

Teaching of Social Studies in Nigerian Schools: A Case for Activity Methods

U. K. EMOEFE EKIUGBO Ph.D D.D

Department of Social Science Education College of Education, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: this study examined the effect of using Activity based methods to teach Social Studies in Primary School Pupils in Nigeria. The Pupils used for the study were randomly picked in a primary school located in Ikere Ekiti.

Methodology: The sample included 240 pupils out of a total of 497 pupils in primary five. Based on their performances in the recent conducted promotion examination, the pupils were listed and assigned to classes A and B systematically so as to concentrate on only the bright ones in the class. A was made the experimental group and B the control group. At the end of six weeks of intensive coaching, a test was administered to the two groups by the researcher and two research assistants respectively.

Findings: the findings of this study revealed that there was a significant difference between the pupils in the experimental group (Group A) and those in the control group (Group B) in terms of their performance in the test administered after treatment. The group taught using the activity method performed better in terms of achievement. However, there was no significant difference in the performance of male and female pupils.

Conclusion: it is recommended that teachers of Social Studies at the primary school level should identify teaching strategies and resource materials which facilitate learning and better comprehension of the subject matter of social studies.

Recommendations: Despite the obvious benefits of the Activity based teaching, most teachers do not use that method of teaching social studies. Teachers of Social Studies especially at this level should be complaint to this method and other innovative methods of teaching the subject especially at the pre-primary and primary school level.

Keywords: Activity Methods, Lecture Method, Teaching, Learning, Nigeria Environment.

INTRODUCTION

Social Studies deals with man's interaction with his environment. It is concerned with the reciprocal relationship between man and the various aspect of his environment, While interacting with his physical and social environment, man encounters problems and challenges in his quest to live comfortably, orderly and more meaningfully, Therefore, the general purpose of social studies education is to help learners develop the ability to adapt to the ever changing environment they live in through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, attitude, values and practical skills, (Ekiugbo 2024). The programme is expected to make good citizens and patriots out of the youths of Nigeria. Incidentally the programme of social studies in schools have been implemented for many years now without success in schools in terms of inculcating the values of good citizenship among the youths, (Ekiugbo 2024), The youths are rich in knowledge of social studies concepts and facts but deficient in expected social studies values, attitude and behaviours that characterize socially responsible citizens. It is assumed that this deficiency arises from the way the subject is taught and learnt in the classrooms.

The teaching of social studies has relied on conventional methods of teaching such as the lecture method,

dictation, note taking all of which are not interactive. These methods are inadequate to facilitate optimal learning in the pupils and modify their behaviours positively. The teacher has been blamed for this seemingly poor outing of social studies as a school subject, (Adeosun, 2002). The teacher is accused of using inappropriate pedagogical approaches like lecturing, dictation and note copying for a programme that requires interactive technique in a conducive social environment for the development and sustenance of desirable social skills, attitude and values. Again, the teachers concentrate on only available instructional materials provided by the school, tests and written assignment for deriving achievement measures for evaluation, (Adeyemi, 2002).

The author in the past ten years observed with dismay that social studies teachers in the primary and junior secondary schools rely solely on the lecture method in teaching social studies topics. The predominance of this traditional talk and chalk teacher method dominated other instructional methods over other teaching strategies among teachers could be due to a carry-over effect inherited from their lecturers in the various colleges of education and universities where the lecture method of instruction predominates. The student teachers only learn of the other teaching strategies in the methodology courses that are again being taught using the lecture method. This lecture method makes the teacher to do almost all the talking while the pupils/students remain passive. Thus, the teacher succeeds only in one of the three domains of learning, the cognitive knowledge, while the affective and psychomotor domains are neglected. This contradicts the objectives of education in general and social studies education in Nigeria in particular.

The National Policy on Education (1988) identified the following as the objectives of education in Nigeria.

1. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
2. The inculcation of the right type of value and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society.
3. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around.
4. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

Based on the above, primary school education has as objectives the following:

1. The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.
2. The laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking.
3. Citizenship education as a basis for scientific and effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
4. Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes.
5. Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment.
6. Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity.
7. Providing basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

The above objectives have implication for teaching –learning process. The desire of the government to translate these objectives into reality gave rise to the teaching of different subjects in the primary school each with its own set of objectives. According to the 1983 National Social studies Curriculum for primary schools, the objectives of social studies should help the Nigeria school child to:

1. Develop the ability to adapt to his changing environment.
2. Inculcate national consciousness and national unity.

3. Become good citizen capable of, and willing to contribute to the development of the society.
4. Inculcate the right types of values and attitudes.

In order to achieve these objectives the three domains of knowledge-cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains – must be covered. There is thus the need to vary and diversify the methods of impacting social studies knowledge to the pupils since no single teaching method can achieve all the set objectives.

Statement of Problem

The failure rate of students in the final and placement examinations in Social Studies is worrisome. Research shows that teachers in Nigerian classroom still stick to the behaviorist method of direct teaching where the learner is given content to memorize and regurgitate. It is observed that teacher still encourage rote learning, memorization and persistently teacher dominated methods in the classroom. It appears that teachers are still far from the constructive instructional models where the learners is required to produce and use knowledge, hence, students in Social Studies classes lack the abilities to think out situation to problem facing them. A method that enable the learners with the knowledge of Social Studies content and higher cognitive skills such as problem solving inquiry method and activitybased teaching that allows for self-development and continuous learning is what the present day Social Studies teacher needs. The issue of appropriate methods of teaching the subject therefore is important considering the fact that the traditional methods used by the teachers in classroom today bring about the systematic destruction of young minds and feelings. These methods minister to the parts and not the whole of the students. This piece meal tinkering is not only costly but in the short and long run frustrating.

Objective of the Study

The study investigated the effect of activity based methods on the primary schools pupils' achievement in Social Studies. The study also determine which of the methods used better enhanced achievement in male and female pupils' in Social Studies in Nigerian schools.

Research Questions

Arising from the stated problem, the research questions are:

- I. What is the effect of activity based teaching method on achievement in Nigerian schools Social Studies classroom
- II. Is there any differences between the post test achievement mean scores of pupils in the experimental and control groups.
- III. Is there any difference between the post test achievement mean scores of male and female pupils in the experimental and control groups

Hypotheses

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

- I. There is no significant difference in the post test achievement mean scores of pupils in the experimental and control group
- II. There is no significant difference in the post test achievement mean scores of male and female pupils in Social Studies in the experimental and control groups.

METHODOLOGY

The study was a quasi-experimental design of the pre-test, post-test, control group. Pre-test was used to establish the knowledge base of the pupils used for the study while the post test was used to measure the level of achievement. Two groups were used, 240 pupils of two schools each, out of the number of 497 pupils in primary

5 were randomly picked in a primary school located in Ikere Ekiti. On the basis of their performances in the recently concluded promotion examination, the pupils were listed and assigned to two classes, which are class A and class B. Class 5B was tagged the control group, while class 5A was tagged the experimental group. Pupils in the experimental group 5A were exposed to treatment through activity based teaching, pupils in the control group class 5B were exposed to treatment through the traditional method, using purely the chalk and duster. Teaching method constituted the independent variables, while the dependant variables are the scores of the pupils in the achievement test.

The population for the study consisted of all the pupils in the primary school. The sample is the 240 pupils picked and assigned to class 5A and class 5B on the basis of their performances in the promotion examination of 2022/2023 academic session. If means, each treatment group was 120 pupils each, 120 male pupils and 120 female pupils, each of the sexes had 120 pupils each and there were 240 pupils all together.

The instructional package used for the study consisted of a two lesson part developed on two selected areas of the core messages being addressed by Social Studies curriculum at the primary school level in Nigerian. The instrument used to collect the data was the Social Studies achievement test, designed by the researcher. To ensure the validity of the instrument, content and construct validity procedures were employed, given to experts in Social Studies and others in counseling psychology Department of the Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology in Ikere Ekiti. Based on their suggestions, necessary amendments were made.

The Social Studies achievement test (SSAT) was administered to another group of pupils in two primary school in Ado Ekiti, another town different from the one where the two schools used for the experiments are located. The pupils were similar in age and class with those for whom the instrument was intended. The scores of the two homogeneous groups were correlated using person product moment correlation analysis. The correlation coefficient was 0.4 what is adequate for the study.

The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method. The items was administered on a group of 40 pupils from two schools not used for the study. After two weeks the instrument was re-administered on the same set of students. The scores were correlated using person product moment correlation analysis. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 was obtained, which was adequate for the study.

The final version of (SSAT) was administered on another 40 pupils from two other schools not used for the study. Cronbach alpha was applied on the responses of the pupils for the estimation of the internal consistency of the items. The formula when applied to the 32 test items yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.71 which is good to measure the differences between experimental and control group.

The researcher visited the schools used for the experiment discussed his mission with the head teacher. Through the head teacher, the researcher got across to the Social studies teachers. He discussed the purpose of the research with them and made arrangement for the pre-test. Two social studies teachers were selected as research assistants. All teachers were trained for few days and so got them familiarized with the methods. They were used as the resource person who taught and administered the test. The test was used to find out the level of achievement of pupils

The time frame was relatively short to minimize the possible effects of history and maturation. No change was made in the calibration of the instrument used for the pre-test and post-test thereby checking for the likely effects of the instrumentation. The experiment arrangement served to provide control for interaction across group of pupils. The pupils in the experimental and control group were based in different classrooms far from one another, though in the same school.

The pupils were taught for six weeks on the two social studies themes of marriage and human and Natural resources in Nigeria, after which the pre-test was administered. While after the six weeks intensive teaching, the post test achievement test was administered

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis:

Question One: What is the effect of activity based teaching methods on achievement in Nigerian schools social studies classroom?

Table 1: Mean scores of Pupil’s achievement in social studies by treatment.

Variable	Group	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test SD	Post-test mean	Post-test SD
Effect	Activity	14.58	2.37	26.15	1.75
	Lecture	15.45	2.16	22.57	4.66
Achievement	Activity	41.10	2.26	67.88	8.71
	Lecture	41.38	5.57	66.58	8.02

Table 1 shows the pre-test effect scores of the pupils exposed for activity method is 14.58 (SD=2.37) and post test scores is 26.15 (SD=1.75) while the lecture method is 15.45 (SD=2.16) and post test scores is 22.57 (SD=4.66). The pupils in the activity method treatment group did better which shows that the activity method can enhance achievement better than the traditional method.

Question Two: Is there any differences between the post-test achievement mean scores of pupils in the experimental and control groups

Table 1 above shows that there is differences in the post-test achievement mean scores of pupils in the experimental and control group. The post-test mean scores of the experimental group was 67.88 (SD=8.7) and 66.58 (SD=8.02) for the control group

Question Three: Is there any difference between the post-test mean achievement scores of male and female pupils in the experimental and control group?

Table 2: Descriptive analysis showing achievement of Social Studies pupils by gender and treatment

	MALE				FEMALE			
	Pre-test	SD	Post test	SD	Pre test	SD	Post test	SD
Activity based	14.77	2.40	26.33	1.45	14.40	2.37	25.97	2.01
Lecture method	12.7	3.01	19.80	2.85	14.83	2.98	19.50	2.60

Table 2 Shows that Male pupils exposed to Activity based method had higher achievement mean score of 26.33, compared to their female counterparts with an achievement mean score of 25.97

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the post-test achievement mean scores of pupils in the experimental and control group.

In testing the hypothesis, post-test achievement mean scores of Social Studies pupils in experimental and control groups was computed and subjected to statistical analysis involving Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 3: ANCOVA summary of Pupil’s achievement in Experimental and Control groups.

Source	ss	df	ms	f cal	f table
Corrected Model	3340.213	4	835.053	75.634	2.37

Covariance (pre-test)	4.434	1	4.434	402	3.84
Group	3339.814	3	1113.271	100.833	2.60
Error	2594.582	235	11.041		
Corrected total	5934.796	239			
Total	112743.000	240			

Table 2 shows that F_{cal} (100.833) is greater than F_{table} 2.60 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the post-test achievement mean scores by pupils in the experimental and control groups.

Hypothesis II: there is no significant difference in the post-test achievement mean scores of male and female pupils in Social Studies in the experimental and control groups.

To test hypothesis, achievement mean scores of male and female pupils exposed for different teaching methods were compared for statistical significant using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 levels.

Table 4: ANCOVA showing the effect of gender treatment on pupil’s achievement in Social Studies.

source	ss	df	ms	f cal	f table
Corrected model	3343.886	8	419.986	32.267	1.94
Covariance Pretest	4.257	1	4.257	0.380	3.84
Sex	0.439	1	0.439	0.039	3.84
Group	3339.698	3	1113.233	99.253	2.60
Sex x Group	3.231	3	1.077	0.096	2.60
Error	2590.910	231	11.216		
Corrected total	5934.796	239			
Total	112743.008	240			

Table 4 shows that F_{cal} (0.096) is less than F_{table} (2.60) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in achievement mean scores of male and female pupils in the experimental and control groups. Similarly, the main effect of gender on pupils achievement in Social Studies is not statistically significant at 0.05 level ($F= 0.039, >0.05$). However, the effect of treatment on the achievement of the pupils is significant at 0.05 level ($F= 99.253, P> 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that the activity based teaching methodology with an experimental situation of learner content recorded the highest post-test achievement mean scores. The activity based teaching methodology group performed better than the other group taught with the traditional method. It performed better and the performance of those in the group could be attributable to the advantages of pupils’ involvement. This teaching method no doubt explores a learner feelings and thoughts about an issue in relation to another. Literature generally supports active learners’ involvement in teaching and learning. It is generally believed that active participation by learners is preferable to passive reception of the contents to be learned and a motivated learners is better than one who is not motivated.

The study revealed that the pupils in the activity based group displayed a lot of enthusiasm throughout the experiment. This method as noted by Ekuigbo (2024) is known to develop self-confidence and cooperative spirit in pupils as well as create avenue for self-expression and self development. The pupils as observed by the researcher and the research assistants found out that those in the activity based group ventured into the realm of

critical thinking, aimed at developing self fulfilment. Ogunyemi (1996) as quoted by Ekuigbo (2024) maintained that more relevant students thinking and more active problem solving activities so on during activity based teaching than during lecture method. The degree of interest and enthusiasm and pupils activities shown in the group taught by the activity based method were far more than those taught using the lecture method.

The lecture method group classroom was such that the teacher dominated the scene. It was observed by the researcher that the teacher that used this method assumed the status of one who knows all. All he did was to dish out the facts to the pupils whom he conceived as empty containers to be filled. It was also observed that as teachers dominated, the pupils were mere passive listeners. There was little or no teacher student and student teacher exchange and it was observed that this killed the students initiatives and inhibits their efforts to make independent decision both within and outside the classroom setting.

Familugba (2007) as quoted by Ekuigbo 2023 opined that activities based teaching creates highly interactive learning environment for all pupils. Adeosun (2002) maintained that it is an effective way of inculcating cultural values, beliefs and ethics in young people. Ekuigbo (2024) explained that activity based methods of teaching is a potent strategy for modifying attitudes and behaviours as this according to him is a rapid way of presenting real life situations in the classroom. Pupils are given the opportunity to be corrected when they make mistakes. Pupils develop self-confidence and thus it was observed that their language and discussion skills are enhanced and additional skills of character formation was noted.

CONCLUSION

The advantages of using the activity methods have been shown. Method that involve pupils doing something useful and considered to be modern and more objective especially in areas of evaluation. The teaching of Social Studies has relied on conventional methods such as the lecture methods dictation, note taking and so on. For too long these methods are inadequate to facilitate optimal learning in pupils and modify their behaviour positively. Recent Socio-political and economic changes in the world and within nations have brought about changes in educational goals. Schools are called not only to equip learners with basic knowledge of Social Studies content, but also with higher cognitive skills such as problem solving skills that allows for self-development.

To meet up with the changes, movement away from the behaviorist method of direct teaching as in the lecture method, note coping and dictation where learner is given contents to memorize and regurgitate to constructive instructional models where the learners is required to produce and use knowledge as in activity based methods of teaching is highly advocated and encouraged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made

1. Teachers should be encouraged to use innovative methods like activity based methods in modern day Social Studies classroom in Nigeria.
2. Teachers should be aware that in Social Studies classroom, their main task is to help growing boys and girls to become well grounded participants in society and discriminating critics in and for the society. Therefore a mastery of innovative methods like activity methods is indispensable for effective Social Studies instruction.
3. The participation of learners is a means to a much larger and that of preserving and adding a new vibrancy to our culture of egalitarianism, democracy, secularism and equality. These values can be best realized through an integrated and well designed curriculum that enables learners' participation. A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout our educational system in Nigeria,
4. Social Studies teachers should be encouraged to update their professional skills through in service training so as to be able to need up with the current challenges required of them in teaching the subject.

5. Open discussion, debates, brain forming and questioning are quite supportive to the evaluation of valuing habits and progressive value system. These should be encouraged at home, schools (primary, secondary and tertiary) public places in order to promote healthy attitude and rationale behavior among the young and adult learners. Otherwise, the Nigerian student might become prone to indoctrination, which is widely practiced in Nigeria classrooms today.

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