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Effects of Instructional Methods On Social Studies Students' Academic Performance In Upper Basic Secondary Schools In Delta State

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine the effects of instructional methods on Social Studies Students' academic performance in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State. In order to investigate this problem, one research question and one null hypothesis were formulated. The main objective of the study was to find out if there would be positive effects of instructional methods on the academic performance of Social Studies Students at the Upper Basic School in the study area. The study utilized quasi-experimental design. The sampled population consists of 200 students of Upper Basic School Social Studies. The instrument of the study was the Social Studies Students Achievement Test employed to generate data for the study. Generated data were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that strategies such as simulation and dramatization are veritable teaching methods that can enhance academic performance. Therefore, the study concludes that there were effects of instructional methods on Upper Basic students' academic performance in Social Studies in Delta State. The study recommends that teachers of Social Studies should utilize innovative instructional methods such as simulation and dramatization to facilitate the teaching and learning of the subject.

Keywords: Social Studies, Instructional Method, Simulation, Dramatization, Academic Performance

Introduction

Instructional methods provide a strong context for interface between the teacher and the students; hence, the method adopted to facilitate effective teaching and learning of school subjects including Social Studies is very important. Gill (2016) stated that effective teaching methods engage students in the learning process and help

critical thinking skills. This observation from Gill's study, points to a number of instances, teaching methods have to be effective; engaging and its instructional should meet the area of developing cognitive ability of students. Generally, the supposition drawn from the above concept is that there seems to be a relationship between instructional method and learning achievement. This is because in the process of learning, efficacy is placed on transfer, storage and retrieval of knowledge. These processes are significant to learning achievement of students.

Students/learners are the target for introducing instructional method in the classroom in a given lesson. The objective of teaching and learning is aimed at changing the learners. Experts such as Osakwe (2006) described learning as any change in the behaviour of a more or less permanent nature resulting from experience or training. Good (2016) makes a connection between learning and the classroom, noted that the effectiveness is the result of classroom strategies. In his view learning is a step by step process in which an individual experiences permanent, lasting changes in knowledge, behaviours, or ways of processing the world. One of such steps that comes in the process is the introduction of appropriate instructional methods that would encourage the change.

Most teachers are familiar and comfortable with the use of conventional method of teaching such as the lecture method. Ajaja (2007) agreed to the fact that the lecture method has been in use for many years as a method of transmitting information. But, he notes that students under this learning condition are passive listeners, and has resulted in many questions on the use of this method. Hence there is a search for better instructional method that can promote and improve learning achievement.

Appropriate instructional method assumes that it could prompt the cognitive ability of the learners. From a psychological point of view, cognitive focuses on the way people process information. Raindy (2016) stated that cognitive style looks at how individuals process information they receive and how they treat this information in order to lead to responses. Based on this meaning, cognitive psychologists study internal processes that include perception, language attention and thinking. For Osakwe and Ogburn (2005) Social Studies learning involves critical thinking which is an aspect of cognitive ability demonstrated by a child, which guarantees his proficiency, competences and learning outcomes. It is expected that application of instructional methods which is simulation and dramatization can eliminate the problem of academic performance faced by students.

Cognitive style deals with thinking processes of a learner. Oftentimes psychology of learning theories found that there are two categories of learners; they consist of analytical and global learners. It is based on this understanding that it could be assumed that cognitive style is concerned with the different ways in which individual processes and utilizes information. Cools, Armstrong and Verbighe (2014), stated that "cognitive

style or thinking style is a term used in cognitive psychology to describe the way individuals think, perceive and remember information." They indicated that "cognitive style differs from cognitive ability (or level), the latter being measured by aptitude tests or so-called intelligence tests". The observation from the study above point to the fact that cognitive style deals with aptitude of the individuals towards learning material which can decide how to group the category of learner he or she belongs weather he or she is an analytical or a global learner.

It appears that academic performance of many learners in Social Studies is affected by aptitude to learning. By implication students aptitude determine his or her academic performance. Barmola (2013) stated that aptitude measures the intelligence of an individual. According to him aptitude is an important aspect of psychological measurements for individual differences for suitability of any occupation. This is because he found relationship between aptitude and academic performance since aptitude explains the cognitive style of an individual that is a person's capacity or hypothetical potential for acquisition of certain more or less well defined patterns of behavior involved in the performance of a task with respect to which the individual has had little or no previous training. Thus, psychologists and educators are interested in simulating learners with the intention to improving their cognitive abilities, cognitive style and academic performance in school subjects. Prompted by this observation, Farooq (2017) stated that simulated teaching can be employed by the teacher to achieve the goal of enhancing learning. According to him, engaging learners in active learning experience has the advantage of promoting cognitive ability and cognitive style of learners.

Suggested method for simulating learning is through the methods of simulation and dramatization. The concept of simulation in learning implies role play allocated to students to enhance their cognitive ability. On the other hand, dramatization allows for a great deal of participation by students and enlivens the routine procedures to teaching and learning where students participate physically, emotionally, and mentally. The objectives of these methods is to make learning students centered, it also shapes their aptitude especially critical thinking mechanism of the child is developed.

Students exposed to instructional method of simulation and dramatization are spaced in rural and urban schools. School location is an important indices in the teaching and learning of any school subject including Social Studies. In particular reference, the difference between rural and urban location with its educational implication is that qualified teachers find it difficult to take appointment in the isolated villages due to the fact that there are absence of major social amenities there. Whereas, their counterparts in urban area are comfortable with the appointment to teach there, because of the available infrastructures that encourages learning. It is likely that the subject (Social Studies) will be able to rank among the best leading subjects if taught with the innovative strategies of simulation and dramatization, including a consideration of their cognitive style. It is

Against this background the study is therefore geared towards investigating the effect of instructional methods on Social Studies students' academic performance at the Upper Basic level in the State.

Traditional methods have been used for a long time in the teaching of Social Studies. This is because it appears classroom teachers find ease in the use of these traditional methods such as lecture method, discussion method, demonstration method etc. Observation shows that the use of these methods does not prompt students practical learning thereby, student find it difficult to grapple with abstract concept due to the theoretical approach the traditional methods advocate. The implication of the use of instructional methods that does not promote learning is shown in the academic performance of Social Studies Students in the internal and external examinations. The reflection from the results of Basic Schools Certificate Examination over the years when compared with other subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Agricultural Science and Basic Science shows that Social Studies is experiencing low performance. Whereas, appropriate teaching strategies with innovative measures have not been introduced to teach Social Studies; in spite of the fact that such innovative instructional strategies are capable of promoting and improving academic performance in test score of school subject. Therefore, the question this study attempts to answer is: What is the effect of instructional methods on students' academic performance in Social Studies?

Research Question

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

1. What is the mean difference between the performance of students taught with dramatization and simulation methods as measured by SSSAT in Upper Basic schools in Delta State?
1. One hypothesis was posed to guide the study. There would be no significant difference in the performance of students taught by simulation and dramatization methods as measured by SSSAT.

Method

The study adopted quasi-experimental design. The population of the study was the entire upper basic secondary schools in Delta State. Data from State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) indicate that there are 435 secondary schools in Delta State, where Delta central senatorial district with sub total of 175; Delta North senatorial district with sub total of 153 and Delta South senatorial district with sub total of 107 giving grand total of 435. From this population an appropriate sample was drawn for the investigation. This population of school has enrollment figure of students at 200,289. The techniques adopted for sampling of sample in this study was the stratified random sampling techniques which involve the use of tailoring procedure. The stratified random sampling employed for this study produced the sample size of 200 Social Studies students in upper

basic school as participants and in order to arrive at the proportionate figure, 45% of the entire population was used to draw the sample size. It is these sample size that was subjected to the treatment, for the period of six weeks. Two separate instruments were utilized for the collection of data for this study; these are the Social Studies Students Achievement Test (SSAT) which is a standardized instrument conducted by the West African school certificate examination council in Delta State and the Social Studies Students Cognitive Style Achievement Test (SSCSAT). This study employed the mean (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation (SD) and the ANCOVA in analyzing the research questions and hypotheses.

Data Presentation

Research Question One

What is the mean difference between the performance of students taught with dramatization and simulation methods as measured by SSSAT in Upper Basic schools in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of students' performance taught by two Methods

Methods	N	Mean	SD	Mean difference
Dramatization	50	58.66	14.50	3.84
Simulation	50	54.82	14.56	

Table 1 revealed that there was slight difference between the performance of students taught by dramatization and simulation methods respectively measured by SSSAT. The mean difference of 3.84 answers the question that there is difference in performance test scores among students taught with the two methods as measured by SSSAT. This means that both methods are suitable for Social Studies teaching.

Hypothesis One

There would be no significant difference in the performance of students taught by two methods as measured by SSSAT.

Table 2: Analysis of Covariance on the performance of students taught by two methods as measured by SSSAT

Test of between – Subject Effects

Source	Type III sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1522.975	2	761.488	3.788	0.026
Intercept	43730.437	1	43730.437	217.511	0.000
Sex	1184.415	1	1184.415	5.891	0.017
Methods	124.215	1	124.215	0.618	0.434
Error	19501.785	97	201.049		
Total	34387.000	100			
Corrected Total	21024.760	99			

R-Squared = 0.072 (Adjusted R-Squared = 0.053)

Table 2 indicated one-way between groups analysis of covariance on the performance of students taught by two methods as measured by SSSAT. Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance, homogeneity of regression slopes and reliable measurement of the covariate. After adjusting for two methods, there was no significant difference in the performance of students – $F(1,97) = 0.618$, $P > 0.05$. That is, the computed F-value = 0.618 and P-value = 0.434. Testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.434 was greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference in the performance of students taught by the two methods as measured by SSSAT.

The finding was supported in the study by Asabe (2014). He studied the impact of conceptual instructional method on students' academic achievement though in chemistry, using a sample of 100 students randomly drawn from two co-educational secondary schools. The subjects were divided into experimental and control groups. The subjects in the experimental group were exposed to lecture method. Academic achievement of subjects exposed to conceptual instructional method was significantly higher than their counterparts exposed to lecture method of instruction. The implication of the finding to instruction and academic achievement in test scores points to the fact that traditional methods are becoming obsolete for promoting learners performance in Social Studies. Also, the likelihood that simulation and dramatization methods of instruction if understood and applied in teaching and learning of Social Studies in Upper Basic schools in Delta State may achieved the same result as shown by the conceptual instructional method on students academic achievement in practical chemistry. Oguafor and Okigbo (2013) found that students taught with different instructional method obtained a higher score in their achievement test above those exposed to conventional method. This finding attempts to agree with previous finding of the study. This is because, finding in literature indicates that there is a paradigm shift on the application of innovative instructional method in the teaching learning process in secondary schools in

Nigeria. Thus, teacher at that level are encouraged to adapt to the use of innovative teaching methods such as simulation and dramatization methods of instruction to promote improved academic achievement among secondary school students.

Conclusion

The study was investigated to establish the relative effects of instructional methods of simulation, dramatization on Upper Basic students' academic performance in Social Studies. It was studied against the background that appropriate teaching strategies with innovative measures could promote and improve academic performance in test score of school subject; whereas, traditional methods such as discussion and lecture have been used because most classroom teachers find ease in the use of them. Though, observation shows that the use of these methods do not prompt students practical learning since they find it difficult to grasp with the abstract concept due to the theoretical approach the traditional methods advocates. Therefore, the study concludes that in order to promote and improve students' performance in their test score, innovative instructional strategies would be one of the sure ways to teaching Social Studies for effective and efficient learning in the study area.

Recommendation

Arising from the conclusion, the study recommended that, teachers of Social Studies should utilize innovative instructional methods such as simulation and dramatization to facilitate the teaching and learning of the subject. Innovative strategies are found to improve students' cognitive ability and enhance performance in test score.

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