

EFFECT OF LEARNER AUTONOMY TEACHING STRATEGY ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN ENUGU STATE.

Ibeh, Edna Chioma Ph.D

Department of Educational Foundations
Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)
Enugu State.

Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the effect of Self Regulated Learning Strategy (a learner autonomy strategy) on junior secondary school student's Achievement in Social studies in Enugu State. It was a quasi-experimental study, pretest-posttest, non equivalent control group design was used. A total of 140 JSSII students were drawn from two secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. Intact classes were randomly assigned experimental and control groups. Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three research experts. SSAT achieved a reliability of .71 calculated using Kuder Richardson 20 (KR-20) formula. Two research Questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). Major findings of the study revealed that students taught social studies with Self Regulated Learning Strategy, achieved higher than their counterparts taught with expository method. There was no significant difference between the achievement scores of private and public school students taught social studies with Self Regulated Learning Strategy. Similarly there was no significant interaction effect between teaching strategy and school ownership on students' achievement in social studies. It was recommended that social studies teachers should adopt Self Regulated Learning Strategy for teaching social studies.

Introduction

In specific terms, the broad goals of secondary education, according to the National policy on Education are to prepare the individual for useful living within the

society and high education. Hence, secondary education among other things, is expected to provide trained man power in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity; raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labor, appreciate those values specified under our board national goals and live as good citizens and provides technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development, (FRN, 2013).

Unarguably, one of the ways of achieving these laudable goals of secondary education is by teaching and learning of social studies. According to Mbu(2012), social studies is an area of school curriculum designed specifically for the study of man and how his problems are solved. Mbu argued further that social studies is not geography; it is neither history nor government. It is not economics; it is not an amalgam of the social sciences rather social studies borrows ideas from all social science subjects to understand, analyze and react to situations. Social studies deals with how man can fit into the society by utilizing the necessary attitudes, values and skills. Social studies focuses on the use of critical and reflective thinking to solve man's problems.

Njor (2013) advised that it is very necessary to include social studies in the school curriculum because of its general importance in the development of citizens. This according to Njor is because social studies is concerned with the development of skills with which man equips himself in solving problems in a rational manner. It also promotes the ability to think creatively and productively. Social studies by its nature caters for the training or teaching concepts dealing, with citizenship education in schools. Through citizenship education, a good citizen, expected to play his role for effective participation in the development of the society is made. Ika (2013) submitted that it is only innovative subjects such as social studies that can cater for the complexity and diversity of the Nigerian society with over 300 ethnic groups, multi-religious groups and over 180 million people. Social studies serve as a tool for fostering unity in diversity. Through social studies, students learn to be tolerant. As students are exposed to the learning of people far and near, they appreciate other people's cultures. This helps in minimizing the negative feelings, misconceptions and prejudices about other people.

Unfortunately, research evidences such as Mbu (2012), Njor (2013) and Al-Gazir (2013) report that secondary school students do not achieve satisfactorily in this all-important subject, social studies. The challenge of this study therefore, was to proffer possible ways of enhancing secondary school student's achievement in social studies. Al-Gazir (2013) averred that academic achievement generally suggest an achievement relating to education and scholarship. Achievement in this study refers to achievement in secondary school social studies as measured with Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT). Research evidences have consistently identified a strong relationship between students' achievement and teaching methods.

In their separate studies, Mbu (2012), Pedro (2013) and Ika (2013) all implicated teaching methods as a major factor that can enhance or inhibit secondary school

students' achievement in social studies. In specific terms, these research experts blamed students' poor achievement in social studies on teachers' use of ineffective and non efficient teaching methods. Perhaps the most popular method of teaching in secondary school today is the expository or lecture method.

Making case for active learning in social studies classroom. Bell (2012) noted that learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn just listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write reflectively about it, relate it to the past experience and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves. Bell therefore recommended the use of Learner Autonomy Strategies for secondary school students.

Njor (2013) reported that the term "learner autonomy" was first coined in 1981 by Henri holec the "father" of learner autonomy. Henri holec, according to Njor defined autonomy as the ability to take charge of one's own learning while Leslie Dickson defined autonomy as a situation in which a learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his (or her) learning and the implementation of those decisions. Al-Gazir (2013) posits that one of the most effective and efficient learner autonomy strategy is Self-Regulated Learning Strategy (SRLS). Consequently, self-regulated learning strategy was adopted for this study. In other words, the study determined the effects of self regulated learning strategy on secondary school students' achievement in social studies. Pintrich (2000) in Al-Gazir (2013) described self regulated learning strategy as an active constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation and behaviour, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment. Hence, in self regulated learning, students are actively involved and have clear intentions to be engaged in learning.

There is no doubt that self-regulated learning strategy can facilitate learning and enhance secondary school students' academic achievement. However, research evidences have reported conflicting findings on the effect of self-regulated learning on students' achievement in secondary school subject. While Mbu (2012) and Al-Gazir (2013) found that self-regulated learning strategy promoted secondary school students' achievement. Bell (2012) and Ika (2013) found the contrary. This gap of no definitive conclusion justifies the need for more studies such as this present work.

Another variable of interest of this study was the influence of school ownership on the achievement of secondary school students' in social studies when taught with self regulated learning strategy. This is because research experts vary in their findings on this issue. While Clauss (2012) and Njor (2013) found higher achievement among public secondary school students', Ika (2013) and Al-Gazir (2013) reported higher achievement among private secondary school students' trained in self regulated learning. Once again, these conflicting findings justifies the need for more studies such as this present one.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Learner Autonomy Strategy on Secondary School students' achievement in social studies. Specifically, the study aimed at investigating the effects of Self Regulated Learning Strategy, (a Learner Autonomy Strategy) on Junior secondary school two (JSS2) students';

1. Achievement in social studies
2. Achievement in social studies with regard to their schools' ownership

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the mean social studies achievement scores of the students in both experimental and control groups both in pretest and posttest?
2. What are the mean social studies achievement scores of public and private schools' students in both experimental and control group both in pretest and posttest?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between the mean social studies achievement scores of students in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean social studies achievement scores of public and private school students in the experimental and control groups.
3. There is no significant interaction between teaching strategy and school ownership on students' mean achievement scores in social studies.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted in the conduct of this investigation was quasi-experimental design. Specifically the design was a pretest –posttest, non equivalent control group design. The area covered in this study was Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State consisting of Enugu East, Enugu North and Isi Uzo Local Government Areas. The population for the study consisted of all junior secondary two (JSSII) students in the sixty four (64) secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, numbering nineteen thousand, three hundred and fifty eight (19,358) students as at the time of this study.

A sample of one hundred and forty (140) junior secondary school II (JSII) students was used in the study. The sample was made up of seventy six (76) students in the experimental group and sixty four (64) students in the control Group. The sample also composed of 60 students from private school and 80 students from public school. This sample was obtained from four intact classes randomly drawn from two schools (one private and one public).

Social studies Achievement Test (SSAT) was used for data collection. SSAT was developed by the researcher. It is made up of Thirty (30) multiple choice questions with four options each. The items were drawn using a table of specification to ensure adequate coverage of the content area covered in the study as well as maintain even spread across the different levels of the cognitive domain tested. SSAT was validated by three research experts. After necessary corrections as directed by the experts, SSAT was confirmed to have face validity. Since the items of SSAT are dichotomously scored, Kuder-Richardson's formula 20 (KR-20) was used to determine the reliability. A reliability coefficient of .71 was obtained for the instrument.

Experimental Procedures

The researcher trained the two regular mathematics teachers in the two secondary schools used in the study for a period of two weeks on the use of the Self Regulated Learning Strategy used in this study. Fore-most, the SSAT was administered to all the subjects of the study as pretest. Thereafter, the treatment was administered for a period of six weeks. The experimental groups in each school were taught the selected social studies topics using Self Regulated Learning Strategy while the control groups in each school were taught the same topics using expository method. At the expiration of the treatment period, the SSAT was re-arranged and administered to all the subjects as posttest. Research Questions were answered using means statistics and standard deviation. Test of hypotheses were done with Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One:

1. What are the mean social studies achievement scores of the students in both experimental and control groups both in pretest and posttest?

Table 1: Pretest and Posttest achievement scores of the experimental and control groups.

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Standard Deviation	Posttest Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental	76	19.8	10.2	83.7	7.03
Control	64	21.1	9.8	52.4	39.15

The pretest mean achievement score and standard deviation of the experimental group were 19.8 and 10.2 respectively while those of the control group were 21.1 and 9.8 respectively. However, the posttest mean achievement scores and standard deviation were 83.7 and 7.03 respectively for experimental group while 52.4 and 39.15 were those of control group. Apparently both groups scored poorly in the pretest and the standard

deviations of 10.2 and 9.8 for both groups were high showing that there were more extreme values, only a few scores clustered around the mean, therefore the means for both groups in the pretest were not very reliable. However, in the posttest, experimental group achieved higher with a mean of 83.7 and lower standard deviation of 7.03 unlike the control group which achieved lower with a mean of 52.4 and a higher standard deviation value of 39.15. Comparing with the pretest data, learning took place in both groups but better in experimental group. Also the mean score for experimental group was more reliable than that of control group as revealed by the standard deviation values of both groups. There were more extreme scores in the control group.

Research Question Two:

What are the mean social studies achievement scores of public and private schools' students in both experimental and control group both in pretest and posttest?

Table 2: Pretest and Posttest achievement scores of male and Female students.

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Std.Dev.	Posttest Mean	Std.Dev.
Private (Experimental)	33	18.6	6.11	72.5	4.01
Private (Control)	27	19.1	5.07	42.3	18.44
Public (Experimental)	43	18.1	6.06	73.1	4.20
Public (Control)	37	18.42	6.14	40.11	14.32

In the experimental group, the pretest mean achievement scores and standard deviations were 18.6 and 6.11 for private students and 18.1 and 6.06 for public students respectively. Similarly, the posttest mean achievement scores and standard deviations were 72.5 and 4.01 for private students and 73.1 and 4.20 for public students. Apparently there was no tangible difference, the standard deviations were very low for both groups, and hence both means were reliable. In the control group, the pretest mean achievement scores and standard deviations were 19.1 and 5.07 for private students and 18.42 and 6.14 for public students respectively. The posttest mean achievement scores and standard deviations were 42.3 and 18.44 for private students and 40.11 and 14.32 for public students. Apparently there was no tangible difference in their performances.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the mean social studies achievement scores of students in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean social studies achievement scores of public and private school students in the experimental and control groups.
3. There is no significant interaction between teaching strategy and school ownership on students' mean achievement scores in social studies.

Table 3: ANCOVA Analysis of students' achievement scores.

Source of Variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F-calc.	Level of significance	Decision
CO-variates	21671.411	1	21671.411	189.212	0.000	S
Pretest	21671.411	1	21671.411	189.212	0.000	S
Main effects	66142.334	2	33071.167	191.332	0.000	S
Methods	59441.716	1	5944.716	662.14	0.000	S
Ownership	5227.853	1	5227.853	32.114	0.000	S
2-Way interaction	119.213	1	119.213	0.128	0.357	NS
Methods/ownership	119.213	1	119.213	0.128	0.357	NS
Explained	85349.601	4	21337.400	157.362	0.000	S
Residual	18654.911	261	71.475			
Total	104004.512	265	392.469			

S = significant, NS = Not significant at 0.05 level of probability

The result above shows f-calculated of 189.212 for pretest, f-calculated of 191.332, 662.14 and 32.114 for main effects, methods and ownership respectively all these indicate significant effects. However with an f-calculated of 0.128 for interactions between methods and ownership, there is no significant effect. Hence, hypothesis one is rejected because the difference between the mean social studies achievements scores of students in the experimental and control groups is significant. On the other hand, hypothesis two is not rejected because there is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of private and public schools' students in both experimental and control groups. In like manner, hypothesis three is not rejected because there is no significant interaction between teaching method and students' ownership on students' achievement in mathematics.

Summary of Findings

The results presented revealed the following:

1. The student taught social studies with Self Regulated Learning Strategy achieved higher than those taught with expository method.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean social studies achievement scores of private and public schools' students taught social studies with Self Regulated Learning Strategy.
3. There is no significant interaction between teaching strategy and schools' ownership on students' achievement in social studies.

Discussion

Results presented in table one showed that both groups of students had close mean and standard deviation scores in the pretest, apparently showing that they had chances of

achieving equally. However, after treatment, the experimental group achieved far higher, with a lower standard deviation. The findings further revealed a significant difference in the achievement of students in both groups in favour of the experimental group. Evidently, these results implicated method of teaching as a major factor affecting students' achievement in social studies. This finding supports the findings of Mbu (2012) and Al-Gazir (2013) who reported the usefulness of Self Regulated Learning Strategy in teaching and learning. Conversely, this finding contradicts the findings of Bell (2012) as well as Ika (2013) who reported in their separate studies that Self Regulated Learning Strategy hindered and restricted students' learning. The design and effective use of Self Regulated Learning Strategy in each study cited above may have accounted for the conflicting result.

There existed no significant interaction between method of teaching and school ownership on students' achievement in social studies. Ownership did not affect students' achievement in social studies significantly. These results agree with the findings of Bell (2012), and Pedro (2013). Conversely, the results contradicted the findings of Clauss (2012), Njor (2013), Ika (2013) and Al-Gazir (2013). Clauss (2012) and Njor (2013) reported that public schools' students taught social studies with Self Regulated Learning Strategy achieved higher than their counterparts in the private schools. Whereas Ika (2013) and Al-Gazir (2013) found in their separate studies that private schools' students taught social studies with Self Regulated Learning Strategy achieved higher than their counterparts in the public schools. It is therefore necessary to advise social studies teachers should master the use of Self Regulated Learning Strategy before applying it in their secondary schools.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made;

1. Self Regulated Learning Strategy enhances secondary school students' achievement in social studies.
2. School ownership does not affect students' achievement in social studies when taught with Self Regulated Learning Strategy.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Self Regulated Learning Strategy should be used in teaching social studies in junior secondary schools.
2. Social studies teachers should be trained through intensive seminars, workshops and in-service trainings on the use of Self Regulated Learning Strategy.

References

- AL-Gazir, P. (2013). Effect of Self Regulated Learning Strategy on 5th grade pupils' achievement in social studies. [http://www.African_quarters.org/journal/5\(2\).230-241](http://www.African_quarters.org/journal/5(2).230-241). Retrieved 05/11/2015.
- Bell H. (2012) Efficacy of Self Regulated Learning Strategy in promoting creative and critical thinking among secondary school students. www.edusupport.net/newsletter.448010322/ABSTRACT. Retrieved 08/05/2016.
- Clauss A. M, (2012) Effect of Self Regulated Learning Strategy on students' achievement in social studies in Public and private secondary schools. www.mathscorner/tcl.com. Retrieved 08/05/2016.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Ika, W.J. (2013) Effects of Self Regulated Learning Strategy on students' achievement and Learning in social studies. *Journal of Technology Education* 14 (2) 101-222 <http://www.scholar/ib.vt.edu/ejour/ijev/1472/haynie/.html> Retrieved 02/02/2015
- Mbu P.A. (2012) Effect of Self Regulated Learning Strategy on students; achievement in social studies. www.artscorner/tcl.com. Retrieved 08/05/2016.
- Njor, S.K. (2013) Enhancing Achievement of students in social studies through Self Regulated Learning Strategy. [http://www.artscorner.prg.com/journal/12\(1\).118-129](http://www.artscorner.prg.com/journal/12(1).118-129). Retrieved 04/05/2016.
- Pedro, J. B. (2013). The effect of Self Regulated Learning Strategy. *Journal of social sciences Learning* 23(1) 260 – 270. New York: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.