Comparative Analysis of the Effects of Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy and Simulation Technique (ST) on Students Interest in Social Studies at Upper Basic 11 in Kogi East Education Zone

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***Abstract*:-This study investigated the comparative analysis of the effects of self directed learning strategy and simulation technique on students' interest in social studies at upper basic 11 in Kogi east education zone of Kogi State. The study used gender as a moderating variable to compare the mean interest rating scores, of male and female at Upper Basic II when exposed to the treatment using self directed learning and simulation techniques. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study employed quasi experimental (pre-test, post-test and non equivalent groups) the sample consisted of 442 Upper Basic II Social Studies students, comprising 232 males (52.49%), and 210 females (47.51%) drawn from 6 intact classes of co-educational government public schools in the study area. The instruments for data collection were Social Studies Interest Questionnaires (SSIQ). The SSIQ was computed using cronbach alpha with reliability r= 0.77. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that students that were taught Social Studies using self directed learning exhibited higher positive interest, achievement and retention. That is f (1441) = 75.894; p=0.00 < 0.05 than those who were taught using simulation technique. There is significant difference in the mean interest rating using Self Directed Learning (SDL) and simulation technique in favour of male students. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that, Social Studies Teacher should be encouraged to employ self directed leaning as a strategy in the teaching/ learning of Social Studies. Government (National, State and Local Government Areas), professional bodies, parents, stake holders should encourage capacity building workshops, seminars, conferences, in service training on the use and implementation of self directed learning and simulating techniques in Social Studies.**

Key Words: **Self directed learning strategy, Self directed learning strategy, Students interest, Social studies, Basic education.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The common definition of social study is that, is the study of man and his environment, how he influences and is influenced by the environment. Social studies is defined as an organized integrated study of man and his environment both physical and social. It emphasized on cognitive and functional skills, as well as desirable attitude and actions for the purpose of creating and infective citizen (Shamija 2008, Zaria & Bulya 2010, Bozimo & Ikwumelu 2009)

Social Studies is a relatively new subject in the curriculum of Nigerian secondary schools compared to traditional subjects like History and Geography. The reason is that knowledge is integrated. According to Adeyemi and Ajibade (2011), Social Studies provided informed and practical solutions to human challenges. Its contribution to man and his environment has necessitated its prominence as a core subject in the present basic education curriculum in Nigeria. Through social studies, learners are expected to acquire requisite skills, values, attitudes and to meet the challenge of the society. Social Studies focused on problems and issues of man in the ever-changing physical and social environment and helps to inculcate desirable social habits, attitudes, values and skills in solving them (Adeniji, 2000, Odoma 2013).

Mezieobi, Utulu and Tijani (2016), defined social studies as an integrative professional and academic field of study that focuses on man and his symbiotic relationships with, attitudes, desirable character and critical reflective intellectual capabilities to identify and solve personal and societal problems for good living. Edozie (2001) added that social studies is a dynamic, systematic and integrated discipline for generating knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviours necessary for dealing with contemporary life issues, for understanding man and the factors which influence his relationship, issues with himself in particular and his society generally in a sustainable manner. This implied that it is a means through which a society propagates its acceptable norms, attitudes values and behaviour. Adeniji (2004) suggested that all teachers of Social Studies at all levels of education need to be familiar with the content and methods of teaching the subject in order to interpret the content of Social Studies correctly and encourage its learning. This is mainly because when Social Studies instructional methods are related to the content, learning would cease to be fragmentary and memorization of unrelated facts and concepts will end.

Mbakwem (2005) maintained that whether a subject is effective or not depended on the nature and quality of the learning experiences that are associated with it. This implied that it is not only the content that determines effectiveness of a subject but also the quality of learning experiences which in some cases are dependent upon teachers' effective application of instructional methods that will enhance active participation of the students in the classroom. Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2011) advocated the application of self-directed instructional method in the teaching and learning of Social Studies for better actualization of Social Studies instructional and programme objectives in the classroom since the method focused mainly on making students to go beyond the content given by their teacher and accept responsibility for their own learning (Mbakwem, 2005).

The aims and goals of Social Studies may be better comprehended when aligned with the national philosophy and objectives of education. The philosophy of education for Nigeria as established in the New National Policy on Education (2013) was based on the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen; the full integration of the individual into the community; and provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school systems" (FRN, 2013). The objectives of Social Studies in Nigeria stemmed from those objectives given by the Mombassa Conference of African Social Studies Educators in 1968 which subsequently enshrined in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). These include: (!)the inculcation of national consciousness and National unity; (2) the inculcation of the right type of values attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society; (3) the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and (4) the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and development of mental, physical and social skills and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and the contribute to the development of the society.

These objectives reflected in greater details, the three educational pillars initiated by UNESCO (2012) namely, learning to know, learning to be and learning to live together. Thus, if these noble objectives of social studies are met through teaching and learning using new techniques such as self-directed learning and simulation, technique the country would be on a right path to national transformation. Shamija, 2008, Utulu, 2007 and Okam, 2010 opined that relevant and diversified methods of teaching as well as relevant instructional materials and strategies when properly used would be able to achieve the aims and objectives of social studies.

Social Studies, like any other subject in the school curriculum, has faced a lot of challenges in general and in Kogi Sate in particularly. The prominent problems or challenges according to Jekayinfa (2014) are inadequate funding by federal, state and local governments as well as poor infrastructures and lack of teaching/learning materials in our public schools. Thus, the teaching/learning environment is no more friendly and conducive.

This could be one of the major reasons Mezeobi (2008) added that Social Studies lack clear definition and clarity of purpose. The problem extended to lack of evaluation of some specific concepts such as attitudes, values, love, democracy etc. For instance, the curriculum modules provided from the State Universal Basic Education Board had no provision for structured evaluation. Jekayinfa (2014) saw the non-continuity of social studies to senior secondary level for student to offer at WAEC and NECO a problem which kills the interest of the students. Likewise, Mezieobi, and Anyawu (2017) maintained that the qualitative trained Social Studies teachers is an asset and strategic figure in the effective implementation of Social Studies curriculum at the Upper Basic level in Nigeria. This means that, it is the qualified trained teachers that could exhibit instructional methods that would enhance interest, achievement and retention of students in Social Studies.

Okam (2012) maintained that the problems of social studies include that of the nature and scope, problem of reconciling different methods, problems of relevant instructional materials for evaluation as well as qualified personnel. Okam observed that there is "the unsatisfactory status of Social Studies education as a curriculum instrument not only for cultivating the ideas of national value re-orientation but also for bringing about improved and enhanced human and social development amongst young learners". Nevertheless, Social Studies teachers should make effort to draw attention and interest of the students to achieve the laudable goals and objective of the subject. It should be noted that how instruction is planned and delivered in social studies determined whether or not students should learn, value learning and be able to apply what is learned, and develop emotional competence (Utulu, 2014).

It is useful for social studies teachers to always bear in mind basic goals and to design their instructional activities and their conduct generally to achieve these goals, namely:-

i) To ensure that everyone is well educated and be able to learn throughout life;
ii) To initiate and foster mentally and ethnically sound developments; and
iii) To develop student's confidence and self-esteem. All were centred on arousing the interest and curiosity of the learners in social studies (Utulu, 2014, Mezieobi, 2008, Jekanyinfa, 2005) attainment of these goals affects student's interest and achievement in social studies with the use of self-directed learning and simulation which the study is out to investigate.

Borich (2011) outlined the reasons for the application of self-directed learning strategy in the teaching and learning situation to include:-

i) To get students to unleash their imaginative and intuitive capacities through self-directed learning.
ii) To get students to accept responsibility for their own learning.
iii) To teach students to go beyond the content given to think critically, reason and problem-solving.
iv) To engage students in project based learning strategy, and
v) To promote the goals of self-directed learning using differentiated instruction.

This study therefore held that if SDL and simulation technique are properly harness or used by Social Studies teachers the students will be interested and achieve more academically. This will help to reduce challenges in Social Studies Education.

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) as a teaching strategy encompasses the involvement of learners in the process leading to their understanding of key ideas. In its broadest meaning, "self-directed learning" is described as process by which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implement appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975:18).

According to him, a learning environment conducive for self-directed learning will have to provide the four conditions which include (a) an emotionally safe classroom community; (b) a rich and inspiring curriculum; (c) unstructured time and opportunity for choice, and (d) open-ended materials.

Knowles identifies three reasons for Self- Directed Learning as follows: (a) Individual who take the initiative in learning, learn more things and better then those who sit at the feet of teachers possibly waiting to be taught; (b) Self-Directed Learning is more in tune with our natural processes of psychological development; (c) Many of the new developments in education put heavy responsibility on the learners to take a good deal of initiative in their own learning.

The implications are that; (1) it is no longer realistic to define the purpose of education as transmitting what is known; there must be somewhat different ways of thinking about learning; and it is no longer appropriate to equate education with youth alone; (2) Knowledge as well stated five key assumptions which underline Self- Directed Learning; (3) Self- Directed Learning assumes that human beings grow in capacity and needs to be self-directing as an essential component in maturity; (4) Self- Directed Learning assumes that the learners experiences become an increasingly rich resource for learning that should be exploited along with the resources of experts; (5) Self- Directed Learning assumes that individual become ready to learn what is required to perform their evolving life task or to cope more in adequately with their life problems (6) Self- Directed Learning assumes that the natural orientation of individuals is task or problem-centred (7) Self- Directed Learning assumes that learners are motivated by internal incentives such as the need for self-esteem and motivation pp.

These assumptions agree with the theories Piaget (1956) and Vygotsky (1978) as the children grow in ages, there is increase in maturity and experience and will be more dependent in solving their personal and social problems. Social studies teachers therefore use their motivational incentives (Self- Directed Learning and Simulation Technique) to enhance their interest/achievement.

Gibbons (2010) defined self-directed learning as any increase in knowledge, skill, accomplishment or personal development that an individual selects and brings about by his or her own efforts using any method in any circumstance at any time. According to Thomas, Strage and Curley (2008) self-directed learning involves learner-initiated and regulated activities such as autonomous learning activities, meta-cognitive activities, self regulated learning, intentional learning and learning strategies. Under self-directed learning, students can run the planning and evaluate learning (Brookfield, 2009).

According to Boyer and Usinger, (2014), self-directed learning is presented in educational status and variety of actions including reading, comprehension, debate, accessing resources, research and development. Taking time to prepare and studying in-depth are expected from students in self-directed learning. Consequently, self-directed learning means an ability to sub-edit educational objectives, name resource, select and carry out proper educational strategy and evaluate instructional outcome as well as learning experiences.

There may be slight variations in how different educators define self-directed learning; but a survey of the literature on the subject identifies several tenets that are central to the concept. Education Research Information Center (2007) highlights these tenets as follows:

i. Self-directed learning viewed learners as responsible owners and managers of their own learning process. Self-directed learning integrates self-management with self-monitoring.
ii. Self-directed learning has significant role of motivation and volition/interest in initiating and maintaining learners' efforts. Motivation drives the decision to participate and volition or interest sustains the will to see a task through to the end so that goals are achieved.
iii. In self-directed learning, control is gradually shifted from teachers to learners. Learners exercise a great deal of independence in setting learning goals and deciding what is worthwhile learning as well as how to approach the learning task within a given framework.
iv. Teachers scaffold learning by making learning visible. The model learning strategies and work with

students so that they develop the ability to use them on their own.

v. Self-directed learning is ironically, highly collaborative, where learners collaborate with teachers and peers.
vi. Self-directed learning develops domain – specific knowledge as well as the ability to transfer conceptual knowledge to new situations. It seeks to bridge the gap between school knowledge and real-world problems by considering how people learn in real life.

This study sought to investigate whether the use of self-directed learning or simulation would increase the interest of students in Social Studies in the study area. In this study, students will be fully engaged in the activities, while the teacher serves as a facilitator or director of programme

Simulation technique is a technique by which a situation where is created in which activities are presented as if they are real-life. Acikalin and Duru (2005) were of the view that simulations are the results when one creates the appearances or effect of something else. Simulations are more than just an interactive model or a collection of facts with which the learner interacts. It provided the framework for learners to build on their existing knowledge and augment, existing cases they already have in their memory.

Achor, Imoko and Ajayi (2010) viewed simulation as a form of experiential learning. Simulations are instructional scenarios where the learner is placed in a 'world' defined by the teacher. They represent a reality within which pupils interact. The teacher controls the parameters of this "world" and used it to achieve the desired instructional results. Simulations are in a way, a laboratory experiment where the pupils themselves are the test subjects. They experienced the reality of the scenario and gathered meaning from it. It is a strategy that fits well with principles of constructivism. Okereke and Onwukwe (2011) stated that there are three major kinds of simulation techniques. These consist of historical simulation, simulation activities and simulation games. Historical simulations are presented through dramatizations in which past incidents are relived and real characters portrayed. Examples include the hoisting of the Nigerian flag on the first Independence Day and the coronation of kings.

Simulation activities include practical exercises wherein pupils role or act what really happens in an occasion of an organization. Examples include a mock State House of Assembly meeting, ECOWAS meeting, African Union (AU) meeting, or bank. Simulation games or instructional games are used for educational purposes. They are activities that involve rules, competitions and players. The outcome of the game is determined less by chance and more by decision made by the players. The difference between simulation games and other games is that the goal of simulation games is not to win but to acquire knowledge and understanding.

Onwukwe and Owukwe (2010) described simulation games as games involving rules, competition games and players where the outcome of the game is determined less by chance and more by decision made by players. The purpose of simulation game according to Adeyemi and Ajibade (2011) is not winning but for developing the spirit of tolerance, planning and give and take. There is now a growing variety of board games which cover a large spectrum of the Social Studies curriculum. Some of them deal with military and political conflicts. Other games deal with economic realities such as career patterns, life in the rural area and election. The use of simulation games in teaching-learning situation is due to the fact that simulation games provide fascinating challenges to learners and add interest, activity and novelty to the lesson (Anikweze, 2012). The use of games helped students to achieve better in Social Studies.

Simulations are pedagogically mediated activities used to reflect the dynamism of real life events, processes, or phenomena in which students participate as active agents whose actions are consequential to the outcome of activity "(Wright-Malay, 2015), p. 8). In other words, activities are really only simulations if students are active, and the decisions they make during the simulation create a yet-to-be determined outcome that nevertheless represents a real process, event or dynamic.

Simulation as used in teaching to copying of real life activities in a simplified manner so that they become accessible and understood (Edegbo, 2015). Instead of mere verbal descriptions or explanations, imaginary or miniature, situations are provided for learning activities (National Teachers' Institute, NTI, 2006). Simulations are old techniques employed by men to learn to prepare themselves for further responsibilities in the family, and the society as well as for recreation. That is to say, the young ones could adjust themselves to the environment. Often, we see little children imitating the actions of the elders. For instance, they play the roles of fathers, mothers, hunters and carpenters. Children could as well play negative roles of prostitution, armed robbery, and advance fraud. The researcher intended to help the students to portray the positive attitudinal behaviour in the course of the study. Therefore the need to investigate effects of simulation technique on students' interest in social studies became inevitable.

Interest is the focusing of the sense organs on giving attention to some persons, activities, situation or objects. It is an outcome of experience rather than a gift. It could either result or cause motivation. It could also be regarded as pre-determinant of ones perception. It could be a temporary or permanent feeling of preference (Essien, Akpan and Obot (2015). It could also be viewed as a condition in which an individual associates the essence of certain things or situation with his needs or wants.

According to Shiefele (1991) interest is a content-specific motivation of characteristic composed of intrinsic

feeling related and valued related initiatives with an organized force. He has distinguished two conception of interest: individuals and situation interest. Individual interest is understood as long term direction of an individual towards a type of object, activity or an area of knowledge. Many researches now have adopted the distinction between situational and individual (personal) interest. The personal interest approach tends to focus on individual difference, whereas the situational interest approach centers on creating appropriate on environment settings to stimulate and motivate learning Essien et al (2015).

McClnerney, Dowson, Young and Nelson (2005) conducted a study with high school students in the United State (N=1078, 70% boys) responded to survey items on their self- esteem and interest in school work, their expectancy of high school completion and their perceived support for parent, teachers and peers for their expectancy. Their GPA and days absence from school were collected from school records. Personal expectancy, parents, teachers and peer support all had significant positive impact on students' interest on school work and on GPA of all the significant factors considered support from teachers has the strongest impact on interest and GPA in the high school sub-sample. The research indicated that teachers are the most influential agent in promoting interest and academic performance in the school context. Most empirical researches in Educational psychology and Social Studies Education have been devoted in finding out how interest influences learning and academic achievement and retention in Social Studies. The study intended to found out how social studies teacher can use Self Directed Learning and Simulation Technique to stimulate students' interest for better achievement in Social Studies.

Interest is the feeling one has when one wants to know more about something. It is a disposition that an individual exhibits in a subject. It can be seen as the desire to know more. Ataboh (2014) noted that the first thing that affects one's study is the level of enthusiasm for the topic or subject. Adegoke (2003) observed that one cannot learn effectively unless one becomes interested in the subject matter at some level. He also posited that interest is a powerful mediator between mastery and appropriation. Thus, any subject can be interesting if one looks at it in the right way. That is, whether you are interested or not depends on what is in your mind. If students are not interested in Social Studies initially, the first thing the teacher can do is to hope that as the teaching continues, the students will find some interesting angle (Gehlbach, 2007).

Ibrahim (2012); Abdul-Raheem (2011); and Muodumogu & Odey (2018) also buttress that interest is an important variable in learning because when one becomes interested in an activity, one is likely to be deeply involved in the activity. As such, self-directed learning and simulation strategy which provide students with activities that involve them in the teaching and learning process has a greater chance of arousing students' interest in Social Studies when the strategies are used to teach students. Students' interest toward a subject is paramount to their achievement and retention.

Gehlbach (2007) observed that for many Social Studies teachers, arousing students' interest is a herculean task. The issue may not be unconnected to the fact that students often perceive Social Studies as less interesting and important than other school subjects. These perceptions are likely worsened by teachers attempting to cover a vast amount of content at a superficial level. Social Studies teachers try to cover topics so fast that very few issues are allowed to come alive in such lessons. Such lessons according to Gehlbach (2007) engage students in learning about others' opinions regarding Social Studies concepts rather than developing their own narratives and explanations. Adeniji (2004) argued that students may not find Social Studies interesting and important because they rarely have the opportunity to actively be engaged in the "doing" of Social Studies.

This implied that students learn and achieve higher in Social Studies if the teacher is capable of arousing their interest. Thus to record high achievement in Social Studies, there is need for teacher to use instructional strategies that are capable of arousing students to learn. This led to investigation into the effect of self directed learning and simulation technique as they would enhance students' interest in Social Studies at Upper Basic II in Kogi East.

The debate on who has higher interest (male or female) has been a subject of academic discourse for a long time. However, Abdu-Raheem, (2012) posited that improved instructional techniques can close the gender gap in interest in social studies. Thus, this study sought to find out if interest of male and female pupils in social studies could be enhanced through self directed learning and simulation technique.

Statement of the Problem

There had been frequent poor students' interest in Social Studies in upper Basic Education level in the study area of Kogi State. This deplorable state of poor students' interest which reflects in their achievement has been evidenced in the observation of researchers from students' performance in JS III Social Studies external examination from 2007 – 2016 which recorded 46% failure. The researchers therefore, wondered what could have been responsible for the irregularities in students' interest which reflects in their achievement or performance in the study area.

There is, however, inadequate documented information in research conducted in Nigeria and /or in the study area on the comparative effects of self directed learning (SDL) and stimulation technique on students' interest in Social Studies in upper Basic level of Education. The problem of this study, therefore is, what are the comparative analysis of the effects of self directed learning (SDL) and Simulation technique on students' interest in Social Studies at upper basic II in Kogi East education zone?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to compare the effects of self-direct learning (SDL) and simulation techniques on students' interest in Social Studies at upper Basic II in Kogi East education zone. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find the difference in the mean interest ratings of students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy and Simulation Technique (ST).
2. determine the difference in the mean interest ratings of male and female students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning(SDL) strategy.

Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the difference in the mean interest ratings of students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy and Simulation Technique (ST)?
2. What is the difference in the mean interest ratings of male and female students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning(SDL) strategy?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy and those taught using simulation technique
2. There is no significant difference in mean interest ratings of male and female students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted quasi-experimental design of pre-test, post-test non equivalent- group design. The reason for the adoption of this design is hinged on the fact that it is not possible to have a complete randomization of the subjects hence intact classes were assigned to experimental groups. The design was implemented in four stages. In the first stage, pre test was administered to the first and second experimental groups. In the second stage, self-directed learning was administered to experimental group 1, simulation technique were administered to experimental group 2. In the third stage, post test was administered to both groups. Finally, the subjects were tested after 8 weeks to ascertain the level of interest in social studies.

This study was carried out in Kogi East education zone. Kogi East Senatorial District is located between latitude 7^0 30' north of the equator and longitude 6^o 42' east of the Greenwich meridian. The area is bounded to the north by Benue State, to the west east by Enugu and Anambra States, to the south by River Niger and Benue Confluence. Kogi East has nine (9) local government areas, with the total population of 1, 484, 345 with 759,738 male and 724,607 female (Population census figure of Nigeria, 2006). The researcher chooses the study area because of the homogeneous nature of the people. Secondly, from the literatures that were reviewed, there had not been empirical records of the use of Self Directed Learning and Simulation Technique in the zone which justified the choice of the study area.

The target population of this study consisted of 18,560 Upper Basic II students from 150 public junior secondary schools in Kogi East Education zone for 2016/2017 academic session. This population according to Kogi Ministry of Education is made up of 10,240 male and 8,320 female. Out of the 150-public, co-educational schools, 6 schools were selected. 3 schools for experimental group I from old Ankpa Education Zone for Self Directed Learning, while 3 schools for experimental group II from old Dekina Education Zone for Simulation Technique.

The study used a multi-stage random sampling technique. In the first stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select 6 schools from the nine (9) Local Government Areas in Kogi East. The choice of purposive sampling technique was to enable equal and fair representation of Local Government Areas in the sample. In the 2nd stage, simple random sampling was used to pick Upper Basic II class in each school. The 3rd stage, the number of males and female were assigned to the experimental group one and two through a random sampling technique. The co-educational nature of the schools allowed for the determination of gender variable in the study. a total of 442 Upper Basic II students for the sample; 232 (52.5%) males and 210 (47.5%) females.

Social Studies Interest Questionnaire (SSIQ) was used as an instrument for data collection. In addition, lesson plans were used for treatment. The SSIQ is made up of 40 items but was scaled down to 35 items for convenience which was used to measure students' interest in Social Studies. SSIQ consisted of two sections which are, section A and B. Section A elicited information about respondents' sex, while Section B elicited students' interest in Social Studies. Each of the items was presented on a 5-point likert-rating scale. The options are Strongly Agree (SA) 5 points, Agree (A) 4 points, Undecided (U) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. SSIQ was administered twice along with pre-test and post-test. The reason for pre SSIQ and post SSIQ was to ascertain students' interest before and after treatment.

The instrument used was developed based on topics in Social Studies such as marriage, family, drug abuse, communication and religion which are drawn from Upper Basic II Social Studies curriculum and the topics cut across all terms. The two lesson plans on marriage, family, communication, drug

abuse and religion are prepared by the researcher for the treatment both the experimental group 1 and group 2. The administration of the lesson plan covered upper basic II students and not more than 40 minutes duration as it has been in the school timetable. Previous knowledge of the students as regards the topics such as marriage, family, drug abuse, communication and religion were ascertained. Laid down steps in instructional delivery, evaluation, conclusion, summary as well as assignment were equally presented to the students.

The instruments were presented to three experts, one in Social Studies Education, another in Curriculum and Teaching and the other in Test and Measurement from Department of Curriculum and Teaching, Benue State University, Makurdi for validation. These experts' advice was sought in terms of scope of coverage, content relevance, ambiguity and vagueness of expression. The experts also checked among other things whether SSIQ items are properly structured. Through this process, corrections were effected, additional items were framed and inappropriate items removed to ensure that the instruments were less ambiguous and capable of providing all the necessary information required for answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses. SSIQ 40 items were reduced to 35.

A trial test was conducted in two secondary schools within the area of study, but outside the schools to be used for the main study. The data generated were used to compute the reliability of the instrument. The SSIQ were administered to 36 students. Two days were used for the trial test, one day for each instrument. The regular Social Studies teachers served as a research assistant. The teacher was responsible for administration and collection of the instruments. The reliability of SSIQ was computed using Cronbach Alpha. It yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.77. The instrument was considered to be sufficiently reliable to be used for the study as it met the condition of 0.70 set by Emaikwu (2012) as necessary for an instrument to be considered reliable.

The researcher obtained permission from the school principals, and letter of introduction were given to them. A week before the commencement of the experimental procedure, six research assistants were trained by the researcher. Intact classes were assigned to experimental groups. The researcher with the help of the research assistants administer SSIQ in each of the schools selected. The students were taught by research assistants who were their regular Social Studies teacher. The criteria used in the selection of these assistants were people who have first degree in social studies and have at least five years of experience in teaching the subject. They were also currently teaching in Upper Basic II classes. Oral test and interviews were carried out after training to determine whether they have mastered instructional packages. The training was carried out in the following stages:

Training of Research Assistants

Before the commencement of the treatment the researcher used (6) research assistants that were holders of Bachelor of Science in Education (B. Sc. Ed.) Social Studies with at least five years teaching experience in the selected schools. The research assistants were properly trained and coordinated on the necessary steps to handle the experimental group 1 and experimental group 11 lesson plans as well as distribution of questionnaires. The training was carried out in the following stages.

Treatment Schedule

This section covered training of research assistants, exposure of experimental group 1 to self-directed learning (treatment), and that of experimental group 11 to simulation technique. The normal time table of the schools was used for the study. Three research assistants were exposed to Self Directed Learning strategy. Lesson plans to teach the five topics selected in the experimental group 1, while on the order hand three research assistants were exposed to simulation technique in the experimental group II using simulation lesson plans on the five topics.

Social Studies Interest Questionnaire (SSIQ) is a researcher's made instrument, with items which were used to measure students' interest in Social Studies. It was made up of two(2) sections: A and B; Section A elicited personal data of the respondents, while section B contained statements that measured respondent's interest towards the learning of Social Studies. This include strongly disagree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U) Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). This statistic was deemed appropriate because it eliminated bias which resulted from using intact classes whose equivalence in certain measures have been determined. This method removed the initial differences among the research respondents and control extraneous variables (Ali, 2006).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis and interpretation of data is done in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1

What is the difference in the mean interest ratings of students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy and Simulation Technique (ST)?

The data which provide answer to this research question is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Interest Ratings of Students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy and Simulation Technique (ST)

Method		Pre SSIQ	Post SSIQ	Mean Gain
Simulation Technique	Mean	2.4686	2.8408	0.3722
	N	226	226	
	Std. Deviation	.4620	.4323	
Self Directed Learning	Mean	2.7260	3.2079	0.4819
	N	216	216	
	Std. Deviation	.2599	.2645	
Difference				0.1097

The analysis of data on Table 1shows the mean interest ratings of students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy and Simulation Technique (ST). The table shows that 226 Upper Basic II social studies students were taught social studies using Simulation Technique (ST) while 216 Upper Basic II social studies students were taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy. The table reveals that the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using Simulation Technique (ST) was 2.47 with a standard deviation of 0.46 during pre-test and their post test scores was 2.84 with a standard deviation of 0.43. The mean interest ratings of students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy was 2.73 with a standard deviation during pre-test and their post test scores was 3.21 with a standard deviation of 0.26. Table 1 further shows that the mean gain of Upper Basic II Social Studies students taught social studies using Simulation Technique (ST)was 0.37and those taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy were 0.48. The mean difference in the interest ratings of students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy and Simulation Technique (ST)was 0.11 in favour of Upper Basic II students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy.

Research Question 2

What is the difference in the mean interest ratings of male and female students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Interest Ratings of Male and Female Students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy

Gender		PreSSIQ	PostSSIQ	Mean Gain
Male	Mean	2.4167	2.8485	0.4318
	N	116	116	
	Std. Deviation	.4547	.4292	
Female	Mean	2.5118	2.8380	0.3262
	N	110	108	
	Std. Deviation	.4615	.4395	
Difference				0.1056

Table 2 shows the mean interest ratings of male and female students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy. The table shows that 116male students and 110 female students in Upper Basic II were taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy. Table 4 indicates that the mean interest ratings of male the students was 2.42 with a standard deviation of 0.45 during pre-test and the post test scores was 2.85 with a standard deviation of 0.43. While the mean interest ratings of female students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy was 2.51 with a standard deviation of 0.46 during pre-test, the post test scores was 2.84 with a standard deviation of 0.44. Table 4 further reveals that the mean gain of male students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy was 0.43and that of the female students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy was 0.33. The mean difference between the interest ratings of male and female students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy was 0.12 in favour of the male students.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy and those taught using simulation technique.

Table 3: ANCOVA on Mean Interest Ratings of Students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy and those taught Using Simulation Technique

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	57.658(a)	4	14.415	440.217	.000
Intercept	7.224	1	7.224	220.622	.000
PreSSIQ	33.012	1	33.012	1008.192	.000
Method	2.485	1	2.485	75.894	.000
Gender	1.042	1	1.042	31.827	.000
Method * Gender	7.606	1	7.606	.000	.988
Error	14.309	437	.033		
Total	4103.746	442			
Corrected Total	71.967	441			

a R Squared = .801 (Adjusted R Squared = .799)

Table 3 reveals that $F(1, 441) = 75.894$; $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis one is therefore rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy and those taught using simulation technique. Thus, it can be concluded that based on evidence from data analysis that there is significant difference between the mean

interest ratings of Social Studies students taught using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy and those taught using simulation technique. This finding agrees with that of Ugwu (2014) who revealed that guided inquiry instructional method was superior to conventional instructional method in facilitating students' interest in basic science. In addition, Essien, Akpan and Obot (2015) found that students' interest in social studies significantly relate to their academic achievement in the subject. Also Ikwumelu (2014) found that there was a wide spectrum of Social Studies instructional methods available for use in teaching Social Studies, which include lecture method brainstorming methods, questioning method, explanation and project. For Social Studies teachers to arouse students' interest is a herculean task. The issue may not be unconnected to the fact that students often perceive Social Studies as less interesting and important than other school subjects. These perceptions are likely worsened by teachers attempting to cover a vast amount of content at a superficial level using non motivating strategy. Social Studies teacher who try to cover topics so fast allow only a few issues to come alive in such lessons. Such lessons may engage students in learning about others' opinions regarding Social Studies concepts rather than developing their own narratives and explanations. Nevertheless, when teaching students via self-directed learning technique, students might find themselves reassessing the importance of Social Studies and becoming more interesting as a result. Although Social Studies has traditionally been viewed by students as unimportant, it seems reasonable to think that as they are taught using engaging techniques like self-directed learning and simulation technique, they may come to regard Social Studies as increasingly important and relevant to their personal lives.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in mean interest ratings of male and female students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy.

The data for testing this hypothesis are presented in Table 13.

Table 4: ANCOVA on Mean Interest Ratings of Male and Female Students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	28.680(a)	2	14.340	239.271	.000
Intercept	6.343	1	6.343	105.829	.000
PreSSIQ	28.666	1	28.666	478.307	.000
Gender	.543	1	.543	9.065	.003
Error	13.365	223	.060		
Total	1865.949	226			
Corrected Total	42.045	225			

a R Squared = .682 (Adjusted R Squared = .679)

Table 4 reveals that $F(1, 225) = 9.065$; $p = 0.003 < 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis four is therefore rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in mean interest ratings of male and female students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy. Thus, it can be concluded that based on evidence from data analysis that there is significant difference between the mean interest ratings of male and female students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy. While findings on the use of Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy and gender on the students interest in social studies reveals that the difference in mean interest ratings of male and female students taught social studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy was 0.12 in favour of the male students. This implies that the use of Self Directed Learning (SDL) strategy is gender sensitive in favour of male based on students' interest in social studies. To check if the difference in the mean gain is statistically significant it was found that there is significant difference in mean interest ratings of male and female students taught Social Studies using Self Directed Learning (SDL) Strategy. This result agrees with that of Ugwu (2014) who found that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students in basic science after the treatment, although male students performed slightly better than their female counterpart.

Self-directed learning is the degree of choice that the learner has within an instructional situation. Learners may exhibit different levels of self-direction in different learning situations have a high level of self-direction in an area in which they are familiar or in areas that are similar to a prior experience. The ability to be self-directed is situational in that one may be self-directed in one subject and a dependent learner in another. It is partly a personal trait linear to maturity. Once developed, certain aspects of self-direction are transferable to new situation. The implication is that few learners are equally motivated towards all subjects. Some features appear to be deep; perhaps even genetic trait of individual personalities. For instance, persistence can influence self-directed learning.

Likewise, findings on the use of Simulation Technique (ST) and gender on the students interest in social studies shows that the difference in mean interest ratings of male and female students taught social studies using Simulation Technique (ST) was 0.01 in favour of the male students. This implies that the use of Simulation Technique (ST) is gender sensitive in favour of male based on students' interest in social studies. It was also found that there is a significant difference in mean interest ratings of male and female students taught Social Studies using Simulation technique. The findings disagree with that of Achor, Ajayi and Imoko (2010) that male and female students taught using games and simulation did not differ significantly in their interest.

Element of reality is compatible with principles of constructivism and are embedded in simulation technique

which makes learning more interesting to the learner. Role-play simulation technique promotes critical thinking of learners who are actively involved in the teaching-learning process. The technique also enhances appreciation of the more subtle aspects of a concept/principle. Role-play simulation technique could also serve as a career pathway for pupils as they may choose a life career in the process of role-play and dramatization.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that self directed learning and simulation technique enhance students interest in social studies. It was concluded that social studies concept are better taught via self directed leaning, since the students find themselves reassessing the importance of social studies and becoming more interesting. The study concluded that self directed learning is gender sensitive in favour of male based on student's interest in social studies. Interest is a degree of choice that the leaner has within an instructional situation. Learners exhibited different levels of self direction in different learning situation.

The study concluded that students taught social studies using ST is gender sensitive in favour of male based on student's interest in social studies.

Since self directed learning and simulation technique has been proven to be instrumental in helping teachers to teach Social Studies more meaningfully in improving students' interest, the persistent poor achievement of Upper Basic II social students need not to continue. There is hope that with self directed learning and simulation technique. The situation can be changed or reduced to the minimal.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made in the light of the findings of this study.

1. Social Studies teachers should employ self directed learning strategy and simulation techniques in their classroom interaction since they have the capacity to improve students' interest in the subject.
2. Social Studies teachers should regularly provide the structure and opportunity for learners to employ these learning methods.
3. Students with low interest and achievement and female students who are observed to have less academic interest should be encouraged academically since they are influenced by the methods to succeed in a students' centered academic environment to close gender gap
4. In service training, seminars, work-shops and symposia should be organized by the state and federal ministry of education for training social studies teachers on the use of self directed learning and simulation in teaching the subject.

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