

Teachers' Perspectives on Effect of Class-Size on the Teaching of English Language in Libyan Secondary Schools

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الملخص

تهدف الدراسة الى معرفة تاثير الفصول المكتظة على التحصيل الدراسي لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية . اجريت هذه الدراسة في خمس مدارس ثانوية حكومية تقع في مدينة طرابلس عام 2024م. وتكونت الدراسة من 18 معلما من خمس مجارس. حيث يضم الفصل الدراسي اكثر من ثلاثون طالبا. تم تطبيق المنهج الكمي في هذه الدراسة. وكانت الاداة المستخدمة عبارة عن استبيان مكون من 10 فقرات. وخلصت الدراسة الى ان اكتظاظ الفصل الدراسية يساهم في عرقلة العملية التعليمية ويؤثر بشكل مباشر على تحصيل الطلاب من خلال تأثيره على استيعابهم الاكاديمي. حيث اظهرت الدراسة ان هناك حوالي ثلاث مشاكل رئيسة تؤثر على عملية التدريس. وهي سماع ضوضاء اثناء الدروس والفصول المكتظة اكثر صعوبة من الفصول الغير مكتظة وعملية التقييم في الفصل المكتظة مرهقة والتكيف مع الطلاب اكثر صعوبة . تظهر نتائج الاستطلاع بوضوح ان احجام الفصل الكبيرة لها تاثير سلبي على جودة التدريس والتعلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية : حجم الفصل، التحصيل الاكاديمي، الفصول المكتظة.

Abstract

The study aims to investigate the influence of overcrowded classes on secondary school students' academic achievement. This study was carried out in five public high schools located in the city of Tripoli in 2024. The sample consisted of 18 teachers from 5 schools, where each class has more than 30 students. A quantitative method was applied in this study. The instrument used was a questionnaire with 10 items. The study concluded that over crowded classroom environment contributes to obstructing the educational process and directly affects the student's achievement through its impact on their academic comprehension. However, the results show that there are about three vital challenges that affect the teaching process, hearing murmur of noise during the lessons, overcrowding classes is more tasking than that in a small class-size, assessment in an overpopulated class is stressful and coping with students in an overpopulated class is challenging. The findings of the survey clearly demonstrate that large class sizes have an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Key words: Class Size, Academic Achievement, Overcrowded Classes.

1. Introduction

Educational institutions are considered one of the best and most important educational institutions used by most societies to be the best place to teach students knowledge, culture and various sciences throughout. Al-Badri (2014) reported that the progress of society ensures the progress of its educational institutions, for example, the school is considered an official institution, so all its programs must be prepared in a good way in order to be able to teach its students

cognitive skills and practical abilities. An important element of the educational and pedagogical process is considered school buildings for their active role in shaping the environment in which students as a human force interact with material elements in order for the educational process to take place successfully. These buildings also provide an educational environment that creates an educational climate capable of developing creativity skills and raising the efficiency of the educational process, and strengthens the student's belonging to the school (Sawaleh, 2014).

Al-Banna (2013) defined the school building as the place and environment where students spend their study time in order to learn and interact with all the school's programs, as well as with their teachers and colleagues through activity and practice programs . Since the school building is considered one of the important cultural tools that have a positive impact on the school environment and students' academic achievement, this building should be characterized by increased flexibility to control the spaces of classrooms, be suitable to meet the needs of the school curriculum and its educational purposes and allow the use of classrooms for several purposes (Awoyele,2014).

In addition, Shalaka (2021) pointed out in his study that the infrastructure of most schools is dilapidated due to its old construction, as well as the pressure of use beyond its capacity, and the number of students per class is more than 40 students, and this has negative consequences for the student and the teacher.

Since the researcher has been a teacher for several years at various educational stages in Libya, he reported that the presence of more students in the classroom than is usual has a negative impact on students' academic performance because of

their inability to pay attention during class and because there aren't enough opportunities for them to be tested in front of the teacher. Moreover, an overabundance of students in the classroom results in failure to meet learning objectives and keeps the teacher from being able to assess each student's proficiency, which makes it difficult for the teacher to use modern teaching methods. This opinion is consistent with Aboulasal's study (2021), which shows that academic achievement, students' comprehension of subjects, and educational communication between students and teachers are negatively impacted by crowded classrooms and more students in a class.

Furthermore, Khan and Iqbal (2012) state that it was hard to carry out effective teaching in cramped classrooms because most teachers were juggling problems with instruction, behavior, physical health, and evaluation. Bahanshall, D. (2013) stated that teachers were only able to cover the fundamental lessons and could not devote additional time to working with slow learners. Teachers had little time to attend to the needs of slow learners, so they were forced to ignore them in order to meet the prescribed time allotment for each learning area.

Grace,A & Oluwatoyin, O (2016) claim that large size is thought to influence students teaching and learning, and also affects the academic achievement of students and makes it difficult for teachers to to meet learning goals and complete learning activities. It might be impossible to achieve high-quality learning in such circumstances.

It might be impossible to achieve high-quality learning in such circumstances. Some of the problems that teachers encounter in large classes are a lack of opportunities to get to know students, a decline in motivation, a drop in active

involvement, a decrease in the quality of interaction, fewer opportunities to work on cognitive skills, and an increase in behavioral issues. Aoumeur (2017).

In large classes, it can be difficult for the teacher to engage with students who are seated far back, and it can be difficult for the students to ask and receive individual attention, according to Harmer (2001: 128–129). It may seem impossible to create teaching and learning activities that are both innovative and engaging. In addition, in large classes, it can be challenging to get students to switch pairs or move around. Above all, for inexperienced teachers, large classes can be extremely intimidating.

On the other hand, small class sizes allow teachers to provide tailored, excellent learning support to each student. As a result, all learning tasks were completed by students more quickly. It also provided time for a range of activities that enhanced effective, high-quality learning (Zayed, N,2016).

According to Plank and Candliffe (2011), a well-organized classroom provides a strong basis for instruction of the highest caliber. Their research indicates that schools with lower noise levels achieve better learning outcomes than those with higher noise levels. Students who are in larger classes tend to be noisier than those in smaller ones. Togunloju (2015) asserts that class size has a major effect on students' academic performance. Large classes are often too crowded to allow for efficient supervision when teaching, even though small classes also allow the teacher to divide the class into smaller groups for group instruction. This implies that educators have greater chances to interact with each student individually and provide each student in the class with instruction that is more meaningful (Zayed, N .2016).

In this sense, the study aims to comprehend the relationship between class size and academic achievement among English students.

2. Statement of the problem

The classroom is considered the place where the student receives cognitive and academic knowledge that encompasses all the scientific knowledge and skills built by the student through a specific academic program tailored to their specialization. The success of the classroom in achieving its objectives requires it to have a capacity that aligns with the number of students studying in it, so as not to negatively impact the academic achievement of the students.

By reviewing the previous studies, it seems that the classroom environment plays a significant role in the success of the academic achievement process. As the researcher has been and still working as a teacher in various educational stages for several years, it has been observed that the size of the classroom affects academic achievement both positively and negatively. It has a negative impact when the number of students exceeds the classroom's capacity and a positive impact when the number of students is less than the classroom's capacity. Within the context of what has been mentioned, this study aims to investigate the negative factors come from an increased number of students in the classroom than usual, which negatively affect academic achievement.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How effective is a teacher's method of teaching in a large class- size?
2. Does Students' population have any effect on their learning?

3. Are the lesson objectives achievable in a large class-size?

4. The Objective of the study

In Libyan secondary schools, the number of students exceeds about 35 students in most classes. However, teaching in such classes leads to several negative results. This study aims at :

1. investigating in the negative effects of class size on students' academic achievement.
2. To see whether teachers can meet the lesson objectives when teaching in an overpopulated class.
3. To explore the effectiveness of the teacher's method of teaching in a large class size.

5. Significance of the Study

It will help teachers of secondary schools how to deal with students in overcrowded classes. It will assist educational authorities at the Ministry of Education in Libya in identifying the issue of classroom overcrowding. It will contribute to filling the gap in the field of educational research, as there is a lack of studies on the phenomenon of classroom overcrowding in Libya, which has a significant impact on students' academic achievement.

6. Research methodology

To answer the research questions, this research uses a quantitative survey, collecting demographic data and exploring English teachers' point of view regarding teaching in large class size. To achieve this, one instrument was applied

for data collection i.e. a questionnaire. The research questions of the study were answered through descriptive statistical analysis.

6.1. Participants

The participants of the study are the English teachers at several schools in Tripoli Libya who are currently teaching in secondary schools. In order to collect valuable data for this study, about 18 teachers were invited to participate in the study.

6.2 Data Collection Instrument

The research instrument employed to collect data for this study was a questionnaire . One questionnaire was distributed to the teachers of English language in order to share their experience in investigating the influence of class size on students' achievement. The questionnaire included (10) items and was designed in English language.

6.3 Data analysis

The quantitative data derived from the questionnaire were analyzed using Excel program. In order to answer the research questions, the descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages were used. Grouping the similar responses, and counting frequencies. This study was carried out in Abossalem area. Tripoli Libya.

7. Results and Discussion

Q 1: How effective is a teacher's method of teaching in a large class- size?

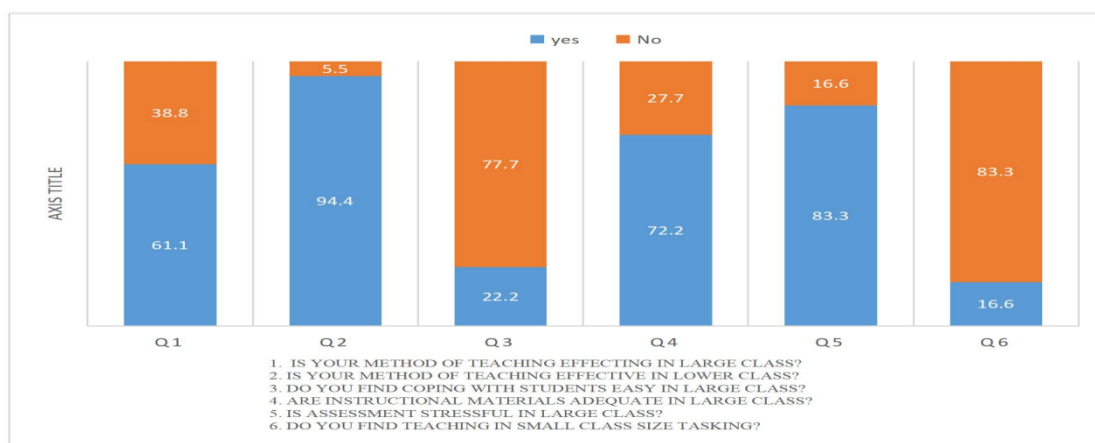


Figure No1: teacher's method of teaching in a large class-size

As can be seen in Figure 1, the majority of teachers 94% state that their method of teaching is more effective in a class of lower students than in overcrowded 61% class: only 38.8% think that the method they apply is not effective in large classes.

The results suggest that the teachers prefer rather small classes than large classes. However, this result is in line with Alava, C. N. J. (2015) who consider that teachers are able to use techniques and pedagogy effectively.

In turn, responses for item 3, show that most of 77.7 % the teachers declare that coping with students in an overpopulated class is challenging, whereas just 22% of them see it not challenging. They suggest that it is a real challenge for them to meet all the students needs or to establish rules and norms.

This finding is in the same vein with the results of a study performed by Alava, C. N. J. (2015) it is very challenging particularly when teaching different modules and it requires particular efforts such as: encouraging group work, encouraging debates and arranging seating.

Results of item 4, also show that many teachers 72 % think that instructional materials are adequate in an overpopulated class. On the contrary, fewer participants 27.7 % were not with this idea. Due to the benefits of using instructional materials, the ministry of education provides them to all schools. In this respect, the results are in line with a study conducted by Alqahtani Mofareh, A (2019) technology is now widely acknowledged as a valuable educational tool. This is especially true for English language instruction, as technology presents several opportunities to improve the pedagogies and content that are traditionally associated with traditional English language instruction. Furthermore, includes the introduction of creative teaching systems and methodologies that enable a quicker and more thorough learning progression.

We can notice from this table that 83 of the sample members confirm % that assessment in an overpopulated class is stressful, meanwhile, just 16.6% find the assessment process less stressful. As being a teacher I declare that implementing evaluation assessment strategies in large classes such as checking students' exercise and giving individual attention to students are so hard. This finding is in agreement with many other studies such as Epri's (2016) study, as the results of the study revealed that large class sizes also impact the amount of time spent on setting assessment tasks, marking and providing feedback.

Through this table, we found that 83 % of the respondents stated that teaching overcrowding classes is more tasking than that in a small class-size. On the other hand about 16.6% of them have different point of view. The justification for that increasing the number of students in the class I think increases the psychological burden on the teacher, so he exerts a great effort within the class, whether at the educational or organizational level, and makes him strive to end the class in any

way, regardless of the result. However, this result is in the same line with Epri's (2016) study as large class sizes increase teachers' work load.

Q 2: Does Students' population have any effect on their learning?

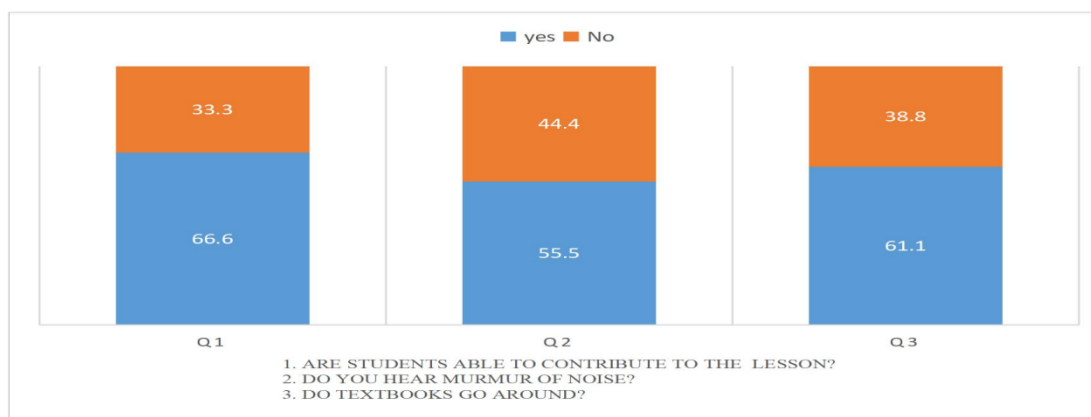


Figure No 2: Students' population have an effect on their learning

Figure 2 showed that 66.6 of the %respondents affirmed that students in overcrowding classes are able to contribute to the lesson when they want to, meanwhile about third 33.3 % of the sample do not think so. Being a teacher, the researcher sees the students' contribution to the lesson in the case of a crowded classroom is due to the presence of a skilled teacher. However, this skill may help to ensure the students' ability to maintain focus and invest in their learning, which ultimately leads to improving the outcomes of the learning process and making the lessons more enjoyable and valuable for them.

In addition, teaching in overcrowded classes, about 55.5 % of the respondents say they always hear murmur of noise during the lessons, on the contrary, about 44.4% of the sample never hear any noise. Naturally, the larger the number of students in one class, the more noise will come out in the classroom during the lesson. In respect, there will be less academic achievement. According to Plank

and Candliffe (2011), schools with lower noise levels achieve better learning outcomes than those with higher noise levels. Students who are in larger classes tend to be noisier than those in smaller ones.

As regard the English textbook provided, 61.1% of the teachers report that all students get the English textbook. The justification for this result is due to the great importance of the textbook in the student's life and is considered the primary source of information which made the government provide it to all students and in all schools. This findings are in agreement with the results of a study conducted by Ahmadi and Derakhshan (2016) that attest to the significance of textbooks for teachers seeking information that will best support their students.

Q 3: Are the lesson objectives achievable in a large class-size?

Figure No 3: achieving the lesson objectives in a large class-size



Figure No 3: achieving the lesson objectives in a large class-size

According to the results that are presented in Figure 3, it is found that the majority 61% of the participants declare that they usually meet the lesson objectives when teaching in an overpopulated class, and 38.8% cannot meet their lesson objectives. According to the results that are presented in Figure 3, it is found

that the majority 61% of the participants declare that they usually meet the lesson objectives when teaching in an overpopulated class, and 38.8% cannot meet their lesson objectives. I think that is attributed to teacher experience, some experienced may be able to achieve lesson objectives, whereas new teachers have not the effective experience to do so. However, these results were in agreement with many other studies such as Bahanshall, D.'s (2013) study, as the results of the study revealed that teachers were only able to cover the fundamental lessons and could not devote additional time to working with slow learners. Furthermore, Grace,A & Oluwatoyin, O (2016) claim that large size is thought to influence students teaching and learning, and also affects the academic achievement of students and makes it difficult for teachers to to meet learning goals and complete learning activities. It might be impossible to achieve high-quality learning in such circumstances.

8. Conclusion

The study was conducted to investigate and determine the influences of Class-Size on the Teaching and Learning of English Language in Selected Secondary Schools in Tripoli. The study was carried out in five (5) selected secondary schools in Abossalem Tripoli. The results demonstrate that coping with students in large class-size is challenging. On the otherhand,teaching English Language in small class-size is easier than large class size, as teachers are able to evaluate the students without being burdened by the population of the students.

9. Recommendations

After discussing the results of this study, few ideas have come into the writer's mind which will be considered as good recommendations for researchers and decision-makers:

A. Reducing the number of students in classrooms. B. Modern multi-storey schools should be built. C. Double-shift schools should be operated in some areas, with morning and evening sessions. D. Instructors ought to employ different pedagogical approaches and techniques. E. The ministry of education should provide more language instructional materials, such as language labs and conducive and serene learning environment in order to increase students' output in English language.

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The Impact of Class Size on Teaching and Learning English**Teachers' questionnaire**

Class Being Taught:..... Years of Teaching Experience:.....

Number of students:

INSTRUCTIONS: Please provide answers in this section by ticking the column that corresponds or suits your opinion or idea to the statements. Yes/No

	ITMES	Yes	NO
1	Is your method of teaching effective in an overpopulated class?		
2	Do you find coping with students easy in an overpopulated class?		
3	Do students in overpopulated class participate in the lesson than students in non-populated class?		
4	Do you think that providing more instructional materials and classrooms can solve the problem of large class-size?		
5	Do you usually meet the lesson objective when teaching in an overpopulated class?		
6	Do students' population in your class always make class management and control difficult?		
7	Do students in small classes perform better in the English language than those in large classes?		
8	Have you ever faced difficulties in large classes?		
9	Have you been trained on how to teach large classes?		
10	Is your assessment/evaluation affected by the size of the class?		

Thanks for your cooperation.