

**CLASS SIZE AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS:
THE CASE OF SELECTED BASIC SCHOOLS IN MANSA DISTRICT**

BY

MIKE MUTALE MULENGA

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DECLARATION

I Mike Mutale Mulenga declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been previously submitted at this or any other university. It also does not incorporate materials from other academic work without acknowledging them.

Signature.....

Date.....

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Mike Mutale Mulenga is approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Master of Education in Educational Administration by the University of Zambia

Examiners' Signatures:

Date:

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of the Free Basic Education Policy in 2002, class sizes in most basic schools have continued rising while expansion and construction of more school infrastructure has not increased proportionately, resulting in large class sizes in most basic schools. This increase in classes has raised a country-wide debate about its effects on the teaching-learning process. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the effects of class size on the teaching- learning process in basic schools.

A combination of data collection instruments were used in order to come up with in-depth data which a single approach could not yield. The instruments for data collection used included questionnaires, focus group discussion, interviews, classroom observation check list and document study.

The findings from the study were that class size had an effect on the teaching- learning process. These effects were that large classes experienced inadequate teaching-learning resources as well as inadequate classroom furniture. Other challenges teachers face in large classes included failure to complete marking of pupils' work in time, challenges in the use of individualised teaching-learning methods, less pupil-teacher interaction, indiscipline, challenges in the identification and provision of pupils with learning difficulties, teaching being exhausting and generally the whole process of class management being challenging.

On the other hand, teachers teaching smaller classes reported that a smaller number of pupils in their classes enabled them to use learner-centered teaching methods such as project work, field trips, discovery method, group work, debate and many others which promoted critical thinking and retention of learnt materials in learners. The other effects smaller classes had on the teaching-learning process as revealed by both literature and research findings included increased teacher-pupil interactions, knowing pupils' names easily and quickly, fewer discipline problems, more classroom space for both mobility of teachers and pupils during group activities, pupils having a quick feedback on both the formative and summative tasks given, improved pupil-book ratio and the whole process of teaching and learning being easily manageable.

Based on these findings, it was recommended that there should be a limit to the number of pupils each class should have. The number of pupils in class should match with the availability of the teaching-learning resources and should enable the teacher to effectively provide individualised attention to all the pupils in class. However, for these recommendations to become a reality the government must put the following measures in place;

- recruitment of all teachers immediately after graduation from colleges;
- construction of more classrooms and schools especially in densely populated areas/compounds;
- immediate replacement of teachers who are retiring, resigning and dying;
- continuous supply of teaching-learning materials, equipment and furniture; and
- doubling the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education

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ACRONYMS

MoE-Ministry of Education

MFNP-Ministry of Finance and National Planning

PTR-Pupil-Teacher Ratio

PBR-Pupil- book Ratio

SAGE-Student Achievement Guarantee in Education

STAR-Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio