

COLLABORATIVE AND COMPETITIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES AS A FUNCTIONAL PEDAGOGY FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN UPPER BASIC SCHOOLS IN DELTA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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Abstract

This study investigated collaborative and competitive learning strategies as a functional pedagogy for effective teaching of Social Studies in upper basic schools in Delta Central Senatorial District. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Quasi-experimental design was employed for the study. Population of the study consisted of all upper basic students in government secondary schools in Delta Central Senatorial District. Sample size for the study was three hundred and ninety seven (397) students. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze research questions, while ANCOVA was used to test the hypothesis. The study concluded that there was a significant difference in the mean interest of scores of students taught Social Studies in a collaborative learning strategy and those taught in competitive learning strategy with those taught in competitive learning strategy having a higher interest mean gain. The study recommended that Social Studies teacher should endeavor to develop and adopt collaborative learning strategy as it would enhance overall interest and academic performance in Social Studies as well as help reduce gender gap in Social Studies.

Key Words Collaborative, Competitive, Learning, Interest, Strategy, Pedagogy,

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Introduction

Social studies is a subject which a society uses to instill in students the knowledge, skills, and actions it considers important concerning the relationship human beings have with each other, their world and themselves. Social Studies educators have identified some of the factors responsible for students' low achievement and lack of interest in the subject. According Danjuma (2019), solutions have been proffered but the problem is yet to be solved. The issue could probably be related to the inability of the students to develop interest in the learning of social studies which is the foundation of national integration and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. This is because it is likely that without developing and sustaining the learners' interest, the objectives of Social studies might not be achieved. If that is the case, then it may be difficult to achieve the objectives of basic social studies. Developing and sustaining students' interest in social studies is necessary for meaningful achievement to occur.

Interest, as defined by Obodo (2015), is the attraction which forces or compels a child to respond to a particular stimulus. Alao and Adeniyi (2019) opined that teacher can motivate children to develop interest to learn in the following ways: by identifying and catering for the needs of the students; acknowledging their success no matter how little; making the classroom student - friendly, the students will always be eager to participate in classroom activities thereby finding learning interesting and fun and recognizing and respecting students' views thereby boosting and developing confidence. When students are motivated, they participate actively in the learning process. The curiosity and interest of the students, according to Aydin and Coskun (2014) manifest itself in the performance of the students. The authors reiterated that students, whose interests have not been developed, do not attend class regularly. Such students do not listen to the lesson carefully neither do they do their homework. For the learner to be interested in class activities, appropriate learning strategies should be in place because such type of learning strategies have the tendency of developing students interest to learn thereby enhancing achievement. Thus, the teacher should direct the learning objectives towards the instructional strategies while the instructional strategies should points to the medium that will actually deliver the instruction. There is therefore the need for the social studies teachers to introduce learners to the appropriate learning strategy for learning Social Studies as early as possible with the hope of enabling the learner to achieve the objectives of learning social studies.

Hill (2016) considered learning as the process of absorbing new information in a meaningful way and putting it to use. As children differ in appearance, so also do they learn in different ways, for example, some learn by memorization, others by hands-on, peer or individual learning, problem solving, inquiry or worksheet based methods among others. Griffiths, et

al., (2016) suggested that the different ways in which a child learns is partially related to the type of learning strategy available. It also determines the type of learning that takes place in an educational set up. It is therefore very important for the teacher to discern the type of learning strategy to guide learners to develop in order to achieve the stated objectives of the subject. There are different types of learning strategies among which are individualistic, competitive, cooperative and collaborative learning strategies.

Cooperative Learning Strategy (COLS) enables students to work together towards a common goal (Panitz, 2019). Effective co-operative learning promotes interdependence, individual accountability, face to face interaction, social skills and group processing. Achievement in this type of learning is positively correlated with that of the other cooperating students. Students work together in small clusters or groups. Effective cooperative learning strategy relies on group management techniques, social skills, training and student-centered teaching methods. Collaborative learning strategy (CBLs) is a method of learning in which students' team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. This learning strategy shares many of the same traits as cooperative learning strategy. However, the major difference is it being more student-centered than cooperative learning. Collaborative learning provides the driving force for social constructivism where students are in control of their own learning and ultimately, the outcome of their learning. Cooperative learning is more concerned with a specific outcome based on teacher facilitation and transmission of knowledge. Collaborative learning is best suited to an arrangement of groups where students can freely interact with one another and construct their ideas together.

In the cooperative model the teacher maintains complete control of the class even though the students work in groups to accomplish the goals of a course. The cooperative teacher assigns a specific task, provides additional materials for the students to read and analyze beyond the text and then asks the students to work in groups to answer the questions. The groups then present their results to the whole class and discuss their reasoning. A follow up question may then be posed to the groups to analyze the findings of the various groups and to make recommendations on possible changes needed to make their findings more effective. The teacher might use specific structure, such as a Jig Saw model to help facilitate the group interactions. He or she might require a specific product such as a term paper or report, class presentations and an examination at the end of the topic. The students do the work necessary to consider the material being covered but the teacher maintains control of the processes at each stage.

In the collaborative model, groups assume almost total responsibility for answering the question. The students determine if they had enough information to answer the question. If not, they identify other sources such as journals, books, videos and the internet, to name a few. The group would decide how many information they could identify. The collaborative teacher would not specify a number but would assess the progress of each group and provide

suggestions about each group's approach and the data generated. It might also occur to the students to list the reasons in order of priority. The teacher would be available for consultations and would facilitate the process by asking for frequent progress reports from the groups, facilitate group discussions and group dynamics, help with conflict resolution, among others. The final product is determined by each group, after consultation with the teacher. The process is very open ended while it maintains a focus on the overall goal. The students develop a very strong ownership for the process and respond very positively to the fact that they were given almost complete responsibility to deal with the problem posed to them and they have significant input into their assessment.

The terms collaborative learning and cooperative learning sometimes are used interchangeably. This is reasonable as both favor small-group active student participation over passive, lecture-based teaching and each requires a specific task to be completed. Each strategy inherently supports a discovery based approach to learning. The two methods assign various group roles though collaborative learning can have fewer roles assigned. In both situations, student members are required to possess group skills though cooperative learning may include this as an instructional goal. Each plan comes with a framework upon which the group's activity resides but cooperative learning is usually more structurally defined than collaborative learning (Cooper & Robinson, 2019). Tabesh (2016) feels that collaborative learning strategy would cause:

- Positive interdependence, a feeling of connection with other members of the group as they accomplish a common goal.
- Individual accountability where every member of the group is held accountable for the group's achievements.
- Face to face interaction where group members engage at close range and are influenced by one another's verbal communication.
- ∴ • Social skills where students become aware of the human interactive skills involved in effective group cooperation.
- Group processing in which groups may reflect and discuss how well they are functioning as a unit and how effective their working relationships are.
- Effective learning relies on group management techniques; social skill training and student centered teaching methods.
- Collaborative learning strategy provides a vehicle for social constructivism where students are in control of their own learning and ultimately, the outcome of their learning.

Akinmusire (2023) conducted a study which focused on influence of collaborative teaching method on academic achievement of English Language students in secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was used. The instrument used to collect data was self-developed structured questionnaire by the researcher, entitled “Questionnaire on Influence of Collaborative Teaching Methods and Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools in Ondo West Local

Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria”. Findings of the study revealed that teaching method could influence positively students' academic performance. Recommendations were made that; teachers should be adopting teaching method in relation to the subject-matter taught; teachers should endeavor to use teaching method that can sustain learners' interest in teaching-learning process.

Pedagogy in teaching can be referred to as an educator's understanding of how the students learn. The teachers are focused on presenting the syllabus to the students in such a way that it is relevant to their needs. Pedagogy demands classroom interactions between the teacher and students which create a significant impact on the learner's mind. Pedagogy enables teachers to understand the best suitable practices for a classroom setting. It helps them to know how different students learn and grasp information so that they can tailor their lessons to satisfy those needs. It is likely to improve the quality of teaching and the way it is received by the students. Pedagogy plays an important role to help teachers understand the best ways to conduct a classroom. It gives them insights into how students learn differently in different topics so that they can conduct lessons to suit these needs. It aims to improve the quality of education for students. <https://www.iitms.co.in/blog/importance-of-pedagogy-in-teaching-and-learning-process.html>

A strategy is a mental event carried out by the learner to achieve some desired goal such as remembering some fact. Therefore when a learner adopts and employs the appropriate learning strategy to study Social Studies, he is likely to achieve positively. Therefore, to promote history, there is the need for the Social studies teacher to encourage students to develop and employ appropriate learning strategies that will enable them view scientific knowledge as that which is inseparable from their environment and background. Based on this assertion, the researcher investigated the effects of collaborative and competitive learning strategies as fundamental pedagogy for teaching social studies in upper basic schools in Delta Central Senatorial District. The quest for the appropriate learning strategy for Social studies is what necessitated this study.

Competitive learning strategy (CPLS) can be defined as the presence of negative goal or reward interdependence. According to Humphreys, Johnson and Johnson (2015), this type of learning strategy is defined as one in which individuals are rewarded so that one receives a minimum reward. Each participant struggles to outshine the other by all means, at all cost as they compete among themselves. In this arrangement, the teacher verbally encourages individuals' efforts, makes sure that the students sit apart from each other in order to keep them from sharing ideas. The students are usually instructed to work on their own and only refer to the teacher when they need clarification. Students using competitive learning strategy are evaluated strictly on norm-referenced basis of how their performance compared with that of their peers and the student who won is praised and rewarded by the teacher (Okoro, 2019).

Competition could be among group members or between groups. Cantandor & Konde (2019) view human competition as a contest where two or more people strive for a goal that cannot be shared, usually resulting in a victor and loser. Individuals and/or groups are placed in positions where they must vie for the achievement of an outcome. Verhoeff (2017) is a strong supporter of its benefits, claiming that a well-organized competition challenges its participants to give their best because it enhances students' motivation and learning. Also, Lawrence (2014) agreed with that idea, reporting that competition encourages active learning and increases motivation. Folu (2017) also recognizes the several odds in competitions such as gain and higher self-esteem. Furthermore, Fasli, and Kopoulos (2015) show that a competitive element acts as an incentive for all students to put in more effort and even we students persist with participating in the activity. In this line, Siddiqui, et. al. (2016) present a study that demonstrates the high sense of competition among students.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have identified factors such as inadequate instructional materials, teachers' poor improvisation skills, specialty and competency among others as some of the causative factors of students' low achievement in social studies. They have also proffered recommendations such as the use of inquiry, cooperative, Jigsaw instructional strategies, among others, as the way forward. However, despite these efforts, students' interest in social studies has not shown appreciable improvement Okoro (2012). This could probably be related to the inability of the instructional strategy employed in the teaching of Social Studies to guide learners unto developing and adopting the appropriate learning strategy for learning Social Studies. A major challenge in implementing appropriate learning strategy in Social studies classrooms perhaps lies in developing and equipping students with the relevant learning strategies that will enhance the learning of Social Studies. Based on this assertion, the researcher assumed that assisting upper basic students to adopt and employ the use of collaborative and competitive learning strategies in learning Social Studies might yield a positive effect, since these two strategies are mostly the ways in which the Nigerian child learns during informal education. The problem of this study, therefore, was to investigate the effects of collaborative and competitive learning strategies as functional pedagogy for teaching Social Studies in upper basic secondary schools in Delta Central senatorial District.

Objectives of the Study

1. Investigate the effects of collaborative and competitive learning strategies on students' academic performance in Social Studies.
2. Examine the effects of collaborative learning strategy on students' academic performance in Social Studies based on location.
3. Examine the effect of competitive learning strategy on students' academic performance in Social Studies based on location.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of collaborative and competitive learning strategies on students' academic performance in Social Studies?
2. What is the effect of collaborative learning strategy on students' academic performance in Social Studies based on location?
3. What is the effect of competitive learning strategy on students' academic performance in Social Studies based on location?

Hypotheses

1. There is significant difference between the mean academic performance scores of students taught Social Studies using collaborative and competitive learning strategies.
2. There is significant difference between the mean academic performances scores of students taught Social Studies using collaborative learning strategy based on location.
3. There is significant difference between the mean academic performances scores of students taught Social Studies using competitive learning strategy based on location.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study are beneficial to the Social Studies teacher, students, parents, and policy makers. The theories reviewed for the study are capable of providing insight on Social Studies learning process. The findings of the study could help in improving the quality of Social Studies teaching in Nigerian basic levels of education. The results will also assist teachers to determine the appropriate instructional strategies to employ for the teaching of Social Studies to enhance students' interest and academic performance. The outcome of the study could enable students to develop and adopt the use of collaborative learning strategy in studying social studies concepts. This could assist them in developing interest in social studies which could equally enable them achieve higher in the subject. For the policy makers, the outcome of the study could enlighten them on the type of learning strategies needed to motivate students to develop interest in studying Social Studies concepts. This knowledge could assist policy makers on the type of learning strategy to be employed in the learning of Social Studies.

Theoretical Frame Work

Vygotsky's Social Learning Theory

Vygotsky (1978) proposes “that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Zone of proximal development presents the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. That is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are

internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement". This is unlike the traditional model for instruction where a teacher transmits information to students. Vygotsky's theory promotes learning contexts where students play an active role in learning. Vygotsky argued that rather than examining what a student knows to determine intelligence, it is better to examine his or her ability to solve problems independently and his or her ability to solve problems with an adult's help. The Vygotsky's learning theory has much relevance to the present study since the theory emphasizes collaborative learning strategy contrary to the traditional classroom learning, hence the review of the theory for this study.

Piaget's Cognitive Theory

Cognitive theory stresses the variables that intervene between stimuli and the responses. Piaget believes that the learning process, as self-regulated, involves the transformation of old knowledge to new knowledge. Children should be given the time they need to explore, understand and remember. This theory points out that two students are likely to respond differently to the same stimuli because of what they have already learnt, hope to achieve and feel are capable of achieving, because of differences which distinguish them from each other. This theory is relevant to the present study because it focuses on the process of children's thinking, not just its products, appropriate learning experiences built on children's current level of cognitive functioning are emphasized and only when teachers appreciate children's methods of arriving at particular conclusions that they will be in a position to provide such experiences. Hence the study seeks to investigate the effect of competitive learning strategy on students' interest and achievement in Social Studies.

Methodology

The design of the study was quasi-experimental. Specifically, it was a nonequivalent control group design. According to Nworgu (2017), this research design is used to establish cause and effect relationships between two or more variables. The design was chosen because it was aimed at establishing the effect of learning strategy on students' interest and consequent achievement in Social Studies. It is important to note that class activities were not disrupted during the experimental treatment as intact classes were used. Two instruments were developed by the researcher for the purpose of data collection. The instruments are: (a) Students' Interest in Social Studies Scale (SISSS), and (b) Social Studies Academic Performance Test (SSAPT. The data obtained from the pretest and posttest on students' interest and academic performance on Social Studies was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for the hypotheses.

Data Presentation

Research Question 1: What is the effect of collaborative and competitive learning strategies on students' academic performance in Social Studies?

Mean and Standard deviation of effect of collaborative and competitive learning strategies on students' academic performance in Social Studies

Variable		Pre-test		Post-test		Mean gain
Learning strategy	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
Collaborative	197	51.36	16.25	67.58	12.68	16.22
Competitive	200	54.87	15.46	58.45	17.07	3.58

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean academic performance scores of students taught Social Studies using collaborative and competitive learning strategies.

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of students' academic performance in Social Studies

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	8461.992 ^a	4	2115.498	9.328	.000
Intercept	126752.456	1	126752.456	558.901	.000
Pretest Interest	4.691	1	4.691	.021	.886
GROUP	8125.753	1	8125.753	35.830	.000
Gender	179.193	1	179.193	.790	.375
GROUP * Gender	9.924	1	9.924	.044	.834
Error	88901.192	392	226.789		
Total	1675325.000	397			
Corrected Total	97363.184	396			

a. R Squared = .087 (Adjusted R Squared = .078)

There was a significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of students taught Social studies in a collaborative learning strategy and those taught in competitive learning strategy with those taught in competitive learning strategy having a higher academic performance mean gain.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of collaborative learning strategy on students' academic performance in Social Studies based on location?

Mean and Standard deviation of the effect of collaborative learning strategies on students' academic performance in Social Studies based on location

Variable			Pre-test		Post-test		Mean gain
Location	Learning strategy	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
Urban	Collaborative	210	54.44	15.12	57.67	17.20	3.32
Rural	Collaborative	105	52.69	15.99	67.09	12.93	14.40

Research Question 3: What is the effect of competitive learning strategy on students' interest and academic performance in Social Studies based on location?

Mean and Standard deviation scores of the effect of competitive learning strategies on students' academic performance in Social Studies based on location

Variable			Pre-test		Post-test		Mean gain
Gender	Learning strategy	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
Urban	Competitive	298	11.13	3.23	19.63	3.04	8.50
Rural	Competitive	105	11.02	2.38	19.12	2.63	8.10

There was no significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of students taught Social studies using collaborative learning strategy in urban and those taught using collaborative learning strategy in rural with those taught under competitive learning strategy in urban having a higher mean gain.

Discussion of Findings

The result of this study showed that collaborative learning strategy had significant effect on students' academic performance in Social Studies. The group exposed to collaborative learning strategy which is the collaborative group performed better with a mean academic performance score of 62.58 than the competitive group that went through the competitive learning strategy with the mean academic performance score of 58.45. Hence the collaborative learning strategy appeared to have facilitated the development of academic performance in Social Studies among the students more than the competitive learning strategy. The result of this study did not agree with the view of Fasli & Kopoules (2015) which revealed that competitive learning strategy provides incentives for students to develop academic performance in Social Studies. This finding is consistent with Akinmusire (2023) that students' academic performance could be enhanced through the use of good innovative strategies that will stimulate their interest. Result obtained on the interactive effect of learning strategy and location on students' performance in Social studies from the study, showed that the mean gain for urban students taught Social studies under competitive learning strategy to be higher than the mean gain scores of those in rural taught social studies under the competitive learning strategy.

Conclusions of the Study

1. There was a significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of students taught Social studies in a collaborative learning strategy and those taught in competitive learning strategy with those taught in competitive learning strategy having a higher academic performance mean gain.
2. There was a significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of students taught Social studies using collaborative learning strategy in urban and those taught using collaborative learning strategy in rural with those taught under collaborative learning strategy in urban having a higher mean gain.
3. There was no significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of students taught Social studies using collaborative learning strategy in urban and those taught using collaborative learning strategy in rural with those taught under competitive learning strategy in urban having a higher mean gain.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study have provided empirical evidence for the use of learning strategies in Social studies teaching. It has some implications for teachers and students, policymakers, curriculum developers as well as various examination bodies.

Social studies teachers could promote interest and performance in social studies by developing and sustaining students' interest in the subject. This can be achieved through the use of collaborative learning strategy.

Leading students to develop and use collaborative learning strategy will assist the teacher in providing learning environment that will be conducive for the teaching and learning of Social Studies.

For curriculum planners, this does suggest a careful reappraisal of Social studies curriculum implementation strategies to ensure the incorporation of activities that will encourage the use of collaborative learning strategy in learning Social Studies concepts.

Recommendations

1. Social studies teachers should endeavor to develop and adopt collaborative learning strategy as it would enhance overall interest and achievement in social studies as well as help reduce gender gap in Social Studies.
2. Regular sensitization workshops should be organized by the Universal basic education commission to retrain Social studies teachers on the development and use of collaborative learning strategy.
3. Pre- service teachers should be trained on how to develop and employ the use of collaborative learning strategy.
4. Government, in conjunction with other professional bodies, should sponsor further research on the use of collaborative learning strategy.

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