
EFFECT OF ADVANCED ORGANIZER METHOD ON INTEREST, PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION IN SOCIAL STUDIES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, NORTHWEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess the impact of the Advanced Organizer method on interest, performance, and retention in Social Studies among secondary school students in Northwest Nigeria. The research design employed for the study was a mixed design, incorporating pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental, and descriptive survey designs. The study population comprised all secondary school students in the North West Zone of Nigeria enrolled in social studies programs, totaling 371,998. A multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 107 social studies students for the study. Two research instruments were utilized: the Social Studies Performance Test (SPT), with a reliability index of 0.79, and a Social Studies Interest Scale (SSIS), developed by the researcher to gauge student interest in social studies, possessing a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The findings revealed that students taught using the advanced organizer method exhibited higher interest, significantly better performance, and greater retention in social studies compared to those taught using traditional methods. The study concluded that the Advanced Organizer method is highly effective for teaching and learning social studies. It was recommended, among other suggestions, that principals and school administrators prioritize the implementation of the advanced organizer method in the social studies curriculum, as it yields superior performance outcomes compared to other teaching methods.

Keywords: Advanced Organizer, Interest, Performance, Retention, Social Studies

Introduction

The purpose of education is to acquire new skills and knowledge, where learning involves gaining positive knowledge that should be retained. Retaining acquired knowledge and applying it in tasks is crucial in learning. The teaching method used for a particular subject can influence students' interest, performance, and retention abilities. Hence, teachers must choose effective teaching methods and strategies that stimulate students' interest, aid better performance, and help in retaining what they learn.

Recent results from junior secondary school students have highlighted poor performance in Social Studies. Various studies have indicated that teaching methods contribute significantly to this high failure rate (Nooreen, 2019). Scholars stress that an effective teaching strategy aims to create specific learning experiences that not only enhance test scores but also foster behavioral changes outside the classroom (Nura, 2015; Okechukwu, 2017). Consequently, considerable efforts have been made to determine the best teaching methods to improve students' performance in social studies, recognizing that ineffective instructional methods and strategies dampen motivation (Sagir, 2019). Many junior secondary school students perceive social studies as a theory-based subject devoid of practical activities. The use of conventional teaching methods in social studies has diminished students' interest, performance, and retention, preventing the subject from achieving its goals for many decades.

Statement of the Problem

The reliance on traditional teaching methods among social studies educators has posed a significant challenge. Researchers have advocated for the use of Advanced Organizers to bridge the gap between prior knowledge and new learning in social studies. It's argued that utilizing these organizers can help students better connect their existing knowledge with new concepts, leading to improved performance and retention.

Advanced Organizers aren't a standalone teaching method but rather a strategy aimed at clarifying social studies concepts for students. Studies have indicated that the use of Advanced Organizers enhances performance, retention, and skill acquisition in social studies. This study emerged due to a noted gap in students' interest, academic performance, and retention in social studies despite the availability of effective teaching methods. Many students struggle to grasp certain concepts, resorting to rote memorization to pass their examinations.

However, rote memorization doesn't foster meaningful learning. Hence, the researcher advocates for the integration of Advanced Organizers alongside effective classroom learning. With conflicting findings on the use or non-use of organizers, this study aimed to determine whether their utilization had any facilitative impact on the interest, performance, and retention of junior secondary students in social studies in Northwest Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the study, to:

- i. find out the effect of the Advanced Organizer method of instruction on the interest of social studies students in the experimental group and those in the control group when taught social studies through the method;
- ii. determine the effect of the Advanced Organizer method of instruction on the performance of social studies students in the experimental group and those in the control group when taught social studies through the method;
- iii. examine the effect of the Advanced Organizer method of instruction on the retention of social studies students in the experimental group with those of the control group when taught social studies through the method;

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. How does the interest of social studies students in the experimental groups and that of control groups differ when taught with the Advanced Organizer method of instruction?
- ii. What is the level of performance of students in the experimental groups and those of control groups when taught social studies with Advanced Organizer method of instruction?

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- iii. To what extent does the retention of social studies students vary between the experimental groups compared to those in the control groups when taught social studies through the Advance Organizer method of instruction?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at the 0.05 level of significance

- H01:** There is no significant difference in the mean interest between students in the experimental group and those in the control group taught social studies using the Advanced Organizer method of instruction;
- H02:** There is no significant difference in the mean performance between students in the experimental group and those in the control group taught social studies using the Advanced Organizer method of instruction;
- H03:** There is no significant difference in the mean retention between students in the experimental group and those in the control group taught social studies using the Advanced Organizer method of instruction;

Review of related literature

Social studies has been defined diversely by various scholars, each highlighting the subject's functions and characteristics. According to James (2017), it involves studying mankind within both social and physical environments. For James, social studies aims to explore human activities within these environments, encompassing interactions such as economic pursuits, marriage, religion, and physical features like mountains, rocks, forests, and oceans.

Ololobou, as mentioned in Olu (2014), defines social studies as an integrated study of man and his surroundings, emphasizing cognition, functional skills, and desirable attitudes to foster an effective citizenry. Olu extends this definition to encompass functional skills and positive attitudes crucial for individual and societal survival. These skills and attitudes, when acquired through social studies, contribute significantly to a nation's development.

As cited from Obemeata in Utulu (2016), the primary objective of social studies is to cultivate the capacity for learning and acquiring fundamental skills. These skills encompass not only listening, speaking, reading, writing, and calculation but also practical skills, observational abilities, analytical thinking, and inference-making crucial for sound socio-economic and political judgment.

Muhammad (2017) outlines the general objectives of social studies, which include the impartation of knowledge, the development of skills, thought processes, attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns. Each of these concepts will be further elucidated.

Knowledge: In our school/education today, knowledge ranks very high with continued emphasis on information and understanding. For a citizen to be functioning and good, he needs to know or have information about his society and other societies and how these societies interrelate.

Skills: Apart from knowledge certain basic skills need to be emphasizing in teaching social studies. This is necessary because an individual needs basic skills to be able to

survive, live effectively and contribute positively to his own growth and development as well as that of his nation and the wider global environment.

Thinking process: Thinking process, on the other hand refer to the intellectual processes which are expected to develop in a learner the ability to think critically and creatively as well as the ability to take rational decisions.

Attitudes, values and behaviour patterns: In the area of attitudes value and behaviour patterns, the objectives of social studies are meant to inculcate in the individual the principles for effective citizenship.

The implementation of any subject's curriculum stands as one of the pivotal activities in the teaching and learning process. Social studies, as an implemented program, holds a central position among educational courses, focusing on social sciences (Godfrey, 2017). It encompasses economic, political, psychological, and physical aspects, emphasizing the crucial role of national development within cultural and moral frameworks. Its content revolves around social and environmental concerns, impacting citizens' lives and their capacity to sustain the environment for long-term development (Mezieobi, 2017).

According to Nwaubani *et al* (2017), the successful implementation of the social studies curriculum relies significantly on teacher professional and academic credentials, crucial principles to assess teachers' effectiveness in driving national curriculum objectives. Okam (2014) emphasized that only professionally qualified social studies teachers can efficiently execute the curriculum. Despite being in place for about four decades, the social studies curriculum still grapples with numerous challenges such as poor teaching standards.

It's evident that no single learning method can universally fit all learning situations, and there isn't a singular best approach to teaching social studies. A combination of methods could greatly contribute to achieving desired instructional objectives. The utilization of diverse teaching techniques is widely considered a best practice, with numerous studies endorsing positive outcomes in teaching social studies through various instructional methods (Kabir, cited in Kadiri, 2015). However, to effectively fulfill the goals of the social studies curriculum, there is a need to employ effective teaching methods like advanced organizers, which emphasize learning through active engagement.

Advanced Organizer

An Advanced Organizer is a strategy that aids students in establishing connections between their prior knowledge and the upcoming lesson. It serves as a tool to introduce the topic and demonstrate the relationship between what students are about to learn and the knowledge they have previously acquired. Typically utilized during expository instruction, it presents information in a manner that enables students to connect concepts effectively. Advanced organizers consist of concise information, conveyed verbally, in written form, or through illustrations, delivered before introducing new material to facilitate learning and comprehension. Its primary purpose is to prepare the learner's cognitive structure for the upcoming learning experience (Nooren, 2019).

This instructional technique involves introducing specific concepts and sub-concepts, termed subsumers, before presenting the actual learning material or task to enhance learning and retention (Ausubel, cited in Nooren, 2019). Hence, utilizing Advanced Organizers to link new information aids learners in easily retaining the new material. Advanced Organizers offer a framework that allows learners to grasp new ideas by meaningfully connecting them with existing ones. Examples of Advanced Organizers can range from skimming reading material to utilizing graphic organizers. Some categories of Advanced Organizers according Inalegwu (2019) are:

1. Narrative
 2. Expository
 3. Skimming
 4. Graphic
 5. Chart
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1. **Narrative:** This type of advance organizer presents new information in the format of a story. For example, a teacher will provide the main and important concepts of the lesson by telling a story that includes these concepts.
 2. **Expository:** This type of advance organizer is used to present new or detailed information as opposed to making connections with previously introduced information.
 3. **Skimming:** Skimming is when the teacher provides the learners with the opportunity to skim over the information that is about to be introduced, focusing on highlighted information (headings).
 4. **Graphic Organizers:** Graphic Organizers are used as a method of presenting information in the visual realm. They are efficient because they highlight and focus on just the important aspects and they also show relationships between necessary information. Graphic Organizers take on a plethora of avenues and looks, but the two most utilized are Venn Diagrams and Concept Mapping
 5. **Chart:** Chart is a type of advance organizer that can be used at any age and for any subject matter.

Advanced Organizer proves beneficial for social studies students as it encourages direct participation in the learning process and fosters reflection throughout the lesson. At the lesson's outset, utilizing an Advanced Organizer can initiate discussions about the forthcoming social studies topic. It serves the purpose of stimulating student interest, enhancing their performance, and improving retention levels.

Interest in Social Studies

Interest in the learning process is regarded as an essential element of spontaneous learning outcomes within the learning environment, largely due to the manner in which the learning episode unfolds (Ngwoke, 2014). Interest represents a preference for engaging in certain activities over others. When someone is interested in an activity, they are inclined to favorably engage in that particular activity rather than any other. It serves as an inducement or persuasion for participation in an activity. Interest predominantly manifests in the affective domain, wielding significant influence over success in various learning experiences. The presence or absence of interest in a learner has the potential to determine the efficacy of a teacher's efforts in

the learning process. As Okoro (2014) notes, a learner's interest reflects a central aspect of their value system towards knowledge or activities.

Sarpong et al (2020) documented a positive correlation between students' interest and a broad spectrum of learning indicators within the realm of social studies. They argue that when students engage and invest prolonged periods in the learning process, particularly when allowed to pursue their own interests, it leads to creative learning in social studies. To elicit and sustain learner interest, the lesson's objectives need to be explicitly outlined. The learner's goal represents the desired and anticipated outcome, influencing the learner's behavior, making it adaptable and intelligent (Sagir, 2019). The implementation of Advanced Organizer teaching strategies aims to mitigate the abstraction of learning materials, ensuring ample opportunities for learner engagement in the learning process.

Academic Performance

Academic performance stands as a central and vital goal of education, denoting the knowledge acquired by students, assessed by educators or based on predetermined educational objectives within a specific timeframe. The pursuit of academic excellence to enhance student performance stands as a primary objective of educational institutions (Adeyemi, 2017). Adeyemi further underscores the immense significance of academic performance, suggesting it as the pivotal point around which numerous essential components of the education system revolve. As a result, academic performance has garnered considerable attention from researchers, parents, policymakers, and education planners (Aminu, 2015).

Consequently, strong academic performance is considered a prerequisite for securing lucrative job opportunities, fostering better career prospects, and ultimately ensuring a high-quality life. It holds immense significance in the educational realm, encapsulating far-reaching implications beyond its apparent simplicity. Sarpong et al. (2020) emphasize that, at its core, the success or failure of any academic institution hinges significantly on the academic achievements of its students. They reinforce the widely-held belief that commendable academic performance serves as a precursor to enhanced career possibilities and a secure future.

Retention in Social Studies

Retention, as defined by Sagir (2019), refers to the preservation of knowledge within the mind. The mind acquires knowledge through sensation and perception, and this information needs to be stored as mental images for knowledge development. Retained images are recalled or reproduced in stimulating situations, aiding memorization. Therefore, presenting social studies concepts in a manner that triggers students' subconsciousness is crucial for their quick recall (Ocheje and Dantani, 2016). Innovative teaching strategies like Advanced Organizers and Activity-based instruction facilitate collaboration among both high and low ability learners, fostering their understanding, explanation, and retention of social studies concepts.

Retention is the indicator that learning has occurred and is sustained over time (Oloyede, 2014). However, Ngwoke (2014) identified poor teaching methods as a cause of students' forgetfulness during the learning process. Teacher-centered

strategies, which tend to alienate learners, are responsible for such forgetfulness. Retention significantly impacts students' performance in a subject. It signifies the storage of information over a retrieval interval, and if this information cannot be recalled afterward, it is deemed forgotten. Muhammad (2017) suggests that a learner's retention after instruction is influenced by their engagement in the learning process. Hence, student-centered teaching strategies can notably enhance retention. The ability to recall experiences from memory traces defines remembering (retention) and the forgetfulness of individual students.

Method

The research design used in this study employed a mixed method, encompassing a pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design, and survey methodology. The study population consisted of all JSSII students in government junior secondary schools across the seven states of northwest Nigeria, totaling 371,998. Due to non-randomization, purposive sampling was utilized to select two intact classes from two states, specifically Kano and Katsina states. The sample size comprised 107 students drawn from the JSS II student population across the seven states. Purposive sampling ensured the selection of intact classes, with one intact class chosen from each school to form the Experimental and Control groups. The sample included 56 students in the Experimental group and 51 in the Control group.

Data collection involved the use of two instruments: a fifty-item multiple-choice Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) and a ten-item Social Studies Interest Questionnaire (SSIQ) using a 4-point Likert scale. The SSIQ was developed by the researcher to gauge students' interest in social studies both before and after the treatment commenced. Research hypotheses were analyzed using inferential statistics: Mann-Whitney for Hypothesis One, examining students' interest in social studies, and Independent Sample t-test statistics for Hypotheses Two and Three, to ascertain statistically significant differences in students' academic performance and retention, at a 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

The pre-test, posttest and post-posttest is presented below:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean interest of social studies between the students exposed to Advanced Organizers Method and those exposed to Traditional Method in North-west zone, Nigeria

Table 1: Mann-Whitney U Test Analysis of difference in the Mean Ranks Interest Scores of Students in Experimental Group 1 and Control Group

Groups	N	MR	R	U	Z	P-value	Decision
Experimental	56	3.97	29864.70	13888.60	-0.127	0.01	Rejected
Control	51	2.05	28555.80				

Significant at $P \geq 0.05$

A Mann-Whitney U-test was performed to compare the mean rank interest scores among students who were taught Social Studies using the Advanced Organizer Method and those taught using the Traditional Method in North-West Nigeria. The results indicate a significant difference in the mean interest scores between the experimental group (MR=3.97) and the control group (MR=2.05); (U=13888.60; Z= -0.127, p =0.01<0.05). Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posited no significant difference in the mean interest of Social Studies between students exposed to the Advanced Organizer Method (AOM) and those exposed to the Traditional Method (TM) in North-west Nigeria, is hereby rejected. It is concluded that the mean interest rank score of students exposed to the Advanced Organizer Method was significantly higher than that of students exposed to the Traditional Method in teaching Social Studies (U = 1388.60, p = 0.01). This implies that the Advanced Organizers Method is more effective in stimulating students' interest in learning Social Studies.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean performance of social studies between the students exposed to Advanced Organizer Method and those exposed to Traditional Method in North-west zone, Nigeria

Table 2: Independent Sample t-test statistics in the Mean Performance Scores of Students exposed to Advanced Organizer Method and those exposed to Traditional Method in Social Studies

Variable	Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	Std. Err	Df	t-Cal	P-Value
Performance	Advanced Organizer	56	61.411	7.5721	1.01181	106	19.021	0.01
	Traditional Method	51	28.441	10.047	1.34251			

Significant at P = 0.05

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean performance scores among students taught Social Studies using the Advanced Organizer method and those taught using the Traditional Method in North-West Nigeria. The results reveal a significant difference in the mean Performance scores between the experimental group (\bar{X} =61.411, SD=7.5721) and the control group (\bar{X} =28.441, SD=10.047) students; d(55) p = 0.01. Consequently, the null hypothesis, stating no significant difference in the mean performance of Social Studies between students exposed to the Advanced Organizer Method and those exposed to the Traditional Method in North-west Nigeria, is hereby rejected. This indicates that the Advanced Organizer Method is effective in enhancing students' performance in learning Social Studies.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of students taught Social Studies using Advanced Organizer Method in Junior Secondary Schools in North-west zone, Nigeria.

Table 3: Independent Sample t-test Analysis on Effect of Advanced Organizer Method on Student's Retention Ability in Social Studies

Variable	Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	Std. Err	Df	t-Cal	P-Value
Retention	Advanced Org. Post test	56	72.804	8.3827	1.123	106	-7.775	.000
	Trad. Method	51	61.411	7.572	1.012			

Significant at P < 0.05

Based on the results presented in Table 3, it is noted that the mean retention ability scores and standard deviations of students at post-test and post-post-test method results are 61.411 and 72.804 for posttest and 7.572 and 8.3827 for post-posttest, respectively, with a mean difference of 11.393 after the post-posttest administration. Furthermore, the result indicates that the calculated t-value is -7.775 with 55 degrees of freedom, and $p = 0.00$ at a 0.05 alpha level. Upon analysis, the p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha level, signifying a significant difference. Consequently, the null hypothesis, stating no significant difference in the mean retention scores of students taught Social Studies using the Advanced Organizer Method in Junior Secondary Schools in North-west zone, Nigeria, is rejected. It is concluded that utilizing the Advanced Organizer Method in teaching Social Studies enhances students' retention ability in junior secondary schools in the North-west zone, Nigeria.

Discussion

The initial finding indicates a significant difference in interest between students taught Social Studies using the Advanced Organizer method and those taught via the Traditional method. Students exposed to the Advanced Organizer method exhibited higher mean interest rankings, scoring 3.97 compared to 2.05 for those taught with the Traditional method. This finding aligns with Auwalu's (2018) study, which similarly showed the superior impact of the Advanced Organizer method on enhancing learners' interest in Social Studies. While Wada's (2018) findings also supported this conclusion, differing slightly in methodology by considering interest and performance but excluding activity-based methods and retention in Social Studies. Similarly, Okechukwu (2017) found that the Advanced Organizer method significantly influenced students' interest in Social Studies, fostering divergent thinking and generating enthusiasm for logical examination. These studies bear resemblance in exploring Advanced Organizer's influence on interest but diverge in considering activity-based methods and retention.

The second hypothesis explored the academic performance of students instructed with the Advanced Organizer and Traditional methods. The mean performance scores were notably higher for students taught with the Advanced Organizer method ($\bar{X} = 61.411$) compared to those instructed with the Traditional method ($\bar{X} = 28.441$). This corroborates Isah's (2018) findings, emphasizing the Advanced Organizer's superiority in enhancing students' performance in Social Studies. Likewise, Wada (2018) highlighted the efficacy of Advanced Organizer strategies in improving engagement and academic performance. These studies share a focus on Advanced Organizer's impact on performance but vary regarding activity-based methods, interest, and retention.

The third finding revealed a significant difference in students' retention when taught using the Advanced Organizer method for Posttest and Post-posttest scores. Students instructed with the Advanced Organizer method demonstrated higher retention in Social Studies, scoring mean interest levels of 61.411 and 72.804 for Posttest and Post-posttest, respectively. This finding aligns with Sagir's (2019) research, indicating the Advanced Organizer's effectiveness in improving retention. However, the similarity lies in examining retention using the Advanced Organizer method, differing in the subject taught and the consideration of students' interest and Advanced Organizer in biology.

Conclusions

From the findings of this study, the following can be concluded:

Advanced organizer method influences students' interest positively towards social studies better than the traditional method; Students performed better in social studies when taught with Advanced organizer than those taught with traditional method; Students retention level improved when taught with advanced organizer method better than those taught with traditional method;

Recommendations

In view of the results of the findings the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Government, curriculum planners, heads of social studies departments in secondary schools should further emphasize the use of advanced organizer teaching strategies in the implementation of social studies curriculum as it improves the students interest than other teaching methods;
2. Government should encourage social teachers to be using advanced organizer in their teaching as it was found to be very effective in improving student's performance.
3. The use of traditional lecture in teaching social studies where teachers primarily give information while students take down notes must be discouraged and motivate teachers to use advanced organizer method as it increases student's retention in social studies.

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