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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Creative Pedagogical Strategies Used in Large Classes for Enhanced Students' Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Misungwi-Mwanza, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the creative pedagogical strategies used in large classes for enhanced students' learning in public secondary schools in Misungwi-Mwanza, Tanzania. The study was guided by one research objectives which were to identify the creative pedagogical strategies used in large classes for enhanced students' learning in public secondary schools in Misungwi district. Moreover, constructivists' learning theory was employed by the study. Furthermore, a mixed research approach and convergent parallel research were used in data collection and analysis. The study targeted 20,261 population thus sampled 175 respondents who answered to questionnaires and interview. SPSS 20th version was employed to analyse the data. Nonetheless, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine reliability of instruments and the reliability was 0.73. The study results shows that pedagogical strategies employed by teachers in large classrooms within Misungwi district, highlighting methods such as group discussions, presentations, and question-and-answer sessions, which are favoured for fostering student engagement. Challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and inadequate resources were identified as significant barriers to effective teaching. The study's conclusion emphasize the importance of interactive teaching methods in enhancing student learning outcomes despite the challenges posed by large classes. Addressing infrastructural and motivational issues is crucial for improving the effectiveness of these pedagogical strategies. Thus, it was recommended that policymakers should focus on reducing student-to-teacher ratios and enhancing educational infrastructure to support effective teaching. Additionally, curriculum developers should integrate interactive and digital literacy components into the curriculum to better prepare students for modern learning environments.

Keywords: Pedagogical Strategies; Large Classes; Students' Learning.

INTRODUCTION

There is a widespread fact that education plays a crucial role in a society's growth. It is considered as backbone to social and economic development because it provides nations with benefits to their citizens' quality of life, health, and food. On the other hand, it should be highlighted that similar to other industries, education faces several challenges that call for immediate action. It is clear to everyone that over the last ten years of the 20th century, the student body in the majority of institutions today has more than doubled. Over the past few decades, education has undergone significant change. More students can now access it than ever before, and formal education is available in a wide

range of subject areas for different types of learners through technology-enabled channels. The United Nations' goal of universal access to basic education by 2015 is another reason for this tripled enrolment (Denis, 2019). This has resulted into large class that are challenging to manage in routine teaching and learning. Dealing with such huge number of students requires creativity in teaching and learning pedagogies. The origin of pedagogical strategies in teaching can be traced back to ancient Greece, where the term “pedagogy” was first used to describe the art of teaching and educating children. The word “pedagogy” comes from the Greek words “Paidos” meaning child and “agogos” meaning leader or guide. Pedagogical strategies were developed by the philosopher Socrates, who believed in the importance of questioning and dialogue in the learning process. Socrates' teaching method, involved asking probing questions to stimulate critical thinking and encourage students to explore their ideas. Today pedagogical is a multidisciplinary field that draws on insights from psychology, sociology, philosophy, and other disciplines to inform effective teaching practices (Paragae, 2023).

Over the past few decades, education has undergone significant change. More students can now access it than ever before, and formal education is available in a wide range of subject areas for different types of learners through technology-enabled channels. This is made possible by the way those pedagogical strategies have changed in tandem with the changing environment. Since the demand for high-quality education is greater than ever, effective pedagogical approaches are essential to delivering high-quality education (Deprez, 2013).

In Nigeria, Asodike and Onyeike (2016) stated that a teacher's ability to establish a well-managed classroom is a prerequisite for successfully leading a large class. The capacity to prepare lessons, implement tactics that improve delivery, and evaluate the teaching and learning processes to teach successfully. Teachers need to understand that based on the pedagogies they choose to use to assist students learn, issues in large courses can be handled successfully. Similarly, Amosa et al. (2015) looked into the instructional tactics used in secondary schools in Nigeria to promote successful teaching and learning. In many secondary schools, it has been determined that effective information delivery for teaching and learning requires the use of student-centred teaching approaches and instructional tactics. Teachers in secondary schools should set aside spaces where students can thoroughly investigate their areas of interest and methods that might support efficient teaching and learning through the application of diverse instructional methodologies.

Jepketer et al. (2015) explained how teachers in Kenya could employ research-based pedagogical strategies to manage students' behaviour and involve them in the teaching and learning process. In addition, as part of tracking students' academic development, teachers ought to conduct ongoing assessments in the classroom. This is a result of pupils squandering teachers' and parents' time by not taking their work seriously. To help pupils discover their other interests and to provide them with additional knowledge if they perform poorly in school, teachers in public secondary schools must expose their students to extracurricular activities. In a similar vein, Manlongat et al. (2021) claimed that large classes negatively impacts teaching and learning because it places a significant burden on teachers in terms of marking, students' lack of focus in class, inadequate resources like textbooks, and teachers' limited ability to use lectures as the primary instructional approach. To assist students in learning, pedagogies such as the utilization of materials and ICT should be used to impact instruction in large classes, build adequate classrooms, and give teachers enough resources.

Moreover, the average class size at the secondary level in most of the developed countries often ranges from 20 to 30 students per class (Leuven & Oosterbeek, 2018). For example, Department of Education Order No. 54, series of 2008 states that a class should have a minimum of 15 pupils and a maximum of 65 students, thus, the average class size in the Philippines is 50 (Cervantes et al., 2022). In South Africa teacher-student ratio is 1:35 for secondary schools (Marais, 2016). Furthermore, Ndethiu et al. (2017) report that classes in Kenyan public secondary schools often consists of 40–59 students. According to these statistics, most African countries have an average student-teacher ratio of 40:1 and any higher than that is regarded as a large class.

In Tanzania, the purpose of teaching pedagogies is to improve the process of teaching and learning. According to the education policy of Tanzania of 2014, fee-free education policy in both primary education and secondary education was introduced. This policy has caused a high enrolment of students in school. This enrolment leads to disturbance in teaching and learning. The average ratio number of secondary students in a classroom is 40:1 (Ministry of Education,

Science and Technology, 2015). This has caused great effects in applying teaching and learning pedagogies. Thus, when the class has more than 40 students, then the class is considered large (Kadelya, 2015). In teaching large classes, pedagogies such as group and pair work, whole-class debates or exercises, role-plays and oral presentations, lectures, and storytelling, can be employed. To effectively transmit knowledge, teachers must be able to adapt to their teaching settings as well as the dynamics of the classroom (Trang, 2015). However, effective pedagogies should be used to deliver high-quality instruction in secondary schools with a big student body (Lukwele, 2016). Kavenuke and Muthann (2021) for example, claimed that critical pedagogy is an important strategy for fostering students' capacity for critical thought. But critical pedagogy necessitates establishing a cordial rapport with pupils and promoting dialogic exchanges. Such strategies result in critical reflection, which guarantees a deeper comprehension of the material being taught. Despite that, the pedagogical strategies are the important aspects that are used in teaching in either small or large classes. The methodologies that are used to deliver knowledge make it difficult for students to learn. Thus, teachers in large classes choose to use the lecture method largely whereby it is not enough for students to learn (Kavenuke & Muthanna, 2021). Therefore, the researcher was interested in investigating the creative pedagogical strategies used in large classes for enhanced students' learning in public secondary schools in Misungwi-Mwanza, Tanzania.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The study was guided by Constructivists' Learning Theory. The theory was propounded by Jean Piaget(1973) and Lev Semionovich Vygotsky (1978) who widely recognized as the most influential developmental psychologists of the 20th Century. According to constructivist theory, people acquire information by actively participating in the learning process. However, according to Piaget (1970, 1977), cognitive development is the result of experimentation and observation made by the mind. On the other hand, Vygotsky (1978) believes that cognitive development is a social process attained through interactions with other educated people in the community (Golder, 2018). In a constructivist setting, a teacher's primary responsibility is to provide the conditions, present the problems, and provide the encouragement needed to let students generate their knowledge from first-hand experience (Efgivia, 2020). As a result, the theory states that teachers should create an environment in which pupils feel comfortable learning based on their experiences. This theory acknowledges that learners come to the classroom with pre-existing knowledge and beliefs, which shape how they interpret and integrate new information. In practice, teaching pedagogies based on constructivism often involve techniques such as problem-based, project-based, and collaborative learning. These methods encourage students to actively participate in their own learning process, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and deeper understanding of concepts.

Empirical Literature Review

In the USA, Abulhul (2021) conducted a qualitative study on Teaching Strategies for Enhancing Student learning. The study results demonstrated that there are five teaching-effective strategies. By using these strategies, teachers can better address the requirements of their pupils while also encouraging their brains to learn and grow. The techniques include brief lectures to bring the lesson back to the students' attention and stimulate their minds to generate ideas based on their experiences from the previous day, group brainstorming sessions that help students learn how to collaborate and respect one another's opinions, group reports that help students become familiar with the process of writing a report as a way to wrap up a group meeting, technology-based activities that enhance students' educational abilities by expanding their own learning, and PowerPoint presentations that help students review the material covered in class.

In the Philippines, Cardino and Cruz (2020) conducted a study on analyzing the influence of learning styles and teaching strategies on academic performance in mathematics. Surveys were conducted on 277 randomly selected grade 9 students and five purposively sample mathematics teachers. The majority of student responders, according to the findings, combine independent, collaborative and dependent learning methods. Based on multiple regression research, the only learning style that significantly affects grade 9 students' academic achievement is the independent style. Academic performance was found to be significantly impacted by four teaching strategies: integrated learning, deductive method, inductive approach, and cooperative learning. Teachers can create several learning techniques to

assist students in improving their learning for better performance by taking into account the learning styles of their students in their classes.

However in Africa, Essel et al. (2015) conducted a study on ways of improving classroom teaching to enhance students' learning in Ghana. The results show that more than 70% of students are familiar with some kind of instructional methodology. Additionally, because students are not familiar with some of the newest technology-based teaching methods, the researchers offer some additional suggestions that should be taken into consideration to improve staff productivity and student learning. Moreover, the teaching methodologies that are frequently used in teaching and learning processes are lectures, discussion/brainstorming, blended, media literacy, face-to-face sessions, visual aids, group presentations, question and answer, assignments, role play, activity, coaching as well as snowballing. This implies that these techniques are mostly used in Ghanaian schools and are preferred by the teachers. These strategies encourage the active participation of students in learning their activities and make learning more engaging and enjoyable for both students and teachers.

In Tanzania, Senyagwa 2021) conducted a study concerning the challenges of teaching, and learning in large class size in Ilala municipality. The study adopted qualitative and a total of 125 interviewees were interviewed. Qualitative data were analyzed by the use of inductive reasoning content analysis in order to understand social reality of the phenomenon. Quantitative data were descriptively analyzed and the finding presented in form of charts and tables. The findings revealed that the overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning materials, low motivation by teachers, low students' performances, selection of teaching methods, teachersstudents' interactions, students' assessments, marking students' works, lack of incentive packages for teachers, low academic concentration among students, poor supervision, were main challenges and difficulties of teaching and learning in large classes. The study concludes by saying challenges and difficulties of teaching and learning in large classes are mainly pedagogical and management related. Therefore, it is practical to have positive viewpoint on large classes and adapt effective teaching and learning methods. Skilled teachers coupled with studentscentered teaching and learning approach and adequate supplies of teaching and learning materials are important in resolving large classes challenges.

METHODOLOGY

The research employed a mixed methodology combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of pedagogical strategies in Misungwi District, Tanzania. A convergent parallel design allowed simultaneous data collection through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, targeting a population of 20,261 individuals, including students, teachers, and education officials. A calculated sample size of 175 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula, with purposive sampling for educational leaders and random sampling for teachers and students to ensure representation. Data collection tools underwent rigorous validity and reliability testing, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of 0.73. Data analysis utilized SPSS version 20 for quantitative results and thematic analysis for qualitative insights, ultimately facilitating a robust examination of how pedagogical practices affect learning outcomes in large classrooms. Ethical considerations were paramount, with informed consent obtained, confidentiality ensured, and transparency in reporting maintained.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

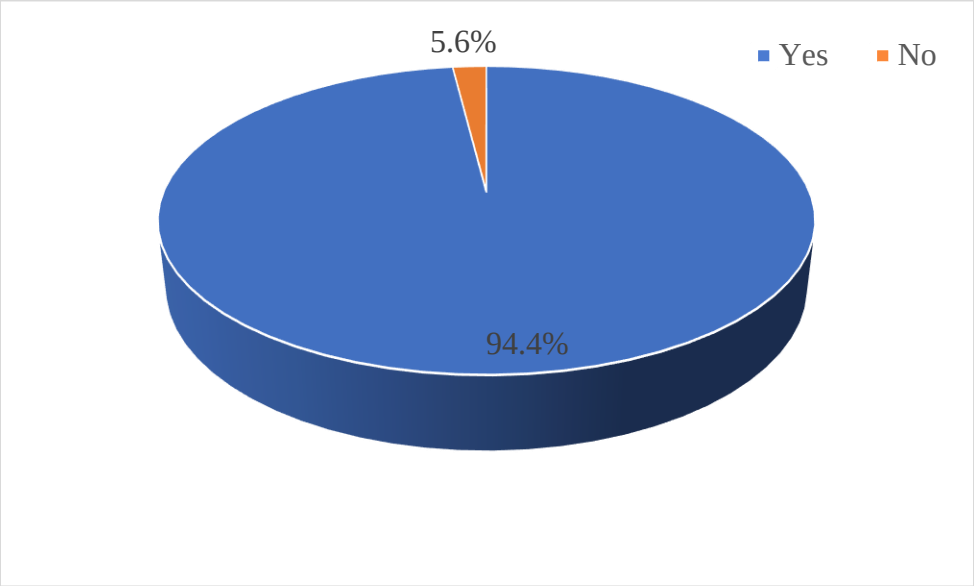
The Pedagogical Strategies Used to Enhance Students Learning in Large Classes

The first objective sought to find out pedagogical strategies used to enhance students learning in large classes. The participants' teachers through open-ended questions included in the questionnaire pointed out and briefly explained the pedagogical strategies they use to enhance students learning in large classes. In doing this teachers were first asked to describe the pedagogical strategies that are used in teaching in large classes. In this question, most of the teachers suggested question and answer method and group discussion method. Some of the teachers proposed a lecture method which is not recommended to be used by the Ministry of Education. They attempt this method to overcome large classes. The rest of the methods were used in rare cases table 4.4 below describes the pedagogical strategies that are used by teachers in teaching large classes in secondary school.

Application of Modern Pedagogical Strategies

Teachers were asked if they apply any pedagogical strategies during their teaching process and their responses were as follows.

Figure 1. Application of Pedagogical Strategies (n-52).



Source: Researcher (2024).

From Figure 4.1 above, the majority of the respondents which is 94.4% agreed that teachers use modern pedagogical strategies in the teaching and learning process. The teacher from station B declared that they used pedagogical strategies especially discussion methods questions and answers, presentation, lecture methods, and brainstorming this helped them to deliver easily the knowledge to the learners. While, only 5.6% said no, they do not apply pedagogical strategies in the teaching and learning process.

Through interviews, the respondents lamented that a method like a lecture method is not recommended but they use it to overcome large classes, also some methods like blended and media literacy need training and improvement of infrastructure like computer laboratory. It is from the majority response that said 'yes', there are pedagogical strategies used in teaching large classes. Therefore, the head of school B said:

> Yes, there are pedagogical strategies. They are defined as different methods used in the teaching and learning process. These strategies include group discussion, lecture methods, presentation, blended methods, and question-and-answer methods (Interview A, July 2024).

This implies that pedagogical strategies are important in improving instruction and learning because they present varied ways of engaging the learner. Different modes of instruction, such as group discussions and blended learning, help deal with different learning styles for better understanding. Techniques such as presentations and question-and-answer sessions raise the level of participation and critical thinking among learners. The results above align with those of Gombo (2017), who found that educators use a variety of instructional techniques. These included interactive teaching, peer, station, simulation, task teaching, cooperative learning, problem-solving, lectures, and one-on-one training.

Modern Pedagogical Strategies Used by Teachers in Large Classes

Teachers stated that among the above-mentioned teaching strategies some were used more frequently than others. However, group discussions were utilized to foster collaborative learning and allow students to engage with the material and each other. In a large class, breaking students into smaller groups can make it easier for everyone to participate and express their ideas. Thinking-ink-pair-sharing exercises Students can make this even better by thinking about a question on their own, talking about it with a partner, and then sharing their thoughts with the class as a whole. This approach encourages active engagement and a deeper knowledge. Presentations provide opportunities for students to research topics in depth and develop their public speaking skills, while also allowing the rest of the class to learn from their peers. These strategies make large classes more interactive and engaging, the teacher picks students randomly to present hence

these make active participation in their group.

It was also discovered that question-and-answer methods and the lecture method are also common in large classes and they are said to be dominant in large classes. The sessions enable students to clarify doubts and explore topics in more detail, encouraging critical thinking and immediate feedback. The lecture method, though traditional, can be effective if supplemented with multimedia aids and periodic interactive elements to maintain student attention and involvement. It seems that teachers are not aware that the lecture method is not recommended in secondary school as they allow spoon-feeding and limit critical thinking to the students. By incorporating these diverse strategies, teachers can create a dynamic learning environment that addresses the challenges of large classes and enhances overall student learning outcomes. Similar to what Essel et al. (2015) provide, teaching methodologies that are frequently used in teaching and learning processes are lectures, discussion/brainstorming, group presentations, question and answer and group assignments. These methodologies contribute to students learning thus leading to better academic achievement among students.

Some of the methods like graphics, blended and media literacy are costive to implement and they need high technology for teachers. During interview sessions, the head of school A stated:

> Yes, I believe that pedagogical strategies can be adapted to address large classes. By incorporating technology and active learning techniques, we can ensure that each student remains engaged and receives personalized attention. Also, fostering collaboration in learning can help in managing large classes effectively (Interview, July 2024).

The quotation above implies that implementing these strategies can lead to improve students' outcomes and a more flexible classroom environment. This allows more use of efficient resources, making it easier to handle challenges in large classes. As stated by Abulhul (2021), teachers can better address the requirements of their pupils while also encouraging their brains to learn and grow when using pedagogical strategies. Furthermore, there were 7 Likert scale questions that teachers responded to reveal the pedagogical strategies which they apply in different secondary schools in Misungwi district, as indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Teachers Response Showing Pedagogical Strategies Used by Teachers (n=54).*
Key: SD-strongly disagree, D-disagree, N-neutral, A-agree, SA-strongly agree

Items	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Brainstorming technique	2	3.7	0	0	12	22.2	24	44.4	15	27.8
Discussion	1	1.9	1	1.9	5	9.3	19	35.2	27	50.0
Presentation	1	1.9	4	7.4	10	18.5	19	35.2	19	35.2
Lecture method	4	7.4	6	11.1	14	25.9	13	24.1	16	29.1
Question and answer method	0	0	2	3.7	11	20.4	25	46.3	15	27.8
Project designing method	4	7.4	5	9.3	12	22.2	24	44.4	8	14.8
Media literacy	9	16.7	4	7.4	14	25.9	17	31.5	9	16.7
Blended learning	6	11.1	7	13.0	16	29.6	20	37.0	4	7.4
Graphics and organizer	7	13.0	6	11.1	17	31.5	15	27.8	8	14.8

Source: Field Data (2024).

Table 4.4 presented data on the effectiveness of various teaching methods based on participant responses. For the brainstorming technique, 3.7% strongly disagreed, 0% disagreed, 22.2% were neutral, 44.4% agreed, and 27.8% strongly agreed with its effectiveness. In terms of discussion, 1.9% strongly disagreed, 1.9% disagreed, 9.3% were neutral, 35.2% agreed, and 50.0% strongly agreed. The presentation method had 1.9% strongly disagreeing, 7.4% disagreeing, 18.5% neutral, 35.2% agreeing, and another 35.2% strongly agreeing. For the lecture method, 7.4% strongly disagreed, 11.1% disagreed, 25.9% were neutral, 24.1% agreed, and 29.1% strongly agreed. The question and answer method showed no strong

disagreement, 3.7% disagreement, 20.4% neutrality, 46.3% agreement, and 27.8% strong agreement.

For the project designing method, 7.4% strongly disagreed, 9.3% disagreed, 22.2% were neutral, 44.4% agreed, and 14.8% strongly agreed. Media literacy had 16.7% strongly disagreeing, 7.4% disagreeing, 25.9% neutrality, 31.5% agreement, and 16.7% strong agreement. Blended learning showed 11.1% strong disagreement, 13.0% disagreement, 29.6% neutrality, 37.0% agreement, and 7.4% strong agreement. For graphics and organizers, 13.0% strongly disagreed, 11.1% disagreed, 31.5% were neutral, 27.8% agreed, and 14.8% strongly agreed. These responses indicated varied perceptions of the effectiveness of each teaching method among the participants. As a result, in relation to constructivist learning theory, the theory posits that learners construct their own understanding and knowledge through experiences and reflection. Constructivist learning emphasizes active engagement, collaboration, and real-world application. Adidul (2024) suggested the importance of implementing effective strategies to promote student success as well as the possibility of improving teaching practices and increasing student involvement, which ultimately contribute to enhanced learning outcomes.

The high levels of agreement and strong agreement for methods such as brainstorming, discussion, and question and answer suggest that participants find these interactive and participatory methods effective. These methods align well with constructivist principles, as they encourage students to actively engage, collaborate, and reflect on their learning. Conversely, methods such as media literacy and blended learning, which received lower agreement ratings, may require more effective implementation or better alignment with constructivist strategies to be perceived as effective. Overall, the data highlights the importance of employing teaching methods that promote active and collaborative learning, as endorsed by constructivist theory. These findings underscore the need for educators to continuously refine and adapt their teaching practices to better align with constructivist principles, thereby enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Nonetheless, students also responded to the same items and their responses summarized in Table 3 below were as follows:

Table 3. *Students' Response Showing Pedagogical Strategies Used by Teachers (n=69).*
Key: SD-strongly disagree, D-disagree, N-neutral, A-agree, SA-strongly agree

Items	**SD**		**D**		**N**		**A**		**SA**	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
Brainstorming technique	14	20.3	9	13.0	10	14.5	24	34.8	12	17.4
Discussion	0	0	0	0	1	1.4	8	11.6	60	87.0
Presentation	0	0	0	0	10	14.5	21	30.4	38	55.1
Lecture method	21	30.4	9	13.0	12	17.4	9	13.0	18	26.1
Question and answer method	3	4.3	2	2.9	8	11.6	8	11.6	48	69.6
Project designing method	18	26.1	8	11.6	12	17.4	15	21.7	16	23.2
Media literacy	4	5.8	2	2.9	4	5.8	15	21.7	44	63.8
Blended learning	27	39.1	7	10.1	16	23.2	14	20.3	5	7.2
Graphics and organizer	9	13.0	8	11.6	15	21.7	11	15.9	26	37.7

Source: Researcher (2024).

The table presents data on various teaching techniques and their perceived effectiveness among students. For each technique, the frequency and percentage (%) of responses in each category were provided. The results revealed a wide range of opinions, with some techniques receiving strong support while others show a more mixed reception. The discussion method stood out with a significant 87% of respondents strongly agreeing on its effectiveness, with no one disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Similarly, the question-and-answer method also garners substantial support, with 69.6% strongly agreeing and only a small fraction of respondents disagreeing.

In contrast, techniques like brainstorming and blended learning show more varied responses. For brainstorming, 34.8% agree, but a notable 20.3% strongly disagree. The data for media literacy, blended learning, and graphics and organizer methods highlights varying perceptions of their effectiveness. Media literacy is highly regarded, with 63.8% of

respondents strongly agreeing and 21.7% agreeing with its effectiveness. Only a small portion of respondents expressed disagreement or neutrality, indicating a strong consensus on the value of media literacy in education. In a similar vein, brainstorming enhanced students' learning, according to Syukri et al. (2023). It is said to stimulate learners' minds to activate creative thinking skills, build new ideas by connecting new knowledge with old, make connections between different concepts, and form new knowledge to a new field in order for learners to strike a balance because it discusses short- and long-term memory.

Blended learning, however, shows a different trend. It has the highest percentage of strong disagreement at 39.1%, indicating significant resistance. While 23.2% of respondents are neutral, only 20.3% agree and a mere 7.2% strongly agree on its effectiveness. This distribution suggests that blended learning is less favoured or perhaps perceived as more difficult to implement effectively compared to other methods. The graphics and organizer technique receives a more mixed response. While 37.7% of respondents strongly agree and 15.9% agree with its effectiveness, 21.7% remain neutral. Disagreement is relatively moderate, with 13.0% strongly disagreeing and 11.6% disagreeing. This indicates that while many find graphics and organizers useful, there is still a significant portion of respondents who are either indifferent or skeptical about their effectiveness. Through the interview, the head of school ‘A’, said:

> Despite other strategies employed by teachers in students' learning, there are other methods like moveable boards. This helps to reach a large number of students at once because teachers are able to reach every student and students will be free to communicate with teachers. (Interview, July 2024).

This shows that the use of moveable boards as an instructional aid represents a move toward classrooms that are far more interactive and inclusive, where teachers are able to provide attention to more students simultaneously. This will enable free communication between students and teachers, in turn providing them with a sense of community and working together on the learning experience. More than that, the integration of such innovative tools in classrooms can result in increased student participation and understanding, which can lead to better educational outcomes. On the other side, when interviewed the DEO said:

> There are different methods that are used to assess the effectiveness of students understanding in large classes. These methods include group work, test re-test method, quizzes and examinations. These methods can help to determine if students have understood what they were taught in the classrooms. Additionally, these methods can provide meaningful feedback to teachers, these can determine areas of improvement (Interview, July 2024).

The quotation above indicates that utilizing a variety of assessment methods, such as group work and quizzes, allows educators to gauge student understanding effectively in large classrooms and pinpoint areas needing attention. Moreover, this approach not only provides valuable feedback for instructional improvement but also supports tailored teaching strategies to enhance overall student learning outcomes.

Likewise, Egara and Mosimege (2024) supported that learners utilizing blended learning improved their achievement and retention scores more than learners tutored utilizing conventional means. This means that adopting blended learning approaches can enhance student achievement and retention more effectively than traditional teaching methods.

This shows that different teaching techniques have varying levels of acceptance and effectiveness among students, with some methods being more universally accepted and others facing significant resistance. For instance, the high effectiveness ratings for the discussion and question-and-answer methods suggest that interactive and participatory approaches are highly valued by students, which could guide educators to incorporate more of these techniques into their teaching practices. On the other hand, the mixed responses to brainstorming and the notable resistance to blended learning highlight the need for careful implementation and possibly additional support or training for these methods to be effective. The strong support for media literacy underscores its importance in modern education, suggesting that integrating digital literacy into the curriculum can be beneficial. Despite the resistance to blended learning, the findings from Egara and Mosimege (2024) indicate that when effectively implemented, blended learning can significantly improve student achievement and retention compared to traditional methods, emphasizing the need for

educators to address the challenges and leverage the benefits of this approach. Overall, the data suggests that a balanced, well-supported integration of various teaching methods, tailored to the needs and preferences of students, can enhance educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant efforts and challenges associated with applying effective pedagogical strategies in large classrooms within Misungwi district secondary schools. Teachers are employing a variety of methods, such as group discussions, think-pair-share activities, oral presentations, and question-and-answer sessions, to enhance student engagement and learning despite the limitations of large classes. These interactive strategies are largely favoured by both teachers and students for their ability to foster collaborative and participatory learning environments. However, the study also reveals substantial challenges, including overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching resources, language barriers, and low teacher motivation, all of which hinder the effectiveness of these pedagogical strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Makers should implement policies to reduce student-to-teacher ratios in classrooms, ensuring a more manageable classes that allows for individualized attention and effective pedagogical practices. Also, they should allocate adequate funding to improve educational infrastructure, including the construction of more schools and classrooms to accommodate growing student populations. Ensure the provision of essential teaching and learning materials. Moreover, curriculum developers should revise and update the curriculum to include more interactive and student-centered learning activities that align with constructivist learning principles. Furthermore, they should incorporate digital literacy and ICT competencies into the curriculum, ensuring students are prepared for the modern digital world. Provide guidelines for effective integration of technology into teaching practices. Also, they should develop curriculum materials that support bilingual or multilingual education, addressing language barriers and promoting English language proficiency from the primary level.

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