Original Research Article

Enhancing Student's Academic Performance in Social Studies Using Conventional and Blended Teaching Strategy in Rivers State

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Abstract: The study was designed to find out the effect of conventional and blended learning strategy on academic performance of social studies students in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. A nonequivalent control group quisi-experimental design was adopted. Stage sampling technique was used in selecting four hundred and eighty (480) students from eight (8) public junior secondary schools for the study. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The researchers developed instrument termed "social studies performance test (SOSPT) to test the students after three weeks of treatment. Mean and standard deviation was used for the research questions while an independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Results of the findings revealed that students in the blended learning class performed better than those in the conventional class. Also, the male students in the blended learning class performed better than their female counterparts. Although, there was no significant differences among the male and female students in the conventional class. On the bases of these findings, it was recommended- among others that social studies teachers be encouraged to used blended learning strategy while blended learning facilities be provided in schools to enhance higher academic performance.

Keywords: Social studies, conventional and blended learning strategy.

INTRODUCTION

It would not be an overstatement to claim that few subject areas or field of inquiry have experience the degree of controversy and heated debate as that of social studies. Perhaps, this controversy is in no small way, due to a lot of competing views from the subject practitioners, over the years that have emerged with the most effective strategies for achieving the objective of social studies. No wonder then, that Bayero and Lawal (2014) commented that "social studies educators are presented with the challenge of teaching students to be active and informed citizens. Social studies as a subject centres on the study of man and his interaction with both the natural and man-made environments (Mbaba, Nwose and Odo, 2018).

As noted by Birabil (2020), even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus would remain dead unless transformed to life by teachers utilizing appropriate methods in the delivery process. Although, there is no one teaching method that is most appropriate or ineffective for all situation. However, the advice of Vikoo, (2003) remains instructive when he added that "a teaching method could be said to be good and effective if it facilitates a very good deal of learning by students; that is, if it adequately facilitates the attainment of the predetermined instructional objectives. In this

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22

regards, he further added that if the focus of the instructional objectives is the acquisition of information or the development of intellectual skill in learners, then, what we have called "cognitive development methods" of teaching are invaluable.

The conventional or traditional method of teaching is as old as history and it is one of the most widely used methods of teaching in Nigeria. This method of teaching is described as a teacher centred approach to teaching, because the teacher virtually occupied the centre stage of the teaching process and does almost everything in the classroom. This method of teaching implies that the social studies teacher treats a particular lesson through verbal communication or explanation. According to Sambuaga (2020), conventional learning can be interpreted as learning characterized by lectures, the learning process is dominated by the teacher, and communication is done mostly by the teacher to students to Fadeiye, J.O. (2001). This method is used because it is cheap, easy and most familiar to the pupils and students.

Blended learning on the other hand occurs when student combine both face-to-face learning with some other media-related activities so as to facilitate or aid instruction.

Gyand (2008) also, supported the above idea when he described blended learning to refer to learning models that combine traditional classroom practice with e-learning solution. For instance, a student in a traditional class can assigned both printed-based and on line material, has online mentoring sessions with their teacher through chat, and subscribe to a class email list, as he further added. Some of the models of blended learning includes: Flip classroom model, station-rotation model, laboratory rotation model, flex model, self-blend model, online drive model and others. Frieson in Nyegia and Ochuba, (2019) sees blended learning to refer to the mixture of using internet and digital media with face-to-face instruction and interaction between teacher and students.

As a result of the effectiveness of blended learning on instruction and the interest scholars have developed over time, there have been a lot of research studies carried out to determine the potential strength and weakness of blended learning as compared to other instructional strategies. For instance, Nyegia and Ochuba (2019) found out that male students performed better than their female counterpart in oral English, having exposed to laboratory rotation blended learning. Akinbo (2021) studied the impact of blended learning on secondary school students' performance in mathematics found out a significant relationship with academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor. Lopez and Rodriguez (2013) that examined the influence of the use of technology on student outcomes in a blended learning context found it out to be effective on the students. Alshwiah (2019) who conducted a study on the effect of blended learning strategy in teaching vocabulary on premedical students' achievement came out with a positive result. So also to many others.

Ironically, the above findings proofed blended learning strategy to be effective on students' academic performance. If that be the case, the need arises if similar study could be conducted with social studies students for reference framework in Rivers State, other state, Nigeria and any other country of the world.

Statement of the Problem

Considering the importance of social studies to the nation's quest for development of a truth, all is not well with the ever increasing rate of societal ills currently going on in Nigeria. Again, the rate at which social studies students performed in both internal and external examination continue to decline on daily bases.

However, there are not enough studies on the actual factors responsible especially, with the use of blended learning strategy in the area. It is in the realization of this fact that this study sought to investigate the effect of blended learning strategy on academic performances of social studies students' in Rivers State.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study investigated the effect of blended learning strategy on academic performances of social studies students' in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the differences in the academic performance of social studies students exposed to conventional and blended learning strategy.
2. Find out the differences in the academic performance of male and female social studies students exposed to conventional learning strategy.
3. Investigate the differences in the academic performance of male and female students exposed to blended learning strategy.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:-

1. What are the differences in the academic performance of social studies students exposed to conventional and blended learning strategy?

2. What are the differences in the academic performance of male and female social studies students exposed to conventional learning strategy?
3. What are the differences in the academic performance of male and female social studies students exposed to blended learning strategy?

Hypothesis
1. There is no significance difference in the academic performance of social studies students exposed to conventional and blended learning strategy.
2. There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female social studies students exposed to conventional learning strategy.
3. There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female social studies students exposed to blended learning strategy.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the nonequivalent control groups quasi-experimental also called the pretest-posttest none- equivalent groups design. According to Nwankwo (2016) quisi-experimental design is not purely experimental as in some cases involving human beings especially when the threat to validity cannot be controlled. The design does this by, the use of pretest and post-test as well as experimental and control groups that were not constituted by random assignment of the subjects (Kpolovie, 2010) as shown below:

Groups	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	O1	X	O2
Control	O3		O4

Pre-test-Post-test control group quasi experimental design (from Kpolovie, 2010:92). When the pretests performance is substracted from the posters, comparison can be made of the experimental and control groups to show the influence of the treatment (the conventional and blended learning stratagems) on the dependent variable (academic performance in social studies).

The population was made up 1418 junior secondary school (JSS) ii student drawn from fourteen (14) public secondary school in Gokana Local Government Area or Rivers State, Nigeria, in the 2021/2022 academic section (Source: Universal Basic Education Board, Kpor –Gokana). Stage (a type of cluster) sampling technique was used in selecting a final sample size of four humbled and eighty (480) Students from 8 Public Secondary Schools formed the sample size for the study.

The instrument used to elicit opinion from the respondents was a questionnaire titled "social studies performance test (SOSPT) developed by the researchers. The (SOPT) was subjected to both face and content validity by exports. Item analysis of the instrument was conducted to determine how reliable the instrument was the instrument was found to be reliable and a reliability coefficient value of 0.86 was obtained which was considered adequate for the study.

The principals of the schools selected were contacted for permission to use their school. The social studies teachers used for the experiment were trained on the use of instructional guide. Three weeks was used for the treatment with the use of the experimental group using blended instructional guide while the control group received their treatment with the use of conventional instructional guide. The researchers strictly monitored the process throughout the three weeks. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while hypothesis were tested using independent t-test using independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the differences in the academic performance of social studies students exposed to conventional and blended learning strategy?

Hypothesis: There are no significant differences in the academic performance of social studies students' exposed to conventional and blended learning strategy.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis exposed to conventional and blended learning strategy

Variable	N	X	DF	SD	S2	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
BC	240	62.19	478	8.07	65.12	10.35	1.96	S
CC	240	52.15		12.19	161.04			

BC = Blended class
CC = conventional class
S = significant at 0.05 level.

Information on tale I shows a significant difference between the academic performance of

those exposed to conventional and blended learning strategy. The t – calculated value of 10.35 is greater

than the t-critical value of 1.96. This means that the null hypothesis was rejected. The therefore show that the level of academic performance of students exposed to blended learning strangely is significantly higher than those of the conventional learning strategy.

Research Question Two: what are the differences in the academic performance of male and female social studies students exposed to conventional learning Strategy?

Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of difference in the academic performance of student exposed to conventional strategy

Variable	N	X	DF	SD	S2	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male in CC	123	53.31	238	12.26	150.31	1.69	1.96	NS
Female in CC	177	50:79		12.91	158.51			

NS = Not Significance at 0.05 level
CC = Conventional class.

Table 2 information on table 2 shows no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students exposed to conventional learning strategy. The t-calculated value is 1.69 and the t-critical value is 1.98. Since the t-cal is less than t-crit, the null hypothesis is retained. This shows that the males and their female counterpart performed equally in the conventional class.

Research Question Three: What are the differences in the academic performance of male and female social studies students exposed to blended learning strategy?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female social studies students exposed to blended learning strategy.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of difference in the academic performance of male and female students exposed to blended learning strategy.

Variable	N	X	DF	SD	S2	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male in BC	123	64.37	238	10.79	116.42	3.05	1.98	S
Female in BC	177	50:04		11.43	130.64			

S=Significant at 0.05 level
BC=Blended class

Information on table 3 reveals a significant difference between the male and female social studies students exposed to blended learning strategy. The t-calculated value is 3.05 while that of the t-critical value was 1.98. Since the t- calculated is greater than the t-critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected. It therefore, means that male students performed better female students in the blended learning strategy class.

DISCUSSION

The result in table 1 shows the performance of students taught with conventional and blended learning strategy. The experimental group has a mean of 62.19 which the control group has 52.15. All the same, independent sample t-test analysis showing a t-calculated value of 10.35 which is greater than the t-critical value of 1.96. This means that there is a significant difference between the performance of the experimental and control. The findings agree with Akinbo (2021) who studied on the impact of blended learning on students' academic achievement on mathematics. So also to that of Lopez and Rodriguez (2013) and Alshwiah (2019).

The result on table 2 showing no difference between male and female students on the use of conventional learning strategy. The female in the group had 50.79. The independent sample t-test analysis shows t-calculated value of 1.69, with a t-critical value of 1.96. This indicated no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female students. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Vikoo (2014) that gender does not affect academic performance with conventional teaching strategy.

As indicated in table 3, significant difference exists between male and female students exposed to blended learning strategy. The male students have a mean of 64.37 while the female recorded a mean of 50.04. The independent sample t-test analysis shows t-calculated value of 3.09 and t-critical value of 1.98. This shows that the male students performed better than the females in the blended learning strategy. This is in line with the findings of Al-zoghby and Doumy (2012) in favour of the experimental group.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Social studies students exposed to blended learning strategy performed better than those in the conventional class.
2. Male students in the blended learning class performed better than their female counterparts in the same class.
3. The two learning strategies affected students' attitude toward social studies.
4. The teaching of social studies using blended learning strategies will not only improve academic performances in social studies but will in addition reduce the workload of the teacher and create a conducive learning environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the strength of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educational planners should see to the inclusion of blended learning as part of teacher education programmes.
2. Social studies teachers should be encourages to blend their lessons in a fashionable manner so as to make lessons more interesting to the students.
3. Government should assist to provide blended learning facilities to schools.
4. Stakeholders and other relevant bodies in education should assist to create an enabling environment that will promote the use of blended learning in schools.
5. Social studies teachers should focus on activities that are capable of fostering blended learning.
6. Social studies teachers should be encouraged and sponsored to attend worship, seminars and refresher courses on blended learning teaching strategy.
7. Students should cooperate with teachers, embrace and develop positive attitudes towards the use of blended learning.

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