching and research experiences have convince me that both small classes and small schools are crucial to a teacher’s ability to succeed with students” (Wasley, 2002).

Some people are not convenience, however, that reducing class size ensures an academic advantage. Kirk A Johnson is a senior policy analyst in the center for data analysis, heritage foundation and asks the question, “are class size reduction programs uniformly positive or does a downside exists to hiring and placing more teachers in its public schools?” (Johnson, 2002). Because of state mandates in classroom reductions, schools are required to hire more inexperienced teachers and are suffering from a lack of qualified teachers to fill the classroom (Johnson, 2002).

Others argue that there is no substantive proof that class size makes a difference in students performance and there may be other influences affecting students performance. Evidence linking smaller classes to improved performance is inconclusive for instance, difference studies have varied in their definition of small class size.

According to Erik Haunshek (2003) of the Hoover institution, only 15 percent of the studies found that reducing class size has a statistically significant positive effect on performance. Moreover, almost as many studies (13 percent) found that reducing class size has a statistically negative effect on student performance. The remaining 72 percent and indicate that

reducing class size has no statistically significant effect on performance. The results were similar in the 136 studies of elementary school class size. Only 13 percent of them found that reducing class size increases students' performance, and 20 percent indicate that a reduction harms performance. Thus, in the words of Hanushek "there is little reason to believe that smaller class sizes systematically yield higher student achievement" (Barcia, and Fredua-Kwarteng, 2008).

Evidence linking smaller classes to improved performance is therefore inconclusive. This study therefore looks at how class size affects secondary schools students and their academic performance in junior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The performance of junior secondary school students in Junior West African Examination Council in 2012 according to report made by (office of the statistics in PPSMB, 2012), calls for proper investigation of causes of poor academic performance of junior secondary schools students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Although, several scholars have proposed various factors responsible for the poor performance of students, few researches have been dedicated to the correlation between class size, school population and academic achievement of students.

### **PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to find out the effect of classroom size in effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Specially, the study sought to:

- 1) Determine the class size of junior secondary school students in Izzi Local Government Area.
- 2) Determine the effect of class size in teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary school students in the Izzi Local Government Area.
- 3) Ascertain the effectiveness of teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary school in Izzi Local Government Area.
- 4) Identify the policy guiding teacher-student ratio in junior secondary school in Izzi Local Government Area.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The researcher in trying to substantiate the result of this study has deduced the following research questions are:

- 1) Is there any relationship between class size and effective teaching and learning Christian Religious Studies of junior secondary schools?
- 2) Does class size really affect the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary school?
- 3) Is there any relationship between class size and the teaching of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary school?
- 4) Is there any policy guiding teacher-students ratio in junior secondary school?

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study has the potential to guide the policy maker about the present scenario of education system. They make the vision and may improve the situation through adopting a better policy about teachers.

The study is also likely to guide for developing the education, standard for students teacher, ratio.

This study is also important such that the findings made will help teachers to identify the reasons for the academic performances of students in large classes with high population and how they can address the problems.

It will provide comprehensive information for educational planners, educators, and parents on how they can assist students to cope in large classes.

This research work will lead to further in-depth study on the impact of class size and school population on the academic performance of students in Christian Religious Studies and other subjects. It will serve as a contribution to knowledge in the subject area. In this regards, it will be useful for other researchers who might want to carryout research in related areas.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of this study will be very wide if it has to be carried out in all the secondary

school in Izzi Local Government Area. Based on this, the study is focused on five junior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is set to expose readers to the kind of methods and approaches used by the researcher in carrying out the research. The research was carried out and discussed under the following headings: research design, population, sample and sample techniques, instrumentation, and procedure for data collection, procedure for data analysis, reliability and validity.

### **Research Design**

This research adopted survey method of descriptive research. This is done in an attempt to collect data and valid information for the manipulation of the variables in order to determine the current status of the population or sample of the population. This method was used to collect information on the effect of class size in effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools.

### **Area of the Study**

This study examines the effect of class size in effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this research is basically on teachers and students of secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Due to the fact that the whole students cannot be assess, the researcher therefore uses random sample technique in order to achieve the possible outcome of the whole population which was about 120 respondents selected.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

As stated earlier, the researcher used random sampling techniques for this study. It is hoped that the schools that are randomly selected can be used to generalize the population. A sample size of (100) one hundred was used. This number was randomly selected form the total population.

## **Instrumentation**

The instrument used by the researcher was mainly the questionnaire meant for the teachers and students of secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The researcher assumed that the information derived from their responses will be valuable as they are those who are directly involved in the success and challenges.

## **Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher visited all the selected secondary school teachers and students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State for the study to administer the questionnaire. One hundred (100) copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to students after which they were collected same day.

## **Reliability and Instrumentation**

Test-Retest method was used to ascertain the reliability of questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to the same group at an interval of two weeks and 85% of the same responses were still derived from the respondents.

## **Validity of the Instrument**

In respect of the validity of the instrument, the draft copy of the questionnaire was submitted to the research supervisor, after which necessary corrections were made to correlate with the study in questions. The questionnaire has both face and content validity as it was concerted to by the supervisor to match the content of the literature review.

## **Procedure for Data Analysis**

After the collection of data, the researcher sorts the questionnaire. Frequencies were then expressed in percentage, based on the total number of responses. The data obtained were transferred into data sheet using descriptive statistics to answer the research questions. All data were coded using SPSS software.

## PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

### Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of data analysis and interpretation of data collected. The data was collected was through the use of questionnaire while the analysis was based on the research question stated earlier in chapter one of this study.

### Presentation and Interpretation of Results

**Table 1: Administration of Questionnaire**

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Questionnaire filled and returned	80	80.0	80.0	80.0
	Questionnaire not returned	20	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

The above 1 shows that out of 100 copies of questionnaire structured and distributed to the selected secondary school teachers and students in Izzi Local Government Area, 80 representing 80% number of questionnaire returned while 20 copies of questionnaire representing 20% was not returned for data analysis.

**Research Question 1:** Is there any relationship between class size and effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools?

**Table 2**

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	60	75.0	75.0	75.0



No	5	6.2	6.2	81.2
No Idea	15	18.8	18.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

The table 2 above shows that 60 respondents representing 75% indicated yes that there is relationship between class size and effective teaching and learning of junior secondary schools and 5 (6.2%) of the respondents indicated no while 15 (18.8%) opted no idea on the question. Based on this analysis, it is deduced that there is relationship between class size and effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools.

**Research Question 2:** Does class size really affect the teaching and learning in junior secondary school?

**Table 3**

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	70	87.5	87.5	87.5
	No	7	8.8	8.8	96.2
	No Idea	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

The table 3 above shows that 70 respondents representing 87.5% indicated yes that class size really affect the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary school and 7 (8.8%) of the respondents indicated no while 3 respondents (3.8%) asserted no idea on the question.

**Research Question 3:** Is there any relationship between class size and the teaching of Accounting in junior secondary school?

**Table 4**

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	75	93.8	93.8	93.8
	No	2	2.5	2.5	96.2
	No Idea	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 above shows that 75 respondents representing 93.8% indicated yes while 2 (2.5%) of the respondents pointed no and another 3 respondents (3.8%) asserted no idea on the question. From the analysis, it is induced that there is relationship between class size and the teaching of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary school.

**Research Question 4:** Is there any policy guiding teacher students ratio in junior secondary school?

**Table 5**

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	55	68.8	68.8	68.8
	No	15	18.8	18.8	87.5
	No Idea	10	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	100.0	

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

The table 5 above shows that 55 respondents representing 68.8% indicated yes and 15 (18.8%) of the respondents indicated no while 10 respondents (12.5%) asserted no idea on the question. Based on this analysis, it is induced that there is policy guiding teacher students' ratio in junior secondary schools.

### **4.3 Discussion of Findings.**

This study was carried out to examine the effect of class size in effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. To achieve this objective, four research questions were stated to guide this study. A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument to gather data from 100 selected secondary school teachers and students in Izzi Local Government Area. Out of this number, 80 (80%) copies of questionnaire were appropriately completed and returned for data analysis.

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using simple percentage and tables to analyze the research questions. The findings revealed that:

- a) There is relationship between class size and effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools.
- b) Class size really affect the teaching and learning in junior secondary schools.
- c) There is relationship between class size and the teaching of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary school.
- d) There is policy guiding teacher students' ratio in junior secondary schools.

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations for further studies.

### **Summary of Findings**

This study was carried out to examine the effect of class size in effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. To achieve this objective, four research questions were stated to guide this study. A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument to gather data from 100 selected secondary school teachers and students in Izzi Local Government Area. Out of this number, 80 (80%) copies of questionnaire were appropriately completed and returned for data

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- a) There is relationship between class size and effective teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools.
- b) Class size really affects the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools.
- c) There is relationship between class size and the teaching of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary school.
- d) There is policy guiding teacher students' ratio in junior secondary schools.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study and subsequent recommendations, it is concluded that class-size and teaching methods has effects on student's achievement in Christian Religious Studies in Izzi Local Government Area. Students of the large class-sizes suffer a lot in their acquisition of skills in Christian Religious Studies. They are subjected to lack of adequate materials and low dedication to the study of the language. The teachers of the large class-sizes equally find it difficult to discharge their duties as a result of the superfluous population of students in the class.

It is highly advantageous for the government, the schools, the teachers and the students to take recommendations that would be highlighted here into consideration.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the above conclusion of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

- i) Workshops and seminars should be organized for teachers of Christian Religious Studies periodically to enhance and improve their classroom efficiencies.

- ii) Government should make provision for more instructional materials, conducive and serene learning environment for the purpose of optimizing the teachers' and students' output in Christian Religious Studies.
- iii) There is need to effect the teacher-students ratio policy stated in the National Policy on Education so as to reduce the congestion in our classes.
- iv) Each school administrator should also see to it that classes exceeding forty students should be broken into arms and liaise with appropriate authority to make provision for infrastructural and other necessary facilities.
- v) In cases where large classes could not be broken down as a result of factors beyond the administrators and teachers control, the Christian Religious Studies teachers should embark on grouping the students. This will give room for efficiency, monitoring the students' participation in the class, identifying the deviant students, identifying students' individual differences and also make the available instructional materials to circulate.
- vi) Christian Religious Studies teachers should not be keen about one particular teaching method. Inter-changing the styles of teaching will arouse different students for if a method is admired by a student, it might be otherwise to another student.

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