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ASSESSING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN YOBE STATE: KEY FACTORS AND CHALLENGES IN SOME SELECTED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

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This study investigates factors hindering academic performance in senior secondary schools in Yobe State, Nigeria, focusing on teaching methods, classroom size, and parental economic status. Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as a framework, the research explores how these factors impact student outcomes. A quantitative survey design was employed, involving 250 SS 3 students from three schools: Government Secondary School Damaturu, Government Science & Technical College Potiskum, and Government Science & Technical College Azbak, Gashua. A stratified sampling technique ensured a representative sample, with data collected via a validated and reliable questionnaire. Analysis using SPSS revealed that while many students find their teachers' methods effective, there is a strong preference for more interactive approaches. Large classroom sizes were identified as a barrier to student interaction and concentration, and financial constraints were found to significantly limit access to learning resources, particularly for economically disadvantaged students. Based on these findings, the study recommends implementing interactive teaching techniques, improving technology integration, managing classroom sizes more effectively, and providing financial support to disadvantaged students. These strategies aim to enhance academic performance and address the challenges identified in the selected schools.

Keywords: Students, Academic performance, Teaching methods, Classroom size, Parental

Introduction

In pursuing educational excellence, the challenges impacting students' academic performance have been a central focus of scholarly exploration for decades. Within the Nigerian context, the effectiveness of educational systems plays a crucial role in national development, with secondary education serving as a pivotal stage in shaping future leaders and professionals (Orji, & Maekae, 2013). However, obstacles hindering students' academic achievement persist, as unique socioeconomic and cultural dynamics intersect with educational endeavours, (Bashayia, *et al.*, 2021).

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The discussion on factors affecting academic performance has its roots in foundational research by educational psychologists and sociologists. Early research emphasised the impact of environmental factors on learning outcomes, setting the stage for later studies exploring the complex nature of educational challenges (Duhoe, 2019). Scholars like Vygotsky further emphasised the pivotal role of socio-cultural factors in cognitive development, underscoring the intricate interplay between societal contexts and academic achievement (Shabani, 2010).

Education is the cornerstone for economic and technological advancements of any developing nation, facilitating poverty reduction and enhancing residents' quality of life. Acknowledging this critical role, Nigeria's Federal Government outlined strategic approaches in its national Education Policy across various periods (Bashayi *et al.*, 2021). Yet, certain factors persistently impede progress, negatively affecting students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Yobe State. These include classroom size, teacher motivation, teaching methods, inadequate libraries and textbooks, school environment, parental factors, and the effective utilisation of equipped laboratories.

Situated in northeastern Nigeria, Yobe State provides a unique backdrop for examining the complexities of students' academic performance at the secondary level. The region contends with a range of challenges, from socio-economic disparities to security concerns, which invariably influence the educational landscape. Moreover, historical underinvestment in education infrastructure and resources poses significant barriers to effective teaching and learning in senior secondary schools (Bashayi *et al.*, 2021). Poverty, limited access to educational materials, and inadequate school facilities occur as the critical determinant of students' learning outcomes (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015). Additionally, cultural norms and practices may shape educational aspirations and attitudes towards schooling, impacting students' engagement and performance (Osogbo, *et al.*, 2023).

The development of any nation or community hinges largely upon the quality of education accessible to its citizens (Nelson Mandela, 1993). Formal education remains the primary vehicle for socio-economic and political development and the social mobilization of any society. Secondary education, as the foundation for further education, serves two main purposes: producing a literate and numerate population capable of addressing challenges at home and work, and providing the groundwork for advanced education (Akanle, 2013). However, in recent times, secondary education, as one of the bedrocks of the educational system, has faced challenges. The quality of education has declined, leading to a national concern, particularly evident in Yobe State (Aduwa, 2021). This decline is reflected in the inability of some students to compete favourably with counterparts from other regions, as observed in external exams like WAEC and NECO (Aduwa, 2021). Efforts to improve performance have been made by school administrators, recognizing the importance of the school environment, including classrooms, libraries, teacher quality, management, teaching methods, and peer interactions, in enhancing academic achievement (Segun, 2020).

Kalagbor (2016), claims that academic performance encompasses students' ability to study, remember facts, and communicate knowledge verbally or in writing. It is also influenced by many factors which include socioeconomic background, emotional disturbances, and the quality of teaching and learning environments.

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The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) identifies core and elective subjects as essential components of school achievement, measured through examinations, research, and ratings.

Despite these insights, the issue of poor academic performance among secondary school students remains prevalent, especially in Yobe State. Recent statistics from Yobe State reveal a troubling trend: only 13.9% of students achieved five credits or more in 2016; the figure slightly improved to 26.7% in 2017 but dropped again to 15.8% in 2018. This declining performance suggests that only a small fraction of students is adequately prepared for higher education, raising alarms among educators, parents, and policymakers (WAEC, 2018). This trend reflects broader concerns about the effectiveness of current educational practices and the quality of learning environments in the region.

While existing literature has extensively explored factors such as teachers' instructional methods, classroom conditions, and students' socioeconomic backgrounds, there is a gap in understanding how these factors interact specifically within Yobe State's unique socio-economic and cultural environment. Furthermore, the role of extracurricular activities and parental involvement has not been adequately examined concerning their combined impact on student performance. This study seeks to fill these gaps by investigating the interplay of these variables in secondary schools across different zones of Yobe State. By providing a more nuanced analysis, this research aims to offer actionable insights to address the root causes of academic underperformance and guide targeted interventions for improving student outcomes (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015).

1. Objective of the Study

The general proposed objective of the study is to examine the factors militating against students' academic performance in some selected Yobe State senior secondary schools. while the specific objectives are:

- i. To determine the relationship between teachers' method of teaching and students' academic performance
- ii. To examine the relationship between the size of the classroom and students' academic performance
- iii. To determine the relationship between parents' economic status and students' academic performance.
- iv. To identify the most militating factor that hinders students' academic performance in senior secondary schools.

2. Literature Review

This section provides an empirical review of the existing literature on the relationship between teachers' methods of teaching, classroom size, parents' economic status, and students' academic performance. Additionally, it identifies the most significant factors hindering academic performance in senior secondary schools.

The relationship between teaching methods and students' academic performance has been widely studied across various educational settings. According to Mupa and Chinooneka, (2015), ineffective teaching methods were identified as one of the significant factors contributing to poor performance among students in Government in Tharaka South District, Kenya. The study emphasised that poor teaching methods hindered students' understanding and engagement, leading to lower academic achievement.

Empirical studies highlight that innovative teaching methods, including the use of technology, cooperative learning, and problem-based learning, positively correlate with higher academic performance. For instance,

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Bashayi, (2021) posits that the art of explanation, a teaching method, if used properly, can significantly enhance students' logical reasoning and understanding of the subject matter. The effectiveness of teaching methods directly influences students' learning outcomes, suggesting that adaptive teaching practices can bridge the gap between different learners' abilities and improve overall academic outcomes.

However, some studies also indicate that the effectiveness of teaching methods is contingent upon other factors such as teacher quality, curriculum content, and student motivation. Mupa and Chinooneka, (2015) highlighted the importance of teacher qualifications and experience, which imply that well-qualified and experienced teachers are more likely to adopt effective teaching methods, thereby improving student outcomes.

Classroom size is another critical factor that has garnered attention in educational research. The relationship between classroom size and academic performance is complex, with numerous studies presenting mixed results. Research by Aduwa (2021) identified classroom size as a significant factor influencing academic performance. The study found that overcrowded classrooms contributed to poor academic performance as they limited student-teacher interaction and individualised attention.

Class size refers to educational tools that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school. The ALL-Nigerian Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) recommended a maximum of forty students per class for efficient and effective teaching. The implication is that smaller classroom sizes generally facilitate better academic performance due to increased student-teacher interaction and a more conducive learning environment (Dang, 2022).

Conversely, some studies, such as those conducted by (Segun, 2020), argue that the impact of classroom size on academic performance may be negligible when other variables, such as teacher effectiveness and resource availability, are taken into account. These studies suggest that while smaller classrooms offer certain benefits, they are not a panacea for improving academic performance, and broader educational reforms are necessary to achieve significant improvements.

The influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance is well-documented in the literature. Although not explicitly covered in the provided reviews, it is generally recognized in educational literature that parents' economic status significantly affects students' academic performance. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often face challenges such as limited access to educational resources, poor nutrition, and inadequate support, which can hinder their academic achievement (Olabisi, 2024).

Empirical evidence from Li, and Qiu, (2018) demonstrates that children from affluent backgrounds often attend better-funded schools with more qualified teachers and smaller class sizes, which contribute to their academic success. Furthermore, parental involvement, which is more prevalent among higher SES families, is strongly associated with improved student performance. Parents with higher income levels are more likely to be engaged in their children's education, providing support and encouragement that fosters academic achievement.

However, the literature also acknowledges the challenges faced by students from low-income families. Studies like Gobena, (2018) highlight that economic hardship can lead to stress and instability, negatively impacting students' concentration, motivation, and academic performance. Therefore, addressing the disparities in

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educational opportunities for students from different economic backgrounds is essential for promoting equity in academic achievement.

Identifying the factors that hinder students' academic performance is crucial for developing effective educational interventions. Research by Adeyemi (2011) identified several key factors contributing to poor academic performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria. These included an inadequate teaching workforce, high rates of student absenteeism, low entry grades, poor assessment techniques, and ineffective teaching methods. Collectively, these factors significantly hinder students' academic success.

Among these, socio-economic factors, such as poverty, parental education level, and household environment, are consistently highlighted as significant impediments to academic success. For example, Munir, *et al.*, (2023) argue that students from low-income families are more likely to face challenges such as lack of access to study materials, poor nutrition, and unstable living conditions, all of which contribute to lower academic performance.

School-related factors, such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of resources, and overcrowded classrooms, also play a critical role. Studies like Mupa and Chinooneka, (2015) show that schools with poor facilities and insufficient teaching materials struggle to provide quality education, leading to lower student performance.

Teacher-related factors, including qualifications, teaching methods, and motivation, are equally important. Research by Frank (2010) suggests that unqualified or under-motivated teachers can significantly undermine students' learning experiences, leading to poor academic outcomes.

Finally, student-related factors, such as absenteeism, lack of motivation, and poor study habits, are identified as direct barriers to academic success. Shabani, *et al.*, (2010) found that students who frequently miss school or do not engage in regular study practices are more likely to underperform academically.

The empirical literature review highlights the multifaceted nature of academic performance, highlighting the interconnections between teaching methods, classroom size, parental economic status, and various factors hindering student success. To improve academic outcomes in senior secondary schools, a holistic approach that addresses these interconnected factors is essential.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which provides a comprehensive lens through which to examine the multifaceted factors influencing students' academic performance. Bronfenbrenner (1979) posits that an individual's development is shaped by their interactions with various environmental systems, ranging from the immediate surroundings to broader societal contexts. In the context of academic performance, the microsystem—comprising direct environments like the classroom and home—plays a critical role. This system includes elements such as teaching methods, classroom size, and parental involvement, all of which have a direct impact on a student's learning experience. For example, effective teaching methods and smaller class sizes can enhance student engagement and comprehension, while strong parental support can foster motivation and provide additional resources for learning.

Beyond the microsystem, the mesosystem captures the interactions between different environments, such as the relationship between home and school. This interplay can significantly affect academic outcomes, as consistent communication between teachers and parents can reinforce learning objectives and address

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challenges promptly. The exosystemic includes broader factors like parents' workplace conditions or the availability of community resources, which indirectly influence students by affecting the family's economic status and stability (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The macrosystem encompasses overarching societal influences, such as educational policies, cultural values, and economic conditions, which shape the resources and opportunities available to students (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). By applying Bronfenbrenner's theory, this study acknowledges the complex and dynamic interactions between various environmental factors and their collective impact on students' academic performance, emphasizing the need for holistic approaches in educational interventions.

4. Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative approach with a survey research design to efficiently and costeffectively gather data from a large sample of 250 respondents across three schools. A questionnaire, a standard method in social sciences research, was used for data collection. This method was chosen for its ability to reach many respondents quickly, maintain confidentiality, give respondents ample time to answer, and provide more objective results. The study focused on three (3) senior secondary school students in Yobe State including Government Secondary School Damaturu, Government Science & Technical College Potiskum and Government Science & Technical College Azbak, Gashua. Specifically, SS 3 students due to their extensive experience in their schools. Sample size was determined through the use of statistical tools and equations were employed, and a stratified sampling technique was used to ensure a representative sample. A questionnaire featuring closed-ended questions based on validated instruments was used as a collection tool. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was reviewed by experts to confirm that it accurately measured the intended constructs. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and a pilot study was conducted to test both validity and reliability. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

5. Results and Discussion

This analysis explores the multifaceted factors influencing students' academic performance, incorporating insights from various dimensions such as teaching methods, classroom size, parents' economic status, and personal challenges. By examining the relationship between these factors and academic outcomes, we aim to identify key areas impacting students' success and, where interventions could be most effective. The results provide a comprehensive view of how educational practices, environmental conditions, and socioeconomic factors converge to shape students' learning experiences and achievements.

Table 5.1: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean on the Relationship Between Teachers' Method of Teaching and Students' Academic Performance

S/N	Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)	% Mean
1.	How would you rate your teachers' teaching methods?	Ineffective	10	4%	
		Somewhat effective	25	10%	
		Neutral	55	22%	
		Effective	90	36%	

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Total	Highly effective	70	28%		
		250	100%	20.0%	
2. Which teaching technique do you find most helpful?	Lectures	60	24%		
	Group discussions	80	32%		
	Hands-on activities	90	36%		
	Multimedia presentations	20	8%		
	Total	250	100%	25.0	%
3. Do your teachers encourage active participation?	Yes, always	30	12%		
	Often	70	28%		
	Sometimes	50	20%		
	Rarely	80	32%		
	Never	20	8%		
	Total	250	100%	20.0	%
4. How frequently do your teachers use technology?	Daily	20	8%		
	Weekly	40	16%		
	Occasionally	50	20%		
	Rarely	80	32%		
	Never	60	24%		
	Total	250	100%	20.0%	

Source: Field Survey 2023

The data in Table 5.1 provides insights into how students perceive their teachers' teaching methods and their impact on academic performance.

Teachers' Teaching Methods: The majority of students (64%) rate their teachers' methods as either "Effective" or "Highly effective." The mean percentage of 20.0% indicates that responses are fairly distributed across all options but with a clear tilt towards positive ratings. This suggests that, as a significant percentage of students appreciate their teachers' methods, others still consider them average or ineffective.

Preferred Teaching Techniques: "Hands-on activities" (36%) and "Group discussions" (32%) are the most preferred teaching techniques, with a mean percentage of 25.0%. This suggests that students prepare interactive and engaging methods over traditional lectures (24%) and multimedia presentations (8%). The preference for active learning techniques reflects the students' desire for more dynamic and participatory classroom environments.

Encouragement of Active Participation: The data shows that while 40% of students believe that their teachers encourage active participation either "Always" or "Often," a significant proportion (32%) report that this happens "Rarely," resulting in a mean percentage of 20.0%. This indicates a polarized experience among

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students regarding classroom engagement, suggesting a need for more consistent encouragement of participation across the board.

Use of Technology: The use of technology in teaching is somewhat inconsistent, with 44% of students indicating that it is used "Rarely" or "Never," and only 24% experiencing it "Daily." The mean percentage of 20.0% reflects this variability. This suggests that while some classrooms integrate technology effectively, there is a substantial number of instances where it is underutilized, pointing to an area that could benefit from improvement.

Table 5.2: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean of the Relationship Between the Size of the Classroom and Students' Academic Performance

S/N	Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)	% Mean	
5.	How would you describe the size of your classroom?	Small (1-20 students)	30	12%		
		Medium (21-30 students)	60	24%		
		Large (31-40 students)	70	28%		
		Very large (>40 students)	90	36%		
		Total	250	100%	25.0	
					%	
6.	Does a large classroom size affect interaction?	Strongly agree	70	28%		
		Agree	90	36%		
		Neutral	40	16%		
		Disagree	30	12%		
		Strongly disagree	20	8%		
Total			250	100%	20.0	
						%
	7.	Does a large classroom size make it difficult to concentrate?	Yes, always	50	20%	
			Often	70	28%	
Sometimes			60	24%		
Rarely			40	16%		
Never			30	12%		

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Total	250	100%	20.0
			%
8. Are there specific challenges in larger classrooms?	90	36%	
	160	64%	
Total	250	100%	50.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5.2 above examines the relationship between classroom size and students' academic performance, providing insights into students' perceptions of how the size of the classroom impacts their learning environment.

Classroom Size: The majority of students (64%) describe their classrooms as either "Large" (28%) or "Very large" (36%). The mean percentage of 25.0% reflects a relatively balanced distribution across all categories, with a noticeable preference for larger classroom sizes. This suggests that many students are accustomed to larger class sizes, which may impact their learning experience differently than smaller classrooms.

Impact on Interaction: When asked if a large classroom size affects interaction, 64% of students "Agree" or "Strongly agree" that it does, indicating a significant concern among students. The mean percentage of 20.0% shows a moderate spread of opinions, with a noticeable majority believing that larger classes hinder interaction. This suggests that larger classroom sizes may be detrimental to student engagement and interaction.

Difficulty in Concentration: The responses indicate that a large classroom size often makes it difficult for students to concentrate, with 48% of students responding "Yes, always" or "Often." The mean percentage of 20.0% aligns with the distribution of responses, highlighting that while concentration issues are a concern, the impact varies among students. This points to a potential area where teaching strategies could be adapted to better support concentration in larger classrooms.

Challenges in Larger Classrooms: A significant majority (64%) of students acknowledge the existence of specific challenges in larger classrooms. The mean percentage of 50.0% reflects a strong agreement across the board, indicating that students generally perceive larger classrooms as more challenging. This suggests that addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the academic experience in larger classrooms.

Table 5.3: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean on the Relationship Between Parents’ Economic Status and Students’ Academic Performance

S/N	Questions	Options	Frequency		Percentage (%)		% Mean
9.	What is your parents' occupation?	Employed	110	44%	Self-employed	80	
		Unemployed	40	16%			
		Other	20	8%			
Total			250		100%	25.0%	
10.	How would you describe your family's economic status?	High	60	24%			
		Middle	100	40%			

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	Low	60	24%	
	Very low	30	12%	
Total		250	100%	25.0%
11. Have financial constraints affected your ability to access learning resources?	Yes, frequently	70	28%	
	Yes, sometimes	100	40%	
	No	80	32%	
Total		250	100%	33.3%
	Yes, strongly believe	90	36%	
	Yes, somewhat believe	80	32%	
	Not sure	50		
	No, do not believe	30	20%	
			12%	

12. Do students from more economically privileged families have an advantage?

Total 250 100% 25.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 5.3 above examines the relationship between parents' economic status and students' academic performance, highlighting how students perceive the impact of their family's financial situation on their education.

Parents' Occupation: The majority of students (76%) reported that their parents are either "Employed" (44%) or "Self-employed" (32%). The mean percentage of 25.0% indicates a moderate spread across all occupational categories. This suggests that most students come from households with a stable income, although a significant portion still comes from unemployed or less economically stable backgrounds.

Family Economic Status: 40% of students describe their family's economic status as "Middle," with an equal number (24%) identifying as either "High" or "Low." The mean percentage of 25.0% reflects a balanced distribution, indicating that students come from a range of economic backgrounds. However, the presence of students from "Low" and "Very low" economic statuses (36% combined) suggests that financial hardship is a reality for a significant portion of the student population.

Impact of Financial Constraints on Access to Learning Resources: A significant 68% of students indicated that financial constraints have affected their ability to access learning resources, either "Frequently" (28%) or "Sometimes" (40%). The higher mean percentage of 33.3% reflects the considerable impact that economic challenges have on students' access to educational resources, underscoring the need for support mechanisms to ensure equal learning opportunities.

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Perception of Advantage for Economically Privileged Students: A majority (68%) of students believe that those from more economically privileged families have an advantage, with 36% strongly believing this to be the case. The mean percentage of 25.0% indicates that this perception is widely held, though some students are unsure or disagree. This suggests a recognition among students of the disparities in academic opportunities tied to economic status.

Table 5.4: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean of the Most Militating Factors that Hinder Students’ Academic Performance

S/N	Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)	% Mean
13.	What is the main factor that hinders your academic performance?	Lack of time management	60	24%	
		Difficulty in understanding subjects	80	32%	
		Exam stress and pressure	90	36%	
		Personal issues	20	8%	
		Total	250	100%	
14.	How do you cope with academic stress during exam periods?	Seek help from teachers/tutors	90	36%	
		Study harder	70	28%	
		Take breaks and practice relaxation techniques	60	24%	
		Ignore stress	20	8%	
		Others	10	4%	
		Total	250	100%	
15.	Which of these factors contributes most to your academic performance?	High-quality teaching	80	32%	
		Supportive environment	90	36%	
		Access to resources	50	20%	
		Family support	30	12%	
		Total	250	100%	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The table 5.4 above presents the frequency, percentage, and mean of the most significant factors that hinder students’ academic performance. The data provides insights into students' challenges and coping mechanisms during their academic journey.

Main Factor Hindering Academic Performance: The majority of students (36%) identified "Exam stress and pressure" as the primary factor hindering their academic performance. This is followed by "Difficulty in understanding subjects" (32%), and "Lack of time management" (24%). Only 8% of students cited "Personal

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issues" as the main factor. The mean percentage of 25.0% reflects a balanced distribution across the different factors, but with a clear emphasis on stress and difficulty with subjects as major hurdles.

Coping with Academic Stress During Exam Periods: A significant number of students (36%) cope with academic stress by "Seeking help from teachers/tutors," indicating that many rely on external support during stressful periods. "Studying harder" is the next most common strategy (28%), followed by "Taking breaks and practicing relaxation techniques" (24%). A small percentage of students (8%) "Ignore stress," while 4% use other unspecified methods. The mean percentage of 20.0% suggests a variety of coping strategies, with a tendency towards seeking help and increasing study efforts during exams.

Factors Contributing Most to Academic Performance: "Supportive environment" (36%) and "High-quality teaching" (32%) are seen as the most significant contributors to academic performance, underscoring the importance of both the learning environment and instructional quality. "Access to resources" (20%) and "Family support" (12%) are also important, though less so than the first two factors. The mean percentage of 25.0% indicates that all these factors are relevant, but the supportive environment and quality of teaching are particularly crucial for student success.

Conclusion

The study on factors militating against students' academic performance in selected senior secondary schools in Yobe State, Nigeria, reveals that various elements, including teaching methods, classroom size, parental economic status, and personal challenges, significantly impact student outcomes. Although the majority of students rate their teachers' methods as effective, there is a strong preference for interactive and engaging teaching techniques, and concerns about the inconsistent use of technology in classrooms. Large classroom sizes are perceived to hinder interaction and concentration, making learning more challenging. Additionally, students from less economically privileged backgrounds face considerable barriers to accessing educational resources, further affecting their academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1. Implement Interactive Teaching Methods:** School administrators should promote and facilitate the adoption of "Hands-on activities" and "Group discussions" by providing training and resources to teachers.
- 2. Enhance Technology Integration:** The Ministry of Education should ensure that schools are adequately equipped with technology. School ICT departments should provide ongoing support and training to teachers for effective technology integration in classrooms.
- 3. Manage Classroom Sizes:** The Ministry of Education should consider policies that limit classroom sizes, where possible. School management should develop strategies to enhance student engagement in large classrooms, such as group work or additional teaching assistants.
- 4. Provide Financial Support:** The government, in collaboration with NGOs, should establish scholarship programs and provide resources to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure equal access to education.
- 5. Stress Management Programs:** School counseling departments should introduce stress management workshops and provide mental health support. Health ministries could partner with schools to offer regular mental health services and awareness programs.

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6. Foster a Supportive Learning Environment: School boards should prioritize highquality teaching and ensure a supportive learning environment by investing in teacher development and student support services. PTAs can support these efforts by actively participating in school activities and offering feedback on student needs.

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