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Research Article

PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF CLASS SIZE ON STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BAMENDA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out on the “Perceived effects of class size on student’s psychological wellbeing in the University of Bamenda”. The study sought to examine the perceived impact of large class size on students’ Psychological wellbeing; to examine the extent to which perceived impact of small class size influence student psychological wellbeing. The survey research design was used and the sample size was made up of 354 students who were from a college, school and faculty in the University of Bamenda. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 23.0) with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical tools used were frequency count and percentages. The Spearman’s rho test was used in testing the hypotheses of the study. Findings indicated that: there was a significant and negative relationship between large class size and the students’ psychological wellbeing ($P=0.021, <0.05$). Finding equally revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between small class size and the students’ psychological wellbeing ($P=0.009, <0.05$). It was recommended that the government should alongside recruiting more teachers, build more classes to reduce large and overcrowded classrooms so as to make the student to learn in a supportive and comfortable learning environment.

KEYWORDS

Class size, psychological wellbeing, small class size, large class size.

INTRODUCTION

Improving students' academic achievement and psychological wellbeing has been the concern and the reason for most educational research and programmes. Most schools identified today as overcrowded are in areas where the school going age population is growing very fast, there are a rapid increase in immigrant population and a decrease in government funding. This can be mostly found in our big cities such as: Bamenda, Buea, Yaoundé, and Douala just to name a few. This increase population in schools has caused class sizes to soar. Studies such as Molnar, (2000) report that school population, class overcrowding (large class sizes) and teaching methods are among the school factors that impact on students' psychological wellbeing in school.

The University of Bamenda which is the focus of the researcher was created in 2010 following Decree No. 2010/372 of 14 December 2010, the University opened in 2011 as the second English language university in Cameroon. It began with two professional Teacher Training Schools; Higher Teacher Training College (HTTC), to train teachers of Secondary General Education and Higher Technical Teacher Training College (HTTTC), to train teachers of Secondary Technical Education.

It is worth mentioning that the March 8, 2011 decree organizing The University of Bamenda contained 96 articles which inter alia highlighted the Anglo-Saxon character (art.1) of the University and proposed six faculties and five schools (art.49) to go operational within the ambit of the resources available. These faculties were: The Faculty of Arts, The Faculty of Science, The Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, The faculty of Law and Political Sciences, The Faculty of Education, The Faculty of Health Sciences, The College of Technology, The Higher Institute of

Commerce and Management, The Higher Institute of Transport and Logistics, The Higher Teacher Training College, The Higher Technical Teacher Training College.

In the 2012/2013 academic year, student population had increased to 7,500. As a result of the rapid growth of student population into the University of Bamenda, the institution began facing the challenges of large class size and insufficient lecture halls and laboratories for all modes of teaching. The challenges of inadequate and the acute shortage of lectures stare university leadership in the face of 2012/2013 academic years since they were still the same infrastructure initially meant for the two pioneer schools of the University-HTTC and HTTTC. In 2016, efforts by the University of Bamenda to step up its infrastructure development were boosted on July 2, 2016, with the lunch of the University of Bamenda Development Fund (UBaDEF). The ceremony in the university campus at Bambili saw the collection of 150 million FCFA from the North West Elites and friends of the University. It was indeed a great moment during which guests demonstrated generosity towards the University that is dire need of classrooms, health centre, etc (Cameroon Tribune, 2016).

Recently the University of Bamenda is flooded with a student population of over 10.000 (Statistic Yearbook of Higher Education in Cameroon, MINESUP). However, student-teacher ratio is an issue of concern given that teaching and learning in the University of Bamenda is characterized by overcrowded classroom or large classroom size.

Statement of the problem

For learning to be effective, learners might perceive the class size to be appropriate which will make them to have a good psychological wellbeing. But from

observation, there is a great demand for education today, but with little provisions made to accommodate. Increases in population and the implementation of Universal Basic Education have resulted in high enrolment. Other problems associated with large classes are congestion, noisy classes, little or no interpersonal relationships between teacher and students, as a result students engage in other activities such as discussing with peers, text messaging, checking their Facebook/WhatsApp account and even playing games on their mobile devices rather than following up lessons. This is usually not noticed by the teacher due to the large nature of the class and the difficulties in managing it, so many students are controlled by a single teacher in group presentation which some students end up not presenting. Also, large class size makes discussion and group work difficult. This study therefore investigates the Perceived Effect of Class Size and its influence on student psychological wellbeing in the University of Bamenda.

Objectives of the study

General objective

This study is aimed at investigating Perceived Effect of Class Size and its influence on student psychological wellbeing in the University of Bamenda.

Specific objectives

- 1) To find out the perceived impact of large class size on students'

Psychological wellbeing in the University of Bamenda.

- 2) To examine the extent to which perceived impact of small class size influence student psychological wellbeing in the University of Bamenda

Research questions

The research questions were both general and specific

General research question

How Perceived Effect of Class Size does influence the student psychological wellbeing in the University of Bamenda?

Specific research questions

- 1) How does perceived impact of large class size influences students' Psychological wellbeing in the University of Bamenda?

- 2) To what extent does perceived impact of small class size influence students'

Psychological wellbeing in the University of Bamenda?

Literature review

The concept of psychological well-being

Huppert (2009) opines that psychological wellbeing is about life going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable wellbeing does not require individuals to feel good all the time; the experience of painful emotions (for example, disappointment, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions are essential for long-term wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing is however, compromised when negative emotions are extreme or last very long and interferes with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life (Huppert, 2009).

The concept of feeling good incorporates not only the positive emotions of happiness and contentment but also such emotions as interest, engagement,

confidence and affection. Functioning well (in a psychological sense) involves the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose and experiencing positive relationships. Correspondingly, Carol (1991) states that convergence of similar features of positive psychological functioning, constitutes the core dimensions of psychological wellbeing. Kumar (2006) observes that conceptions of wellbeing are integrally related to how one values the nature of man and what perspective is valued. In alignment with Kumar's opinion, psychological wellbeing is a broad term that encompasses different psychological functioning such as general health, life satisfaction, attitudes, just to mention a few.

As summarized by Huppert (2009) Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. By definition therefore, people with high psychological well-being report feeling happy, capable, well-supported, satisfied with life, and so on. Huppert's (2009) review also claims the consequences of psychological well-being to include better physical health, mediated possibly by brain activation patterns, neurochemical effects and genetic factors. The pursuit of happiness or psychological well-being is central to human existence. Therefore, psychological well-being is a popular topic of psychological research. Questions concerning the personal characteristics and contextual factors that predict psychological well-being in the student age are central in that line of research. Cameroonian students that acquire higher education are considered to be the future leaders.

Class size

The concept of class size refers to the number of students undertaking a particular course/subject or the number of students taught by a teacher in a

classroom in a given period. It is the number of students a teacher attends to during a given period of instruction. Class size is thus different from the student-teacher ratio, which is expressed as the relationship between the student population and the number of teachers available in the school. Adeyemi (2008) describes class size as an educational tool that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school. The teacher who is the classroom manager should therefore, have the number of students he/she can effectively control, supervise and teach at any given period. Lazear (2001) postulates that smaller classes have less number of disruptions thereby engendering better student/teacher engagement and better student learning than larger classes. Adding more students to a class increases the number of disruptions and decreases the amount of time during which learning can take place because the teacher spends time dealing with these students that cause disruptions. On the other hand, Hattie (2009) argues that not all interactions between student and teacher will result in improved learning; rather effective interaction is what is needed.

Determining the ideal class size continues to generate a lot of discussion, especially in this present period of school population explosion, financial hardship, shortage of teachers and students' poor academic achievement leading to poor psychological wellbeing (Hattie, 2009). When should a class be considered too large or small? Opinions differ among educationists and different people/ nations have varying perceptions of what constitutes a small, large or ideal class size. Whether a class is perceived as large or small depends on factors such as teacher factors, school environment, educational theories and philosophies. Because of the Universal Education programme in Cameroon, it is not uncommon to

observe large class sizes and classes of less than sixty (60) are not necessarily considered large. Several factors such as inadequate school building, population explosion, inadequate number of subject teachers, give rise to larger class sizes. In a normal classroom, the teacher is expected to cater for/deal with diverse personalities with divergent backgrounds, ideas, interests, attitudes and abilities.

Discussion about the class size has developed to a considerable body of research on the impacts or implication of large and small class size on the outcome of learning and student performance. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), class size refers to the number of students being taught by an individual teacher in a course or classroom or the number of students a teacher faces during a given period of instruction. Emphasis have been on class size reduction due to the difficulties or problems that characterized the teaching and learning process in large or overcrowded classrooms, identified by education stakeholders and researchers.

The effects of class size on students' performance and psychological wellbeing has been researched in various fields and the results of this research show mixed effects of class size on students' performance. McKeachie (1990) has summarized the theory of the effects of class size on learning, focusing on how instructors and students behave differently in large and small classes. It is noted that discussion time becomes fragmented among students in large classes and instructors may rely on passive lecturing, assign less written homework or fewer problem sets, and may not require written papers. In addition, instructors may find it difficult to know each student personally and tailor pedagogy to individual student needs in a large class.

Small class size

Lazear (2001) postulates that smaller classes have less number of disruptions thereby engendering better student/teacher engagement and better student learning than larger classes. Adding more students to a class increases the number of disruptions and decreases the amount of time during which learning can take place because the teacher spends time dealing with these students that cause disruptions. On the other hand, Hattie (2009) argues that not all interactions between student and teacher will result in improved learning; rather effective interaction is what is needed.

However, it is mainly believed that smaller classes provide a better teaching and learning environment. This belief has been shared by many countries like the USA, European countries, China, Japan, and many other countries and they made policies to reduce their class sizes (Blatchford & Lai, 2012). The policies to reduce the class size are generally received well by many; it is generally supported by parents, teachers, administrators and consequently policy makers (Graue, Rauscher & Sherfinski, 2009). One of the most of important reasons behind such policies is that common support, which is based on the belief that smaller classes positively impact the academic achievement of the children. That support is primarily based on the research that advocates the benefits of smaller class size. The research behind the class size is plenty since such studies started a couple of decades ago and still researchers do various studies about different sides of this topic on different academic levels.

Smaller classes have been found more effective when instructional goals involve higher level cognitive skills including application, analysis, and synthesis. Smaller classes provide for greater contact between students and lecturer, which appears to be most needed for

students with low motivation, those with little knowledge of the subject matter, or those who have difficulty grasping conceptual material. Smaller classes are also more effective than large ones in affecting student attitudes (Hanushek, 2006). In sum, the optimal size of a class depends on the instructional goals being pursued. The main advantage smaller classes have over larger ones is that they provide students with greater opportunities for interaction with subject matter, with the professor and with one another (Hanushek, 2006).

However, literature reveals there is conflicting evidence from the research that smaller classes have effect on student achievement and wellbeing (Toth and Montagna, 2002). Hoxby's (2000) study on the effects of class size established that smaller classes had insignificant or no effect on student achievement. Similarly, Milesi and Gamoran (2006) report in their research study that there was no evidence of class size effects on student achievement. The conclusion made by this study was that class sizes do not have an impact on student performance. Equally Hanushek (2006) concluded that class size has no significant effect on performance.

In schools with small class, teachers can have more time to spend with each student and check the progress of every student under their responsibility and can provide more individualized teaching that is more suitable to each student (Johnson, 2011). It is equally easy for a teacher to teach, evaluate and provide feedback to students if the class size is comfortable for example 40 students per teacher. In this light Chingos (2013), argues that students will learn more in small classes since there are more opportunities to receive individualized instruction from the classroom teacher as opposed to those in large classes. It is considered that low student teacher

ratio (40:1) gives better results and enhances students' academic performance than those of high student-teacher ratio (180:1).

Large class size

Large class size is defined as a class with more students than the available facilities can support with more than 100 student enrolled (Imtiaz, 2014). Amua-Sekyi (2010) argued that large class is only in the mind of the orthodox teacher and there is no fixed number. They opined that class size depends on the discipline in the class room.

Teaching in large and overcrowded classrooms creates an enormous challenge in producing productive learning classroom environments, where effective teaching and assessment strategies are crucial. Teachers cannot practice a variety of methods, such as higher-order questioning and active learning approaches. In fact, teachers are effectively confined to the 'chalk and talk' instructional method (Opoku-Asare et al., 2014). Quality teaching and assessment actually suffer in large classes and this is an indictment on the quality of higher education in Cameroon and the other developing countries. This is supported by the fact that lecturers "reported that developing appropriate teaching and learning styles in large classes with diverse needs is challenging in itself" (Amua-Sekyi, 2010).

Furthermore, in large classrooms, teachers cannot pay attention to all the learners (Imtiaz, 2014) and are unable to differentiate their attention amongst learners. This is affirmed by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) and Sosibo and Nomlomo (2014), who argue that teachers cannot persuade or take all learners to task to participate and they tend to ignore those who are passive or those that are less interested. Teaching and learning in large amphitheatres of the University

of Bamenda for instance amphi 650 and 750 is characterized by similar challenges mentioned above as teachers often ignore students who are distracted, slow, passive and those that usually seat at the back of the class. These challenges affect the way students perform. This is supported by ATL (2009) indicated that, Helen Terry, a secondary school teacher from Rothertham, said, “I am unable to give all students the time and attention they often need”.

Several factors such as inadequate school building, population explosion, inadequate number of subject teachers, give rise to larger class sizes. In a normal classroom, the teacher is expected to cater for/deal with diverse personalities with divergent backgrounds, ideas, interests, attitudes and abilities (Kiggundu and Nayimuli, 2009). In large classes and overpopulated classes, the result is student disengagement (Fleming, Toutant, & Raptis, 2002). The teacher in such a situation may not be able to give individual students the attention they need and this may lead to poor academic achievement and negative psychological wellbeing.

Also discipline in large classes is difficult since to control the behaviors of adolescent and adults can be very demanding. Mustafa et al (2014), point out that large numbers of learners in one classroom are an impediment to classroom management in general and classroom discipline specifically. Larger classes are noisier and more prone to pushing, crowding and hitting, to the extent that this can impact negatively on classroom discipline. One teacher cannot cope with such situations in the classroom on his/her own. Teachers lose valuable lesson time in such circumstances, because they spend most of the lesson time trying to control the learners. In the University of Bamenda teachers in large and overcrowded classrooms faces enormous challenges in managing

the class and maintaining an environment that supports learning especially in classes where seats are inadequate. Imtiaz (2014), holds that in such situation little time is left for real teaching since teachers regularly pause to manage learners’ behaviors.

Teaching in large and overcrowded classrooms is a global challenge. Kobaissi, a teacher who teaches Advanced Placement Psychology in a school in Tennessee, says, “When you have a class size that’s even 40, it’s too large, you can never really get to teach students and find out their needs and weaknesses” (Ellis, Limjoco & Johnson, 2011). This means the situation might be aggravated in large university classes like the University of Bamenda where about 500 to 600 students are taught by a single teacher in a class. As such students are left to manage their weaknesses by themselves which may result to poor performance and negative feeling of students since learning deficiencies are not properly managed. Oliver & Said-Moshiro (2007) described large class size as an inevitable feature of the developing countries, given that class size reduction requires increased expenditure.

Teaching large classes has been found to adversely affect morale, motivation and self-esteem of teachers (Oliver & Said-Moshiro, 2007). Although many teachers could manage a class of almost any size successfully, this could often be at the expense of the teacher's own wellbeing and the range of learning experiences offered to students. Many teachers of large classes feel they spend too much time on organizing and managing class activities and not enough on meeting the needs of individual children. Large classes and overcrowded classrooms have negative effects on students' behavior and learning (Oliver & Said-Moshiro, 2007).

Oliver & Said-Moshiro (2007) opined that some other problems with large classes are:

- Students become faces instead of people
- It is harder to give individual advice and guidance to students
- Organizational problems are compounded, making it difficult to schedule tutorials, laboratory sessions, and fieldwork
- There can be technical problems working with large classes e.g. difficulties in projecting slides that are clearly visible to all students.
- Monitoring of attendance can be difficult, thus encouraging students to cut classes
- Coping with large numbers of assignments and examination scripts is a source of difficulty
- The quality of feedback to students can be much reduced in large classes.

Alderman, Orazem & Paterno (2001) concluded that large class size had a consistent negative effect on student achievement and psychological wellbeing particularly on language skills. Equally, Levacic et al, (2005) found that reduction in the student-teacher ratio had a statistically significant positive effect on student psychological wellbeing.

METHODOLOGY

The research design that was appropriate for this study was survey research design particularly the sample survey. Sample survey research is necessary because it collect data from a few people or items considered to

be a representative of the entire group. The study was carried out in the University of Bamenda, located in the North West Region of Cameroon. The target population of this study consisted of all students in the University of Bamenda. The accessible population included students from the Faculty of Education, Higher teachers training college and Higher Institute of Transport and logistics. The sample size was 354 students which was determined through Krejcie and Morgan (1970) model of determining sample size.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 23.0) with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical tools used are frequency count and percentages. The Spearman's rho test, a non-parametric test was used in testing the hypotheses. Finally, findings were presented using frequency distribution tables, and on charts with inferential statistics presented at 95% level of confidence interval with alpha set at 0.05 levels accepting only 5% margin of error.

FINDINGS

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic data were faculty, schools, college, level and sex

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by faculty/school/college

Faculty/school/college	Frequency	Percentage
Higher Technical Teachers' Training College (HTTC) of Bamenda in Bambili	178	50.3
Faculty of Education	148	41.8
The Higher Institute of Transport and logistics	28	7.9

Total	354	100
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Among the 354 students sampled, 178 (50.3%) of them were students of the Higher Technical Teachers' Training College, 148 (41.8%) of them were students of the faculty of Education and 28 (7.9%) of them were students of the Higher Institute of Transport and logistics.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by study level

Level	Frequency	Percentage
200	79	22.3
300	94	26.6
400	89	25.1
500	51	14.4
600	41	11.6
Total	354	100

Describing the students level of study, 79 (22.3%) were in level 200, 94 (26.6%) were in level 300, 89 (25.1%) were in level 400, 51 (14.4%) were in level 500 and 41 (11.6%) of them were in level 600.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by sex

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	151	42.7
Female	203	57.3
Total	354	100

Describing the students by gender, 151 (42.7%) were male and 203 (57.3%) of them were female. This is also presented on the figure below.

Table 4: Students' appreciation of their psychological wellbeing

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
I am always happy irrespective of the class size	59 (16.7%)	128 (36.2%)	109 (30.8%)	58 (16.4%)	187 (52.8%)	167 (47.2%)
I can express myself freely in class despite the size of the class	58 (16.4%)	171 (48.3%)	82 (23.2%)	43 (12.1%)	229 (64.7%)	125 (35.3%)

I often have difficulties interacting with others when the class is large	23 (6.5%)	105 (29.7%)	164 (46.3%)	62 (17.5%)	128 (36.2%)	226 (63.8%)
I often feel sad when class size is large	49 (13.8%)	104 (29.4%)	111 (31.4%)	90 (25.4%)	153 (43.2%)	201 (56.8%)
I am not always happy seeing my courses to be taught in large class	94 (26.6%)	124 (35.0%)	73 (20.6%)	63 (17.8%)	218 (61.6%)	136 (38.4%)
I always happy learning in any class	139 (39.4%)	150 (42.5%)	61 (17.3%)	3 (0.8%)	289 (81.9%)	64 (18.1%)
I have the support I need despite the class size	121 (24.2%)	145 (41.0%)	75 (21.2%)	13 (3.7%)	266 (75.1%)	88 (24.9%)
I am satisfied writing exams in any class	62 (17.5%)	144 (40.7%)	133 (37.6%)	15 (4.2%)	206 (58.2%)	148 (41.8%)
I feel disturbed when the class is noisy	77 (21.8%)	124 (35.0%)	130 (36.7%)	23 (6.5%)	201 (56.8%)	153 (43.2%)
Multiple response set	687 (21.6%)	1206 (37.9%)	887 (27.8%)	405 (12.7%)	1893 (59.5%)	1292 (40.5%)

In overall, findings showed that 59.5% of the students were found to have high psychological wellbeing meanwhile, 40.5% of the students were found having low psychological wellbeing. This overall finding is presented on the figure below.

Table 5: Students' perception of large class size

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
Large class size is economical	40 (11.3%)	114 (32.2%)	145 (41.0%)	55 (15.5%)	154 (43.5%)	200 (56.5%)
Large class size does not encourage better relationships of students with their teachers	62 (17.5%)	97 (27.4%)	136 (38.4%)	59 (16.7%)	159 (44.9%)	195 (55.1%)
Large class size affects the students' academic wellbeing negatively	44 (12.4%)	102 (28.8%)	96 (27.1%)	112 (31.6%)	146 (41.2%)	208 (58.8%)
Large class size does not allow teachers to	98 (27.7%)	191 (54.0%)	28 (7.6%)	37 (10.5%)	289 (81.6%)	65 (18.4%)

give students individual attention						
Large class size has a direct effect on the quality of teaching and instructional delivery	190 (53.7%)	131 (37.0%)	20 (5.6%)	13 (3.7%)	321 (90.7%)	33 (9.3%)
Large class size leads to disruptive and inattentive behavior	39 (11.0%)	102 (28.8%)	121 (34.2%)	92 (26.0%)	141 (39.8%)	213 (60.2%)
Large classes are difficult to manage and this makes teaching and learning ineffective	223 (63.0%)	113 (31.9%)	10 (2.8%)	8 (2.3%)	336 (94.6%)	18 (5.1%)
With large class size, a teacher finds it difficult to vary teaching methods because of the lack of instructional material	86 (24.3%)	134 (37.9%)	83 (23.4%)	51 (14.4%)	220 (62.1%)	134 (37.9%)
Multiple response set	797 (28.1%)	1015 (35.8%)	608 (21.5%)	412 (14.5%)	1812 (64.0%)	1020 (36.0%)

In overall, findings showed that 64.0% of the students had a negative perception about large class size meanwhile 36.0% of the students not.

Table 6: Relationship between large class size and students' psychological wellbeing

Test	Statistical parameters	Large class size	Students' psychological wellbeing
Spearman's rho	R-value	1.000	.187*
	P-value	.	.021
	N	354	354

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Findings showed that there is a significant and negative relationship between large class size and the students' psychological wellbeing ($P=0.021$, <0.05). The negative sign of the correlation value ($R = -0.187^*$) implies that students

are more likely to have low psychological wellbeing when their class size is large or increasing and turn to have high psychological wellbeing when their class size is small or reducing.

Table 7: Students' perception of small class size

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
Students in small classes display less disruptive behaviour and teachers spend less time on discipline	41 (11.6%)	90 (25.4%)	135 (38.1%)	88 (24.9%)	131 (37.0%)	223 (63.0%)
Students in small classes are much more likely to interact with their teachers rather than to listen passively	166 (46.9%)	108 (30.5%)	48 (13.6%)	32 (9.0%)	274 (77.4%)	80 (22.6%)
Schools claim that they cannot afford to reduce class size because of the cost factor	129 (36.5%)	179 (50.7%)	26 (7.4%)	19 (5.4%)	308 (87.3%)	45 (12.7%)
Small class size influences socioeconomic factors such as improved citizenship, welfare independence and decreases crime	117 (33.1%)	169 (47.7%)	51 (14.4%)	17 (4.8%)	286 (80.8%)	68 (19.2%)
Small classes make significant differences in students' academic performance and psychological wellbeing	106 (29.9%)	176 (49.7%)	46 (13.0%)	26 (7.3%)	282 (79.7%)	72 (20.3%)
Small class size increases teacher workload because the teacher will have more classes to teach as the class size is	52 (14.7%)	96 (27.1%)	142 (40.1%)	64 (18.1%)	148 (41.8%)	206 (58.2%)

reduced and more classes created						
Multiple response set	623 (29.3%)	864 (40.7%)	402 (18.9%)	234 (11.0%)	1487 (70.0%)	636 (30.0%)

In overall, findings showed that 70.0% of the students have positive perception about small class size meanwhile 30.0% of them do not.

Table 8: Relationship between small class size and students' psychological wellbeing

Test	Statistical parameters	Small class size	Students' psychological wellbeing
Spearman's rho	R-value	1.000	.212*
	P-value	.	.009
	N	354	354
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Findings on table 13 showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between small class size and the students' psychological wellbeing ($P=0.009$, <0.05). The positive sign of the correlation value ($R = 0.212^*$) implies that students are more likely to have high psychological wellbeing when their class size is small or reducing.

DISCUSSIONS

Perceived impact of large class size and students' Psychological wellbeing

Findings showed that there was a significant and negative relationship between large class size and the students' psychological wellbeing. The negative sign of the correlation value implied that students are more likely to have low psychological wellbeing when their class size is large or increasing and turn to have high psychological wellbeing when their class size is small or reducing. This is supported by Imatiaz (2014) who

concluded that in large classrooms, teachers cannot pay attention to all students and are unable to differentiate their attention amongst students. Equally the findings of this study is as well affirmed by Kiggundu and Nayimuli (2009) and Sosibo and Nomlomo (2014), who argue that teachers cannot persuade or take all learners to task to participate and they tend to ignore those who are passive or those that are less interested. Also the findings are supported by Mustafa el al (2014) who opined discipline in large classes is difficult since to control the behaviors of adolescent and adults can be very demanding and that large numbers of learners in one classroom are an impediment to classroom management in general and classroom discipline specifically. Larger classes are noisier and more prone to pushing, crowding and hitting, to the extent that this can impact negatively on classroom discipline. From the findings large class size is equally responsible for low psychological and poor performance in educational institution.

Findings of this study further confirmed the report of Yusuf, Onifade and Bello (2016) that class sizes could have adverse effects on students' general behaviour attitude and learning outcome. Large class sizes are associated with increases in students' disruptive behaviour and inattention which task teachers more and result in inadequate wellbeing. This situation is heightened by insufficient teaching aids (per number of students) and does not allow teachers to give students the individual attention they need for effective learning. The state of affairs in schools due to the high enrolment rates with inadequate facilities and inadequate training of teachers calls for concern.

This finding is in congruence with Opoku-Asare et al., (2014) who argued that teaching in large and overcrowded classrooms creates an enormous challenge in producing productive learning classroom environments, where effective teaching and assessment strategies are crucial. Teachers cannot practice a variety of methods, such as higher-order questioning and active learning approaches. In fact, teachers are effectively confined to the 'chalk and talk' instructional method.

Perceived impact of small class size and students' psychological wellbeing

Findings showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between small class size and the students' psychological wellbeing. The positive sign of the correlation value implied that students are more likely to have high psychological wellbeing when their class size is small or reducing. This is supported by Omwirhiren and Anderson (2016) as they reported significant differences between class sizes and students' psychological wellbeing. Achilles and Finn(2002) had earlier reported that positive outcomes were found for small classes on factors

such as time on task, individualized instruction, well behaved classes and teacher satisfaction.

This is supported by Cameron (1999) who found out that it is more helpful to remember that what the students does (active learning) is actually more important than what the teacher does. This is equally affirmed by the research of Diane M. Bunce et. Al (2010) who found that leveraging active learning is good in getting learners' active participation and concentration in class to guarantee students wellbeing. Barkely et al (2005) argues that group activities where students participate in the content of every lesson through critical thinking of task, presented to them in their small groups is the most appropriate method of engaging students' interest and concentration which increases performance, short of this the result will be poor performance. Also the result of this finding is in line with Ikediaskhi and Amaechi (2012) who opined that students' activities are at the center of learning and achievement and when students are placed in classes with small numbers, they are more involved and academic performance increases.

This finding is in line with Lazear (2001) who postulates that smaller classes have less number of disruptions thereby engendering better student/teacher engagement and better student learning than larger classes. Adding more students to a class increases the number of disruptions and decreases the amount of time during which learning can take place because the teacher spends time dealing with these students that cause disruptions. On the other hand, Hattie (2009) argues that not all interactions between student and teacher will result in improved learning; rather effective interaction is what is needed.

This finding is supported by Hanushek (2006) who argued that smaller classes have been found more

effective when instructional goals involve higher level cognitive skills including application, analysis, and synthesis. Smaller classes provide for greater contact between students and lecturer, which appears to be most needed for students with low motivation, those with little knowledge of the subject matter, or those who have difficulty grasping conceptual material. Smaller classes are also more effective than large ones in affecting student attitudes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the information of the study most students and rather prefer smaller classes to larger ones. The findings of this study show that large class size has a negative impact on the quality of interaction between teacher and students, teachers' teaching method, teachers' assessment of the students and students' learning. Students in the university of Bamenda perceive that large class sizes are less preferable to small class size for university students for better academic achievement.

Herbst (2001) advances a number of reasons for variations in terms of optimum class sizes in different learning institutions. He believes that systems around the country differ in many respects. Important sources of variation include the examination system, existence of high-stake incentives for students and educators, provision of remedial instruction for lagging students or of enrichment classes for outstanding achievers, the level of allocation of resources, the quality of educators amongst others. He believes that these are the factors which inform class sizes in many institutions. As a result, naively assumed estimations of educational production functions may be biased by omitted variables among these characteristics of good teaching. These include the ability to communicate challenging content; involving students in hands-on experiences; providing clear and immediate feedback;

and supporting family involvement and endogeneity of class size with respect to student performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the result of this study, recommendation were made to; the Ministry of Higher Education and the Cameroon Government to work hand in hand to make sure they recruit more teacher in the University Bamenda. This will reduce the ratio of students to teachers (student-teacher ratio) and guarantee high quality education.

Also the government should alongside be recruiting more teachers, build more classes to reduce large and overcrowded classrooms so as to make the student to learn in a supportive and comfortable learning environment.

The counselors should advocate and explain the dangers of large room sizes to the administrators. They should equally guide students on strategies us to succeed in the large class rooms.

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