EFFECTS OF COLLABORATIVE AND META COGNITIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES ON STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT AND SOCIAL SKILLS IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN DOMA, NASSARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Persistent drop in achievement of students in Social Studies is a matter of concern to stakeholders in education over the years concerted effort has been made to improve the achievement of students in Social Studies. The present study investigated the effects of collaborative technique and metacognitive on academic achievement of students' social skills in Social Studies in Doma, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study was guided by 3 research questions and 1 hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study used the quasi-experimental research design. Specifically, the Non-equivalent pretest-posttest group design which involved two groups. The population of the study consisted of 1887 students in all public secondary schools in Doma, Nasarawa State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the two schools used for the study while intact classes were used in each school selected. Two instruments were used for data collection which were titled Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT) and students' social skills Attitude towards Social Studies Questionnaires (SSSASST). The validity of SSAT and SSSASST were established using a test blue print and judgment of experts from Research Measurement and Evaluation as well as experts from Social Studies education units. The reliability of SSAT and SSSASST was ascertained through test-retest method and the scores subjected to test retest method and the coefficient 0.83 was obtained. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of mean and standard devaition while the hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of ANCOVA and t-test at 0.5 level of significance. The study revealed That the groups were equivalent based on the mean score obtained at the pre-test level (Expr=Crtl). However, after the intervention the result shows that the experimental group performed higher than the control group and even higher than their pretest scores obtained in the study (42.59≥40.32). Hence it can be deduced that collaborative technique enhances students' achievement. It was found out that the experimental group performed higher after the intervention than the control group. It was concluded in this study that that collaborative learning strategy is an effective teaching method in Social Studies since the findings of this study confirms that it leads to social skills development and improved academic achievement of students. The study recommended among others that Social Studies teachers should endeavor to develop and adopt collaborative and metacognitive techniques as it would enhance overall social skills development and achievement of students in Social Studies as well as help reduce gender gap in Social Studies.

Keywords: Collaboration, Meta-cognitive, Achievement, Social Skills, Social Studies

Introduction

Education is a process which allows human societies to develop the requisite knowledge, experience and various skills acquisition through interaction for self –preservation, growth and development. Education has been attributed to teaching and learning in a modern

classroom situation as act of transferring knowledge. A number of several subjects can be identified in the curriculum of our schools at all levels of Nigerian education, the subjects are included with the expectation that when properly taught, a more effective learning will result, and this will bring about the realization of the goal of Nigerian education as stated in the national policy on education (NPE) (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) 2013). At the primary and secondary levels, there are certain subjects that are classified as core subjects. Core subjects are those subjects which students compulsorily offer, while the subject called electives consist of subjects from which students can freely make their choice, based on preference and future career interest.

The act of teaching has become a multidisciplinary enterprise to develop critical thinking, interaction, and collaboration among learners (Nelson, 2019). Given these multidisciplinary changes in curriculum and its relative learning objectives, the need to collaborate in order to create meaningful learning environments has gained momentum by all sundry either plan or unplanned teaching and learning curriculum. At the junior secondary school level, Social Studies is one of the core subjects, which if effectively taught, according to Iyewarun (2019) has the potential to influence the intellectual, social and personal growth and development of Nigerian child.

Social Studies education is designed to generate and develop intelligent responsible and self-directing citizens who are expected to positively explore opportunities to develop their own potentialities and to contribute their maximum efforts to the improvement of group living within the societal frame-work of a nation (Okam & Onuoha, 2017). The broad objectives of Social Studies in Nigeria is to give direction for effective instruction. To develop a capacity to acquire certain basic skills essential for forming sound judgment and to ensure the acquisition of relevant body of knowledge and information which is an essential pre-requisite to personal development and positive contribution to the betterment of the society as a whole (Ossai, 2019). Teaching children Social Studies increases the possibility of their becoming more informed and responsible members of the society. Teaching children Social Studies is necessary if we want a brighter future for our society and increase their chances of adhering to ethical and moral value in life.

In spite of the important place of Social Studies in our educational system, students' achievement in the subject shows growing decline in junior secondary School Certificate examination (JSCE) in Nasarawa state, as observed by Yusuf (2019). Social Studies educationists and educators such as Mezieobi (2013) and Yusuf (2019) have given some reasons for the poor performance of students in the subject and Ariya, Umaru and Egan (2017) attributed the poor performance of students to the low quality of teachers. Umaru and Daboer (2021) also attributed the poor achievement of Social Studies to poor and abstract teaching method. This view may be due to the position held by teachers as the implementers of curriculum that the problem of overcrowded classrooms is caused by increase in enrolment without proportionate increase in the provision of facilities, instructional and supporting personnel with requisite qualities.

In Nigeria, there is ample evidence of continued fluctuation of performance of students in both standardized and teacher made examinations (Benjamin & Agwagah, 2016). Reports from examination bodies such as Junior Secondary Certificate Examinations (JSCE) and internal examinations indicated students' low achievement in Social Studies as contained in

the chief Examiner's report (2020 & 2021). Considering these reports, Fajemidagba (2017) opined that, high performance in Social Studies is a good indication of its objectives attainment in particular, the reverse may be true. However, efforts must be made to employ a technique or techniques that will enhance better achievement of the students in the subjects. This implies that that if Social Studies teachers employ problem solving instructional techniques which will equip the leaner with analytic skill, reflective thinking and problem-solving tools, the students will be able to perform better in the subject.

Many reasons have been advanced for this fluctuating state of students' achievement in Social Studies in particular. Some researchers viewed technique of teaching as one of the contributing factors to poor performance of students in Social Studies, some of whom include (Chianson, Kurumeh & Obida, 2015). There has also been an increased awareness by those concerned with Social Studies education that the traditional lecture method of teaching Social Studies has not been very successful (Chianson, Kurumeh& Obida, 2015). This study therefore attempts to explore avenues through which teaching of Social Studies in public secondary schools can be made more effective. This implies the use of collaborative and metacognitive techniques can result in positive impact students' achievement and social skills development.

Conventional instructional techniques facilitate individualistic and competitive learning environment that only facilitates gifted or high-achieving students rather than catering for the learning needs of average and below average students. Edinyang (2012) sees conventional learning techniques not supporting the affective and psycho-motive development of Social Studies students, but only contributing to the increase in rote-learning amongst younger students, scrambling for certification and damping of students thinking ability with the teacher doing all the talking and dishing out of information to the passive students.

Collaborative technique (CBT) is a teachnique of learning in which students' team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. This learning technique shares many of the same traits as cooperative learning technique. However, the major difference is its being more student-centered than cooperative learning. Collaborative technique provides the driving force for social constructivism where students are in control of their own learning and ultimately, the outcome of their learning. Collaborative technique is best suited to an arrangement of groups where students can freely interact with one another and construct their ideas together.

Students positively depend on each other, engage in face-to-face interaction, assessed individually and held accountable for equally haring and contributing to the mastery of learning goals, develop appropriate collaborative and interpersonal skills to teach and encourage each other to learn and reflect and assess the effectiveness of growing, for future learning (Kagan, 2014). This method is different from the traditional group method where the student has low independence, in collaborative technique students take responsibility only for themselves. Collaborative technique, according to Dillenbourg (2019) is "a process in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together," and more specifically as Joaquin problem solving.

Metacognitive technique involves three regulatory skills or activities of planning, monitoring and evaluating. Planning involves identifying and choosing appropriate techniques and resources. Monitoring involves being aware of comprehension and task. Metacognition is the analysis of the process of thinking and learning by one's self (MerriamWebster, 2012). It

is the ability to think about and control one's own learning and mental processes. Cognition is the process/processes for an organism to get information about its surrounding environment and to use this information in understanding the world and in bringing solutions to the problems. As understood from the definition, the human is in a struggle of understanding, interpreting and decoding the information about the world he is in. The cognitive processes are of quite importance for individuals in making use of themselves and their environment. The cognitive processes also have an effect on coding of information, transferring to the long-term memory and calling back. Metacognition is, on the other hand, the individuals 'skills of monitoring and organizing own cognitive processes and techniques, as well as the information obtained. Demirel (2020) explains the metacognitive as the individual communicating with himself/herself about the cognitive technique and the requirements of the task before, during and after a learning task; Metacognitive is about self-knowledge and cognitive processes and knowledge about how these processes work. "Using cognitive and metacognitive techniques correctly and effectively in learning directly affects performance and learning product, as it increases efficiency in both choosing new information and placing this information in memory and remembering for later use".

Metacognitive techniques such as planning, monitoring and evaluating allow students to control various cognitive processes of their problem-solving processes. A student's employing metacognitive techniques shows that he/she regards learning as a process and knows how to apply these techniques in new situations. Planning as a metacognitive technique means deciding on the processes to be carried out for the processes of solving and finalizing a problem. The studies conducted have revealed that lack of collaborative technique is among the factors causing learning difficulties of students in schools (Victor, 2019).

Achievement is the outcome of education to which a student, teacher or institution has been able to realize their educational goals (Ezeudu, 2016). Achievement implies something that somebody has done successfully especially using his/her own efforts and skills (Okeke, 2016). Achievement is the act of obtaining a result through efforts in the quality and quantity of students' work. On the other hand, Bitrus (2019) stated that academic achievement is a measure of knowledge gained through education process usually indicated by test scores, grade point average and degree. This is why some schools define this as a certain grade point average (GPA) or ranking in class. According to Gumus (2020) academic achievement can be defined as performance of students in schools. It could be getting high grades and a high GPA level. This high GPA level may be achieved through the use of innovative teaching techniques such as two meta-cognitive teaching techniques (problem solving and collaborative). In this regard, the use of innovative teaching techniques may help students to develop better understanding of a subject such as Social Studies which may lead to improved performance in achievement.

Education and school can affect a person's social skills because in school students learn various skills. Weak social skills can result in low academic achievement; absence of friends, rejection, anxiety, and depression one of the skills learned in education is the link between social skills and techniques and various influences and efficient learning methods so as to achieve the desired learning goals. Here, parent's teachers and lecturers play an important role i n the process of maintaining and developing each skill possessed by students. Social interaction is a situation in which the behavior of one actor is consciously rearranged by, and influences the behavior of, another actor, and vice versa, In this case, social skills are needed

by students. Social Skills is a form of adaptive behavior which consists of skills to initiate and maintain social relationships, contribute to developing a positive peer relationship, give consideration to what other people want in the social sphere, and overcome problems that may occur. Students are required to have good social skills because the field of work that will be involved after graduation is related to the ability to adapt and build relationships with other people. Nowadays, there is a huge need for individuals with high social skills needed and able to adapt to changes in the work environment and social life they live (Woolley, 2016).

Student's poor achievement in Social Studies has been attributed to a number of factors. These factors include; poor primary school background, gender among others. Gender is another important variable that can influence students' achievement and social skills. Gender is a socio-cultural construct that assigns roles, attitudes and values that are considered appropriate for each sex. This implies that, the role an individual play in the society determines his or her gender; these roles played by individuals in society are imposed on them by society. This being the case, members of the society, children inclusive believe that there are certain roles that are not for them to play.

Another factor that may likely affect students' achievement is gender which is a socio-cultural construct that assigns roles, attitudes and values that are considered appropriate for each sex. Makama (2017) in his study on patriarchy and gender inequality in Nigeria, posited that gender implies the character of being male or female, man or woman, boy or girl. From another point of view, the role an individual play in the society determines his or her gender, these roles played by individuals in society are imposed on them by society. This being the case, members of the society, children inclusive believe that there are certain roles that are not for them to play. One of such roles is active participation in some of the affairs of the society which may influence students' attitude towards learning.

The persistent decline in students achievement accompanied by lack of social skills despite concerted effort by stakeholders has become worrisome not only to the researcher but to all those who mean well for the future of these students. It is on this background that this study seeks to adopt and use student-centered techniques in teaching Social Studies. One of such student-centered techniques which could be applied to the teaching of Social Studies to enhance students' achievement is the collaborative technique and Meta-cognitive learning techniques. Hence, the need to find out the effect of collaborative and meta-cognitive techniques on students' academic achievement and social skills development in Social Studies in Doma Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

One of the core foundations of secondary school social science subjects in Nigeria is Social Studies. Therefore, it is expected that on completing basic education, the learner is fully prepared for senior secondary education (social science subjects inclusive) and should be able to excel in secondary education. This assertion does not however seem to hold for secondary school Social Studies because research has shown that students' achievement in secondary Social Studies is declining. The records of Basic certificate Examination (BECE) from 2019-2023 as documented by the Ministry of Education Nasarawa, Shows 57%, 43%, 51%, 49%, 40% and 39% failed in Social Studies in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively. This situation has become so worrisome that needs to be checked immediately. Social Studies educationists have identified factors such as inadequate instructional materials, teachers' poor improvisation skills, specialty and competency among others as some of the causative factors

of low achievement in Social Studies. They have also proffered recommendations such as the use of inquiry, cooperative, Jigsaw instructional techniques, among others, as the way forward. However, despite these efforts, students' achievement and skills development in Social Studies has not shown appreciable improvement (Okoro, 2020). This could probably be related to the inability of the instructional technique employed in the teaching of Social Studies to guide students unto developing and adopting the appropriate learning technique for learning Social Studies.

A major challenge in implementing appropriate learning technique in Social Studies classrooms perhaps lies in developing and equipping students with the relevant learning techniques that will enhance the learning of Social Studies. Based on this assertion, the researcher assumed that assisting upper basic students to adopt and employ the use of collaborative and metacognitive techniques in learning Social Studies might yield a positive effect, since these two techniques are mostly the ways in which the Nigerian child learns during informal training. This study is born out of the desire to determine the effect of the two learning techniques on students' social skills and achievement in Social Studies.

Rote learning has been a common practice in the Nigerian educational system (Edinyang, 2012). Most Social Studies teachers are in doubt of the students' ability to acquire knowledge on their own. Most of the time, students are treated like empty vessel which need to be filled with facts in order to trigger their cognitive capability. Thus, the corollary of this perception leads to the rigidity of the teaching approach which is more teacher-centred. It also leads to the constant spoon-feeding on the teachers' part and students' dependency on the teacher in the quest to acquiring knowledge. Teacher lectures, presents information, disciplines the students and gives instructions. This technique is one of the popular techniques due to its convenience for the teachers since they can impart a large amount of information and knowledge to many students.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to find out the effects of collaborative technique and metacognitive on academic achievement of students' social skills in Social Studies in Doma, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the pretest mean score of students in the experimental and control group in Social Studies.
2. find out the effect of collaborative technique on the students' social skills in Social Studies.
3. find out effect of metacognitive technique on students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What is the pretest mean score of students in the experimental and control group in Social Studies?
2. To what extent does collaborative technique affect students' social skills in Social Studies?
3. to what extent does metacognitive technique affect students' academic achievement in Social Studies?

Hypothesis

One wing hypothesis was tested at 0.05% level of significance

There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of students in Social Studies in the experimental group based on gender.

Method and Procedure

This study employed the quasi-experimental research design. Specifically, the non-equivalent group pre-test-post-test control group design, in which intact groups were assigned to one of the experimental and control groups. The choice of the design is because the school may not allow for the split of the class for the experiment. The population for the study comprised all the 1887 Junior Secondary Schools (JSS II) Social Studies students in government secondary school in Doma local government area of Nasarawa state.

The sample size of the population is drawn from the required sample size of 50 students in two public Secondary School selected in Doma Local Government Area. The sampling technique for this study was the proportionate stratified and random sampling technique. The researcher used two self-designed instruments to collect data for this study, the instruments; Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT) and students' social skills towards Social Studies Questionnaires (SSSSSQ). Content and face validity were established for the instrument. The reliability of the instrument is to ascertain the consistency of the instrument administered. The data collected for this study was analyzed using various statistical tools. The demographic data of the respondents was analyzed using frequency count and simple percentage.

Results and Discussion

Answering Research Questions

Research Question One

What is the pretest mean score of students in the experimental and control group?

Table 1

Pre-test mean Scores of students in the experimental and control group

	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Pre-Test experimental group	23	42.35	19.319
Pre-Test Control group	27	42.74	19.548

Table 1 presents the pretest mean score of students in the experimental and control group. The experimental group had a pre-test mean score of 42.35. Similarly, the control group had a pre-test mean score of 42.74. This implies that the groups were equivalent based on the mean score obtained at the pre-test level.

Research Question Two

To what extent does collaborative technique affect students' social skills in Social Studies?

Table 2

Mean responses on the extent collaborative technique affect students' social skills in Social Studies

Groups		N	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$ diff
Experimental	Pre-test	23	39.06	20.21	40.81
	Post-test	23	79.87	13.60	
	Pre-test	27	32.88	21.52	

Control					26.48
	Post-test	27	59.36	14.57	

Table 2 shows the Mean responses on the extent collaborative technique affect students' social skills in Social Studies. The pre-test and post-test social skills mean scores of the experimental group were 39.06 and 79.87 respectively. Also, the pre-test and post-test social skills mean scores of students in the control group were 32.88 and 59.36. The mean difference for pre-test in the two groups is low (6.18) showing no much difference before exposure to treatment, while the mean difference for post-test in the two groups is higher (20.51). This implies that after intervention the experimental group displays social skills better than the control group in Social Studies.

Research Question Three

To what extent does metacognitive technique affect students' academic achievement?

Table 3

Mean Responses on extent to which metacognitive technique affect students' academic achievement

	N	**Mean**	**Std. Dev**
Pre-Test experimental group	23	42.35	19.319
Post-Test Experimental group	23	63.48	17.270
Pre-Test Control group	27	42.74	19.548
Post-Test Control group	27	40.59	20.506

+69

Table 3 presents the mean responses of students on the extent to which metacognitive technique affect students' academic achievement before and after exposure to metacognitive technique. The experimental group had a pre-test mean score of 42.35 while their posttests mean score of 63.48. The control group had a pre-test mean score of 42.74 while the posttest mean score was 40.59 in the study. This shows that the experimental group performed higher after the intervention than the control group. Also, the experimental posttest scores obtained in the study revealed a high achievement than the pre-test scores. Hence it can be deduced that metacognitive technique affects students' academic achievement positively.

Testing Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of students in Social Studies in the experimental group based on gender.

Table 4

ANOVA of significant difference in the academic achievement of students in Social Studies in the experimental group based on gender

Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Partial Eta Squared**
Corrected Model	839.019[a]	2	419.510	.642	.528	.013
Intercept	69852.550	1	69852.550	106.972	.000	.527
Pre-attitude	52.897	1	52.897	.081	.777	.001

Gender	817.009	1	817.009	1.251	.266	.013
Error	62687.607	96	652.996			
Total	1360640.000	99				
Corrected Total	63526.626	98				

a. R Squared = .013 (Adjusted R Squared = -.007)

The analysis in Table 4 showed that F (1,96) = 1.25, p > 0.05) since the p value of 0.266 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was retained, indicating that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of students in Social Studies in the experimental group based on gender.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the effects of collaborative technique and metacognitive on academic achievement of students' social skills in Social Studies in Doma, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Table 1 presents the pretest mean score of students in the experimental and control group. The experimental group had a pre-test mean score of 42.35. Similarly, the control group had a pre-test mean score of 42.74. This implies that the groups were equivalent based on the mean score obtained at the pre-test level. This finding is in line with the findings of Lawrence (2014) who stated that competitive learning increases interest. In the same vain, the result of this study did not agree with the view of Fasli & Kopoules (2015) which revealed that competitive learning strategy provides incentives for students to develop interest in science.

Table 2 shows the Mean responses on the extent collaborative technique affect students' social skills in Social Studies. The pre-test and post-test social skills mean scores of the experimental group were 39.06 and 79.87 respectively. Also, the pre-test and post-test social skills mean scores of students in the control group were 32.88 and 59.36. The mean difference for pre-test in the two groups is low (6.18) showing no much difference before exposure to treatment, while the mean difference for post-test in the two groups is higher (20.51). This implies that after intervention the experimental group displays social skills better than the control group in Social Studies. This agrees with the findings of Weinstein (2018) who opined that learning strategy influences how the learner process information. It is assumed that human beings processes information and that learning involves such information processing. Research has also shown that learners have their own strategies for transforming information into knowledge.

Table 3 presents the mean responses of students on the extent to which metacognitive technique affect students' academic achievement before and after exposure to metacognitive technique. The experimental group had a pre-test mean score of 42.35 while their posttests mean score of 63.48. The control group had a pre-test mean score of 42.74 while the posttest mean score was 40.59 in the study. This shows that the experimental group performed higher after the intervention than the control group. Also, the experimental posttest scores obtained in the study revealed a high achievement than the pre-test scores. Hence it can be deduced that metacognitive technique affects students' academic achievement positively. The findings of this research is consistent with the view of Otuka (2014), who submitted that metacognitive enables students to develop interest in the task presented to them which is exhibited through their active participation in the given tasks.

The analysis in Table 4 showed that F (1,96) = 1.25, p > 0.05) since the p value of 0.266 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was retained, indicating that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of students in Social Studies in the experimental group based on gender.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study has very important contributions and high implication for Social Studies Educators and the educational practices in Nigeria. This study revealed that collaborative learning and metacognitive techniques had higher immediate development of social skills and academic achievement of Social Studies students in Doma, Nasarawa State. The study also shows that collaborative learning and metacognitive techniques has the ability of establishing class friendliness and when friendliness is established, students are motivated to learn and are more confident to ask questions from one another for better understanding of the tasks being learnt. It is therefore, concluded that collaborative learning strategy is an effective teaching method in Social Studies since the findings of this study confirms that it leads to social skills development and improved academic achievement of students.

Based on this conclusion, the following recommendations are deemed necessary:

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

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