

**THE EXTENT TO WHICH CLASS-SIZE AFFECTS TEACHING AND LEARNING
IN PUBLIC DAY PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ISEMBE SOUTH DISTRICT
MERU COUNTY KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The government of Kenya introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in January 2003. This opened doors to many children who had been left out of primary school due to inability to pay fees. Despite this initiative, the available facilities in most schools may not have been adequately prepared for absorption of the additional children who joined schools. Hence the quality of education became an issue of national concern. This affected performance in public day primary schools in Igembe South District. Studies on effect of class-size on the learning process and academic outcomes have been done in other areas of the county. However, no such studies had been conducted in Igembe South District. As such, the researcher saw the need to explore the extent to which class-size affects pupils' performance, class room management, the learning-teaching resources and pupil-teacher motivation, in public day primary schools in Igembe south District. The study targeted the 4 Educational zones in the district: Maua, Kangeta, Kiengu and Akachiu, which have a total of 105 public primary schools. The target population comprised the 105 head teachers, 1,157 teachers and 5,252 pupils in these schools. Stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select 8 schools, 16 class eight teachers, 8 Head teachers and 46 standard eight pupils to participate in the study. The research instruments used for data collection were questionnaires and interview schedules. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Piloting and test -retest was done in two primary schools not included in the above sample to ascertain the validity and reliability of the instruments. The data obtained was then analysed using descriptive statistics into percentages and presented in tables, charts and graphs. This study will be useful to many stakeholders like, school committees, head teachers, Teachers Service Commission and education managers in planning and providing adequate facilities to support efficient learning in public primary schools. The findings revealed that majority classes were large class-size with 40-50 pupils at 62.5% and above 50 pupils per class with 31.5%. Small class-sizes with 25-40 pupils were only 6.0%. This affected the learning teaching resources like textbooks which were found inadequate, classroom management and motivational strategies. The study recommended that there was need to stream classes, provide adequate teaching and learning resources and teachers to make more effective use of available resources like charts. The study recommended further research study to examine the causes for small class -sizes in some schools despite the FPE initiative.