

The Implication of Large Class Size in the Teaching and Learning of Business Education in Tertiary Institution in Ekiti State

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Abstract

Large class size is one of the problems in the educational sector that developing nations have been grappling with. Nigeria as a developing nation is no exception. The purpose of this study is to provide views of both lecturers and students on large class size and how it affects teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State of Nigeria. The study employed survey design; the population consisted of all lecturers and students in College of Education in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ikere Campus and Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. The total populations of thirty (30) lecturers were used for the sample, while five hundred and twenty (520) final year students were randomly selected. The research instruments used in data collection were questionnaire. The findings of this study revealed that large class size has negative implications on effective teaching and learning of Business Education in tertiary institutions. The relationship between large class and effective teaching and learning is very low. The authors recommended among others that management should employ more lecturers for the teaching of Business Education in tertiary institutions if they want to admit large number of students because of income, also the institution should make extra effort to provide more resources and facilities to promote effective teaching and learning of Business Education.

Keywords: Class Size, Teaching and Learning

Introduction

The increase in population in a school affects the class sizes, the performances of students become an issue. Class size refers to the number of students in a given course or classroom, specifically either the number of students being taught by individual teachers in a course or classroom or the average number of students being taught by teachers in a school or educational system. The term may also be the number of students participating in learning experience. Class size is almost an administrative decision over which teachers have little or no control. Class size refers to an educational tool that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school (Adeyemi, 2008). There are large and small sizes in school. The smaller the class, the greater the likelihood is that a teacher will spend more time with individual pupils.

Large classes present more challenges for classroom management, pupil control, and marking, planning, and assessment. Teachers are put under more strain when faced with large classes. In smaller classes, it can be easier for teachers to spot problems and give feedback, identify specific needs and gear teaching to meet them, and set individual targets for pupils. Teachers also experience better relationships with, and have more knowledge of individual pupils. Ajayi and Adeosun (2004) opined that in order to control rising capital cost of education, the average class-size could be increased. These points were also supported by Toth and Montagna (2002) who reported that the increase in enrollment in many institutions which has become major concerns of students could definitely lead to an increase in class size. Commeyras (2000) however, disagreed with these arguments and reported that effective teaching seems impracticable for teacher educators having large class sizes of 50, 75, 100 or more.

In Nigeria, Okoro (1985) reported that the class-size in University of Nigeria, Nsukka should range between 35 or 40 students. He argued that few students per class are uneconomical, as they do not make full use of space, teachers and teaching materials. Nwadiani (2000) argued that the higher the class-size, the lower the cost of education. He contended however, that most classrooms are over-crowded spreading resources thinly and thereby affecting the quality of education. One of the pillars of a successful implementation of effective business education programme is the availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources. Unfortunately, as observed by the researchers, one of the major challenges facing tertiary institution in Ekiti State is inadequate infrastructural facilities which are obvious in inadequate laboratory equipment, classrooms and lecture halls. It is therefore the intention of this study to examine the implication of large class size in the teaching and learning of Business Education in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Conceptual framework

In teaching and learning of business education, student-teacher ratio have to be considered, student-teacher ratios are a general way to measure teachers workloads and resources as well as the amount of individual attention a student

receive from the teacher because it involves some skills subjects. Teaching is an interaction process involving the learner, the subject matter and the teacher in a conducive environment. Olowe (2003) quoting Opute (1998) stated that teaching is the teachers activities designed and performed to produce a change in learner's behavior. Teachers should encourage learners to learn with different teaching methods. According to Desai (2012) teaching is one with learning outcomes that effect changes in knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes and mindset. It is an active process in which one person shares information with others to provide them with the information with a resultant change in behaviour. The most effective teaching is one which results in the most effective learning.

Ayeni (2003) believed that the learner is the focal point in the classroom and what he is gaining from the educational experience is of great importance towards the achievements of the goals of Business Education which includes - skill acquisition, occupational competence, self-reliance and productivity. The acquisition of these skills and competencies require a conducive learning atmosphere. Under learning, psychologists view learning as a process. Learning is a process by which one acquire and retained attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities that cannot be attributed to inherited behavior pattern. Farlex (2015) stated that learning is the act, process or experience of gaining knowledge or skill. Knowledge or skills can be gained through schooling or studying. Learning is an act of gaining knowledge. According to wikipedia (2015), Learning is the act of acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing, existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information. Human learning may occur as part of education, personal development, schooling, or training. It may be goal-oriented and may be aided by motivation. Gagne (1970) consider learning as a change in human disposition or capabilities which can be retained and which is not ascribed to the process of growth. From the definition, the characteristics attached to learning are, the change must be due to experience, study, training and practice. The change must be receptively permanent.

Good learning and teaching is very important in Business Education. Business Education is an aspect of Educational training which an individual receives with the primary motive of enabling him/her to acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for vocational usage in careers as an administrator, manager or teacher, or where ever the student may find himself in the business world. According to Okoro (2013), Business Education is that part of the total educational process that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/ or consumer. Njoku (2006) also defines business education as a programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that enable the student to operate in the future in his environment in which he/she finds himself/herself. Business education provides students with information and competence which will be needed in personal business affairs (Osuala, 2004).

Business Education is that part of the total educational process that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/ or consumer. The aim of the programme is to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teacher, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. Students in business education department do skilled and unskilled courses. The aim of the programme is to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teacher, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. In such a programme, the condition of teaching and learning is important in acquisition of such skill. This study will look into the implication of large class size in the teaching and learning of business education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine;

1. The implication of large class size in the teaching of Business Education.
2. The implication of large class size in the learning of Business Education.

Hypotheses

Two Null hypotheses was generated

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between large class and effective teaching of business education.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between large class and learning business education effectively.

Method

The study employed survey design. The population consisted of all lecturers and students in College of Education in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ikere Campus and Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. The total populations of thirty (30) lecturers were used for the sample, while five hundred and twenty (520) final year students were randomly selected. The questionnaire used for data collection was an adapted four-point Likert type which was validated by experts in Business Education. The questionnaire was tested for reliability using split-half method and its coefficient was 0.89 which implies that the instrument was highly reliable. The data collected were analysed using percentage count and Pearson Correlation coefficient at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Question 1: What are the implications of large class size in the teaching of Business Education?

Table 1: The implications of large class size in the teaching of Business Education.

| S/N | The implications of large class size | SA | A | D | SD | Mean (X) | Decision |
|-----|--|------------|------------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | Poor classroom management | 21 (70%) | 9 (30%) | - | - | 3.70 | Agreed |
| 2 | Ineffective students control | 7 (23.3%) | 21 (70%) | 2 (6.7%) | - | 3.16 | Agreed |
| 3 | Poor planning and assessment | 3 (10%) | 12 (40%) | 15 (50%) | - | 2.60 | Agreed |
| 4 | Ability of each students will not be known by teachers | 3 (10%) | 24 (80%) | 3 (10%) | - | 3.00 | Agreed |
| 5 | Increase strain on teachers | 13 (43.3%) | 14 (46.7%) | 3 (10%) | - | 3.33 | Agreed |
| 6 | Lack of proper understanding of students by teacher | - | 28 (93.3%) | 2 (6.7%) | - | 2.93 | Agreed |
| 7 | Students show more disruptive behaviour | 10 (33.3%) | 17 (56.7%) | 3 (10%) | - | 3.23 | Agreed |
| 8 | Make teachers less productive | 4 (13.3%) | 7 (23.3%) | 17 (56.7%) | 2 (6.7%) | 2.43 | Disagreed |
| 9 | Large class frustrate the teachers | 4 (13.3%) | 18 (60%) | 8 (26.7%) | - | 2.86 | Agreed |
| 10 | Students are less attentive in large class size | 10 (33.3%) | 17 (56.7%) | 3 (10%) | - | 3.23 | Agreed |
| 11 | It affects teachers' health | 7 (23.3%) | 10 (33.3%) | 11 (36.7%) | 2 (6.7%) | 2.73 | Agreed |
| 12 | Not giving out the best during teaching | 1 (3.3%) | 15 (50%) | 8 (26.7%) | 6 (20%) | 2.36 | Disagreed |
| 13 | Sometimes the class become a noisy place during teaching | 7 (23.3%) | 21 (70%) | 2 (6.7%) | - | 3.16 | Agreed |

The result presented in table 1 showed the responses of respondents on the implication of large class size on the teaching of Business Education. The table revealed that most of the respondents agreed that large class size leads to poor classroom management, ineffective students' control, poor planning and assessment and increase strain on teachers. Also, the respondents agreed that, student's ability will not be known by teachers in a large class. It encourages disruptive behaviour, frustrate the teachers' effort and affect teachers' health. However, the respondents indicated that large class size does not reduce teachers' productivity and does not hinder teachers from giving out their best. These responses indicates that there are negative implications of large class size on effective teaching of Business Education in tertiary institutions

Question 2: What are the implications of large class size in the learning of Business Education?

Table 2: The implications of large class size in the learning of Business Education.

| S/N | The implications of large class size on learning | SA | A | D | SD | Mean (X) | Decision |
|-----|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | Large class affect student assimilation | 313 (60.2%) | 166 (31.9%) | 21 (4.1%) | 20 (3.8%) | 3.48 | Agreed |
| 2 | It is an avenue to interact instead of learning | 189 (36.3%) | 186 (35.8%) | 145 (27.9%) | - | 3.08 | Agreed |
| 3 | Information from the teacher will not be properly disseminated | 271 (52.1%) | 228 (43.8%) | 21 (4.1%) | - | 3.48 | Agreed |
| 4 | High cases of examination failure in large class | 209 (40.2%) | 270 (51.9%) | 41 (7.9%) | - | 3.32 | Agreed |
| 5 | Interference from unserious students affect learning in a large class | 271 (52.1%) | 208 (40%) | 21 (4.1%) | 20 (3.8%) | 3.40 | Agreed |
| 6 | No motivation to attend classes | 230 (44.2%) | 249 (47.9%) | 41 (7.9%) | - | 3.36 | Agreed |
| 7 | Opportunity for students to exhibit unruly behaviour due to inability of teacher to control students | 231 (44.4%) | 206 (39.6%) | 62 (11.9%) | 21 (4.1%) | 3.24 | Agreed |
| 8 | Facilities to enhance learning are not available in a large class | 209 (40.2%) | 311 (59.8%) | - | - | 3.40 | Agreed |
| 9 | Regular lateness for lectures | 168 (32.3%) | 208 (40%) | 123 (23.6%) | 21 (4.1%) | 3.00 | Agreed |
| 10 | Students are less attentive in large class sizes | 291 (56%) | 167 (32.1%) | 62 (11.9%) | - | 3.44 | Agreed |

The result presented in table 2 showed the responses of the respondents on the implication of large class size

on the learning of Business Education. It was revealed in the table that most of the respondents agreed that: large class size affects student assimilation in Business Education; large class is an avenue for students to interact instead of learning; Information from the teacher will not be properly disseminated. Also there is a high case of examination failure in large class. The study revealed that interference from unserious students affects learning in a large class. The respondents further indicated that there is no motivation to attend classes in a large class. There is opportunity for them to exhibit unruly behaviour due to inability of teacher to control students effectively. The study also revealed that facilities to enhance learning are not available in a large class. Large class encourages regular lateness for lectures and students are less attentive in large class sizes. These responses indicated that there are negative implications of large class size on effective learning of Business Education in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between large class and effective teaching of Business Education.

Table 3: Relationship between Large Class and Effective Teaching of Business Education

| Variables | | Large class Size | Teaching of Business Education |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Large class size | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .225 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .310 |
| | N | 30 | 30 |
| Teaching of Business Education | Pearson Correlation | .225 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .310 | |
| | N | 30 | 30 |

The result presented in table 3 showed that the correlation coefficient for large class size and teaching of business education was 0.225. This value was less than the level of significance (0.310). Hence, the null hypothesis one was not rejected. This means that there is no significant relationship between large class and effective teaching of business education in tertiary institutions.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between large class and effective learning business education.

Table 4: Relationship between Large Class and Learning of Business Education

| Variables | | Large Class Size | Learning of Business Studies |
|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Large Class Size | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .393 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .442 |
| | N | 520 | 520 |
| Learning of Business Studies | Pearson Correlation | .393 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .442 | |
| | N | 520 | 520 |

The result presented in table 4 showed that the correlation coefficient for large class size and learning of business education was 0.393. This value was less than the level of significance (0.442). Hence, the null hypothesis two was not rejected. This means that there is no significant relationship between large class and teaching of business education in tertiary institutions.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that large class size has negative implications on effective teaching of Business Education in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study revealed that it leads to poor classroom management, ineffective students' control, poor planning and assessment and increase strain on teachers. Large class size encourages disruptive behaviour, frustrate the teacher's effort and affect teacher's health. It was revealed in the test of hypothesis that very low relationship exist between large class size and effective teaching of Business Education. This is in line with the findings of Commeyras (2000) that effective teaching seems impracticable for teacher educators having large class sizes of 50, 75, 100 or more.

The study also revealed that effective learning becomes difficult in a large class. Large class affects student's assimilation in Business Education and that information from the teacher is not properly disseminated. It leads to high case of examination failure'. Interference from unserious students affects learning in a large class. The respondents further indicated that there is no motivation to attend classes in a large class. There is opportunity for them to exhibit unruly behaviour due to inability of the teacher to control students effectively. The study further revealed that there are no enough facilities to enhance learning in a large class. Large classes encourage regular lateness for lectures and students are less attentive. The hypothesis indicates that there was no relationship between large class and effective learning. This implies that large class does not encourage effective learning of Business education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Class size is thought to influence students teaching and learning. The study have revealed that that large class-size affect the academic achievement of students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti state, Nigeria. Large class size makes teaching and learning of Business Education difficult and it does not promote seriousness among students in tertiary institution. The programme gives individuals the skills to live, learn and work as a productive citizen in a global society. It contributes greatly to the economic development of any nation and a tool for development. Quality teaching must be given during the training, so as to give the students the best that will make them fit in into the world of work.

Recommendations

It was recommended that:

- The management should employ more lecturers for the teaching of Business Education in tertiary institutions. There is the need to make the number of students to be taught in the classes to be moderate so that the lecturer can be able to manage the class effectively and give individual attention to students where necessary.
- The population of students admitted into the department of Business Education should be on the basis of available space and facilities. There should be a reasonable match between students' population and the available resources. More lecture halls should be provided to enable the students to seat comfortably in a conducive environment.
- Management of the institutions should carefully allocate resources for Business Education.
- Government should take in to consideration of the special needs of the programme by funding or increasing the allocation giving to the institution. According to Prosser & Quigley (1949) stated that, it is better not to attempt a vocational programme than to operate it below the economic level that would lead to success. Vocational education is not cheap education, but it is economically sound to provide it.

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