

## STUDENT'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LARGE-SIZED GROUPS IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF UZBEKISTAN

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**Annotation.** *This article investigates the multifaceted effects of large class sizes on student academic performance, teacher effectiveness, and overall educational quality within the context of Uzbekistan's education system. Drawing on both international research and local insights, including in-class experiments and feedback from educators, the author highlights how overcrowded classrooms hinder learning, reduce teaching quality, and contribute to student behavioral issues. The study contrasts large public-school classes with smaller private school environments, emphasizing the benefits of class size reduction. It also connects low teacher salaries to systemic issues in educational quality, advocating for strategic reforms such as increased educator compensation, construction of more schools, and policy attention to class size reduction. The findings reinforce the argument that smaller class sizes can lead to higher academic achievement, more effective teaching, and better classroom management.*

**Keywords:** *Class size, academic performance, educational quality, uzbekistan education system, overcrowded classrooms, student behavior, teacher effectiveness, private vs public schools, education policy, language learning, peer influence, teacher salary, interactive teaching methods, classroom management, student engagement.*

A pupil's academic performance, student behavior, and quality of teaching are the three things that can be affected negatively in large-sized groups in educational system of Uzbekistan.

Uzbek schools have a long history of educational systems, spanning centuries from the "Madrasa" to our modern schools of today. Education is one of the essential ways to improve a country's economy, diplomacy, and other sectors. However, there are many factors contributing to the poor quality of education in this country. A major factor is large class size, which is believed to have negative consequences on students' academic and behavioral performance.

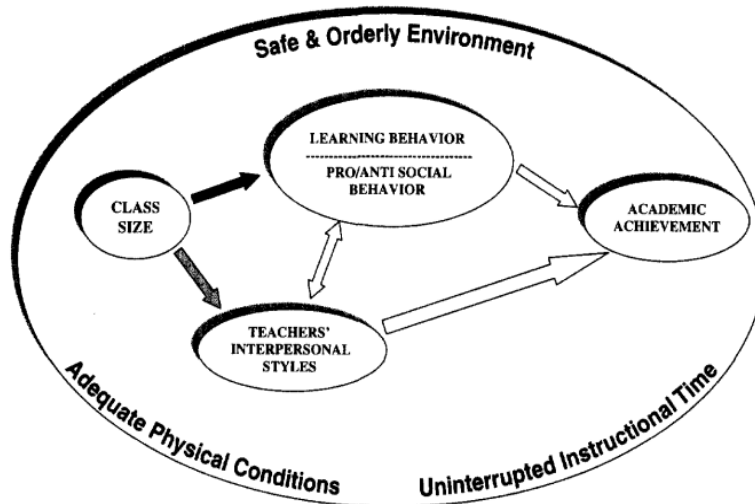
However, Min Shi (2019) claims that some empirical studies have found no statistically significant relationship between class size and student achievement. According to most parents, teachers, and professors, students (both pupils and high school students) can receive more attention and time from their teachers in smaller-sized groups.

The decline in academic performance among students in large classes is becoming a prevalent issue in this technological era. While The Ministry of Education discusses various factors to potentially improve the education system, a crucial aspect often overlooked by professionals is the impact of class size on student learning performance. Research has demonstrably shown that studying in a large class leads to several negative consequences.

Firstly, studying in larger groups hinders students' academic performance across all subjects due to distractions, lack of attention, and limited communication opportunities. In simpler terms, classroom noise can force teachers to focus on maintaining order, while students may struggle to hear the teacher clearly. Penny Fidler's (2001) research found that third-grade English language learners (ELL) with three years of Class Size Reduction (CSR) experienced significantly larger gains (2.02) in reading compared to students with only one year of CSR (0.16).

This finding underscores the importance of smaller groups for language learners, facilitating conversation practice in a new language and promoting a more conducive learning environment where individual responses are actively encouraged.

During my research presentation, I inquired about my audience's experiences with noisy group environments. The majority expressed negative opinions, aligning with my research findings on the detrimental impact of noise on academic performance. According to Alycer Olivera, excessive noise in classrooms can trigger various negative consequences, including stress, attentional difficulties, delayed neuropsychomotor development, aggressive behavior, and ultimately, a decline in learning performance. Several sub-factors contribute to this decline,



*1. Picture is taken by Jeremy D. Finn and Gina M. Pannozzo, 2003 The "Why's" of Class Size: Student Behavior in Small Classes*

with distraction being a primary culprit. This implies that students' attention in class is being diverted when class size is large due to various distractions (Yusuf, Onifade & Bello, 2016). In large groups, active conversations between teachers and students are common, causing some pupils to lose focus on their studies. In addition, when a class is overcrowded, it becomes challenging to maintain order and effectively manage the classroom environment. The teacher faces difficulties in identifying students who need additional support and guidance due to the larger number of individuals present. Noise of the teacher makes the class noisier simultaneously responses will be louder. Moreover, the physical limitations of a crowded classroom restrict the teacher's movement, hindering their ability to connect with students on a personal level and build rapport. These factors are increasing the fame of private schools. Many parents are willing to pay substantial amounts for their children to be educated in small classes (Iacovou, Maria, 2001). In Uzbekistan, a number of private schools have more students compared to state schools like: Sodiqov's school, Pifagor, Cambridge, Registan schools for offering better quality of education and extra languages. However, conducting experiments to definitively clarify this issue can be expensive, prompting me to primarily rely on existing data sets.

Class size is a crucial factor influencing student instruction, learning, and ultimately, their academic success.

A large body of research consistently demonstrates a negative correlation between class size and student achievement.

According to Min Shi (2019)'s research, Student's math skills cannot be affected by the group size, but when it comes to the reading skills, noticeable change can be seen. In addition, most of the language teachers who work in the regions of Uzbekistan complain about lacking

time to focus on their students and they are showing low academic performance for not having enough classes or teachers to divide groups in the lesson of modern languages.

Overcrowded classrooms are increasingly recognized as a contributing factor to a global educational issue: poor student behavior, impacting not just their peers in schools but also their interactions within university settings. This phenomenon has prompted significant research and debate among educators and policymakers. As Min Shi (2019) notes in his research, the vast majority of existing studies on class size have focused primarily on elementary and secondary schools. This leaves significant gaps in our understanding of the effects of class size in the higher education context. It is undeniable that student interaction fosters the development of both social and communicative skills. This interaction allows students to become more comfortable and confident in expressing themselves, ultimately minimizing their fear of public speaking. Parents and teachers frequently express concerns regarding the potential for negative peer influence in large, diverse classrooms. When students from varied family backgrounds are placed together, there is a risk of them adopting undesirable behaviors from one another. Research by Yui Nakamura and Smitha Dev (2022) suggests that associating with friends who lack academic focus can negatively influence students, leading to neglect of their studies and ultimately, poor academic performance. Additionally, peer group dynamics can contribute to bullying, particularly when students assume leadership roles within the group. In essence, the pressure exerted by large group settings can significantly impact student behavior and academic achievement. This experience highlighted the significant challenges posed by peer pressure on student behavior. In fact, according to the research of Finn & Pannozzo (2003), students in small classes were less likely than students in large classes to fool around, engage in inappropriate behavior, or disrupt the work of other students, and they had fewer referrals for discipline problems.

Having many students in the class may have both positive and negative effects and it has many more problems than benefits (Chand, 2023). The challenge associated with large class sizes is a decline in teaching quality. In such environments, not only students but also teachers can experience negative impacts. The sheer effort required to manage and engage a large group can demotivate teachers, leading them to abandon interactive methods and innovative projects. The reduction of pupils' number in class creates the opportunity to teach in more modern and productive ways (M. Badalova, 2022). One explanation, given often by researchers and practitioners, is that teachers change their teaching strategies when class sizes are reduced, providing more individualized instruction and higher quality instruction generally (Finn & Pannozzo, 2003).

A. Hanushek (1998) mentions that a substantial body of research indicates that teacher quality is one of the most significant determinants of student achievement. Most teachers working with overcrowded classes struggle to maintain the quality of their instruction. The additional time and resources necessary to prepare interactive lessons and materials for large groups often lead to financial strain for educators. To illustrate this, I conducted an experiment involving a game called "Crocodile" with two seventh-grade classes. The first group had 32 students, while the second had 20. Both groups were divided into teams of four for the game.

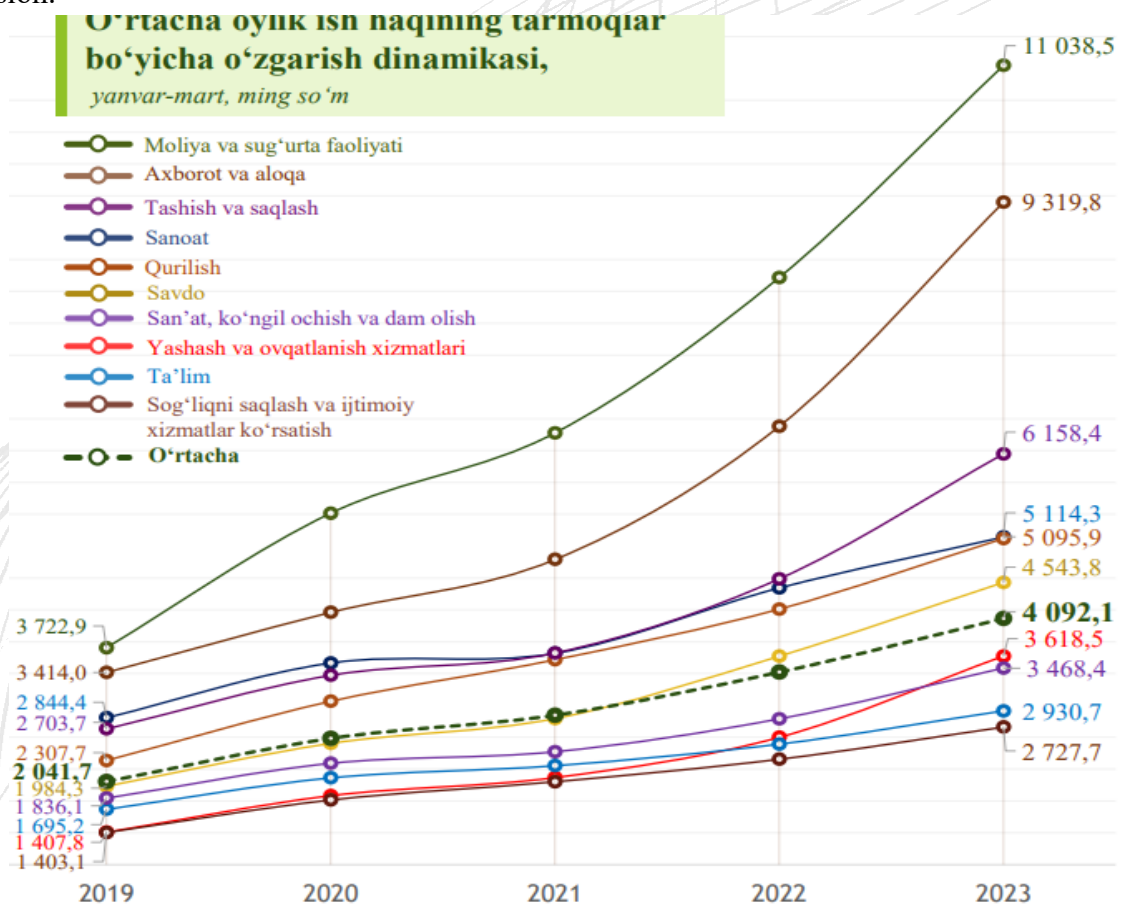
After completing the activity, I asked students to complete a four-question questionnaire about their experience. In the first group, 7 students expressed dissatisfaction due to insufficient participation time, while 13 commented on the disruptive noise levels. Conversely, the second group exhibited minimal such complaints.

As an educator, I strongly prefer smaller class sizes like the second group. They are easier to manage and allow for more effective integration of interactive methods within the 45-minute lesson duration. This ensures that every student has the opportunity to participate and complete all tasks.

Moreover, managing large classes and meticulously checking assignments consume a significant amount of teacher time, often exceeding their designated working hours. This workload contributes to the widespread belief among educators that maintaining control in large classes is challenging. The majority of the teachers believe that it is tough to control students in large classes; they do nonsense activities at the back of the class, and we cannot see what they are doing (Chand, 2023). The overwhelming volume of homework and essays can also lead to reluctance among teachers, with some resorting to ignoring assignments and exams altogether.

This lack of individual attention and feedback negatively impacts student learning and engagement. As Bahodur Chand (2023) notes, providing individual feedback in a large class is almost impossible. This lack of accountability further encourages students to neglect their homework responsibilities.

Another significant factor contributing to the decline in teaching quality is low teacher salaries in Uzbekistan. Compared to other professions, educators in the country receive significantly lower compensation. This inevitably diminishes the prestige of the teaching profession, discouraging many talented individuals from pursuing careers in education. As stated by B. Maqsuda (2022), "If teachers' salaries are not competitive, they will not invest their time and money in self-education or, more precisely, leave the profession and seek employment that better utilizes, recognizes and pays more for their expertise." This lack of financial incentive and recognition demotivates teachers, hindering their effectiveness and commitment to their profession.



Source: *Yuridik shaxs maqomiga ega bo'lgan korxona va tashkilotlarda ishlovchi xodimlarning o'rtacha oylik nominal hisoblangan ish haqi (2023 yil yanvar-mart) (stat.uz)*image

The severity of this issue is further highlighted by the table shown in the accompanying.

It clearly demonstrates that the average salary for teachers (represented by the blue line in the ninth row) falls significantly below those of other sectors like industry, art, and trade. This disparity creates a sense of inequity and dissatisfaction among educators, leading them to avoid larger class sizes due to the additional workload without any corresponding increase in compensation.

Teachers expressed that classroom management was much easier with a small class and there were generally fewer behavior problems. (Finn & Pannozzo,2003). To address this critical issue and attract qualified individuals to the teaching profession, it is imperative to prioritize significant increases in teacher salaries.

This investment in the education sector will not only enhance the quality of instruction but also attract and retain talented educators, ultimately fostering a more empowered and motivated teaching force. Reducing class sizes across all schools would significantly enhance student engagement and motivation, leading to improved academic performance.

Yui Nakamura and Smitha Dev (2022) write in their article that Smaller class sizes facilitate diverse teaching methods, including interactive learning and personalized assignments, which are often infeasible in large classrooms.

In conclusion, large class sizes pose a significant challenge to the educational system in Uzbekistan, negatively impacting students, teachers, and the overall learning environment. By strategically reducing class sizes, constructing additional schools, and incentivizing skilled educators through competitive salaries, we can overcome this obstacle and cultivate a thriving educational landscape for future generations.

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