Introduction

Class size is an educational tool that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school. Adeyemi (2008) described it as the number of students per teacher in a class. Blatchford (2005) saw it as a tool that can be used to measure the performance of education system in relation to size. Class size is an important factor in relation to academic performance of students. There is a consensus among various researchers and educationists that the lower the class size the better the students' academic achievement, since students' achievement may decrease as class size increases. Some studies have pointed out the significance of class size to cognitive learning in school, they include Biddle and Berliner (2002), Blatchford (2005), Akin (2013).

Teachers' workload can be categorized into two: moderate and abnormal workload. Moderate workload is viewed as the essential parts of working within a

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school which are necessary for effective teaching and learning activities. Abnormal workload is described as the unnecessary or unproductive tasks which increase teachers' working hours without necessarily adding value to teachers' skillset such as recording, inputting, monitoring, analyzing data, excessive/depth marking, lesson/weekly planning, basic administrative, support tasks, data management, staff meetings, reporting on students' progress, and implementing new initiatives/curriculum/qualification change. According to Niemtus (2016), teachers' workload is a challenge and abnormal workload is a huge problem in teaching. In an analysis of 4,450 responses to the Guardian Survey on teachers' workload crisis in the United Kingdom, 98% said they were under increasing pressure, 82% described their workload as unmanageable. More than three-quarters were working between 49 and 65 hours a week (Lightfoot, 2016).

Teacher's qualification is also a major issue affecting students' performance in economics at senior secondary schools. Akin (2013) opined that qualification of teachers, is one of the factors to be considered when it comes to students' performance in schools. Others are lack of facilities and poor teaching method. Popoola (1980) worked on the problems confronting the teaching and learning of economics in the Nigeria secondary schools. The findings identified problems such as lack of proper identification of subject matter, shortage of qualified teachers, inadequate material resources and teacher's use of conventional or expository techniques in teaching. Onuoha (1997) and Akanbi (2003) identified shortage of qualified and dedicated teachers as the factor affecting students' performance in science and that poor practical orientation will lead to poor understanding of the theory.

Therefore, this research aimed to fill the gap created by previous studies to investigate the influence of school variables on students' performance in senior school certificate economics. This study focused on the influence of class size, economics teachers' workload and economics teachers' qualifications on economics students' performance in senior school certificate examinations. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of selected school variables on the senior secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What has been the trend of students' academic performance in the senior school certificate economics between 2008 — 2012?
2. Is there any difference in the academic performance of economics students in moderate and over-populated economics classes?

3. Is there any difference in the academic performance of economics students taught by moderately and abnormally loaded economics teachers?
4. Is there any difference in the academic performance of economics students taught by qualified and unqualified economics teachers?

In similar vein, the following research hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

Hot: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of economics students in normal and overpopulated economics classes.

Hox There is no significant difference in the academic performance of economics students taught by moderately and abnormally loaded economics teachers.

H03: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of economics students for those taught by qualified and unqualified economics teachers.

Methodology

The population for this study was the entire senior secondary school economics teachers. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select ten secondary schools out of the thirty-seven secondary schools in Ifelodun local government area of Kwara State. Two teachers of Economics were randomly selected from each of the randomly stratified secondary schools in Ifelodun local government area of Kwara State.

The instruments used to elicit information in this study were questionnaire and proforma. The proforma was given to the Vice Principal to collect students' academic grades in senior school certificate examinations for the period of 2008 2012. It contained information on student such as: total number of students that sat for the senior school certificate examinations in economics for the period of 2008 — 2012, student grades in the form of Al, B2, B3, C4, C5, C6, D7, E8, and Fg which is the grade format in senior secondary schools. The questionnaire contained 19 items: school's name, school's status, qualifications of the teachers, teaching experience, availability of instructional materials, workload, etc. The questionnaire copies were administered to economics teachers. The data collected were analysed using Chi — square statistics to test the hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question 1: What has been the trend of students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) Economics in the period 2008 - 2012?

Table 1

Academic Performance of Students in Senior School Certificate Economics for period of 2008 - 2012

Year	No. of Students that passed Examinations									No. of Students that failed	Overall Total No. of Students that passed
	No. Al	No. B2	No. B3						07		
200	529			C4	C5	C6	D7	E8	F9		
41	52	65	74	40							
	58	76	64	59	470						
	8%	10	12	14	8%	11	14	12		(11%)	(88.8%)
200	517	66	20	40	91	29	77	66	47	81	436
	13	4%	8%	18	6%	15	13	90/0		(16%)	(84.3%)
201	566	74	67	15	79	91	40	73	44	67	483
	13	12	3%	14	18	7%	13	8%		(13%)	(85.3%)
201	520	14	90	18	38	70	74	11	67	35 (7%)	483
	3%	17	4%	80/0	14	14	13				(92.7%)
201	553	13	19	58	46	95	31	78	10	132	441
	2%	4%	11	90/0	17	6%	14	%	19	(24%)	(79.7%)
Tot al	268	20	24	17	32	32	28	40	32	374	2312
	5	8	8	6	8	5	0	4	4	(14%)	(86.1%)

8% 9% 7% 12 12 10 15 12
% % % % %

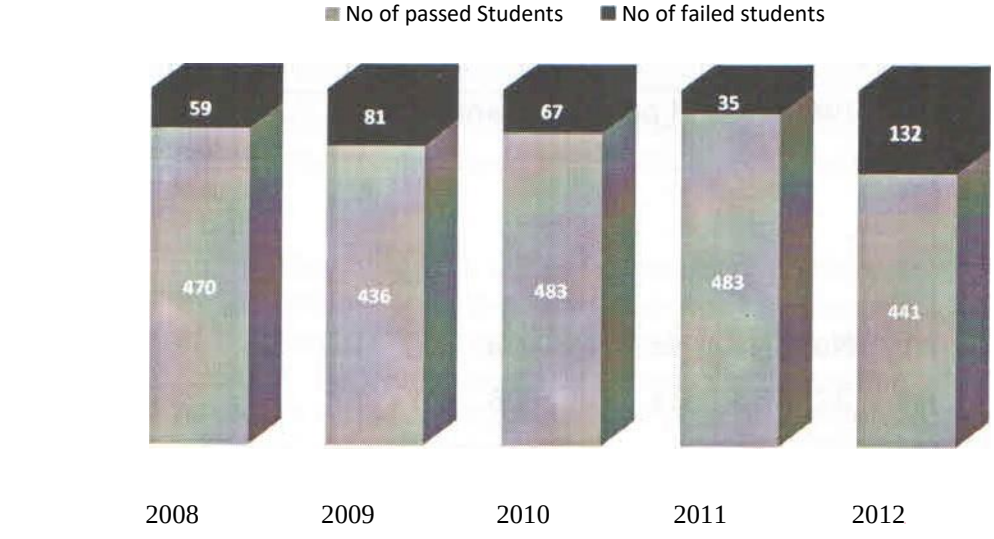

Figure 1. Academic Performance of Students in Senior School Certificate Economics 2008 - 2012.

From Table 1 and Figure 1, it can be deduced that there were fluctuations in the students' performance in senior secondary certificate examination in economics. In the year 2008, 88.8% passed while in 2009, 84.3% passed which shows a decline in the success rate of the students. Likewise in 2010 and 2011 respectively, the percentage passes were 85.3% and 92.7% respectively which indicates an increase in the success rate as compared to 79.7% in 2012 which also shows a decline in the success rate. Therefore, the senior secondary certificate economics results of students in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State fluctuated between the year 2008 and 2012.

Hypotheses Testing

Hot: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of economics students in normal and overpopulated economics classes.

Data were collected and analysed on the basis of the demographic nature of the economic classes i.e. normal and over-populated classes. Table 2 presents the output of the analysis.

Table 2

Chi—square analysis of results of students taught in a normal populated class with those taught in an over—populated class

Class Size	No	Total Score	Mean Value	df Value	Cal.	Table	Decision	Score
Normal	882	2,746	3.73					
Over-populated	1,803	6,724	3.11	1	23.4	3.84	Rejected	

Critical level of sig. 0.05

Table 2 revealed that a calculated Chi—square value (x^2) of 23.4 was obtained while table value was 3.84 at alpha level of 0.05. Since calculated Chi—square value of 23.4 is greater than the table value (x^2 t = 3.84), the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of economics student in normal and overpopulated economics classes is rejected. This implies that there was significant difference in the academic performance of economics student in normal and overpopulated economics classes. This is in favour of the normal class as the mean score showed that economics students in normal classes scored higher than those in over-populated classes.

H02'. There is no significant difference in the performance of economics students taught by moderately and abnormally loaded economics teachers.

Data were collected from the instruments and analysed on the basis of the workload of economic teachers i.e. moderately loaded and abnormally loaded. Table 3 presents the output of the analysis.

Table 3

Chi—square analysis of results of students taught by moderately loaded and abnormally loaded economics teachers

Teachers' Workload	No	Total Score	Mean Score	df	cal. Value	Table Value	Decision

Moderately loaded	1,252	4,046	3.78			3.84 Rejected
Abnormally loaded	1,433	5,423	3.23	1	25.0	

Critical level of sig. = 0.05

Table 3 revealed that the obtained Chi—square (x^2) calculated of 25.0 is greater than the critical table value of 3.84. Therefore, the null hypotheses is rejected. Thus, there was significant difference in the performance of economics students taught by moderately and abnormally loaded economics teachers. The significant difference is in favour of the economics students taught by moderately loaded teachers as the mean score of students taught by the moderately loaded teachers was higher than those taught by abnormally loaded teachers.

H03: There is no significant difference in the performance of economics students those taught by qualified and unqualified economics teachers.

Table 4

Chi — square analysis of results of students taught by qualified economics teachers and with those taught by unqualified economics teachers

Teachers' Qualification	No	Total Score	Mean Score	df	P Cal. Value	Table Value	Decision
Qualified Teachers	1,738	6,489	3.73				
Unquafified Teachers	947	2,981	3.15		24.0	3.84	Rejected

Critical level of sig. = 0.05

Table 4 shows that Chi-square calculated of 24.0 is greater than the table value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the performance of economics students taught by qualified and unqualified economics teachers is rejected. This implies that there was significant difference in the performance of economics students taught by qualified and unqualified economics teachers. The significant difference lies in favour of economics students taught by qualified teachers as their mean score was higher than those of economics students taught by unqualified teachers.

Summary of Findings

The following are the major findings from this study:

1. Performance of economics students in senior school certificate examinations fluctuated between 2008 — 2012.

2. There was significant difference in the performance of economics students in normal and over-populated classes.
3. There was significant difference in the performance of economics students taught by moderately-loaded and abnormally-loaded economics teachers.
4. There was significant difference in the performance of economics students taught by qualified and unqualified economics teachers.

Discussion

The outcome of the analysis of data collected from this study gave an indication that school variables such as class size, teachers workload and teacher qualifications greatly affected the academic performance of students in senior school certificate examination in economics.

The findings of this research revealed that there was a significant difference in the academic performance of economics students taught in a normal populated class and those taught in an over—populated class. The finding revealed that the

performance of economics students in normal class was higher than those of overpopulated class. This finding is in agreement with Akin (2013) who reported that there was a positive relationship between class size, teachers/students ratio and performance of students in the examinations. He observed that schools with larger class size and higher teacher/students' ratio recorded poor performance while better academic performance was obtained in a school with small size and lower teacher/ students ratio.

Another finding from the study revealed that there was a significant difference in the academic performance of economics students taught by moderately loaded and abnormally loaded economics teachers. The economics students taught by moderately loaded economics teachers performed better than those taught by abnormally loaded economics teachers. This finding is in consonance with Alberta Education (2015) who observed that a teacher with six to ten periods load of work per week would achieve better performance in their subject than their counterpart with ten to twenty periods load of work per week. It was pointed out that those students that are taught by moderately loaded teachers always perform well academically.

There was significant difference in the academic performance of economics students taught by qualified economics teachers and those taught by unqualified Economics teachers. The economics students taught by qualified economics teachers performed better than those that were taught by unqualified economics teachers. It was also observed that most of the teachers teaching economics in the sampled schools were not qualified professionally which could have had a negative effect on the performance of students in economics. This is

in line with Onuoha (1997), Akanbi (2003) and Akin (2013) who identified shortage or lack of qualified teachers as a factor affecting students' performance.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicated that school variables affected students' performance in senior school certificate examinations in economics. It further confirmed the position that school variables have great influence on what a child will become in future.

Recommendations

On the basis of findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1 . Schools should maintain ratio 1 to 40 students as prescribed by National Policy on Education as this will reduce over — populated class and in turn enhance students' performance in economics.
2. More qualified economics teachers should be recruited to handle the subject. This will positively influence the performance of students in senior secondary certificate examination in economics.
3. Economics teachers should not be made to teach other subjects aside economics in the school. This will reduce the economics teachers' workload and also enhance the effective teaching of the subject.

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