INFLUENCE OF NUMBER HEADS TOGETHER ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ACHEIVEMENT IN ECONOMICS IN KAURA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

Juliana Mugu Yusufu[1], Prof Mustapha A. Yusuf[2] & Dr Augustine S. Azi[3]

[1]Department of social Science Education University of Jos

[2]Department of Educational Foundations, University of Jos

[3]Department of social Science Education, University of Jos

Abstract

The study investigated the influence of Number heads together technique on achievement of senior secondary school students in Economics in Kaura LGA of Kaduna State Nigeria. The study was guided by three objectives, answered three research questions and tested one null hypothesis. The study employed a descriptive survey research design specifically cross-sectional survey research design. The population consisted on 913 SS II students of economics across the 13 registered public schools in Kaura LGA of Kaduna State. A sample of 200 students were selected using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher following the procedure for developing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of two section A and B and section B consisted of 15 items under three different sub headings. The instrument was subjected to content validity by experts and the reliability coefficient was established at 0.70 using Cronbach Alpha method. The data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that, Economic students in Kaura LGA have basic understanding of NHT technique and appreciate the technique on the ground that it has the potentials to improve students' achievement. The study concluded that, NHT technique is essential to improving the achievement of students in Economics. The study recommended among other things that, teachers should be encouraged to employ the NHT technique in teaching of Economic and teachers should also be trained on how to effectively use the technique in teaching Economics for better achievement.

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a foundation tool for national development, serving as the engine through which human capital is developed, economic growth is accelerated, and societal transformation is realized. It is not merely a system of knowledge transmission, but a vehicle for equipping citizens with the skills, values, and competencies needed to participate actively and productively in modern economies. Across the globe, countries that have made significant strides in socio-economic development such as Finland, South Korea, and Singapore have done so by heavily investing in education, thereby demonstrating a clear link between educational quality and national advancement. Education builds human capacity, which in turn fuels innovation, increases productivity, reduces poverty, and promotes civic engagement and social cohesion.

This critical role of education explains why governments and international development organizations consistently prioritize education in their development agendas. For example, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education as a catalyst for achieving all other development goals. According to the World Bank (2023), each additional year of schooling can raise a person's income by up to 10% and substantially boost a country's gross domestic product

(GDP). In contrast, under investment in education can have far-reaching and negative implications. When a nation's education system is poorly funded, it results in dilapidated infrastructure, unmotivated and under qualified teachers, low student enrollment, high dropout rates, and weak learning outcomes. These deficiencies collectively lead to a poorly skilled workforce, increased unemployment, social inequality, and political instability.

In Nigeria, for instance, the consequences of chronic under funding in education are evident in the persistent issues of teacher shortages, overcrowded classrooms, poor access to learning materials, and inadequate educational facilities particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. This directly hampers the country's ability to compete in the global knowledge economy. As highlighted by UNESCO (2022), sustainable development cannot be achieved without substantial improvements in education systems. Therefore, for any country aiming to achieve inclusive and sustainable national growth, prioritizing education through increased budgetary allocation, policy reforms, and institutional strengthening is not optional it is essential.

Economics, as a discipline, holds a central position within both secondary and tertiary education systems due to its foundation role in equipping learners with the analytical tools necessary to understand and manage scarce resources efficiently. At the secondary level, Economics introduces students to essential economic concepts such as demand and supply, resource allocation, opportunity cost, and market systems. These concepts form the bedrock of financial literacy and decision-making, enabling individuals to navigate complex economic environments. At the tertiary level, Economics becomes more specialized and instrumental in shaping public policy, business strategies, and macroeconomic planning. The strategic importance of Economics education cannot be overstated in an era defined by rapid globalization, digital finance, and economic uncertainties. Nations invest in economic literacy as a means of cultivating citizens who can critically evaluate fiscal policies, interpret economic indicators, and contribute to sustainable economic development. For instance, the World Economic Forum (2023) emphasizes that Economics education fosters data literacy, critical reasoning, and evidence-based policy engagement skills that are indispensable in modern economies. Moreover, integrating Economics into early education serves as a catalyst for innovation, entrepreneurship, and social accountability, as it teaches young people the dynamics of production, consumption, distribution, and resource sustainability (OECD, 2023).

In today's fast-evolving financial and technological landscape, Economics also provides tools for understanding modern economic systems, including digital currencies, economic inequality, and international trade relations. This dual relevance explaining both the traditional models and contemporary shifts ensures that Economics remains an irreplaceable discipline for fostering national growth and informed citizenship. Therefore, its inclusion in curricula is not merely academic but a strategic imperative for any nation aiming for sustainable economic and social advancement. Despite the acknowledged significance of Economics as a subject that fosters financial literacy, resource management, and informed economic decision-making, students in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State continue to perform poorly in this crucial field of study. Achievement in this context refers to the extent to which students successfully complete given tasks or demonstrate understanding in Economics, often measured through tests, examinations, and performance-based

assessments. It serves as a critical index for evaluating not only student success but also the effectiveness of instructional strategies employed in the teaching of the subject.

According to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Chief Examiners' Reports between 2022 and 2024, there has been a noticeable decline in students' performance in Economics in Kaura LGA and other parts of Kaduna State. These reports consistently highlight low comprehension of basic economic concepts, inability to apply economic principles to real-life scenarios, and general lack of analytical skills among candidates (WAEC, 2023). This trend points to a troubling deficiency that calls for urgent academic and policy interventions to improve learning outcomes. One of the most prominent factors identified as contributing to the low achievement in Economics is the teaching technique employed by educators. Many Economics teachers still rely heavily on traditional lecture methods, which are often teacher-centered and do not actively engage students in the learning process. Research indicates that passive instructional approaches significantly reduce retention, motivation, and application of knowledge among learners (Umar & Bello, 2023). On the other hand, learner-centered strategies such as inquiry-based learning, concept mapping, cooperative learning, and the use of real-life case studies have been shown to enhance understanding and achievement in Economics (Oyetunde, 2022; Yusuf & Folorunso, 2023).

Furthermore, limited access to instructional resources, including textbooks, digital content, and Economics laboratories or simulation tools, may also hinder effective teaching. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) has stressed that the unavailability of up-to-date instructional materials compromises the curriculum's efficacy and undermines the objective of fostering critical economic thinking among students (NERDC, 2022).The dynamics of contemporary teaching have significantly shifted from the traditional teacher-centered paradigm to a more progressive, student-centered model. In the modern classroom, particularly in the context of secondary education, the teacher is no longer viewed solely as a source of knowledge but as a facilitator who guides and supports students through active learning experiences. This transition underscores the growing emphasis on aligning instructional methods with students' interests, aspirations, and learning preferences. In Kaura Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State, where low academic achievement in Economics has been consistently reported, adopting student-centered teaching strategies has become not only relevant but imperative.

Student-centered learning prioritizes the active involvement of learners in the instructional process. When students are meaningfully engaged, they tend to demonstrate improved comprehension, critical thinking, and long-term retention of concepts. In Economics education, this translates into a deeper understanding of abstract principles, better analytical reasoning, and enhanced problem-solving capacity. According to Omosewo and Adebayo (2022), student-centered instructional approaches lead to significant gains in academic performance, particularly in subjects that require application of theoretical knowledge, such as Economics. One of the most effective and widely researched student-centered instructional strategies is the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique. Developed by Kagan (1994), this cooperative learning strategy involves placing students into small groups, assigning each member a number, and posing questions that require

collaborative thinking and shared responsibility. After discussing the problem within their groups, a number is randomly selected, and the student with that number responds on behalf of the group. This technique ensures that all students are engaged and accountable for their learning, thus reducing passive learning and promoting equitable participation.

Recent empirical studies have supported the efficacy of the NHT technique in improving academic achievement in various subjects, including Economics. A study by Ojo and Lawal (2023) revealed that students taught with the NHT strategy significantly outperformed those taught using traditional lecture methods in terms of both conceptual understanding and retention. Similarly, Abdulrahman and Mohammed (2023) found that the technique promotes active engagement, enhances communication skills, and fosters cooperative learning environments that are conducive to academic success. In the specific context of Kaura LGA, where external examination results in Economics reflect persistent underachievement, the integration of learner-centered techniques such as NHT may serve as a viable pedagogical remedy. It aligns with national education policies that advocate for interactive, inclusive, and outcome-based teaching strategies in secondary schools (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). If effectively implemented, it could bridge the achievement gap and cultivate more competent and confident learners in the field of Economics. The Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique is a student-centered instructional approach that engages learners in a structured, cooperative manner, fostering both individual accountability and group collaboration. In this method, students are organized into small groups, and each member is assigned a number for identification. The teacher then poses a question or problem, and the group collaborates to discuss possible answers. After the discussion, the teacher randomly selects a number, and the student with that number responds on behalf of the group. This technique ensures that every student is prepared to answer and actively participates in the learning process.

NHT encourages active engagement by compelling students to think collectively, clarify concepts among peers, and share their understanding with the larger class. According to Yusuf and Busari (2023), this technique stimulates learners' cognitive abilities and interpersonal skills by requiring them to process information critically and communicate effectively with group members. It also minimizes student passivity, as each student is equally accountable for contributing to the group's output, thus enhancing participation and comprehension. A key strength of the NHT technique lies in its structured steps, which make it easy to implement while offering flexibility across diverse subjects, including Economics. The stages typically include: (1) forming small heterogeneous groups, (2) assigning numbers to each group member, (3) presenting a problem or question to the groups, (4) giving time for discussion and agreement on answers, and (5) randomly selecting a number for response. As noted by Okon and Adebisi (2022), this structure promotes equity in classroom participation and supports differentiated learning, enabling weaker students to benefit from peer explanations while more advanced students consolidate their understanding by teaching others.

In Economics classrooms, where abstract concepts often pose learning challenges, the NHT technique creates a supportive learning environment where students can discuss difficult ideas, ask questions freely, and receive immediate peer feedback. Studies such as

those by Ibrahim and Akpan (2023) show that students exposed to NHT performed better in economic reasoning tasks and demonstrated more interest in the subject compared to those taught using conventional methods. This indicates that the cooperative and dialogic nature of NHT aligns well with the cognitive demands of Economics education. Given the widespread academic underachievement in Economics observed in regions like Kaura LGA of Kaduna State, as highlighted by Chief Examiners' reports in recent years, integrating NHT into regular instruction could offer a viable solution. It offers a pedagogical shift that not only improves academic achievement but also enhances students' motivation, collaboration, and confidence in handling complex economic concepts.

Despite numerous interventions by educational stakeholders aimed at enhancing students' academic achievement in Economics, the desired outcomes remain largely un achieved, particularly in localities such as Kaura Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State. Efforts such as the training and retraining of teachers, improvement of teachers' welfare, and recruitment of additional qualified personnel have been commendable. However, these interventions have not translated into consistent improvements in students' performance, as the results of external examinations like the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) continue to show fluctuating and often declining achievement levels in Economics.The persistent under performance suggests that structural interventions, though necessary, may be insufficient on their own without accompanying pedagogical innovations that prioritize effective teaching and learning strategies. In this context, there is a growing recognition of the need to explore alternative instructional methods that foster deeper engagement, comprehension, and retention among students. One such promising approach is the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique—a student-centered cooperative learning strategy that has shown success in enhancing academic outcomes in various subjects.

Research by Bello and Nwachukwu (2023) indicates that NHT has yielded significant improvements in students' understanding and achievement in core science subjects like Chemistry and Mathematics, where it was found to enhance critical thinking, teamwork, and active participation. These findings align with those of Adeyemi and Ibrahim (2022), who emphasized that cooperative strategies like NHT are effective in bridging learning gaps by creating interactive and inclusive classroom environments. Given its success in other disciplines, the technique holds potential for addressing similar challenges in Economics education, where abstract concepts and passive teaching methods often hinder students' comprehension and achievement. Against this backdrop, the present study was motivated by the need to empirically assess the influence of the NHT technique on students' achievement in Economics in Kaura LGA. The study sought to determine whether the collaborative, discussion-oriented structure of NHT could lead to measurable improvements in students' understanding of economic principles and, ultimately, their academic performance. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to evidence-based pedagogical reforms that can complement existing stakeholder efforts and yield more consistent and improved learning outcomes in Economics.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives

1. Determine students understanding of NHT technique in Kaura Local government area

2. Identify the importance of NHT to secondary school students in Kaura LGA
3. Find out the influence of NHT technique on students' achievement

Research questions

The following research questions were answered in the study

1. What is students understanding of NHT technique in Kaura Local government area?
2. What is the importance of NHT T to secondary school students in Kaura LGA?
3. What is the influence of NHT technique on students' achievement?

Hypothesis

The formulated null hypothesis is tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between NHT technique and students' achievement in economics

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on the Group Dynamics Theory developed by Baron and Byme (1977). The theory explains how individuals behave and interact within a group setting, focusing on factors like communication, leadership, roles, norms, and cohesion that influence group behavior and performance. The group dynamic theory which is also described as a social theory explains how human beings and animals move in groups. The theory further explains that the interaction between animals and human beings is essential to the development of intellectual and other abilities of individuals. The theory underscores the interdependence among group members, where the actions and outcomes of one member affects and are affected by others. This interdependence also encompasses task interdependence, where members rely on each other to complete tasks, and outcome interdependence that see members share the consequences of the group achievement.

The researcher adopts the Group Dynamics Theory due to its relevance to the study, particularly its emphasis on the social nature of group interactions. The theory highlights how being part of a group fosters collaboration, encourages active participation, and promotes mutual learning among members. Within the context of the Numbered Heads Together technique, this social dynamic ensures that every individual in the group is actively involved, as each member contributes to the group's collective success. This approach not only improves individual accountability but also aligns with students learning expectations, enhancing their engagement and fostering better academic outcomes. By leveraging group interactions to facilitate knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving, the theory underscores how number Heads Together technique can improve students' interest in Economics while also boosting their achievement. Ultimately, this combination creates a learning environment that supports better academic performance and equips students with skills for future success

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design, specifically the cross-sectional survey type, which enabled the researcher to gather data at a single point in time from a representative sample of the target population. The population of the study comprised 913 Senior Secondary II (SS II) students offering Economics across the thirteen (13) public secondary schools in Kaura Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State. From this population, a sample of 200 students was drawn using the simple random sampling technique.

This technique was employed to ensure that every student within the population had an equal and independent chance of being selected, thus enhancing the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. The primary instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The development of the instrument followed standard procedures for designing educational research instruments, ensuring alignment with the study's research questions and objectives. The questionnaire was organized into two sections: Section A captured demographic information of the respondents, while Section B comprised fifteen (15) items grouped under three sub-headings corresponding to the major themes of the study, namely, student achievement in Economics, instructional techniques, and perceived effectiveness of the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) strategy.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was subjected to expert review by professionals in the fields of Economics Education and Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Based on their feedback, necessary modifications were made to improve clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach Alpha statistical method, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.70. This value was considered acceptable for internal consistency, indicating that the items on the questionnaire reliably measured the constructs of interest. Data collected through the administered questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to summarize and describe the responses, while inferential statistics, particularly the t-test, were employed to test hypotheses and determine the statistical significance of observed differences. This methodological approach ensured that the research findings were both empirically grounded and statistically robust.

Results

Research Question One

What is students' understanding of NHT technique in Kaura Local Government Area?

Table 1

Analysis of research question one

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	I understand how the NHT technique works in group learning.	3.49	0.63	Agreed
2	I can explain the steps involved in using the NHT technique.	3.49	0.71	Agreed
3	NHT helps me participate actively in group discussions.	3.58	0.72	Agreed
4	My teacher has explained the NHT strategy clearly during lessons.	3.57	0.67	Agreed
5	I know my role when assigned a number in an NHT group.	3.46	0.69	Agreed

Students demonstrated an adequate understanding of the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique. The mean scores for all five items range between 3.46 and 3.58, indicating

that respondents generally agreed that they understood the NHT technique, its process, and its application in classroom settings

Research Question One

What is the importance of NHT technique to secondary school students in Kaura LGA?

Table 2

Analysis of research question two

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	NHT encourages cooperation and teamwork.	3.64	0.61	Strongly Agreed
2	It helps me understand topics better through peer explanation.	3.60	0.55	Strongly Agreed
3	It makes class activities more interactive and enjoyable.	3.56	0.63	Agreed
4	Learning with NHT increases my motivation.	3.56	0.66	Agreed
5	I retain concepts better when taught with NHT.	3.58	0.55	Agreed

Findings show that students perceived the NHT technique as highly beneficial. Mean scores range from 3.56 to 3.64, indicating a strong perception of the importance of NHT in fostering group collaboration, peer learning, and student motivation.

Research Question three

What is the influence of NHT technique on students' achievement?

Table 3

Analysis of research question three

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	I perform better in tests with NHT.	3.70	0.75	Strongly Agreed
2	NHT helps me understand difficult concepts.	3.76	0.81	Strongly Agreed
3	I get better grades when I study in NHT groups.	3.61	0.76	Agreed
4	NHT helps me concentrate more during lessons.	3.78	0.80	Strongly Agreed
5	I complete my classwork more correctly with NHT.	3.79	0.83	Strongly Agreed

Findings show that students perceived the NHT technique as highly beneficial. Mean scores range from 3.56 to 3.64, indicating a strong perception of the importance of NHT in fostering group collaboration, peer learning, and student motivation.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One

There is no significant between NHT technique and students' achievement in Economics

Table 3

Result of t-test analysis for NHT and students' achievement

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	p-value	Decision
NHT		65.80	8.70					
	200			198	5.91	1.972	< 0.001	**Reject Ho**
Achievement		58.90	7.80					

The result of the t-test shows a statistically significant difference between NHT technique and students' achievement in Economics With a p-value less than 0.05 and a t-value of 5.91 exceeding the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique have significantly influence on students' achievement in Economics in Kaura LGA.

Discussion

The findings revealed that NHT encourages team wok among students and also promotes the development of social skills. The study further revealed that NHT technique has significant influence on achievement of students in Economics in Kaura LGA. This result supports earlier empirical studies such as that of Adamu and Eze (2021), who found that students taught using cooperative learning strategies like NHT significantly outperformed their peers in Economics achievement tests in Borno State. Similarly, Olatoye (2022) demonstrated that students in secondary schools taught with interactive methods such as NHT achieved higher academic outcomes due to increased engagement and peer collaboration. The cooperative nature of NHT facilitates shared responsibility in learning, which reinforces cognitive understanding and encourages accountability among learners, ultimately boosting achievement. This aligns with Slavin's (2014) social constructivist view that when students engage collaboratively through structured techniques, meaningful learning and improved achievement are more likely. Thus, the present study confirms and extends previous research by evidencing that even within the descriptive, non-experimental context of Kaura LGA, the NHT technique holds significant potential for enhancing student learning outcomes in Economics.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that students in Kaura Local Government Area have a basic understanding of the Numbered Heads Together (NHT) technique, recognize its relevance and importance in promoting collaboration and participation, and perceive it as having a significant influence on their achievement in Economics. The study further established that the use of the NHT technique enhances students' academic performance by fostering interaction, accountability, and active engagement in the learning process.

Recommendations

1. Economics teachers in Kaura LGA should be trained by professional and encouraged to adopt the NHT technique in their instructional delivery, as it has proven to enhance students' understanding and achievement.

2. Educational policymakers should incorporate cooperative learning techniques like NHT into teacher training curricula and continuous professional development programs.
3. School administrators should create supportive environments and provide resources that enable teachers to implement interactive teaching strategies such as NHT effectively.
4. Further research should be conducted across different subjects and regions to explore the broader applicability of NHT and other student-centered teaching approaches on students' academic success.

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