

EFFECT OF CONTEXTUAL LEARNING STRATEGY ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL (JSS2) SOCIAL STUDIES IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effect of contextual learning strategy on students' academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools (JSS2) Social Studies in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The population of the study is one hundred and eighteen (118) junior secondary school students (JSS2) intact classes used for the study. The design adopted for the study was quasi experimental research of non-randomized pre-test and post-test. Three research objectives were formulated for the study. Two instruments of Social Studies Ability Test (SSAT) and Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) were developed for the study. Three research hypotheses were also formulated to guide the study and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to analysed the data. All the hypotheses were test at an alpha of 0.05 level of confidence. The findings of the study revealed that contextual learners performed better than their traditional counterparts in the performance test. The findings of the study also indicated that there were no discrepancies in the scores of male and female social studies learners in their performance test. Lastly, the study revealed that the urban contextual learners also perform better than their rural counterparts in the performance test. The study therefore agitated for the use of alternative resources places, work sites, that capable of providing rich learning environment and potentials. Conclusively, knowledge acquired through contextual learning enhances learner's performance. It closes the gap between learning theory and real life situation.

Keywords: *Contextual Learning Strategy, Students Academic Performance, Junior Secondary School and Social Studies.*

INTRODUCTION

The relationship of what is learned in school and the manner and approach of its application apply to the real world situation has been the primary concern of education generally. The standard and effectiveness of education in today's world becomes a subject of public interest. It is on this basis that Shuaibu, (2015) stated that the products of any educational system should be properly equipped to use power of influence by exercising some element of control over the events that affect them through handwork and functional education. Education therefore should produce people with unique abilities and capacity to top the current educational trend, culture, social and economic problems and probably to over their world. This will certainly be attainable if education and instructional learning packages, orientation and goals geared towards acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skills, ideas, values, attitudes, competencies and abilities are closely to the needs, desires and aspiration of the society. This will therefore lead to the development of individuals and the society at large. This type of education enjoys the pride of place in social studies education.

Social studies as a noble subject deals with man in totality and his various interaction in his environment. According to Adams Shuaibu and Edegbo, (2018) defined social studies as a subject that tried to foster in young learners a better understanding of man's interaction with his physical and social environment. This is in consonance with Nseribe, (2002), who described social studies as a subject that seeks to explore man's environment, the physical, social, religious, political, economic and cultural which help in shaping man's behaviours on the other hand and the effects

of man's behaviour on the environment. This implies that social studies is a discipline which attempts to shape the learner's behaviour in the direction of acceptable values and attitudes through a process of studying relationships of human beings with their environment (Adams, Shuaibu, and Edegbo, (2018).

The priority of social studies centred on the development of a functional and meaningful citizens with certain qualities and values needed in the societies such as creativity thinking, reflective, analytical and decision making skills and competences learners. Based on the revealed aims and objectives of social studies education, social studies teaching should not and does not require mere passing of desirable knowledge to passive learners who may on demand recall the rote memory acquisition and storage of knowledge. This traditional method of teaching does not portray what teaching worth in social studies education (Shuaibu, 2016).

From this established fact, functional and meaningful teaching in social studies, compare to any other subject must emphasis higher level of knowledge and affective character development. Social studies teaching involves total student controlled or guided interactive learning achievement oriented activities within walls and outside the formal classroom situation in which the learner actively participates and makes a conscious and deliberate effort to explore and acquire meaningful learning under the teacher being a learning collaborators director, guide a separation and a helper. (Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi, 2008). This analogy is in line with Edegbo and Shuaibu (2016) who stated that social studies subject emerged as an instrument for the correction of social ills in the society. Thus, it is pertinent to provide meaningful and effective teaching strategies that will enhance student's performance in social studies by piling most empirical prove on the use of contextual learning package as it can enhance secondary school performance in social studies.

The words contextual teaching/learning is process of structural arrangement of the concepts and other contents for teaching and learning that will helps the teachers relate subject matter content to real world or life situation. (Adams, Shuaibu, and Edegbo, 2018). According to Berns and Erickson, 2005, also view contextual teaching and learning as an innovative instructional package that helps the students to link the content they are learning to the life contexts through which the content could be used. Adams, et tal, (2018) revealed that problem solving, self-regulated/learning, teaching based on students multiple life contents, learning from each other and together, genuine assessment, and the use of different context such as home, community and work sites, have been a revealed practices of contextual teaching and learning.

Moreover, these particular learning experiences ginger independence among students and their learning team. Also, the learning package is inconsonance with the viewpoint of Parneil, (2011) who stated that this instructional package helps student's to process new information given to them in a way that is meaningful to them in their own world of memory, experiences and response. The main thrust of this type of learning is that the child's mind originally seeks meaning and context in the subjects they are being thought. It gives the learners ample opportunity to participate effectively, meaningfully, interactively and corroboratively in activities that will make them become fully active and self-regulated learners. Therefore, achieving this meaning teaching/learning in social studies required the need to provide meaningful teaching strategies that will facilitate students' achievements in social studies through accumulation of more empirical prove on the use of contextual learning towards the improvement of secondary school performance in social studies. Based on this premise, this study aims at investigating the extent of contextual learning towards improving students' academic performance in junior secondary two (JSS2) Social Studies.

Statement of the Problem

The main aim of Social Studies is the understanding of the environment, even the world and the ability to solve the problems of the society through the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, skills and competences required for the development of the society. The inability of social studies students to rigor out the real world application and principles combined with the noticeable use of traditional methods during the implementation of social studies has been one of the major factors

to the poor academic performance of students in Social Studies examinations. For some parents now students have been over flux with bookish which make them to receive overdose of theoretical knowledge. Students with this kind of developed abilities find it difficult to make connections between what they have learnt and the application of the knowledge they have acquired through social actions to solve societal problems. The truth about it is the alarming rate of vices in the forms of corruption, kidnapping, thuggery, religious tolerance, killing, raping and tribal discrimination among others which have been the order of the day in the present Nigerian society. Therefore the question is that, can contextual learning strategy link social theories to social actions among students of social studies?

Theoretical Framework

This study traced its theoretical basis from theory Piaget theory of cognitive development (1896 – 1980), the active learning theory by Chiekering and Gamson, (1999), as well as the connection theory propounded by Berns and Erickson, (2005). The theoretical framework for contextual teaching/learning strategy (CTLS) have pointed it focus on connectionism, constructivist, and active learning theories. It involves the summary of brain activity during the learning process showing the psychological changes and connection that occur during learning activities. These three types of learning principles evolved within project-based, goal-based, and inquiry oriented and are given priorities in this work to demonstrate how (CTLS) strategy can be applied by teachers and students to yield positive academic performances in social studies.

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) refers to a concept that helps the teachers and learners relate the subject matters to the real life situation. This method of teaching/learning motivates learners to explore their own learning and also links between knowledge and its applications to different contexts of their lives. Also, it provides a conceptual background for unifying a constellation of education theories and practices and represents one approach towards the improvement of learning and academic performance in education, (Curts and Lawson, 2010). It is a teaching/learning strategy that helps in making learning functional and meaningful to students by connecting or linking them to the real world. It allows the students have adverse skills, interests, experiences and cultures and integrate these varieties of attributes acquired into what and how students learn and how they assessed. By this it means that contextual teaching present or places learning and learning activities in real life and vocational context to which students can relate, incorporate not even the content, but “the what” of learning and also the reasons why that learning is necessary.

Moreover, contextual teaching and learning focuses on higher level of thinking, knowledge transfer across academic disciplines and collecting analyzing and synthesizing information and data from various sources of ideas. Still on contextual teaching/learning (CTL), it helps the students to relate subject matter content to the real world situations and also ginger the students to make connections between knowledge and its applications to their lives and encourage them to embark in hard work that is the primary factor which the learning requires. Adams, et-tal, (2018) also added that contextual teaching/learning strategies geared towards relating teaching and learning strategies that can bring out better understanding within the context of these words “who”, “where”, and “how”. For instance, who are the learners? This question revealed the major aims of contextual teaching and learning strategies which centred on helping the learners or students become self-regulated learners, capable of making high performances. Apart from these major objectives, students taught using contextual teaching and learning approach passes unique values such as skills, interests, and cultural backgrounds that will help them explore their world alone.

This facets of multiple values offered when CTL has been used in the classrooms must be addressed if students are to feel this valued and to learn respect for others. Again, the question, where does learning take place? The contextual teaching and learning (CTL) acknowledge the question that learning should take place in different sites, or multiple context not only in the classrooms, museums, parks, government offices, and health care facilities are just a few of the

places where learning can take place in the community concerning the question "How does learning take place?" This particular question is related to learning in various contexts based on the first three teaching strategies; the problem based learning, that believes that students learn from real world problems, while the other two learning strategies is of the opinion that students learning occur through interdependences, groups and authentic assessment, contribution to the development of self-regulated learners. These teaching/learning strategies happen to possess both academic skill and skills of self-control that will help them to learn more easily. It also helps them develop the skill of motivation and the drive to know. These three factors therefore, influence their skill and will, knowledge, motivation and self-discipline (Adams et-tal, 2018)

Viewing the idea off self-regulated learners, it is obvious that they need knowledge about themselves, the subject, the task at hand, learning strategies and probably the contexts which they will apply their learning. Hence, there are various terms that can be used in descending contextual learning strategies such as hands on experience, real world education, active learning integrated project, learning based etc. According to the view point of the National Council for the Social Studies (2001) social studies should be taught and learned in a manner and approached that is based with:

- Constructivist point of view of learning
- The principle of teaching essential characteristics of powerful Social Studies
- The spelt out approach stated by NCSS concerning how social studies should be taught in school consist of five (5) basic principles. Each of these principles has direct implications for what the teacher must know and be able to do and the attitude they should possess in the classroom. The principles are;
 - o Social Studies is powerful and functional when it is meaningfully expressed
 - o It is powerful when it is integrative
 - o Social Studies learning is powerful when it is value based
 - o It is powerful when it is challenging
 - o It is also powerful when it is active and interactive (NCSS 2001)

Social studies teachers are therefore charged with the responsibility of teaching experience, knowledge, capabilities and attitude needed to create enabling learning experiences and environment that are functional to favour learners to acquire meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging and active instruction. Upon all the strategies which aimed at applying the principles of constructivism, contextual teaching/learning seems to be the instructional strategy.

In contextual learning strategy, there is a common objectives level of the performance of the group determines the success of individuals. A situation where the group failed, individual cannot succeed either. Scholars like Yusuf, (2004) develop the study on the idea of contextual teaching and learning in human relation. He further stated that other educationists expanded the concept to educational teaching and learning situations and cooperation as an educational strategy as form of contextual learning which has become known for various reasons. Again, Smith and MacGregory, (1992) confirmed that cooperative instructional strategy offer variety to teacher's repertoire. This is certainly true because it helps the teachers to manage the learning style of the students with diverse needs. It also improves academic performance and social development. It prepares students for high interactive work environments.

Moreover, Smith and MacGregory, (1992) further explained that contextual learning strategy create powerful long-lasting effects, probably because it has the capacity to make school more importance place for students to learn and also giving them a stable supportive environments for learning. As a result this analogy, teachers who teaches social studies content through contextual learning strategy – promote learning in a greater dimension because such strategy enhance greater academic performance and better inter group relationships among diverse ethnic group ability groups. Contextual learning approach is a high premium educational learning strategy. In research studies, carried out, the teaching strategy constantly yielded positive results and attitudinal benefits. Contrary to individual or competitive learning environments, a contextual

learning group is structured to accommodate all members of the group depending on each other to complete an assignment successfully. Thus, whatever result yielded in the group comes from the efforts of the group members and the group as a whole shares the reward.

Still on the fruit of contextual learning the skills writing manifest itself. For instance, students delve deep into social studies issues when they work cooperatively in given context with their group mates such as activities like writing the correspondences of historical characters or discussing or writing about famous historical quotations, publishing and sharing political cartoons and whole lots of issues (Adams, et-tal, 2018).

Contextual learning experience promotes ethnic sharing of views or the mixed groups regularly with various positive cognitive and affective outcomes. This therefore implies that, contextual learning enhanced academic learning, improved self-esteem and also promotes more constant social interactions among majority/minority members of the learning group, enhanced feelings of trust and acceptance by peers and teachers and increased acts of cooperative behaviour in the contextual settings (Gundlaeh, 2010).

The use of center learning can be useful to Social Studies students in varieties of ways. From the point of view of Gundlaeh, (2010), contextual learning has long lasting effects on the learners of social studies. For instance, students work together or as a team in the contextual setting. They gain profitable life skills. Also, students are talented, learn leadership skills. All the students are exposed to diverse view-points which challenge students socially and academically.

Edegbo and Shuaibu, (2016) considered learning as being active when the students are not just memorizing facts, rather working with their peers to process and synthesize information. Therefore, the researcher of study is in line with the opinion of Edegbo and Shuaibu, (2016) who stated that contextual learning students provide the learners with the following benefits; that

- Learning requires a challenge that spurs the learners to be actively engaged with their peers and to process and synthesize information rather than memorization.
- Learners begins when they are exposed to diverse view points from people with variety of backgrounds
- Learning provides in a social environment where conversation between learners take place.
- Concerning the aspect of collaborative learning environment, learners are faced with both social and emotionally issues as they listen to different perspectives and are required to articulate and defied their ideas. By so doing, learners begin to impact their own.
- Special conceptual framework. Based on this established facts, this research investigated the effect of "contextual learning strategy on students' academic performance in junior secondary school (JSS2) social studies in Akwa Ibom State.

The Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to JSS2 social studies student comprising of males and females from urban and rural areas of Essien Udim Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

Three research purposes was formulated to guide the study:

- To determine the mean performance score of students taught Social Studies using contextual learning strategy and those taught using traditional methods.
- To determine the mean performance scores of male and female students taught social studies using contextual learning strategy and those taught using traditional methods.
- To examine the mean performance scores of students in the rural and urban areas taught social studies using the contextual learning strategy.

Research Hypothesis

Three research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

- H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the mean performance score of students taught social studies using contextual learning strategies and those taught using traditional methods.
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the mean performance score of male and female students taught social studies using contextual learning strategy and those taught using traditional methods.
- H₀₃ There is no significant differences in the mean performance of students taught social studies using the contextual learning strategy in the rural and urban areas.

METHODOLOGY

Quasi-experimental research design was adopted for this study. The reason for using this design for the study was that it will help the researcher to maximize the internal and external validity of the research activity. The quasi experimental design adopted for the study was non-randomized pre-test and post-test experimental group design. The study also adopt non-equivalent research design that will be used as follows:

G₁ : R₀₁ - - - X1 - - 02
G₂ : R₀₁ - - - - - - - 02
Where : G₁ = Control group
 G₂ = Experimental group
 01 = Pre-test
 02 = Post-test
 x = Treatment

Population of the Study

The population of this study was its students that are made up of 55 male and 63 females. Intact classes were used to select the student for the study. since the study is not randomized as sixty seven (67) students that was made up of 29 males and 38 females was used for contextual learning strategies and 49 students which 26 were males and 23 were females was used for the traditional learning strategies. Also one class in each of the two classes in urban and rural schools were randomly sampled without replacement to serve as control experimental class. The remaining class from each location was used for the experiment to be taught using contextual learning strategies.

Instrumentation

The researcher made instruments and treatment strategies were developed and used for the study. They Are Social Studies Ability Test (SSAT) and Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT). The Social Studies Ability Test (SSAT) was made up of a 45 item multiple choice instruments. This instrument was used to measure the two groups through pre-test and post-test, which was randomly assigned into the experimental and control groups. The students quickly responded by attending the classes and also took part in the test. Intact classes were used for the study meaning that the students were not randomized. Pre-test was administered to all the students participated in the study. Post-test was administered shortly after they had be exposed to treatment.

Validation of the Instruments

The two instruments were validated by three experts from the Department of Social Studies, two from Akwa Ibom State College of Education Afaha Nsit. This was done to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. The scores gathered from the pilot study was analysed to determine the reliability index and the internal consistency of the instruments. Kuder-Richardson coefficient formula 20 was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The difficulty level (ID) ranges between 0.30-0.77 while discrimination index (DI) was between 0.30-15 was used by the researchers.

The result of the reliability test indicated that the reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.76. This therefore, made the instrument suitable for the study. The result also is in line with Steven and Spigel, (1986) who stated that the closer the relationship of the coefficient to one, the more reliable and valid an instrument. The researcher used four (4) research assistant who are B.Ed holders in Social Studies. The four (4) assistants were shared into two based on the two variables. Two of the research assistants used contextual methods and the other two used the traditional methods to teach in each of the two different schools in rural areas and the other two research assistants also used the same method in the two schools in the urban areas.

The treatment lasted for a period of six weeks under experimentation of five (5) lessons per week. Before and after the experiment, the pre-test and post-test were administered on the students. The pre-test was administered first on the students to enable the researcher established or determine the homogeneity of all students in the group. This also helps the researcher to determine whether they are not still with their previous knowledge in socialization and family. After some weeks, post-test was administer in each of the groups in the sic (6) schools.

Method of Data Analysis

The statistical tool used in analyzing the data was Analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA). This statistical tool is suitable for the study because it will help the researcher test all the hypothesis using the alpha level of 0.5 significant. The pre-test score was used as covariate for the post-test scores. The researcher uses ANCOVA for the study because intact classes were used to determine the initial differences of the people. The data therefore were analyzed using Statistical Instructional Learning Strategy Package for Social Studies (SILSPSS) version 20 at the alpha 0.05 level.

Presentation of Results

H₀₁ There is no significant differences in the academic performance of students of social studies that are taught using contextual learning strategy and those taught using the traditional method.

Table 1: The summary of the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on Academic Performance of Students taught Social Studies using Contextual Learning Strategy and those taught with Traditional Methods.

Methods	Means scores	Mean Diff	Std. Error	f	Sig.
Contextual Learning strategy	54.27	13.208	2.871	18.089	0.0001
Traditional methods	36.14				

Table 1: above indicated that the mean score of students taught using contextual learning strategies is 54.14%. While that of the traditional methods is 36.14%. From the analysis, it revealed that there is significant difference between the mean performances scores of students taught socialization using contextual learning strategies and those taught using traditional methods of learning. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there existed significant differences in the mean performances scores of Social Studies students taught with contextual learning strategies and those taught using traditional methods of learning.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the performance of the Male and Female Students of Social Studies who are taught using Contextual Methods and those taught using Traditional Learning Methods.

Table 2: The summary of the result of the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) based on Academic Performance of Male and Female Students taught Social Studies using Contextual Learning Strategy and those taught with Traditional Methods.

Sex	Means scores	Type III sum of sq	Diff	Mean square	f	Sig.
Male	51.74	87.795	1	87.795	.676	0.414
Female						

Table 2: above indicated that, there is no significant difference between the mean performances scores of male and female students that socialization using contextual learning strategies and those taught using the traditional learning methods. The analysis indicated that the mean score of the male students is 4.63 higher than that of the female, the differences is not significant. This is because the calculated t-value is significant by 41.4% while the accepted probability level of the study is 5%. From the result of the findings, the null hypothesis of the study which stated that there is no significant difference between the male and female students taught using the contextual learning strategies and those taught using the traditional learning methods is accepted.

H₀₃ There is no significant differences in the performance of Social Studies Students in rural and urban areas taught using Contextual Learning Strategies and those taught with Traditional Learning Strategies.

Table 3: The summary of the Mean, Standard Deviation of Covariance (ANCOVA) of the performance test of urban and rural students taught using Contextual Learning Strategy and those taught using Traditional strategies.

Location	Means scores	Type III sum of sq	Diff	Mean square	f	Sig.
Urban	51.55	173.549	1	173.549	1.96	0.000
Rural	42.42					

Table 3: above indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean performance of urban and rural students taught Social Studies using the contextual learning strategies. The analysis revealed that the mean scores of students in urban area is 51.55 while those of rural areas is 42.40. From the result it shows that the scores of those in urban areas are higher than scores of those in the rural areas based on the analysis, it means that there is no significant difference. This is because the value at 0.000 is lower than the accepted level of significant 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of students from urban areas stands rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study depend on the hypothesis. Considering the first hypothesis, the finding revealed that contextual learners performed better than the traditional counterparts in the performance test. This implies that Social Studies learners exposed through the contextual learning strategies performed better than those that was exposed through the traditional learning methods who sees the teacher as a person with the reservoir of knowledge.

The success of the learners that were exposed to contextual learning strategies had their performances was attribute the rich potentials of the contextual based lesson as against the traditional learning methods. The finding of the study is in agreements with that of Smith (2003) and Glyn and Scott (2012) who stated that the principles of active participations and experience of students' possession promote contextual teaching/learning. By this it means, relating learning to students based on their previous experience, real experiences, application and social responsibility of contextual learning makes learning meaningful compared to the traditional methods.

The findings of the study as a result of hypothesis two indicated that there is no difference in the performance of male and female Social Studies learners in their performance test. It reveals that contextual learning is gender friendly. This implies that both genders actively took part in the

learning process despite the fact that the learning package was actively laden. It is on the premise that Ketter & Arnold, (2003) confirmed that contextual learners based their priority on students and not the packages.

Finally, the study also revealed that the urban contextual learners also performed better than rural counterparts in the performance test. This high performance of the urban learners was a result of their exposure through contextual learning strategies compare to their counterparts in the rural. This is in line with the relevance of learner's diverse socio-economic and social background which is peculiar characteristics of urban schools. The urban setting offers a variety of audience than the rural schools, and as the urban such class brings rich diverse social relationship to bear on the learning activities. This is in consonance with Smith (2003) who stated that urban environment provides multiple experiences compared to rural setting. Thus, Resnick, (1996) added that the use of contextual learning strategies as instructional strategy used in modern teaching helps the learners to learn the subject matter independently follow by the acquisition of more skills like creative thinking, inference drawing, decision making and generalization which is the thrust of social studies education.

Implication of the Study

The findings have a tremendous implication for teaching and learning of Social Studies at various levels of education. The following are the implications;

- The knowledge acquire through contextual is not strange to the learners. Thus, learners therefore see the immediate relevance of the lesson especially when it is contextually designed.
- It provides a rich and meaningful learning environment. This is true because the study create an avenue for the use of other resources, places, work sites, etc, capable of providing ample learning potentials.
- Teachers should play the role of guidance and moderators during the application of learning, while students should be allowed to explore the learning tasks on their own.
- Equal opportunities or responsibilities should be given to males and females in both instructional and learning test because both of them have equal capacity in educational achievement.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it concluded that the use of contextual learning strategies enhances students' academic performance in social studies. The use of contextual learning strategy also provides significant advantage for students and teachers no matter the sex and location. Therefore, considerable priority should be given to the use of this learning strategy by the teachers and the government for its utility during classroom instruction. Again, contextual learning strategy is a based line for the outcome of education because the thrust is geared towards learners' centred pedagogy. Also, contextual learning instructional strategy should be considered as one of the useful strategy that should be added to the already existing social studies learning/teaching techniques that attempt to involve learners in their own learning. As a result of these fruitful established facts through use of the contextual learning strategy, the study recommends that teaching of social studies should be contextually carried out by the teachers. This will help the teachers and learners to see the relationship that exist between instructional contexts and its application in the real life situations. There should not be gender inequalities in any form since both of them should be treated as co-learners. Teaching and learning should be carried out in a good learning environment in order to increase the knowledge based and also provide alternative authoritative resources.

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