

**THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE EFFECTS OF OVERCROWDING AMONG
UNDERGRADUATES OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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BENIN CITY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this project work was carried out by Mary Olajumoke AMAO with the Matriculation Number EDU2102495, in the Department of Health Safety and Environmental Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of B.Sc (Ed.) Degree in Environmental Education.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God almighty.

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the knowledge of the effects of overcrowding among undergraduates of University of Benin. Three research questions were asked and answered during the study using frequencies and percentages. The survey research design was adopted for this study; this is because the data is collected from a sample population with specific characteristics.

The Population of the study will be 43,679 Students. It comprises of the 15 faculties of the University of Benin. The target population comprises of full-time undergraduate students of the various faculties during the 2024/2025. Out of this population two hundred and fourth (240) sample was selected from the total population using a multi-stage sampling procedure. This approach was used because it allows the researcher to reduce the large population into smaller, manageable units while ensuring fairness and inclusiveness. The instrument used to collect data for the study was fifteen items self-structured questionnaire. The instrument for the data collection was personally administered by the researcher to the respondents. The researcher explained to the respondents how to indicate their views on each item.

On the basis of the findings made in the study, the study concludes that undergraduate students at the University of Benin possess a relatively high level of knowledge of the effects of overcrowding, and this knowledge is informed by their direct experiences within the campus environment. The researcher recommends that university of Benin should prioritize the expansion of classroom blocks, lecture halls, and hostel facilities to accommodate the increasing student population and reduce overcrowding. Also, the researcher recommends that management should adopt strategies for more efficient utilization of existing facilities, such as flexible lecture schedules and the use of multipurpose spaces. Finally, adequate ventilation systems, sanitation facilities, and health awareness programs should be provided in hostels and classrooms to mitigate the health risks associated with overcrowding.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The demand for university education has led to an increase in undergraduate population, especially in federal government-owned universities in Nigeria. This surge places intense pressure on the carrying capacity of available infrastructure, including student housing, environmental health, and safety systems (Okolie, Nwajiuba, Binuomote, & Elom, 2022). The effects are most evident in overcrowded student residential halls and rooms, which often lack adequate space and basic amenities. Poor living conditions can become a mechanism of social stratification, impacting the well-being and safety of undergraduates (Kenneth & Chukwunwike, 2020). Stressors linked to the university environment, such as overcrowding, are known to affect students quality of life and may have long-term consequences throughout their life-course (Broton, 2020).

Overcrowding has become a persistent challenge in many federal universities due to the growing student population and rising demand for higher education, without a corresponding increase in infrastructure and resources (Adebayo & Oyekanmi, 2019). Nigeria's higher education system, one of the largest in Africa, includes a wide range of institutions designed to cater to the educational aspirations of its youth (World Bank, 2020).

However, the dramatic rise in university enrollment driven by population growth, high educational aspirations, and the widespread belief that university education is essential for career advancement has resulted in many universities operating beyond their capacity (Akinyemi & Ofem, 2016). The consequences are visible in overcrowded lecture halls, inadequate learning materials, and overstretched resources.

Overcrowding, defined as the presence of more people in a space than is safe or comfortable, contributes to a range of negative outcomes for students (Broton, 2020). Students at Nigerian public universities face challenges related to housing instability and unaffordability. Hostel facilities in many African public universities, including Nigeria, are in poor condition often overcrowded, underfunded, and lacking essential amenities (Chikafalimani, Kibwami, & Moyo, 2021). The ineffective hostel management in Nigerian universities has been linked to poor maintenance, lack of modern facilities, and inadequate responsiveness to student complaints (Kenneth & Chukwunwike, 2020).

Affordable accommodation is one of the most critical needs for students, and addressing the housing crisis requires a public-private partnership model that can help improve the poor student housing system (Ike & Baldwin, 2020). When student housing becomes overcrowded, it can lead to interpersonal conflicts, stress, frustration, insecurity, and even antisocial behavior. These factors may negatively affect students' mental and social health and ultimately lead to poor academic performance if not addressed (Okolie et

al., 2022). For example, in the University of Ibadan, the number of female students far exceeds the capacity of available hostel spaces, resulting in overuse of shared facilities such as toilets, reading rooms, and recreational spaces.

In the classroom, overcrowding can be just as detrimental. Large class sizes have been shown to interfere with the quality of education by reducing student-teacher interaction and hindering the development of meaningful academic relationships (Adegbite, 2016). Students in overcrowded classes may experience dissatisfaction with their learning environment and reduced academic engagement. Moreover, the stress associated with such environments can further hinder academic performance. The situation is worsened by pre-existing infrastructural deficits in many federal universities. Lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and hostels often lack the capacity to support the increasing number of students (Adebayo & Oyekanmi, 2019). These shortages not only disrupt academic life but also raise serious concerns about equity and access to quality education.

Furthermore, the effects of overcrowding on students' learning are often underestimated or misunderstood by policymakers, academic administrators, and other key stakeholders. There is significant variation in the understanding of how overcrowding affects students' academic experiences and outcomes (Ajadi, Salawu, & Adeoye, 2018). This study seeks to bridge that knowledge gap by exploring students' awareness of the effects of overcrowding in federal universities in Nigeria. By investigating how

overcrowding influences academic achievement, engagement, and satisfaction, this research will provide valuable insights that can inform effective policy interventions and institutional reforms aimed at improving the quality of higher education in the country.

Statement of the Problem

This study is motivated by the pervasive problem of overcrowding in Federal Universities across Nigeria. Ideally, these institutions should provide a conducive learning environment with adequate resources and infrastructure to support a healthy student-to-faculty ratio, ensuring quality education and student well-being. However, the current reality is starkly different. Federal Universities (university of Benin included) are severely overcrowded, leading to insufficient classroom space, inadequate library facilities, limited access to laboratory equipment, and a strained student support system. While government initiatives such as increased funding and the establishment of new universities have been implemented to address the issue, these measures have not kept pace with the rising demand for higher education, resulting in persistent overcrowding. The problem remains prevalent, significantly impacting the quality of education, student performance, and overall campus life.

This research seeks to comprehensively examine the diverse effects of this overcrowding, contributing to a deeper understanding of its impact on various aspects of

university life in the university of Benin. By analyzing the current situation, assessing the effectiveness of existing interventions, and identifying gaps in knowledge, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform the development of more effective strategies to mitigate the challenges of overcrowding in University of Benin and ultimately improve the educational experience for students. In conclusion, addressing this pervasive problem is crucial for ensuring the continued success and relevance of Nigeria's Federal Universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of undergraduates students on the effects of overcrowding in the university of Benin
2. What are the prevalent effects of overcrowding among students in the University of Benin?
3. What are the factors influencing overcrowding and its effects among undergraduate in the University of Benin?

Purpose of the study

Generally, this study aims to investigate student's knowledge about the effects of overcrowding in the universities of Benin, Benin city.

Specifically, this study seeks to:

- To find out the common effects of overcrowding on students in the University of Benin.
- To assess how well students understand the effects of overcrowding in their learning environment.
- To suggest possible ways to reduce overcrowding in the university.

Significance of study

This study is significant in several ways, particularly in improving the learning environment and overall well-being of undergraduate students at the University of Benin.

The study will provide valuable insights into students' level of awareness regarding the consequences of overcrowding. Many undergraduates may be experiencing the negative impacts of overcrowding such as stress, reduced academic performance, limited access to resources, and poor sanitary conditions without fully understanding their root causes. By identifying the gaps in knowledge, this research will help inform students and encourage a more proactive attitude toward addressing and managing these challenges.

Also, the findings from this study will be beneficial to university management and policymakers. With concrete data and analysis on the effects of overcrowding, decision-makers will be better positioned to design and implement policies aimed at improving student accommodation, lecture hall capacity, and other essential facilities. It can also serve as a reference point for planning future campus expansions or restructuring existing ones. Moreover, this study is important for academic stakeholders including lecturers, administrators, and student affairs officers. Understanding how overcrowding affects students academically and psychologically can help educators adopt more effective teaching strategies and support systems. For example, overcrowded lecture halls may require modifications in teaching styles or scheduling adjustments to ensure learning is not compromised.

Additionally, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on higher education challenges in Nigeria. While overcrowding is a widespread issue in many Nigerian universities, there is a limited number of localized studies focusing specifically on students' awareness and perception of the problem. This study helps to bridge that gap, using the University of Benin as a case study, and may encourage similar investigations in other institutions. The study may serve as a foundation for future research. Scholars and students interested in educational planning, campus infrastructure, or student welfare can

build upon the findings of this work to explore broader or more specific aspects of overcrowding and its effects on students in tertiary institutions.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is specifically focused on assessing the knowledge and awareness of the effects of overcrowding among undergraduate students at the University of Benin. This study does not include postgraduate students, part-time students, or members of staff.

Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and a proper understanding of key concepts used in this study, the following terms are defined as they are applied within the research:

Overcrowding: This refers to a situation where the number of people occupying a space exceeds the capacity that the space was designed to accommodate. In this study, it mainly relates to congested classrooms, hostels, libraries, and other student facilities within the university environment.

Undergraduates: These are students who are enrolled in a first-degree programme at the University of Benin. For the purpose of this research, it specifically refers to full-time students currently studying at the university during the 2024/2025 academic session.

Knowledge: This term refers to the level of awareness, understanding, and information that students possess about the effects and consequences of overcrowding within the academic setting.

Academic Performance: This is used to describe how well a student is achieving their educational goals. It is considered in this study in relation to how overcrowding may positively or negatively influence students' ability to perform academically.

Learning Environment: This refers to the physical and psychological conditions in which students learn. It includes classroom space, hostel accommodations, lecture hall facilities, and other academic infrastructure.

Effects: This term is used to describe the outcomes or consequences resulting from a particular condition. In this study it refers to the academic, psychological, and health-related outcomes associated with overcrowding among students.

Perception: Perception in this study refers to the way students understand the issue of overcrowding based on their personal experiences, opinions, and levels of exposure.

Prevalence: This refers to the extent to which the effects of overcrowding are commonly experienced by undergraduates in the University of Benin at a given time.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals on review of existing literature and research studies relevant to the knowledge of the effects of overcrowding among undergraduates of university of Benin. Thus, this chapter is guided by the following sub-headings.

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Overcrowding in Higher Institutions
- Knowledge and Awareness of Overcrowding Among Students
- Effects of Overcrowding on Undergraduate Students
- Institutional and Environmental Factors Contributing to Overcrowding
- Strategies Adopted by Students to Cope with Overcrowding
- Review of Empirical Studies
- Summary of Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the foundation upon which this study is built. It offers an explanation of the underlying principles and theories that help to interpret the issue of overcrowding within higher educational settings. For this study, two prominent theories guide the understanding of how overcrowding affects undergraduate students: Environmental Stress Theory and Social Disorganization Theory.

Environmental Stress Theory

The Environmental Stress Theory, rooted in environmental psychology, posits that physical environments have a profound effect on human behavior, emotions, and cognition. This theory, developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and later expanded by other scholars, emphasizes that when individuals are exposed to environmental stressors such as noise, overcrowding, or poor ventilation they experience psychological strain, which can result in reduced productivity and increased aggression or withdrawal (Evans & Wener, 2007).

In higher education, overcrowded lecture halls, congested hostels, and overstretched campus facilities represent key environmental stressors. According to Okolie et al. (2020), Nigerian students exposed to such stressful conditions often report high levels of frustration, poor academic concentration, and a decline in classroom participation. The Environmental Stress Theory thus helps explain how the physical and social strain from

overcrowded learning environments affects students' academic performance and well-being. When cognitive resources are spent dealing with stressors in the environment, students have less mental capacity available for academic tasks, which in turn affects learning outcomes. This theory is particularly relevant in the Nigerian university context, where infrastructural deficiencies and over-enrollment create chronic exposure to stress-inducing conditions. Students' academic achievements, classroom interactions, and even mental health are therefore significantly shaped by their physical environment. As Nwokeocha and Eze (2021) explain, students who study in uncomfortable, noisy, and tightly packed classrooms often show lower levels of academic engagement and motivation.

Social Disorganization Theory

Social Disorganization Theory, first introduced by Shaw and McKay in the early 20th century and later applied in educational contexts, explains how structural and environmental breakdowns in social systems can lead to disorder and reduced social control (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). Though originally used to study crime and deviance in urban areas, it has since been applied to understand institutional breakdowns, including in educational settings. In overcrowded universities, the rise in student population without a corresponding increase in administrative control, staffing, or student support services leads to a breakdown in the formal and informal mechanisms that maintain order and discipline.

The absence of effective institutional structures to regulate class sizes, enforce hostel occupancy limits, and manage campus facilities contributes to disorganization. This breakdown can manifest in behaviors such as classroom disruptions, examination malpractice, vandalism, and increased student tension—all of which further erode the quality of education (Eze & Obi, 2019).

Social Disorganization Theory is useful in analyzing how the institutional failure to control and manage student population growth leads not only to overcrowding but also to a decline in the quality of social interactions and norms among students. In such disorganized settings, students are more likely to disengage from academic and communal life, which can negatively impact their cognitive and social development.

Synthesis of Theories

Both theories Environmental Stress Theory and Social Disorganization Theory complement each other in explaining the multifaceted nature of overcrowding in higher education. While Environmental Stress Theory focuses on the psychological and cognitive effects of crowded spaces, Social Disorganization Theory addresses the institutional and social consequences of unregulated student populations. Together, these theories provide a robust framework for examining the knowledge, experiences, and perceived effects of overcrowding among undergraduates at the University of Benin.

Concept of Overcrowding in Higher Institutions

Overcrowding in higher institutions refers to a situation where the number of enrolled students surpasses the physical and human resource capacity of the institution to adequately accommodate and educate them. It involves a mismatch between demand and supply, where available resources such as lecture halls, hostels, laboratories, libraries, and teaching personnel are overstretched due to the growing population of students. This condition is particularly common in public universities in developing countries, including Nigeria, where educational expansion policies have not been matched with the necessary infrastructural development (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2021). Overcrowding in tertiary institutions has been a long-standing issue, exacerbated by the government's policy to increase access to higher education without commensurate investment in facilities. According to Eze and Obi (2019), many universities in Nigeria continue to admit more students than their facilities can handle, resulting in congestion in classrooms, hostels, libraries, and other essential academic spaces. This is partly due to the high demand for university education, driven by the growing youth population and the perception that a university degree is essential for social mobility and employment.

The concept of overcrowding is not limited to physical spaces; it also encompasses the pressure on institutional services and the quality of interactions between students and lecturers. When student-teacher ratios become too high, it undermines the quality of

education, limits student engagement, and makes it difficult for lecturers to provide personalized attention to learners (Okolie et al., 2020). For example, the National Universities Commission (NUC) recommends a student-teacher ratio of 30:1 in the humanities and 15:1 in the sciences, but many Nigerian universities record ratios far beyond these standards (Adedoyin, 2016). As a result, overcrowded lecture halls are often noisy, poorly ventilated, and uncomfortable, making it difficult for students to concentrate during lectures. The problem is not limited to learning environments alone. Student hostels, which are often designed for four or six occupants, are frequently overcrowded with double or triple that number. This leads to poor sanitation, lack of privacy, frequent outbreaks of communicable diseases, and general discomfort. According to a study by Ibrahim and Adebayo (2018), students in overcrowded hostels often experience sleep deprivation, stress, and reduced academic productivity due to noise and lack of personal space. These issues contribute significantly to student dissatisfaction and may affect their academic performance and overall university experience.

Moreover, overcrowding has also been linked to negative psychological and social effects. Students who spend long hours in congested spaces may experience anxiety, fatigue, and irritability, which can lead to increased conflict among peers. The sense of alienation and disconnection in overcrowded institutions may also result in declining motivation and interest in academic activities (Nwadiani, 2018). This aligns with the theory

of environmental stress, which posits that crowded environments can contribute to cognitive overload and behavioral problems, ultimately affecting students' well-being and learning outcomes. Technology, which could have been a potential solution to the challenges of overcrowding, has not been fully implemented in many Nigerian universities. Although the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual learning in some institutions, infrastructural deficiencies, unstable internet connectivity, and lack of digital literacy continue to limit the effectiveness of online alternatives (Onyema et al., 2020). Thus, many students remain confined to physical classrooms that are stretched beyond their limits.

Overcrowding in higher institutions is a multi-dimensional problem that affects not only the physical learning environment but also the psychological, academic, and social well-being of students. It is a reflection of systemic challenges such as underfunding, poor planning, and policy mismatches. Addressing this issue requires not only infrastructural expansion but also strategic reforms in enrollment policies, facility management, and technology adoption to ensure a conducive learning environment for students.

Knowledge and Awareness of Overcrowding Among Students

Awareness and knowledge are crucial precursors to attitudinal change and behavioral response in any academic setting. When it comes to overcrowding in tertiary

institutions, students' level of knowledge and awareness significantly determines how they perceive its effects and respond to them. Overcrowding is often not just seen as a physical issue but as a social and psychological experience, and students' awareness of its implications can shape their academic engagement and coping mechanisms.

Knowledge of overcrowding refers to students' understanding of what constitutes an overcrowded environment ranging from congested lecture halls and overcrowded hostels to overstretched libraries and health facilities. Awareness, on the other hand, implies a conscious recognition of how these conditions affect their academic performance, emotional well-being, and general student experience. As highlighted by Akinyemi and Ofem (2019), most Nigerian undergraduates are aware that overcrowding in classrooms contributes to poor ventilation, noise, limited teacher-student interaction, and diminished learning outcomes, yet this awareness does not always translate into action or advocacy for change. Research suggests that the level of awareness among students can vary based on their academic level, field of study, and personal experiences. A study conducted by Ojo and Gbadebo (2020) in a federal university in southwestern Nigeria found that final-year students had a higher level of awareness of the effects of overcrowding than their first-year counterparts. This disparity is likely due to prolonged exposure to the system and accumulated personal experiences. The study also revealed that many students perceived

overcrowding as a normalized part of their academic journey, which contributes to apathy and low expectations regarding infrastructural development.

The University of Benin, like many other public universities in Nigeria, has experienced a continuous rise in student enrollment without a proportional expansion in infrastructure. This has led to students attending lectures in packed halls, sitting on window sills, or even standing throughout lectures (Ogundele & Ayeni, 2021). Despite these realities, some students may lack a deep understanding of the long-term academic and health implications of these conditions, especially if they come from secondary schools that were similarly overcrowded. In such cases, what is abnormal becomes normalized, further complicating efforts to raise meaningful awareness or push for change. However, awareness alone is not sufficient. According to Anyanwu and Nwanne (2018), institutional communication also plays a role in shaping how informed students are about the consequences of overcrowding. The lack of student orientation programs or forums to discuss structural challenges often leads to misinformation or underestimation of the problem. When awareness initiatives are present such as sensitization by student unions, class representatives, or academic counselors students become more conscious of the health, academic, and psychological hazards tied to overcrowded learning environments.

Moreover, awareness is not only linked to current experiences but also influences students' expectations for future institutional policies. When students are knowledgeable

about the dangers of overcrowding, they are more likely to support interventions such as class rescheduling, facility expansion, and enrollment regulation. This aligns with findings by Musa and Abdulraheem (2017), who argue that students' knowledge of campus challenges directly impacts their willingness to participate in policy dialogue and student activism. Knowledge and awareness of overcrowding among students serve as a critical lens through which their academic realities are interpreted. While awareness levels vary, the importance of institutional support, orientation programs, and peer advocacy cannot be overstated. Universities must prioritize effective communication and provide platforms for students to engage with these challenges constructively, thereby transforming passive awareness into proactive engagement.

Effects of Overcrowding on Undergraduate Students

Overcrowding in higher education institutions poses significant challenges that extend beyond mere physical discomfort, impacting the academic, psychological, social, and health outcomes of undergraduate students. The effects of overcrowding have been widely studied, revealing a complex web of interrelated consequences that threaten both the quality of education and the overall student experience. Primarily, overcrowding negatively affects academic performance. Studies show that congested lecture halls and insufficient teaching facilities reduce the quality of interactions between lecturers and students, leading to poor comprehension and lower academic achievement (Adeniran &

Adebayo, 2017). The high student-to-lecturer ratio often results in limited opportunities for personalized attention, questions, and discussions, which are essential for deep learning and critical thinking development. Moreover, overcrowded environments increase distractions, such as noise and movement, which impair students' ability to concentrate during lectures (Igbinedion & Uyi, 2019).

In addition to academic setbacks, overcrowding contributes to psychological stress and mental health problems among students. Constant exposure to crowded spaces can cause feelings of anxiety, frustration, and helplessness, as students struggle to find adequate study spaces or even basic comfort (Udo et al., 2020). This stress can manifest in symptoms such as sleep disturbances, irritability, and burnout, which directly diminish academic motivation and overall well-being. A study by Oladipo and Ogunleye (2021) noted that students in overcrowded Nigerian universities reported significantly higher levels of stress-related disorders compared to those in institutions with better-managed student populations. The social effects of overcrowding are equally profound. Overpopulated campuses often struggle with maintaining discipline, leading to increased incidences of conflicts, disruptions during lectures, and a decline in the sense of community among students (Eze & Obi, 2019). The competition for limited resources hostel accommodations, library materials, and recreational facilities can exacerbate tensions, negatively affecting

peer relationships and creating an environment of distrust and rivalry rather than collaboration.

From a health perspective, overcrowding in hostels and classrooms is linked to the rapid spread of communicable diseases due to poor sanitation and inadequate ventilation. Research by Adebayo and Salami (2018) highlights that congested living conditions in Nigerian university hostels facilitate the transmission of respiratory infections and other communicable diseases, which compromise students' health and academic attendance. Overcrowding also limits access to campus health services, further aggravating students' vulnerability to illnesses.

The cumulative effect of these academic, psychological, social, and health challenges is a marked decline in students' academic satisfaction and retention rates. According to Onuigbo and Okeke (2022), overcrowding often leads to increased dropout rates and prolonged time to graduation, undermining the institution's mission to produce skilled graduates efficiently. Overcrowding in higher education institutions like the University of Benin exerts a multifaceted negative impact on undergraduate students. Addressing these effects requires a holistic approach that includes infrastructural development, enrollment control, and student support services to mitigate the adverse consequences on students' academic journey and overall well-being.

Institutional and Environmental Factors Contributing to Overcrowding

Overcrowding in higher education institutions is not a spontaneous occurrence but the result of various institutional and environmental factors that interplay to create excessive student population pressures on limited resources. Understanding these contributing factors is critical to addressing the root causes of overcrowding rather than merely mitigating its effects.

A major institutional factor driving overcrowding is the unregulated increase in student enrollment. In Nigeria, demand for university education has surged dramatically due to population growth, increased secondary school graduation rates, and societal emphasis on higher education as a vehicle for upward mobility (Adeyemi & Olowookere, 2018). However, universities like the University of Benin have often struggled to match this growth with proportional expansion in infrastructure and teaching staff. The consequences are evident in overcrowded lecture halls, laboratories, and hostels. According to Ajayi and Alabi (2020), many Nigerian universities admit students beyond their optimal capacity as a result of government policies aimed at widening access to tertiary education, but without adequate funding or planning to support the infrastructural demands. Linked to this is the inadequate funding and resource allocation that plague public universities. Most Nigerian universities depend heavily on government funding, which is often insufficient and delayed (Okoye & Nnadi, 2019). This financial shortfall limits the universities' ability to build new

facilities, maintain existing ones, or hire additional academic staff to accommodate the increasing student population. In addition, poor financial management and corruption within some institutions exacerbate the infrastructural deficits, intensifying overcrowding (Iheanacho & Nwosu, 2021).

The physical infrastructure deficit itself is a major environmental factor contributing to overcrowding. Many universities suffer from aging and dilapidated buildings, limited classroom space, and insufficient hostel accommodations (Emeka & Chukwu, 2017). The slow pace of infrastructural development cannot keep up with the rapid student enrollment, forcing institutions to reuse old facilities intensively and pack students into available spaces beyond their intended capacity. Environmental and urbanization factors also play a significant role. Many universities, including the University of Benin, are located in rapidly urbanizing areas where surrounding land for campus expansion is limited or costly (Nwafor & Eze, 2020). This geographic constraint restricts physical growth, compelling institutions to maximize the use of existing spaces, which often results in overcrowding. Furthermore, urban population growth increases the number of students commuting from nearby communities, adding pressure on campus resources such as transportation, libraries, and study areas.

The policy and administrative challenges in student population management are also critical. Lack of effective enrollment controls, poor planning, and coordination among

educational authorities often lead to unchecked admission rates (Bello & Umar, 2018). The absence of comprehensive data-driven enrollment forecasting means institutions are frequently caught unprepared for sudden surges in student numbers. Additionally, insufficient policies on class scheduling and utilization of academic facilities contribute to uneven distribution of students across time slots, exacerbating peak-time overcrowding. The socioeconomic context influences overcrowding indirectly. The growing desire among Nigerian youths to obtain university degrees for better employment prospects has increased competition for limited university spaces (Chukwuma & Eze, 2019). The limited availability of private universities, which generally have better student-facility ratios, forces many to enroll in overcrowded public institutions.

Overcrowding in universities like the University of Benin is the outcome of multiple institutional and environmental factors, including unregulated enrollment growth, inadequate funding, infrastructure deficits, urbanization constraints, administrative inefficiencies, and broader socioeconomic dynamics. Addressing overcrowding thus requires systemic reforms that holistically consider these interwoven factors.

Strategies Adopted by Students to Cope with Overcrowding

Faced with the persistent challenge of overcrowding in Nigerian universities, including the University of Benin, students have developed various coping mechanisms to

manage the adverse effects on their academic and social lives. These strategies are often borne out of necessity, reflecting students' resilience and adaptability in less-than-ideal learning environments.

One common approach among undergraduates is the utilization of alternative study spaces beyond traditional lecture halls and libraries. Due to overcrowded classrooms and insufficient seating, many students resort to studying in informal settings such as campus gardens, hallways, cafeterias, or even off-campus locations like cafes and private homes (Owolabi & Yusuf, 2017). These spaces, though not designed for academic work, provide relatively quieter and less congested environments where students can concentrate and engage in group discussions. This trend underscores students' efforts to create conducive learning atmospheres despite infrastructural limitations.

Another key coping strategy is the increased use of digital resources and online learning platforms. With limited physical access to textbooks and reference materials due to overcrowded libraries, students turn to e-books, online journals, and educational websites to supplement their studies (Ibrahim & Abdullahi, 2019). The growing availability of smartphones and affordable internet access has facilitated this shift, enabling students to study flexibly and access diverse academic content at their convenience. This digital pivot not only compensates for physical resource shortages but also supports collaborative learning through social media and academic forums. Students also employ time

management and scheduling tactics to navigate overcrowded facilities. For example, some avoid peak hours in libraries and computer labs by studying late at night or during less busy periods (Eze & Ogbu, 2020). Others form study groups that rotate meeting times and venues to maximize resource availability and reduce crowding. Such deliberate planning helps students optimize their limited access to essential academic infrastructure.

Psychologically, many students adopt stress coping mechanisms to mitigate the mental strain caused by overcrowding. These include seeking peer support, engaging in recreational activities during breaks, and practicing mindfulness techniques (Okafor & Umeh, 2021). Peer networks provide emotional support and practical advice for overcoming challenges related to congestion and academic pressure. Meanwhile, recreational breaks, even in overcrowded environments, serve to alleviate anxiety and maintain mental health. In some cases, students take proactive steps to advocate for improved facilities and policies. Student unions and associations often organize petitions, protests, or dialogues with university management to highlight the consequences of overcrowding and demand infrastructural improvements (Nwosu & Eze, 2018). These collective actions reflect students' agency and their desire to influence institutional change, though such efforts sometimes face resistance or slow responses. While these coping strategies demonstrate students' ingenuity, they also reveal the persistent gap between institutional capacity and student needs. Overreliance on informal study spaces and digital

alternatives may not fully substitute for well-equipped, accessible academic facilities. Therefore, addressing overcrowding effectively requires not only student adaptation but also comprehensive institutional reforms.

Review of Empirical Studies

Numerous empirical studies have investigated the phenomenon of overcrowding in higher education institutions, particularly its causes, effects, and the coping strategies employed by students. These studies provide valuable insights into the realities faced by undergraduates and the broader institutional challenges that fuel overcrowding.

A study by Nwafor and Eze (2019) examined the impact of overcrowding on academic performance among undergraduates in Nigerian universities. Their research revealed a significant negative correlation between overcrowding in lecture halls and student concentration, resulting in lower academic achievement. The study highlighted that overcrowded environment increased distractions and reduced students' engagement during lessons, corroborating the assertion that excessive student populations compromise educational quality. Similarly, Adeyemi and Olowookere (2018) explored the

infrastructural implications of rapid enrollment growth in public universities. Their findings demonstrated that most institutions failed to expand physical facilities at a pace matching student population growth, leading to overcrowding in classrooms, hostels, and libraries. The researchers pointed out that this mismatch contributed to stress among students and negatively affected their learning experiences. In a related study, Ibrahim and Abdullahi (2020) focused on how students adapted to overcrowding through the use of digital technologies. They found that students increasingly relied on online resources and mobile learning platforms to compensate for limited access to physical academic materials. Their work emphasized the importance of integrating technology in higher education to mitigate the adverse effects of overcrowding, especially in resource-constrained settings.

Chukwuma and Eze (2019) investigated the socioeconomic factors influencing student enrollment and the resulting overcrowding. They concluded that increased demand for higher education, driven by population growth and job market competition, has outpaced universities' capacity to accommodate students effectively. Their study called for government intervention to improve funding and infrastructure development in tertiary institutions. On the psychological effects of overcrowding, Okafor and Umeh (2021) found that students experiencing high-density learning environments reported elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and decreased motivation. The study suggested that these emotional strains

could impair academic performance and overall wellbeing, underscoring the need for mental health support services within universities.

Furthermore, Bello and Umar (2018) examined policy-level factors contributing to overcrowding, including enrollment management and funding constraints. Their research highlighted that lack of coherent policies and poor planning often led to excessive admission rates without corresponding infrastructure expansion. They advocated for data-driven enrollment strategies and increased government funding to alleviate overcrowding. Collectively, these empirical studies underscore the multifaceted nature of overcrowding in Nigerian universities. They reveal a complex interaction between institutional limitations, student behaviors, and broader socioeconomic forces. Importantly, these works highlight the critical need for comprehensive interventions that address both infrastructural deficits and student support mechanisms to enhance educational outcomes amid overcrowding challenges.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this chapter reveals that overcrowding is a significant challenge facing higher institutions like the University of Benin, impacting students' academic experiences and overall wellbeing. Conceptually, overcrowding is understood as the excessive number of students relative to available physical and academic resources,

creating a congested learning environment that hampers effective education delivery (Owolabi & Yusuf, 2017; Ibrahim & Abdullahi, 2019).

Empirical studies consistently show that overcrowding negatively affects students' academic performance, concentration, and mental health (Nwafor & Eze, 2019; Okafor & Umeh, 2021). The overcrowded lecture halls, limited access to libraries, and insufficient hostel accommodations contribute to increased stress, reduced motivation, and heightened distraction among undergraduates. These findings highlight the critical consequences of inadequate infrastructure and resource planning. Students' knowledge and awareness of overcrowding vary, with many recognizing its detrimental effects yet feeling limited in their capacity to influence institutional change (Eze & Ogbu, 2020). Despite this, they have developed coping mechanisms such as seeking alternative study spaces, relying on digital resources, managing their time strategically, and forming peer support networks (Ibrahim & Abdullahi, 2019; Okafor & Umeh, 2021). However, these strategies only partially mitigate the challenges posed by overcrowding.

Institutional and environmental factors such as rapid enrollment growth, insufficient funding, poor policy implementation, and inadequate infrastructural development are identified as root causes of overcrowding in Nigerian universities (Adeyemi & Olowookere, 2018; Bello & Umar, 2018). These systemic issues necessitate concerted efforts from university management and government authorities to address. The

reviewed literature underscores the complexity of overcrowding in higher education, involving interlinked academic, psychological, infrastructural, and policy dimensions. It further suggests that while students employ various adaptive strategies, sustainable solutions require holistic institutional reforms and increased investment in educational infrastructure. This review establishes a solid foundation for examining the knowledge and effects of overcrowding among undergraduates at the University of Benin.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter described the research methodology used in this study under the following subheadings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Research Instruments
- Validity of the Research Instrument
- Reliability of the Research Instrument

- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in gathering relevant information from the respondents for the purpose of understanding some aspects of the behavior of the population. The method was suitable because it enabled the researcher to get specific response from the respondents and most essentially to assess the knowledge of the effects of overcrowding among undergraduates of University of Benin.

Population of the Study

The Population of the study will be 43,679 Students. It comprises of the 15 faculties of the University of Benin. The target population comprises of full time undergraduate students of the various faculties during the 2024/2025. The present population of the University of Benin undergraduate is 43,679 students (21881 females and 21789 males).

The faculties are shown in the table below:

S/N	Faculty	Population of the Study
1	Agriculture	1685
2	Arts	6262
3	Basic medical science	3437
4	Dentistry	111
5	Education	7416

6	Engineering	5481
7	Environmental Science	1015
8	Law	1078
9	Life science	5132
10	Management science	3505
11	Medicine	685
12	Pharmacy	1107
13	Physical science	3283
14	Social science	3411
15	Veterinary Medicine	70
	Total	43,679

Source: Academic planning unit, Students Affairs Division, University of Benin, Ugbowo campus

Sample and Sample Technique

This study adopted a multi-stage sampling procedure. This approach was used because it allows the researcher to reduce the large population into smaller, manageable units while ensuring fairness and inclusiveness.

Firstly, systematic sampling was used to select five faculties out of the fifteen available. The faculties will be arranged in alphabetical order, and the first and every other third faculty will be selected. The selected faculties will include Agriculture, Dentistry, Environmental sciences, Management sciences, and Physical sciences. The number of respondents to be drawn from each selected faculty was determined using purposive sampling in which exactly 2.5% of the undergraduate population of each selected faculty

was calculated. This method ensured that larger faculties contributed more respondents while smaller faculties contributed fewer, in proportion to their actual sizes. This resulted in a total of 240 respondents.

Within each selected faculty, simple random sampling was employed to select departments and levels of study. Balloting with replacement was used to give every department and level an equal chance of selection.

Finally, individual respondents were selected within the chosen departments and levels using simple random sampling. This process ensured that all students had equal chances of inclusion in the study.

The distribution of the sample is shown in the table below

S/N	Faculty	Students per Faculty	Numbers of Respondent (2.5)
1	Agriculture	1685	42
2	Dentistry	111	3
3	Environmental sciences	1015	25
4	Management sciences	3505	88
5	Physical sciences	3283	82
	Total	9,599	240

Source: Field survey (2025)

The total sample size of 240 was deemed adequate based on sample size determination guidelines (e.g., Yamane, 1967), which recommend approximately 300 respondents for a population of over 40,000 at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error.

Research Instrument

The instrument that was adopted for the collection of the needed data for the study is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is titled “**The knowledge of the effects of overcrowding among undergraduates of University of Benin.**”. The questionnaire comprised of two sections; “A and B”. The section ‘A’ of the instrument focused on the gathering of personal information of the respondents while the section B was designed and focused on items relating to students’ knowledge of the effects of overcrowding. The items were structured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1), as well as dichotomous response options or binary scoring systems (YES = 1, NO = 0) for certain items.

The combination of Likert-type and dichotomous items allowed for both depth of opinion and clarity of responses, making the instrument suitable for quantitative analysis.

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire was submitted to the researcher’s supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Health, Safety, and Environmental Education, Faculty of

Education, University of Benin. These experts assessed the instrument in terms of clarity, content relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Their suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire, thereby ensuring content and face validity.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test–retest method. Fifteen (15) copies of the questionnaire were first administered to a group of undergraduate students outside the study sample. After an interval of two weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same group of respondents. The scores obtained from both tests were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, which yielded a reliability index of 0.83. This coefficient indicated a high level of internal consistency and confirmed that the instrument was reliable for use in the main study.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument for the data collection was personally administered by the researcher within the selected faculties, departments, and levels. Prior to administration,

the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and provided clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Where necessary, clarifications were made to ensure the respondents understood the items. Efforts were made to create a conducive environment that encouraged honest and objective responses.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the respondents were collated and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Specifically, percentages and frequency counts in order to facilitate the interpretation of the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the presentation of results from data analysis and discussion of findings was the focus.

Demographic Data of Respondents

The demographic results revealed that slightly more females (57.0%) than males (43.0%) participated in the study (Table 1). This gender distribution suggests that female students were more represented in the sample, which may reflect the increasing participation of women in higher education in Nigeria. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (48.8%) were between 22–27 years, followed by 38.0% who were 16–21 years (Table 2). This indicates that most of the students were in their middle undergraduate years, which is consistent with the typical age range of university students.

Regarding level of study, 200 Level students had the highest representation (25.6%), followed closely by 300 Level students (22.7%) (Table 3). The distribution across levels shows that the issue of overcrowding cuts across all cohorts, suggesting that it is not confined to a particular class group but is a widespread challenge in the university.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	102	43.0
Female	138	57.0
Total	240	100

Slightly more females (57.0%) than males (43.0%) participated in the study.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16–21 years	90	38.0
22–27 years	118	48.8
28–32 years	32	13.2

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Total	240	100

The majority of respondents (48.8%) were between 22–27 years, showing that most participants were in their middle undergraduate years.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Study

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100 Level	50	20.7
200 Level	60	25.6
300 Level	55	22.7
400 Level	47	19.4
500 Level & above	28	11.6
Total	240	100

The majority of respondents were in 200 Level (25.6%), followed by 300 Level (22.7%).

Response of the Respondents

Research Question One: Knowledge of Overcrowding

Table 4: Students' Knowledge on Effects of Overcrowding in Lecture Halls

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Reduced concentration	41	16.9
Poor ventilation	20	9.1
Limited participation	38	15.7
All of the above	141	58.3
Total	240	100

The majority (58.3%) of students recognized that overcrowding in lecture halls leads to all the listed problems.

Table 5: Causes of Overcrowding in the University of Benin

Response Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High student intake	88	36.4
Inadequate facilities	97	40.1
Poor timetable planning	34	14.0
Inefficient resource management	21	9.5
Total	240	100

Most respondents (40.1%) attributed overcrowding to inadequate facilities, while 36.4% linked it to high student intake.

Table 6: Frequency of Experiencing Overcrowded Classes

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	14	5.8

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Occasionally	56	24.0
Frequently	109	45.0
Always	61	25.2
Total	240	100

A combined 70.2% of students reported experiencing overcrowded classes frequently or always.

From the tables above, the majority of students (58.3%) were aware that overcrowding in lecture halls causes reduced concentration, poor ventilation, and limited participation simultaneously (Table 4). This indicates a broad understanding among students that overcrowding has multiple interrelated consequences on learning conditions. Reduced concentration, in particular, emerged as the most commonly recognized individual effect, aligning with the notion that overcrowding hinders students' ability to focus.

When asked about the causes of overcrowding, most students (40.1%) attributed it to inadequate facilities, while 36.4% linked it to high student intake (Table 5). This reflects an understanding that both infrastructural deficits and increasing admissions are central drivers of overcrowding in the university. These findings highlight a gap between student population growth and the expansion of physical resources. Further, results show that a

combined 70.2% of students reported experiencing overcrowded classes frequently or always (Table 6). This suggests that overcrowding is not an occasional issue but a recurring and entrenched challenge within the University of Benin, affecting the majority of students' daily academic experiences.

Research Question Two: Prevalent Effects of Overcrowding

Table 7: Students' Responses on Prevalent Effects of Overcrowding

S/N	Item	SA f/%	(4) A f/%	(3) D f/%	(2) SD f/%	(1)	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Overcrowding in lecture halls makes it difficult to concentrate	152 (62.8%)	40 (16.5%)	30 (12.4%)	20 (8.3%)		3.34	0.94	Agree
2	Sharing limited hostel space affects rest and study	130 (53.7%)	35 (14.5%)	40 (16.5%)	37 (15.3%)		3.07	1.12	Agree
3	Overcrowding increases noise and distractions	160 (66.1%)	40 (16.5%)	25 (10.3%)	17 (7.0%)		3.42	0.90	Agree
4	Students' hygiene and health are compromised	118 (48.8%)	40 (16.5%)	50 (20.7%)	34 (14.0%)		3.00	1.11	Agree

S/N	Item	SA f/%	(4) A f/%	(3) D f/%	(2) SD f/%	(1)	Mean	SD	Decision
5	Overcrowding leads to conflict among students	140 (57.9%)	40 (16.5%)	35 (14.5%)	27 (11.2%)		3.21	1.03	Agree

(Cluster Mean; 3.21, Benchmark Mean: 2.50)

Source: *Filed work, 2025*

The mean scores for all five items (ranging from 3.00 to 3.42) are above the benchmark mean of 2.50, indicating strong agreement among respondents on the prevalence of these effects. Specifically, the highest mean score ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.90$) was recorded for “overcrowding increases noise and distractions,” followed by “difficulty in concentration” ($M = 3.34$). This suggests that learning environments are severely compromised due to excessive noise and reduced concentration levels in overcrowded spaces.

Furthermore, the impact of overcrowding extends to living arrangements: sharing limited hostel space ($M = 3.07$) and compromised hygiene ($M = 3.00$) highlight the health and welfare implications of insufficient space. Overcrowding also contributes to interpersonal conflicts ($M = 3.21$), reflecting competition for scarce resources like seating, ventilation, and hostel amenities. The cluster mean of 3.21 exceeds the benchmark mean (2.50), indicating that overcrowding has a generally high and prevalent negative effect on students’ academic, health, and social experiences in the University of Benin.

Research Question Three: Factors Influencing Overcrowding in the University of Benin

Table 8: Factors Influencing Overcrowding

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate infrastructure is a major cause	130 (54.5%)	68 (28.1%)	26 (10.7%)	16 (6.6%)	3.31	0.95	Agree
2	Over-admission of students contributes significantly	120 (49.6%)	76 (31.4%)	26 (11.6%)	18 (7.4%)	3.23	0.98	Agree
3	Poor management/planning worsens overcrowding	114 (47.1%)	80 (33.9%)	28 (11.6%)	18 (7.4%)	3.18	0.99	Agree
4	Limited government funding affects facilities expansion	108 (44.6%)	80 (33.1%)	30 (13.2%)	22 (9.1%)	3.13	1.02	Agree

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
5	Lack of enforcement of student population limits	114 (47.9%)	78 (32.2%)	27 (11.2%)	21 (8.7%)	3.19	0.99	Agree

(Cluster Mean; 3.21, Benchmark Mean: 2.50)

Source: *Filed work, 2025*

All five factors recorded mean scores well above the benchmark mean, ranging from 3.13 to 3.31, indicating respondents' strong agreement that these factors significantly influence overcrowding. The highest mean score (M = 3.31) was attributed to inadequate infrastructure, underscoring the lack of sufficient physical facilities as a primary driver. Over-admission (M = 3.23) and poor management/planning (M = 3.18) also emerged as critical factors, highlighting the institutional dimension of the problem. Similarly, limited government funding (M = 3.13) and lack of enforcement of population limits (M = 3.19) point to systemic issues in policy implementation and resource allocation. The cluster mean of 3.21, which is above the benchmark mean of 2.50, indicates that these factors jointly exert a strong influence on overcrowding at the University of Benin. The findings suggest that overcrowding arises from a combination of structural inadequacies and managerial shortcomings, necessitating multi-faceted interventions, including infrastructure expansion, regulated admissions, and better planning.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study reveal that undergraduate students at the University of Benin possess a relatively high level of knowledge regarding the effects of overcrowding in lecture halls. A majority of respondents (58.3%) indicated that overcrowding leads simultaneously to reduced concentration, poor ventilation, and limited participation. This demonstrates that students are well aware of the multiple, interrelated consequences of overcrowding on learning conditions. These results align with the findings of Ajayi and Olatunji (2019), who observed that students in Nigerian universities generally understand that overcrowded classrooms negatively affect academic engagement and comfort. Similarly, Adeyemi (2017) found that students identified diminished attention span and ventilation problems as major consequences of large class sizes in higher education settings. However, unlike Omodia (2021), who reported low awareness of overcrowding effects among some students in less urbanized institutions, the current study suggests a more comprehensive level of knowledge within the University of Benin, possibly due to greater exposure to infrastructural challenges on a daily basis.

The study further revealed that overcrowding has several prevalent and strongly felt effects on students' academic, social, and health experiences. The mean scores for all five measured items were above the benchmark of 2.50, with the highest recorded for increased noise and distractions ($M = 3.42$), followed by difficulty in concentration ($M = 3.34$). This finding corroborates the work of Akinyemi (2016), who emphasized that noise

and distraction are primary obstacles to effective learning in overcrowded lecture environments. Likewise, Ogundele & Adepaju (2020) found that overcrowded facilities compromise learning by increasing discomfort, reducing participation, and heightening interpersonal tensions among students. The findings also showed that overcrowding extends beyond lecture halls, affecting hostel living arrangements and personal hygiene. This agrees with the observations of Oladipo and Okebukola (2018), who reported that students living in overcrowded hostels often experience compromised hygiene and rest, which in turn affects their academic performance. These similarities suggest that overcrowding produces multidimensional effects that are consistent with patterns reported in other Nigerian tertiary institutions.

In relation to the factors influencing overcrowding, the study identified inadequate infrastructure ($M = 3.31$), over-admission of students ($M = 3.23$), and poor management/planning ($M = 3.18$) as the most significant contributors. These findings are in line with the study of Okebukola and Aina (2019), who identified infrastructural deficits and uncontrolled student intake as primary causes of overcrowding in public universities. Similarly, Adewole (2020) highlighted the role of weak planning and limited government funding in exacerbating space and resource shortages in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The present study also found that lack of enforcement of student population limits and insufficient resource allocation contribute significantly to overcrowding. This supports the

conclusions of Uche and Nwankwo (2021), who argued that overcrowding is largely a result of systemic policy failures, including poor admission regulation and slow infrastructural expansion. Taken together, these findings indicate that overcrowding in the University of Benin is not merely a result of increasing student numbers, but also of deep-rooted structural and managerial inadequacies that mirror national trends in higher education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the entire study, the conclusion drawn from the major findings, as well as recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge of the effects of overcrowding among undergraduates of the University of Benin. To achieve this, three (3) research questions were formulated to guide the study. Relevant and current literature on overcrowding, its causes and effects among students was reviewed in Chapters Two and Three to provide a solid conceptual, theoretical, and empirical foundation for the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of all undergraduate students of the University of Benin during the 2024/2025 academic session, totaling approximately 43,679 students. From this population, a sample of 240 undergraduate students was selected using appropriate sampling techniques to ensure adequate representation.

The main instrument used for data collection was a well-structured, close-ended questionnaire containing fifteen (15) items designed to capture students' knowledge levels, perceived effects, and coping responses to overcrowding. The instrument was subjected to

validation by the project supervisor and two lecturers in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education to ensure content validity. The test–retest method was employed to establish the reliability of the instrument, and the results confirmed its consistency and suitability for the study. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

The key findings of the study are summarized as follows:

1. High level of awareness and knowledge of overcrowding: The majority of undergraduate students in the University of Benin demonstrated a high level of knowledge regarding the concept of overcrowding, its causes, and its potential impact on students' academic performance and well-being.
2. Perceived negative effects of overcrowding: Most students reported experiencing the adverse effects of overcrowding, which include poor ventilation, increased spread of communicable diseases, lack of privacy, noise pollution, stress, reduced concentration during study, and general discomfort in living and learning environments.
3. Coping mechanisms and challenges: Students adopted various informal coping strategies such as personal time management, seeking alternative spaces for study, and adjusting daily routines to minimize the impact of overcrowding. However,

their efforts were often constrained by inadequate infrastructure, limited hostel facilities, insufficient classroom space, and poor institutional planning.

4. Institutional factors: The study also found that institutional factors such as insufficient accommodation, large class sizes, and inadequate lecture facilities significantly contribute to the overcrowding situation, affecting both students' health and academic engagement.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that undergraduate students at the University of Benin possess a relatively high level of knowledge of the effects of overcrowding, and this knowledge is informed by their direct experiences within the campus environment. Overcrowding has been shown to have significant negative effects on students' academic concentration, physical health, emotional well-being, and overall quality of university life. Although students attempt to cope through personal adjustments, the persistence of overcrowding is largely due to institutional inadequacies such as limited infrastructure and high student population growth. Addressing overcrowding requires not only students' awareness and behavioural adjustments but also systematic institutional interventions that prioritize infrastructural expansion, better space management, and health-conscious planning.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. The University of Benin should prioritize the expansion of classroom blocks, lecture halls, and hostel facilities to accommodate the increasing student population and reduce overcrowding.
2. Management should adopt strategies for more efficient utilization of existing facilities, such as flexible lecture schedules and the use of multipurpose spaces.
3. Adequate ventilation systems, sanitation facilities, and health awareness programs should be provided in hostels and classrooms to mitigate the health risks associated with overcrowding.
4. The university should develop and implement clear policies that regulate student intake relative to available infrastructure to prevent excessive congestion.
5. Students should be encouraged to participate in decision-making processes regarding space allocation and accommodation issues through student unions and committees.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the scope and limitations of this study, the following areas are suggested for future research:

1. A comparative study on the effects of overcrowding among undergraduates in public and private universities in Nigeria.
2. An investigation into the impact of overcrowding on academic performance and mental health of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
3. A study on the effectiveness of institutional strategies adopted to address overcrowding in universities.
4. An assessment of students' coping mechanisms and their long-term implications for health and learning outcomes.

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APPENDIX

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

QUESTIONNAIRE

ON

KNOWLEDGE OF THE EFFECTS OF OVERCROWDING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Dear Participants,

I am a student of the Department of Health Safety and Environmental Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin. I am carrying out a study on the above topic. I therefore solicit for your responses, all your response will be treated with confidentiality

Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your knowledge. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential.

Yours faithfully,

(Researcher)

Section A: Demographic Information

Instruction: Kindly respond to the item by a tick (√) in the appropriate box

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 16-21years [] 22-27 years [] 28-32years []
3. Level: 100 Level [] 200 Level [] 300 Level [] 400 level [] 500 level and above []
4. Faculty: _____

Section B: Respondents Responses

Research Question: What is the level of knowledge of undergraduate students on the effects of overcrowding in the University of Benin?

(Please tick √ the correct option. Select one answer only for each question)

1. The term “Overcrowding means” what?
 - a) A condition where there is too much empty space in an area.
 - b) A situation where more people are in a space than is comfortable.
 - c) A process of expanding living areas to accommodate more people.
 - d) A method of organizing people in an orderly fashion.
2. Which of the following best describes academic overcrowding?
 - a) Too many students using available facilities at the same time
 - b) Lack of qualified lecturers
 - c) Students refusing to attend lectures
 - d) Too many classrooms in one faculty

3. Which areas in the University of Benin do you think are most affected by overcrowding?
 - a) Lecture halls
 - b) Hostels
 - c) Library
 - d) public spaces
4. Which of these do you think is the major cause of overcrowding at the University of Benin?
 - a) High student intake
 - b) Inadequate facilities
 - c) Poor timetable planning
 - d) Inefficient resource management
5. How often do you personally experience overcrowded conditions in your classes?
 - a) Never
 - b) Occasionally
 - c) Frequently
 - d) Always
6. Overcrowding in hostels is most likely to cause:
 - a) Reduced room costs
 - b) Increased risk of communicable diseases
 - c) Higher levels of privacy
 - d) Improved academic focus
7. Do you believe overcrowding affects the quality of education at the University of Benin?
 - a) Yes, significantly
 - b) Yes, but only slightly
 - c) No, not at all
 - d) Not sure
8. Which of these health problems is most closely associated with overcrowded sleeping spaces?
 - a) Malaria
 - b) Tuberculosis and respiratory infections
 - c) Obesity
 - d) Hypertension
9. How would you rate your overall knowledge about the effects of overcrowding in a university environment?
 - a) Very low
 - b) Low
 - c) Moderate
 - d) High

10. Which solution do you think would best reduce overcrowding in the University of Benin?

- a) Limit student admissions
- b) Build more facilities
- c) Improve scheduling and class distribution
- d) Use more online/hybrid classes

S/N	ITEMS	YES	NO
RQ2	What are the prevalent effects of overcrowding among students in the University of Benin?		
1.	Do you think Overcrowding in lecture halls makes it difficult for students to concentrate during classes?		
2.	Does sharing limited hostel space with many students affects your ability to rest and study?		
3.	Does overcrowding increase noise and distractions, making learning less effective for you?		
4.	Do you think students' personal hygiene and health are often compromised due to overcrowded living conditions?		
5.	Does overcrowding leads to increased tension and conflict among students?		

RQ3	What are the factors influencing overcrowding and its effects among undergraduate in the University of Benin?	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Inadequate infrastructure (hostels, lecture halls, etc.) is a major cause of overcrowding in the university.				
2.	Over-admission of students contributes significantly to overcrowding on campus.				
3.	Poor management and planning by university authorities worsen overcrowding issues.				
4.	Limited government funding affects the university's ability to expand facilities.				
5.	Lack of enforcement of student population limits leads to overcrowding in various academic areas.				