

**DYNAMICS OF TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL WORKLOAD AND ITS
IMPLICATION ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN EKITI STATE**

Mercy Adesola DARAMOLA (Ph.D)

Department of Science Education
Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology,
Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Ibukun Omolara AKINWUMI (PhD)

Department of Science Education,
College of Education,
Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology,
Ikere, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Samuel Oluwaseyi OLOFIN (Ph.D)*

Advocate Educational Consult,
Ikere – Ekiti, Ekiti State
engineersam2003@gmail.com

Oladele Dennis OMODARA (Ph.D)

Department of Science Education,
College of Education,
Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology,
Ikere, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Funke Aina FALEMU

Department of Science Education,
College of Education,
Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology,
Ikere, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Amoke Monisola KENNI (Ph.D)

Department of Science Education,
College of Education,
Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology,
Ikere, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Samuel Oluwaseyi OLOFIN (Ph.D)

Abstract

This study investigates the dynamics of teachers' instructional workload and its implications for student academic performance in Ekiti State. A correlational research design was employed to explore the impact of the independent variable (teacher's workload) on the dependent variable (students' academic performance). The study's population comprises all teachers in secondary schools across three Senatorial districts in Ekiti State. A sample of 150 teachers, drawn from 25 public senior secondary schools in these districts, participated in the study. Data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire, and the instrument's validity was confirmed by Test and Measurement experts. The study utilized Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05. The findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between teachers' implementation of workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools ($p > 0.05$). However, a significant positive correlation exists between the level of compliance with teachers' instructional workload policy and students' academic performance ($p < 0.05$). Based on these findings, recommendations are made for educational policymakers, school administrators, and teachers to enhance the relationship between workload policies and student academic performance in secondary schools.

Keywords: Dynamics, Teacher, Instruction, Workload, Academic Performance

Introduction

The issue of a significant percentage of children not attending school in various Sub-Saharan African nations continues to persist within the realm of secondary education. This particular circumstance has emerged as a critical factor impeding students' seamless transition from primary to tertiary education. In the last twenty years, many governments have made significant investments, both in terms of infrastructure and financial resources, with the aim of enhancing the accessibility of high-quality elementary education for children, as well as fostering the growth of robust networks of postsecondary institutions. Nevertheless, it has been astutely recognised that the secondary education level has experienced significant disregard and has been assigned a low degree of importance. According to the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2015), the National Policy on Education (NPE) is regarded as a comprehensive framework outlining the objectives, aspirations, targets, guidelines, benchmarks, and prerequisites for the provision of high-quality education in Nigeria. This document serves as a legally binding instrument that provides detailed information on the guidelines, concepts, philosophy, processes, norms, and practises governing the functioning of many educational systems. Given the legal validity of the document, it is imperative that all educational activities adhere to its provisions. Additionally, the conduct of diverse stakeholders and participants in the field of education should be directed by the prevailing national policy.

Education is the process of imparting information, skills, and attitudes to individuals throughout their lifespan, starting from birth and extending into old age (FGN, 2014). The pursuit of educational merit has been a primary objective for many nations worldwide. This is due to the recognition that education serves as a crucial tool for permanently eradicating poverty and ignorance, while simultaneously fostering economic resilience, social development, and civilization. In light of this objective, if education is acknowledged as a catalyst for transformation, instructors assume the role of agents of change, while students might be perceived as the substrates upon which the transformative effects gradually materialise. A teacher is someone who assumes the role of guiding, managing, and assessing an educational curriculum. According to Li (2011), the role of a teacher encompasses several responsibilities like providing leadership, facilitating instruction, assessing student involvement in the educational curriculum, and fostering the development and enhancement of students' cognitive abilities.

The implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) has led to a significant surge in secondary school enrollment among pupils, starting from the year 2004. Additionally, the increase in population and advancements in technology have led to a significant rise in the number of youngsters enrolling in secondary education as a means to improve their social mobility. The consequence of this situation has been an excessive number of students being enrolled, leading to an amplified instructional workload for teachers in these secondary educational institutions.

The enrollment of students in public secondary schools has been experiencing a significant growth, primarily attributed to the rising population rate and the retirement of teachers. However, this increase in student enrollment has not been adequately matched by the government's employment of teachers in public secondary schools. As a result, there is a discrepancy between the demand for teachers and the supply, which hampers the provision and maintenance of a

reasonable instructional workload for teachers. There is a significant issue over the lack of comprehensive evaluation on the influence of teacher workload on the academic performance of students in both public and private secondary educational institutions. Educators exhibit a reluctance to engage in an environment that necessitates assuming additional duties outside their primary tasks. The phenomenon under consideration has the effect of diminishing the motivation of educators within the field of teaching, so engendering a sense of diminished inspiration in their professional endeavours. Educators perceive the teaching occupation as a source of stress due to excessive work demands and insufficient allocated instructional time. According to the National Policy on Education, it is recommended that instructors should have a maximum teaching burden of twenty-eight periods and the number of students each stream should not exceed forty. This allocation is intended to facilitate the effective and efficient performance of teachers in carrying out their tasks and responsibilities.

According to Inegbedion et al. (2020), Hart and Staveland define workload as the subjective perception of the correlation between the mental capacity or resources available and the prescribed tasks for a teacher, with the aim of achieving increased productivity. The workload of teachers has a significant role in determining the level of academic achievement and educational value for pupils. Nevertheless, there exists a divergence of opinions among the general populace regarding the diminishing state of educational proficiency, as evidenced by the evaluation of students' academic performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), whereby the proportion of successful outcomes in Nigeria frequently falls below the 50% threshold (Ogundare, et al., 2022). The perceived discrepancy in the distribution of effort might give rise to concerns among instructors who experience excessive work demands and perceive unfair treatment.

The research conducted by Ogundare et al. (2022) demonstrated that the academic achievement of students can be understood as the observable calculation of their performance based on the scores they received from assessments administered by teachers, as well as internal and external examinations, including the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations Council, among other assessments. The workload of teachers exerts a conservative impact on the academic achievement of kids. However, instructors who are burdened with excessive workloads are less likely to possess the visionary mindset, vitality, and adaptability.

According to Grenata (2014), teachers who are overworked are less likely to possess the necessary qualities of vision, energy, flexibility, and optimistic and caring interaction that are essential for effective classroom teaching. These prevailing circumstances can have a detrimental impact on instructional quality in schools, resulting in negative attitudes and values, as well as lower academic performance among secondary school students. In a study conducted by Jelagat, et al (2017), the researchers examined the impact of teachers' workload on the academic performance of secondary school students. The findings of the study indicated that a reduction in teachers' workload has the potential to improve students' academic performance.

According to the statistical data on West African Examination Council (WAEC) results from 2016 to 2018, it was observed that the number of candidates who took the examination in 2018 as public students was 1.57 million, which showed a little increase compared to the previous year's figure of 1.56 million applicants in 2017. Out of the total number of applicants, 822,941 were identified as male, and the remaining 748,595 candidates were identified as female. A total

of 849,069 candidates achieved a minimum of 5 credits, including English Language. Similarly, 106 million applicants attained 5 credits or more, including Mathematics. Additionally, 756,726 candidates obtained 5 credits, including both Mathematics and English Language, representing 48.15% of the total. In a same manner, the number of applicants who took the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) as private students in 2018 amounted to 109,798, whereas in 2017, the corresponding figure was at 133,258 candidates. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2019, there were 54,417 male candidates and 55,561 female candidates, among the candidates, 47,122 achieved 5 credits and above, including English Language. Additionally, 47,434 candidates achieved 5 credits and above, including Mathematics. Furthermore, 37,184 candidates achieved 5 credits and above, including both Mathematics and English Language. The percentage of candidates who achieved 5 credits and above, including Mathematics and English Language, was reported to be 33.81% (NBS, 2019). Based on the aforementioned evidence, the researcher asserts that among the several reasons potentially contributing to the decline in academic performance among students in the 2016 to 2018 WAEC results, the primary determinant is the workload of instructors and its associated impact.

In a study conducted by Kimani et al. (2013), the researchers examined the various teaching factors that influence the academic performance of secondary school students. The findings of the study revealed that several factors, including teachers' weekly classroom workload, students' management of class assignments, students' performance in continuous assessment tests (CAT), the provision of individualised attention to underperforming students, the timeline for completing the Form Four curriculum, and the establishment of students' achievement goals, significantly influenced students' academic performance. Education is a lifelong pursuit that is essential for everyone throughout their existence. Investing in individuals who have the potential to make positive contributions to society is a worthwhile endeavour. It is crucial to acknowledge that inadequate or nonexistent investment in a given society might result in significant losses (Choyee, 2018). In several developing nations, the transition from primary to higher education is hindered by the inadequacies of secondary education.

The findings of the study conducted by Ndioho and Chukwu (2017) indicated a correlation between instructor workload and student performance in the field of biology. Furthermore, it has been shown that the accessibility of educators significantly influences the scholastic achievements of pupils. The subpar academic performance exhibited by the nation's high schools has a detrimental impact on students' prospects of gaining admission into institutions of higher education. Furthermore, it poses a threat to their employability and significantly hampers their ability to actively contribute to the country's overall progress and development. Hence, this study endeavoured to examine the dynamics of instructors' instructional burden and its impact on students' academic performance in Ekiti State.

According to Ksenia (2012), instructional burden refers to the duties carried out within the professional setting that beyond an individual's personal capacities, leading to potential dangers and eliciting feelings such as uneasiness, anxiety, irritation, pressure, or aggravation. These responses have the potential to alter both the physical and mental states of an individual, as well as influence their conduct when performing duties within an organisational setting. According to Marina (2012), instructional workload refers to the expansion of personal work responsibilities from a single task to multiple duties. This increased workload poses a risk of emotional

exhaustion among employees, leading to delays in completing tasks, diminished team morale, and non-compliance with organisational rules. Ultimately, these negative consequences can have a detrimental effect on the overall performance of the organisation.

Various roles, such as department heads, house masters or mistresses, and class instructors, impose additional responsibilities on educators, hence impacting students' academic achievements. Additional elements that contribute to the instructional workload of instructors include class size, extracurricular activities, the variety of student abilities and ages, the availability of resources and facilities, and voluntary efforts such as school camps, educational trips, and sports activities. The following compilation enumerates the many factors contributing to the instructional workload of teachers in economically prosperous nations. In nations with lower levels of affluence, several noteworthy factors can be considered. These include inadequate housing for both teachers and students, limited transportation options for educational purposes, insufficient access to reliable electricity supply, and a lack of fundamental facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, books, as well as necessary equipment and materials for science-related subjects. These factors impact both the instructional workload of instructors and the academic success of students in secondary schools.

The study is done to investigate the dynamics of teachers' instructional workload and its implication on student's academic performance in Ekiti State. The study specifically examined:

1. the relationship between teachers' implementation of workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools; and
2. the relationship between the level of compliance with teachers' instructional workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated for the study

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers' implementation of workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the level of compliance with teachers' instructional workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Methodology

The study employed a correlational research design that aimed at examining the independent variable (teacher's workload) on the dependent variable (students' academic performance). The population of the study consisted of all the teachers in all the secondary schools in the three Senatorial districts in Ekiti State: Ekiti North, and Ekiti Central in the 2021/2022 academic session. The sample for the study one hundred and fifty teachers who had been teaching in senior secondary schools in Ekiti South, Ekiti North, and Ekiti Central Senatorial districts in Ekiti State. Random sampling technique was used to select twenty – five secondary schools from all the public senior secondary schools in Ekiti South, Ekiti North, and Ekiti Central

Senatorial district in Ekiti State that were used for the study. Thereafter a random sampling technique was also used to select an average of six teachers from each of the schools selecting a total of one hundred and fifty respondents. The instrument used for the study was a self-structured questionnaire. The face and content validities of the instrument were ascertained by two Test and Measurement experts from the School of Science Education, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of a self-trained research assistants. The hypotheses formulated were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ implementation of workload policy and students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

Table 1: Correlation between teachers’ implementation of workload policy and students’ academic performance in secondary schools

		Teaches’ Workload policy	Students’ Performance
Teacher’ Workload policy	Pearson Correlation	1	.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.394
	N	150	150
Students’ Performance	Pearson Correlation	.035	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.394	
	N	150	150

Table 1 showed the correlation between teachers’ workload policy and students’ academic performance among secondary school students. The table revealed that the calculated Pearson value of 0.035 was not significant because the p-value (0.394) > 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is not rejected, which implies that there was no significant relationship between teachers’ implementation of workload policy and students’ academic performance in secondary schools

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the level of compliance with teachers’ instructional workload policy and students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

Table 2: Correlation between the level of compliance with teachers’ instructional workload policy and students’ academic performance in secondary schools

	Teachers’ instructional workload	Students’ performance

Teacher's instructional policy	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 150	.153* .000 150
Students' Performance	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.153* .000 150	1 150

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

Table 2 showed the correlation between the level of compliance with teachers' instructional workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools. The table revealed that the calculated Pearson value of 0.153 was significant because the p-value (0.000) < 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected, which implies that there was significant relationship between the level of compliance with teachers' instructional workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The inferential analysis of the study revealed that there was no significant relationship between teachers' implementation of workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.035 indicates a very weak positive correlation between teachers' workload policy and students' academic performance. However, this correlation is not statistically significant as the p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance commonly used in hypothesis testing. The lack of a significant relationship could be due to the complexity of factors affecting students' academic performance. Academic performance is influenced by numerous variables such as students' motivation, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and individual differences in learning styles, which may overshadow the impact of teacher workload policies. It's possible that workload policies were not consistently implemented across all schools or classrooms, which could lead to a lack of significant correlation. Inconsistent implementation may also be attributed to variations in teacher compliance or understanding of the policy.

Existing research on the relationship between teacher workload policies and student academic performance varies. Some studies may have found significant correlations, while others may not. The lack of a significant relationship in this study aligns with findings from research emphasizing the multifaceted nature of factors impacting academic performance. The study is in line with the findings of Ogundare et al. (2022) that there was disagreement within the public about the declining stage in educational excellence as revealed in the students' academic performance in WASSCE with the percentage in Nigeria often below 50. The apparent disparity in the allotment of workload has the possibility to create judgment for teachers who have work overload and are being treated unjustly. The findings further corroborated the findings of Kimani, et al. (2013) that teachers' weekly classroom workload, students' class assignment

management, and students' continuous assessment test (CAT) results significantly impacted students' academic performance.

The lack of a significant relationship between teacher workload policies and student academic performance suggests that policymakers may need to reconsider the effectiveness of current workload policies. It may prompt a reevaluation of whether these policies are achieving their intended goals or if resources could be better allocated elsewhere. Educators and administrators should recognize that factors other than workload policies play a more substantial role in shaping student academic outcomes. Efforts to improve student performance should focus on a broader range of factors, including curriculum design, teaching methods, and student support systems.

The lack of a significant relationship between teachers' workload policy and students' academic performance in secondary schools, as indicated by the given statistical analysis, suggests that other factors are likely to have a more substantial influence on student outcomes. Policymakers and educators should consider a holistic approach to improving educational outcomes, recognizing the multifaceted nature of factors contributing to student success.

The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.153 in Table 2 indicates a positive correlation between the level of compliance with teachers' instructional workload policy and students' academic performance. Importantly, this correlation is statistically significant. One possible reason for this positive correlation is that when teachers comply with instructional workload policies, they may be better equipped to manage their time and resources effectively. This, in turn, can lead to improved teaching quality, more focused instruction, and ultimately, better student outcomes. When there is a consistent implementation of workload policies across schools or classrooms, it can create a stable and conducive learning environment for students. Students may benefit from a more structured and organized educational experience, leading to improved academic performance. Teachers who adhere to workload policies may be more invested in their teaching responsibilities, dedicating more time and effort to their students' success. This increased commitment can positively impact student performance.

The findings align with some existing research of Ndioho and Chukwu (2017) that suggests that effective policy implementation and teacher compliance with workload policies can have a positive impact on student outcomes. When teachers are supported in managing their workload, they are more likely to provide high-quality instruction, which can lead to better academic performance. Some studies also emphasize the importance of administrative support and resources in facilitating policy compliance. When teachers have the necessary tools and support, they are more likely to meet policy requirements effectively.

The significant positive correlation between compliance with instructional workload policies and student academic performance suggests that policymakers should focus on creating and implementing policies that support teachers in managing their workload effectively. This may include providing resources, professional development, and clear guidelines. Schools and educational institutions should consider strategies to support teachers in complying with workload policies. This could involve training, mentorship, or workload adjustments to ensure that teachers can meet policy requirements without excessive stress or burnout. Acknowledging the importance of compliance with workload policies, schools should also consider the well-

being of teachers. Overly burdensome policies can lead to stress and burnout, which can ultimately impact both teacher and student well-being.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that while the direct implementation of teachers' workload policies may not significantly affect students' academic performance in secondary schools, there exists a noteworthy and statistically significant positive correlation between a higher level of compliance with teachers' instructional workload policies and improved student academic outcomes. These findings emphasize the critical role of policy adherence and underscore the need for educational policymakers to not only establish clear workload guidelines but also provide the necessary support and resources to enable teachers to meet these expectations effectively. This study highlights the importance of a balanced approach to workload management, which, when achieved, can contribute to enhanced student performance and overall educational success.

These findings imply that while the mere existence of workload policies may not directly impact student outcomes, adherence to and compliance with such policies can have a positive influence on students' academic performance. It underscores the importance of ensuring that teachers are adequately supported in managing their workload and that policies are effectively communicated and implemented.

For policymakers, these results highlight the need to develop policies that not only define workload expectations but also provide the necessary resources and support for teachers to meet these expectations. Additionally, for educational institutions and administrators, it underscores the importance of creating a conducive environment where teachers can fulfill their workload requirements without undue stress or burnout.

Further research is warranted to explore the nuanced mechanisms underlying these correlations, taking into account contextual and individual variables that may moderate these relationships. Nevertheless, these findings offer valuable insights into the complex interplay between workload policies and student academic performance in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to educational policymakers, school administrators, and teachers to improve the relationship between workload policies and students' academic performance in secondary schools

1. School administrators should ensure that workload policies are clearly defined, communicated, and easily accessible to teachers. Make sure teachers are aware of the expectations and guidelines regarding workload management.
2. Policymakers should recognize that compliance with workload policies often requires additional support and resources. Allocate resources for professional development, instructional materials, and classroom support to help teachers effectively manage their workload.

3. School administrators should invest in ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their time management skills, teaching strategies, and classroom management techniques. This will enable them to better handle their workload and improve instructional quality.
4. Policymakers should implement a system for monitoring and evaluating compliance with workload policies. Regularly assess how well teachers are adhering to these policies and identify areas where additional support may be needed.
5. Policymakers should recognize that one-size-fits-all workload policies may not be suitable for all teachers or classrooms. Allow for some flexibility in workload expectations, taking into consideration the unique needs and circumstances of individual educators.
6. School administrators should prioritize the well-being of teachers by avoiding excessive workloads that can lead to stress and burnout. Ensuring that teachers have a manageable workload will contribute to their job satisfaction and effectiveness in the classroom.
7. School administrators should encourage collaboration among teachers and provide opportunities for peer support and mentoring. When teachers work together and share best practices, they can better manage their workload and improve student outcomes collectively.
8. Teachers should engage parents and the community in discussions about workload policies and their impact on student performance. Involving stakeholders in the decision-making process can lead to more effective and widely accepted policies.

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