
**EFFECTS OF PEER TUTORING STRATEGY ON BASIC 8 STUDENTS’
INTEREST AND PERFORMANCE IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN BENUE
SENATORIAL ZONE B, NIGERIA.**

***Gabriel Wajir**

Prof. Omada Virginia Alachi Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Rev. Fr.
Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

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***Corresponding Author: Gabriel Wajir**

Prof. Omada Virginia Alachi Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu
University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of peer tutoring strategy on Basic 8 students’ interest and academic performance in Social Studies in Benue Senatorial Zone B, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the persistent poor performance and low interest of students in Social Studies, which have been partly attributed to the continued use of teacher-centred instructional approaches such as the lecture method. Specifically, the study sought to determine the difference in the academic performance and interest of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design involving a non-randomized pre-test, post-test control group design. The area of the study was Benue North-West Educational Zone comprising seven Local Government Areas. The population consisted of 4,342 Basic 8 students in 87 public junior secondary schools during the 2023/2024 academic session. A sample size of 220 students representing 5% of the population was selected using intact classes. Two instruments developed by the researcher, namely Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) and Social Studies Interest Questionnaire (SSIQ), were used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy achieved significantly higher academic performance than those taught using lecture method. The findings also showed that students exposed to peer tutoring

strategy developed greater interest in Social Studies compared to those taught using the conventional lecture method. Based on the findings, the study concluded that peer tutoring strategy is an effective instructional approach for improving students' academic performance and interest in Social Studies. It was therefore recommended among others that Social Studies teachers should adopt peer tutoring strategy in classroom instruction and that school administrators should organize workshops and seminars to train teachers on the effective use of peer tutoring strategy in Social Studies teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as one of the dynamic instruments for achieving sustainable development, promoting democracy and fostering overall national development. That is why it is called an instrument per excellence for affecting national development (FRN, 2014). Education is the comprehensive process by which individuals, from childhood through adulthood, acquire the skills, attitudes and behaviours that contribute positively to their society.

The goal of a functional education is to prepare its beneficiaries with all it takes to adjust well in the society, contribute meaningfully to the development of the society and as well live a fulfilled life. It is a fundamental instrument of change that gradually transforms people and make them become refined and civilized in the society. According to Oluwayomi (2015) most societies have used education as a relevant instrument for effecting desirable social, economic, political and technological change. That is why the government of Nigeria realizing the importance of education, has adopted it as a vital tool for achieving its national objectives, which include; Free and democratic society, Just and egalitarian society, United, strong and self-reliant nation Great and dynamic economy, Land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens (FRN, 2014). Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the development of the individual into a sound minded and effective citizen and also advocates for equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both within and outside the formal school system.

Social Studies is one of the basic subjects in Nigerian education system. Kissock (2020) see it as programme of study which a society uses to instill in students the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and actions it considers important concerning the relationships human beings have with each other, their world and themselves. Ezegbe, Eskan, Anyanwu, and Abiogu (2014) define Social Studies as a discipline that deals with social change and ensures that a

meaningful interaction of the recipients with their physical, social, and cultural environments is attained.

The relevance of Social Studies is further demonstrated by its goals and objectives which basically entails studying social actions, addressing social needs and problems. There are as many varieties of objectives of Social Studies as there are varieties of social needs and problems. The objectives of Social Studies vary from one country to another depending on the social conditions of the country concerned. Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2015) identified seven key goals of Social Studies education: didactic knowledge, reflective thinking, affective development, citizenship transmission, self-enhancement, socio-political activism and skills development. These goals aim to impart knowledge, foster critical thinking, cultivate positive attitudes and values, promote civic responsibility, encourage personal growth, and develop active participation in society, ultimately equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge for self-sufficiency and independence.

The core purpose of Social Studies education is to instill knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in learners, enabling them to become informed and responsible citizens who contribute to personal and national development. It serves as a means of achieving the broader national educational goals by preparing students for active participation in a diverse and democratic society (Essien, 2017). Very importantly, the National Policy of Education (2014) stipulates that the teaching of Social Studies in our secondary schools must be seen as one of those avenues of establishing strong bases for the production of effective citizens and forming a sustainable society that will support a notion of nation-building (Bozimo & Ikwumelu, 2019). However, despite the significance Social Studies, it has been observed that the performance and interest of students in Social Studies have been a daunting task and it has not been encouraging especially in the upper basic School Certificate Examination (Shamija, 2021). The concern for this low performance and interest has prompted many researchers to identify these factors that could be responsible for this problem. These factors among others include lack of appropriate teaching strategies, qualified teachers, instructional materials among many others (Ishaya, 2024).

In the same vein, Abdu-Raheem (2019) maintained that many instructors and teachers in Nigerian secondary schools continue to rely heavily on the **lecture method** when teaching **Social Studies**. This lecture method typically involves a teacher-centered style, where the instructor delivers information verbally to students who passively receive it. This makes the classroom teaching environment teacher dominated, textbook bond and examination oriented without recognizing the need for the development of critical thinking skills in the students.

Furthermore, Afurobi et al. (2015) lecture method is a teacher-centered instructional strategy in which knowledge flows from the teacher to students who remain more or less passive in the process. The lecture method of teaching has faced criticism for its perceived rigidity and lack of adaptability to diverse learning styles and modern educational needs. Critics argue that the emphasis on rote memorization and standardized testing can stifle creativity and critical thinking skills, inhibiting students' ability to engage deeply with subject matter. Adeyemo (2016) observed that lecture method seem not to be achieving the objectives of instruction and critical skills needed by today's students because of their theoretical nature. Consequently, there has been a shift from teacher-centred approaches to teaching and learning to more student-centered approaches which prioritize collaboration, inquiry-based learning, and the development of essential skills for the 21st century.

Peer-tutoring strategy has been shown to be effective in promoting equitable participation and fostering a supportive learning environment for diverse student population, including English language learners and students with special needs. By engaging in collaborative activities, students can benefit from peer interaction, peer support, and peer feedback, which can enhance their learning experiences and outcomes (Ali, Anwer, & Abbas, 2015).

Peer tutoring strategy is thus, an instructional strategy in which a group of students under the guidance of the teacher work together in a given instructional assignment with a student who's already mastered a topic acting as a tutor; providing assistance and instruction to others (Ullah, & Kaleem, 2020). It is a student-centred approach and a total shift from the teacher-centred or lecture method of teaching. The emphasis is on the learning process, including the emotional support that learners offer each other, as much as the learning tasks itself. It is also effective in the development of creativity and problem-solving skills of both tutors and tutees. Peer tutoring strategy can also be viewed as an instructional strategy that consists of pairing students together to learn or practice an academic task. According to Conrad (2018) peer tutoring strategy is an organized learning experience in which one student serves as the teacher, and others play the role of learners. Peer tutoring gives students an opportunity to use their knowledge in a meaningful and social experience. Tutors reinforce their own learning by reviewing and reformulating their knowledge. Tutees gain one-on-one attention. Both tutors and tutees gain self-confidence since the tutor, sees self competence in his or her ability to help someone and the tutee by receiving positive reinforcement from peers.

Interest is a very strong factor in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, as the degree and direction of performance towards the subject is largely determined by the kind of interest

developed by students. Interest provides a driving force, motivates and arouses the desire to study (Ikumelu, 2015). It is more than just a feeling; it also includes a tendency to act or behave in certain ways towards a topic or subject. In the same vein, Okoro (2018) is of the view that interest is an emotionally oriented trait which determines the vigor of the learner tackling education and other activities it could result in the tendency to seek out and participate in activities of choice as against others. Similarly, Corno (2020) defined interest as a student's relatively stable or enduring predisposition, positive affective orientation, and tendency to persevere when working on certain specific academic content or task domains. This is supported by Harbor- Peter (2017) who states that a student is bound to pay attention as a lesson goes on if such student is interested in that particular lesson. Invariably, students' success in Social Studies could be influenced in one way or the other by their interest in the subject. If a student shows a higher interest in Social Studies, such student will put in more time, effort and energy in learning, which could in turn lead to higher academic performance. Academic performance according to Narad and Abdullah (2016) refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers. It is commonly measured by examination or continuous assessment. A student who performs well in school can be said to record high academic performance and a student whose results are not good can be said to have recorded poor academic performance. In other words, academic performance can be either high or low, depending on the performance of students. Academic performance of students may be influenced by gender which relates to the difference in sex (that is, either male or female) and how this quality affects their dispositions and perception toward life and academic activities.

This study therefore investigated the effects of peer tutoring strategy on Basic 8 students' interest and performance in Social Studies in Benue Senatorial Zone B, Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

The mind of young people needs to be exposed to critical thinking, analysis and problem solving strategies in a fast-changing world. In striving to achieve these goals, Social Studies curriculum employs a multi-disciplinary approach that takes cognizance of the socioeconomic, political, religious, physical, scientific and technological aspects of life. The contents of Social Studies at upper basic levels are thematically organized in order to make teaching and learning realistic.

Despite the efforts of educators and curriculum developers to make the subject more engaging and relevant, students have been found to perform so poorly in social studies over

the years. From personal interaction with many students, it is the general feeling that most of them feel inadequate in this subject area and often complain that Social Studies is complex and difficult to understand. This feeling has justification in the poor academic performance on these students as evidenced by the increased failure rate recorded in both internal and external examinations. This situation calls for concern, because the implication is that the students cannot retain relevant knowledge in the subject area necessary for successful academic performance.

Furthermore, it was observed by the researcher that lecture method of teaching has not been effective enough to enhance the practice of the expected societal values among Nigerian secondary school students. It appears that this lecture method does not enable them to develop initiatives to identify and provide attempted solutions to different societal problems cropping up around them. As a result, there is a growing call for more interactive and student-centered strategies that can stimulate learners' interest and improve academic outcomes.

In addition, there are notable disparities between urban and rural schools within Benue Senatorial Zone B. Urban schools often have relatively better access to qualified teachers, instructional materials, and supportive learning environments, whereas rural schools frequently face challenges such as inadequate teaching resources, overcrowded classrooms, and a shortage of trained educators. These inequalities can influence both the quality of instruction and students' academic outcomes. Consequently, students in rural areas may experience lower levels of engagement and achievement in Social Studies compared to their urban counterparts which suggests that location may play a significant role in influencing how students respond to different teaching approaches.

Peer tutoring has emerged as a promising pedagogical strategy that involves students teaching and learning from one another under the guidance of a teacher. Research in other educational contexts suggests that peer tutoring can enhance understanding, increase engagement, and improve academic performance across various subjects. However, despite its potential, there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of this strategy in the context of Social Studies in Nigeria, and specifically in Benue Senatorial zone B. This study therefore, investigated the effects of peer tutoring strategy on basic 8 students' interest and performance in Social Studies Benue Senatorial zone B, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of peer tutoring strategy on basic 8 students' interest and performance in Social Studies students in Benue Senatorial Zone B. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to;

1. Determine the difference in the performance of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method.
2. Investigate the difference in the interest of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the difference in the mean performance of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method?
2. What is the difference in the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method.

METHODOLOGY

The design of this study was quasi-experimental design of a non-randomized pre-test, post-test, control group. The design was quasi-experimental because it is not possible to have complete randomization of the subjects as this would disrupt school organization. Hence, intact classes were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The reason for the adoption of intact class is informed by Emaikwu (2019) who affirms that quasi-experimental design of non-randomised control group of pre-test and post-test is a design that allows the use of intact classes in order not to disrupt the regular school programme. Pretest was used for experimental and control groups to determine their equivalence as well as their entry behaviour. The area of the study was Benue North-West Educational Zone. The zone has Seven Local government which includes; Buruku, Tarka ,Guma, Makurdi, Gboko, Gwer-East and Gwer West. The population of this study comprised 4,342 (2,302 males and 2,040

females) Basic 8 students in the 2023/2024 academic session in 87 Public Junior secondary schools spread across the seven Local Government Areas that made of Zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. The sample size of 220 respondents representing 5% of the 4,342 studied population was used for the study. This is based on Nworgu as cited in Emaikwu (2019) who state that for a study of known population, a sample size of 5-20% can be used to determine the sample size of a study. To this end, the study made use of 5% to sample total number of respondents studied. Two instruments were developed by the researcher for collecting relevant data for this study. Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) and Social Studies Interest Questionnaire (SSIQ) for both experimental and control groups.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One

What is the difference in the mean performance of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the difference in the Mean Performance Scores of students taught Social Studies using Peer Tutoring Strategy and those taught using Lecture method.

Method	n	<u>Pre-test</u> X	σ	<u>Post-test</u> X	σ	Mean Gain
Peer tutoring strategy	127	14.05	3.85	20.84	4.67	6.79
Lecture Strategy	93	15.99	3.82	18.43	3.87	2.44
Mean Difference		1.94		2.41		4.35

Table 1 shows that the peer tutoring group had a pre-test mean performance score of 14.05 with standard deviation of 3.85. The post-test mean score was 20.84 with standard deviation of 4.67 and the mean gain was 6.79. The lecture strategy group had a pre-test mean score of 15.99 with standard deviation of 3.82 and the mean gain was 2.44. The mean difference was 4.35 in favour of peer tutoring group. This means that those students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy have higher performance than those taught using lecture method.

Research Question Two

What is the difference in the mean interest rating of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Interest Rating of Students taught Social Studies using Peer Tutoring Strategy and those taught using Lecture Method.

Method	n	Mean interest	Standard deviation
Peer tutoring strategy	127	2.95	0.40
Conventional method	93	2.94	0.41
Mean Difference		0.01	

Table 2 shows that the peer tutoring group had a mean interest rating of 2.95 with standard deviation of 0.40 whereas the mean interest rating of conventional method group was 2.94 with standard deviation of 0.41. The difference in the mean interest rating of both groups was 0.01 in favour of the peer tutoring group. This means that those students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy slightly develop more interest than those taught using lecture method.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture strategy.

Table 7: ANCOVA test on significant difference in the Mean Performance Scores of students taught Social Studies using Peer Tutoring Strategy and those taught using Lecture Method.

Dependent Variable: Performance Test Score					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1518.091 ^a	2	759.046	56.370	.000
Intercept	1449.281	1	1449.281	107.630	.000
Pre-test Score	1205.651	1	1205.651	89.537	.000
Methods	654.123	1	654.123	48.578	.000
Error	2921.995	217	13.465		
Total	90887.000	220			
Corrected Total	4440.086	219			

Results in Table 7 show that $F(1, 219) = 48.58$ with $p=0.00 < 0.05$. This implies that, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using conventional teaching method is therefore rejected. It therefore, means that Social Studies students taught using peer tutoring strategy perform higher than their counter parts taught using lecture method.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using lecture method.

Table 8: ANCOVA test on the significant difference in the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using Lecture Method.

Dependent Variable: Interest					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1016.116 ^a	2	508.058	32.423	.000
Intercept	62.750	1	62.750	4.005	.047
Mean interest	1.851	1	1.851	.118	.731
Methods	1012.791	1	1012.791	64.634	.000
Error	3400.334	217	15.670		
Total	9807.000	220			
Corrected Total	4416.450	219			

Results Table 8 shows that $F(1, 219) = 64.63$ with $p=0.00 < 0.05$. This implies that, the null hypothesis which states that is no significant difference in the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using conventional teaching method is therefore rejected. It therefore, means that Social Studies students taught using peer tutoring strategy developed more interest than their counter parts taught using lecture method.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of this study revealed that Social Studies students taught using peer tutoring strategy perform higher than their counter parts taught using conventional method. This finding corroborate with Adanikin and Damilola (2021) who found that there was a significant difference between academic performance of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring method and those taught with conventional method. The finding further agreed with Ogheneakoke (2022) who found that there was a significant effect of peer-tutoring instructional strategy on Social Studies students' performance. The similarity in this findings could be that peer-tutoring strategy offered students more interactive, concrete, and collaborative learning experiences. The opportunity to engage in hands-on activities, exchange ideas with peers, and actively participate in the learning process likely contributed to deeper understanding, greater engagement, and improved retention of Social Studies concepts. This aligns with the principles of learner-centered instruction, where students

assume active roles as both learners and co-educators, thereby fostering autonomy and academic confidence.

The improvement in academic performance can be attributed to the active engagement, peer collaboration, and collective problem-solving inherent in peer tutoring which allows students to actively engage in learning, ask questions freely, and receive immediate feedback from their peers. In contrast, the lecture method, which is often teacher-centered limit students' participation and reduce opportunities for collaborative learning. This result implies that when students are given the opportunity to learn from one another, their understanding of concepts is strengthened, leading to better academic outcomes.

The finding of this study also revealed that Social Studies students taught using peer tutoring strategy developed more interest than their counter parts taught using conventional method. This finding agreed with Ugwuanyi (2019) who revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean interest scores of students taught Social Studies using peer-tutoring instructional strategy and those taught Social Studies using convention teaching method. The finding is also in agreement with Ebute and Aende (2024) who found that the peer tutoring strategy had significant effect on students' interest and achievement in Social Studies than the conventional strategy. The agreement of the finding of the present study with the existing one could be attributed to the interactive nature of peer tutoring, which provides a more engaging and less intimidating learning environment. Increased student autonomy, interaction, and feedback in peer tutoring sessions likely contributed to sustained interest in Social Studies.

This result further indicates that peer tutoring strategy is highly effective in stimulating and sustaining students' interest. This increased interest could be due to the supportive and less formal learning environment created by peer tutoring. Students are more likely to feel comfortable expressing themselves among peers, which can reduce anxiety and make learning more enjoyable. The active involvement required in peer tutoring sessions also helps sustain attention and curiosity, thereby fostering a positive attitude toward the subject.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have shown that students taught Social Studies using the peer tutoring strategy performed significantly better than those taught using the conventional method. This suggests that peer tutoring fosters better understanding, collaboration and retention of knowledge, thereby improving academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secondary Schools within Zone B Area of Benue State and beyond should incorporate peer tutoring into regular classroom instruction, particularly in Social Studies, as it has been shown to improve both academic performance and student interest.
2. In service training in the form of workshops, conferences, seminars should be organized by school administrators to equip teachers on how to effectively implement peer tutoring strategy in Social Studies teaching.

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