

The Relationship between Disciplinary Measures, Class Size, and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between disciplinary measures, class size, and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria. Four research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria and adopted correlational research design. The sample for the study consists of 62 teachers obtained through non-proportionate stratified random sampling technique from eight (8) schools in the Onitsha education zone. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled Disciplinary Methods, Class Size, and Academic Performance Questionnaire. The face and content validation were carried out by two experts. The research questions were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) while hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance using multiple regression analyses.

Results of the research showed that large disciplinary measures and class size has significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students and that small class size and disciplinary measures has a significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Nigeria. The study recommended, among other things, that government should reduce the number of the students in each class so that the class size will fall in tune with the minimum standards approval, this will allow the teachers easy control of the classroom environment.

(Keywords: class size, discipline, disciplinary measures, academic performance)

INTRODUCTION

Discipline is an important component of human behavior and asserts that without it an organization cannot function well towards the achievement of its goals (Nduka, Okorie, and Ikoro, 2019). Therefore, discipline denotes a decent and decorous conduct that contributes to harmony, respect for authority, love for orderliness, eagerness to discharge duties with regularity, and efficiency, and an exalted sense of responsibility that develops a sense of social conscience.

According to Priyandi, Ginting, and Absah, (2020), discipline ideally means more than adhering to rules and regulations and entails the learner's ability to discern what is right or wrong. Discipline in school is a very important aspect towards academic excellence, while lack of it usually gives rise to problems such as lack of vision and mission, poor time management, irregular attendance, and punishment. It also plays a vital role in the acquisition of sense of responsibility in learners as well as educators. In the context of a school system, a disciplined student is that student whose behaviors, actions, and inactions conform to the predetermined rules and regulations of the school.

According to Weli and Nnaa (2020), the definition discipline refers to the ability to carry out reasonable instructions or orders to reach appropriate standards of behaviors. Lack of discipline is called indiscipline. Therefore, indiscipline can be seen as any action considered to be wrong and not generally accepted as proper in a set up or society (Valensia and Dapu, 2015). And there is need to apply disciplinary measures in order to maintain discipline in the

classroom for decorum and conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning.

Disciplinary measure is the method of monitoring and enforcement of obedience and applying established rules so as to avoid occurrence of undesirable and unacceptable acts (Okolie and Udom, 2019). Therefore, disciplinary measures are control strategies which ensures that students conform to the behavioral and performance standards determined by the school and society.

There are three types of disciplinary measures which are preventive measure, progressive measure, and corrective measures. Preventive disciplinary measures involve the use of threats and rules to discourage misconduct among staff and students in school organizations. Progressive measure is the use of heavy or strong sanction or punishment for repeatedly committed offence. In progressive approach, there is increasing severity of punishment for professional misconduct among teachers. Similar to this, Itang (2015), stated that progressive discipline is a disciplinary measure where there is increasingly severe punishment every time there is an offense from a student. The correct approach is the use of punishment and sanction against violators of school rules and regulations. Itang (2015) noted that corrective discipline is an action taken to address violations of the rules. All these disciplinary measures are used to increase good academic performance from the students.

Academic performance is the extent to which a student has attained their short- or long-term educational goals. It could also be seen as the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects. Academic performance is viewed by Gupta and Mehtani (2017) as the knowledge obtained, or skills developed, in the school subjects usually designed by test scores or marks assigned by the teacher. Academic performance, which is measured by the examination results, is one of the major goals of a school. Academic performance is the outcome of education, to the extent at which a student, teacher or institution have achieved their educational goals during and after teaching and learning process that usually takes place in the classroom.

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 refers to an educational tool that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school (Adeyemi, 2018). While Ezeakunne (2012), described it as the number of students per teacher in a class.

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 students. This means that higher levels of academic interaction between students and their teachers, as well as increased level of student engagement within smaller classes can improve academic performance of students in the subject.

Statement of Problem

Due the continually and progressive growth in population in the country and inability of the government to establish more schools to serve the educational needs of the growing population and compounded with the problems of inadequate facilities in schools to meet the resultant unprecedented increase in students' enrolment in schools with inadequate planning for the expected students population explosion in schools, overcrowded classrooms now become a permanent feature of academic setting at all levels of the educational system because as school population increases class sizes also increases.

Also, it could be observed that various forms of indiscipline may be found among school students which include truancy, theft, sneaking, cheating, lateness, noise making, absenteeism, fighting, defiance, destroying of school properties, bullying, drug abuse, and failure to complete assignments, sexual harassment among others, which influences the students' academic performance in the school. These and many other problems inform the decision to conduct

this research work on the relationship between disciplinary measure, class size and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the relationships between large class size and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. What are the relationships between small class size and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria?
3. What are the relationships between teachers' disciplinary measures and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria?
4. What are the relationships between disciplinary measures, large class size and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses guide the study:

Ho1: Disciplinary measures and large class size has no significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Ho2: Disciplinary measures and small class size has no significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for this study was correlational research designs. The study was carried out in Anambra State. Anambra State, located in the Southeastern Region of Nigeria. Anambra State has Delta, Enugu, Abia, and Imo States as north, east, west and south bordering states, respectively.

Specifically, the study was carried out in Onitsha North, Onitsha South, and Ogbaru Local Government Areas (LGA) that make up Onitsha Education Zone, with a total number of 32 public secondary schools which include Onitsha North Government Area 16 school, Onitsha South Local Government Area 6 schools, and Ogbaru Local Government Area 10 schools (P.P.S.S.C. Onitsha Education Zone 2023).

Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State was used on the fact that academic performance of students in this area has been going on downward trend instead of increasing, thereby the need to seek for learning approaches that will enable the students achieve more. The population of the study comprised of 512 teachers teaching in the senior secondary schools in the Onitsha Education Zone (Post Primary Schools Service Commission, 2021).

The sample for the study consists of 62 teachers obtained through non-proportionate stratified random sampling technique from eight (8) schools in Onitsha Education Zone (three (3) schools each from Onitsha North and Ogbaru LGAs, and two (2) from Onitsha South LGA).

A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 22 teachers from three schools in Onitsha North, 20 teachers from three schools in Onitsha South and another 20 teachers in Ogbaru LGA making it a total of 62 teachers. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire which was developed by the researcher titled; Disciplinary Methods, Class Size, and Academic Performance Questionnaire (DMCSAPQ). The face and content validation were carried out by two experts in the field of Education.

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, which yielded coefficient values of 0.80 with average coefficient index of 0.79. This value shows that the instrument is sufficiently reliable. The instruments were administered to the respondents in the sampled schools by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The research questions were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) while hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using multiple regression analyses

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between large class size and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Results relating to research question 1 are presented Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson r on Large Class Size and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students.

Sources of Variation	N	Large Class Size r	Academic performance r	Remark
Large class size	62	1.00	0.544	Moderate Positive Relationship
Academic performance	62	0.544	1.00	

In Table 1 it was observed that a moderate positive relationship of 0.544 exists between secondary school students with large class size and academic performance in Anambra state.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between small class size and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Result relating to research question 2 is presented Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson r on Small Class Size and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students (N=62).

Sources of Variation	N	Small Class Size r	Academic performance r	Remark
Small class size	62	1.00	0.654	High Positive Relationship
Academic performance	62	0.654	1.00	

In Table 2 it was observed that a high positive relationship of 0.654 exists between small class size and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Research Questions 3: What is the relationship between teachers' disciplinary measures and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Result relating to this research question 3 is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson r on Teachers' Disciplinary Measures and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students (N=62).

Sources of Variation	N	Teachers' disciplinary measures r	Academic performance r	Remark
Small class size	62	1.00	0.404	Moderate Positive Relationship
Academic performance	62	0.404	1.00	

In Table 3 it was observed that a high positive relationship of 0.404 exists between teachers' disciplinary measures and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra state.

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between disciplinary measures, large class size and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria?

Result relating to research question 4 is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Regression Analysis on Large Class Size, Teachers' Disciplinary Measures and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students (N=62).

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Remark
0.562	0.315	0.314	Moderate Positive Relationship

Table 4 shows that moderate positive relationship of 0.562 exist among large class size, teachers' disciplinary measures jointly with the academic performance of secondary school students.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypotheses 1: Disciplinary measures and large class size has no significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Result relating to hypotheses 1 is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Summary of Regression Analysis on Large Class Size, Teachers' Disciplinary Measures and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students (N=62).

N	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Df	Cal. F	P value	Remark
62	0.562	0.315	0.314	60	314.122	0.000	S**

Table 5 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance 2df numerator and 60df denominator, the calculated F 314.122 with P value 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

This implies that teacher's disciplinary measures and large class size has significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses 2: Disciplinary measures and small class size has no significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Result relating to hypotheses 2 is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Regression Analysis on Small Class Size, Teachers' Disciplinary Measures and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students (N=62).

N	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Df	Cal. F	P value	Remark
62	0.654	0.315	0.314	60	517.79	0.000	S**

Table 6 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance 2df numerator and 60 df denominator, the calculated Fb514.79 with P value 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the second null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that disciplinary measures and small class size has a significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.

DISCUSSION

Data relating to Research Question 1 reveals a moderate positive relationship between secondary school students with large class size and academic performance in Anambra State. This finding agrees with the finding of Gupta and Mehtani (2017) who found that academic performance is the knowledge obtained or skills developed in the school subjects usually designed by test scores or marks assigned by the teacher.

Similarly, data relating to null Hypotheses 1 revealed that large class size and teachers' disciplinary measures have significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State. This finding conforms with the finding of Itang (2015) who averred that progressive discipline is a disciplinary measure where there is increasingly severe punishment every time there is an offense from a student. The correct approach is the use of punishment and sanction against violators of school rules and regulations.

Data relating to Research Question 2 shows that a moderate positive relationship exists between small class size and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State.

Result relating to Research Question 3 reports a highly positive relationship between teachers' disciplinary measures and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State.

Result relating to Research Question 4 shows that moderate positive relationship exists among large class size, disciplinary measures jointly with the academic performance of secondary school students. In the same vein, relating to Hypotheses 2 this study found that disciplinary measures and small class size has significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria.

These findings conform to the finding of Adeyemi (2018) who revealed that class size refers to an educational tool that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school. 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.

Furthermore, these findings are further supported by Okolie and Udom (2019) who found that disciplinary measures are control strategy which ensures that students conform to the behavioral and performance standards determined by the school and society. There are three types of disciplinary measures which are preventive measure, progressive measure, and corrective measures.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that:

1. A moderate positive relationship exists between secondary school students with large class size and academic performance in Anambra State.
2. A highly positive relationship exists between small class size and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State.
3. A moderate positive relationship exists between teachers' disciplinary measures and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra State.
4. Moderate positive relationship exists among disciplinary measures, large class size jointly with the academic performance of secondary school students.

5. Disciplinary measures and small class size have significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.
6. Disciplinary measures and large class size have significant relationship with academic performance of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research and its conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Governments should reduce the number of students in each class so that the class size will fall in tune with the minimum standards approval, this will allow the teachers easy control of classroom environment.
2. There should be a decision on the appropriate teacher-student ratio and insist that all classes abide by the specified ratio. A plan should be put together for each district that entails what their ratios should be, where the money is going to come from to hire more teachers and build more classrooms, and exactly what steps that they should take throughout this process to implement class size reductions properly.
3. Mode of instruction should be investigated further to determine just how much it affects students' academic performance. From this study, it is clear that it does affect student academic performance in some way.
4. Workshops, seminars, conferences, or orientation courses on disciplinary measure should be organised for teachers, in order to acquaint them to some disciplinary measure so as to give students the opportunity to inculcate moral on the students.
5. Workshops, seminars, conferences, or orientation courses on disciplinary measure should be organised for students to inform them about school rules and regulation this will also help the student do the right things needed from them in the school, and improve their academic performance.

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