

## EFFECT OF ADVANCED ORGANIZER ON SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION IN UPPER BASIC SCHOOLS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The study determined the effects of advance organizer on academic performance and retention ability of students towards social studies in Katsina state. Two objectives, research questions and hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. A quasi experimental design was used for the study. The population of the study involved seventy five (75) JSS II Social Studies students selected through purposive sampling techniques from two (2) schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance. Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) was used the instrument for data collection. The test items were validated by the research experts and social studies specialists. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method for testing reliability; computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and the value obtained was 0.9. The experimental group was taught using advance organizer instructional strategy while the control group was taught using conventional lecture method. The data collected from the students was analyzed using t-test for independent samples and paired t-test. The findings revealed that students taught using advance organizer instructional strategy performed significantly better than those taught using conventional lecture method. Based on the findings, the study recommended that teachers should expose students to advance organizer instructional strategy as it enhances students' academic performance and retention ability in social studies.

**Keywords:** Advanced Organizer Instructional strategy, Academic Performance, Retention, Social Studies

### Introduction

Social Studies is a comprehensive discipline that delves into the intricate relationship between individuals and their socio-physical surroundings. It focuses on training and orienting individuals to acquire and apply social skills, knowledge, and values, enabling them to become effective and functional members of society. As proposed by Ololobou in Abubakar & Mohammed (2020), Social Studies is the subject that explores human activities within their social, economic, political, cultural, and physical contexts. This highlights that the Social Studies curriculum isn't solely guided by immediacy but also aims to instill in young learners desirable attitudes and attributes, essential for functioning in a democratic society.

The National Policy on Education (2014) emphasizes that Social Studies is a compulsory core component of the upper basic school curriculum. This policy underscores that Social Studies instruction should not only contribute significantly to the social education of young learners but also play a pivotal role in their social development, offering insights into how people live,

work, and collaborate. The objectives of Social Studies are drawn from the National Educational objectives, and they are aligned with the aspiration of these objectives. They share common goals, such as fostering national consciousness, unity, and the development of positive attitudes towards democratic values and citizenship. These objectives encompass knowledge acquisition, covering various educational domains, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In terms of its objectives, Social Studies emerge as the most suitable subject for realizing the National educational objectives (Ololobou, 2004).

Okam (2011) endorses the importance of teaching Social Studies at the secondary education level, with a focus on providing young learners with insight into knowledge structures and procedures relevant to modern civilization. This field of study aims to enhance understanding of historical events, movements, and personal abilities that have shaped Nigeria's history. It goes beyond the mere study of controls imposed by political, social, and economic institutions and actively promotes the improvement of human relations through better understanding of others, both domestically and internationally. The ultimate goal of a Social Studies program is the holistic development of intelligent, responsible, and self-directed citizens, not limited to the classroom but extending to the community, country, and the world (Okam, 2009).

Traditional lecture method is one of the oldest and most commonly used approaches in teaching Social Studies. The approach is teacher-centered since it allows the teacher to dominate the lesson while students remain passive listeners in classroom instructions. (Okam, 2009), in Abubakar and Muhammad (2020) observed that the traditional method serves four basic purposes namely; (i) motivating students to become excited and learn, (ii) clarifying students' problems during classroom work, (iii) reviewing classroom in order to improve students mastery, and (iv) to expand ideas, knowledge or information in order to engender interest and mastery amongst students. The lecture approach is used directly to convey information which is designed to generate understanding and stimulate interest amongst students. The method is also used in getting immediate feedback from students; the method is employed in providing on the spot solution to the problems and questions raised by students. In general, the traditional method is an instructional design by which the teacher seeks to a number of ends or objectives such as, interest, creating influence, stimulating and molding opinion, promoting activity, imparting information and developing critical thinking by the use of verbal message. Upon all the numerous advantages of the traditional method, it was found that it does not enhance academic achievement because it reduces students to mere passive listeners. It does not allow students to participate actively during the lesson, hence teacher – centered (Okam, 2009).

A number of activity--oriented instructional strategies and learner-centred method have been advocated by curriculum designers and Social Studies educators. Abubakar and Muhammad (2020), opined that activity-based teaching method is the type of method which leads to meaningful learning against rote learning, and also improve students' performance and retention. Advanced organizer model is a cognitive instructional strategy that was proposed by Ausubel in (1960). He envisioned an advance organizer as a bridge between what the learner already knew and the knowledge needed before a task can be performed (Tago, 2002).

Advanced organizer which was the central message of Ausubel's learning theory of subsumption is designed to strengthen students thought process. The constructive view of learning and memory maintains that, people do not receive the meaning of a message; instead, they must construct a meaning by interpreting message in the light of their own knowledge.

Performance as a variable in students learning has been a matter of concern in the present day research. Busari (2000) defines performance as the display of knowledge attained or skills developed by students in the school subject. It is the level of performance in the subject as exhibited by an individual. Performance is the exhibition of knowledge attained or skills developed by learners in the school subjects (Social Studies) usually designed by test score or marks assigned by teachers which can be low or high (Ogundukun & Adeyemi 2010).

Bichi (2002) regarded the term retention as the process of relegation of past learning experiences in Social Studies in the sub-conscious mind of the individual in the form of mental experiences. Aggarwal (2008) reported that it is one of the four main elements of memory, while others are learning, recall and recognition. Mangal (2010) reported that these four elements have been replaced by three distinct stages (encoding, storage and retrieval). The storage stage is concerned with the power of retention of encoded information. Educational psychologists have used retention as one of the criteria for distinguishing between short term and immediate memory. Despite the immense benefits to be derived from the introduction of Social Studies in our school curriculum, there seems to be a poor handling of the subject in the upper basic schools.

A great concern is that most Social Studies teachers still rely mostly on the lecture method for imparting information, while the manner of presentation is supposed to be constructive or student centered. Studies such as Abubakar, Armaya'u and Ahmed (2006), Akpochafo, (2001) and Arisi, (2012), have pointed out that despite the more than thirty years existence of learning style theories (detailing how people learn). Most teachers still dispense information using conventional lecture method without regard to student learning abilities. This teaching method is theoretical and teacher-centered instead of being constructive or activity based.

Ausubel's (1962) in NTI (2012), posited that students who are very successful in their academic performance and retention have the value of prior (i.e. previous) knowledge in learning. It is generally accepted that what a student already knows could aid or hinder new learning. According to Ausubel's meaningful learning occurs where there is appropriate link between prior knowledge and new learning task i.e. interaction between the students appropriate element in the knowledge that already exists and the new materials to be learnt. When there is no such interaction, no learning occurs. The parts of the learner's cognitive structure (i.e. prior knowledge) which can provide the interaction necessary for meaningful learning are called subsumers i.e. prior knowledge or knowledge already existing in the cognitive structure of the learner is referred to as a subsumers.

An advance organizer is a cognitive instructional strategy used to promote the learning and retention of new information. Mayer (2003), argued that advance organizer is information that

is presented prior to learning and that can be used by the learner to organize and interpret new incoming information. These organizers are introduced in advance of learning itself and are also presented at a higher level of abstraction, generality and inclusiveness and since the substantive content of a given organizer or series of organizers is selected on the basis of its suitability for explaining, integrating and inter-relating the material they precede. This strategy simultaneously satisfies the substantive as well as programming criteria for enhancing the organization strength of cognitive structure (Ausubel, 1963:81).

Oyeniya and Owolabi (2020) investigated the effects of advance organizer teaching strategy on students' gender and retention in secondary school Basic Science in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the difference in the performance and retention of students exposed to advance organizer teaching strategy based on students' gender. Their study revealed that the use of advance organizer teaching enhanced performance and retention of students in Basic Science than the Conventional strategy. However, advance organizer is not gender biased in students' academic performance and retention.

Joda, (2019) investigated the effect of instructional scaffolding strategy on senior secondary school Biology Students' academic achievement and retention of concepts in Jalingo education zone. The study found that the students taught with instructional scaffolding strategy have a significantly higher academic achievement than those taught with lecture method. Equally, those taught through instructional scaffolding retained Biology concept more than those taught through lecture method. Theodore and Mumuni (2015) investigate the efficiency of advance organizers strategies on chemistry students' cognitive achievements in redox reaction concept. Their result showed that graphic organizers produced the highest level of achievement gain and was therefore found to be most efficacious in promoting meaningful understanding and enhancing higher cognitive achievements in redox reaction concept at all levels of the cognitive domain among the three strategies compared.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Today, the prevailing situation characterized by poor academic performance, a rising crime rate, and various societal challenges underscores the fact that there are issues plaguing the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Upper Basic School systems. This prompts us to inquire about the root causes of these problems. Could it be that the methods employed for teaching and learning are ineffective in imparting the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and skills to the learners? Or is it possible that Social Studies instructors still rely on traditional methods such as lectures and other teacher-centered strategies, failing to consider the students' prior knowledge or provide advanced organizers?

The effectiveness of the Social Studies curriculum across all levels of education plays a vital role in addressing these concerns. According to Abubakar, Armaya'u, and Ahmed (2006) and Okam (1998) as cited in Abubakar (2020), it is evident that Social Studies education has not been consistently implemented in schools to equip students with the essential knowledge, facts,

and ideas necessary to enhance academic performance, retention, as well as foster positive values and attitudes crucial for both individuals and society's well-being.

As reported by the Katsina State Educational Resources Centre (2024), student performance has consistently fallen below expectations, with results fluctuating over the years. An examination of the Katsina State Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results for Social Studies between 2016 and 2020 reveals a concerning pattern of declining and fluctuating student performance at this educational level, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

**Table1: Academic Performance of Upper Basic School III Social Studies Students in Katsina State Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE 2020 -2024)**

Year	No. of Students	No. of Students Pass	No. of Students Fail	% Pass	% Fail
2020	64694	30224	34470	46.72	53.28
2021	60007	28843	31164	48.07	51.93
2022	58818	28800	30018	48.96	51.04
2023	58557	30550	28007	52.17	47.83
2024	54355	25305	29050	46.56	53.44

**Source:** Educational Resource Centre, Katsina (2024)

Analysis of Table 1 reveals the existence of challenges and difficulties faced by Social Studies students, resulting in poor performance and retention levels at the Junior Secondary School stage. Various factors contribute to this underperformance in Social Studies. Among the key contributors to students' poor performance in Social Studies is the inadequacy of instructional methods and strategies employed by educators. These methods often fall short of effectively instilling the desired attitudes, values, and social actions necessary with the students being taught

Extensive research on the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria has exposed a prevalent reliance on traditional lecture-based teaching methods, with a focus on the teacher, textbooks, chalk, and chalkboard. To address the persistent issue of high failure rates among Social Studies students and to improve their performance and retention, it is imperative to shift towards more innovative and learner-centered teaching strategies in the curriculum.

Given this context, the central concern of this research is to investigate whether the utilization of Advanced Organizer Instructional strategy in the teaching of citizenship education will have a positive impact on students' academic performance and their ability to retain the knowledge acquired.

## Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the effect of advance organizer teaching strategy on Social Studies students' academic performance in upper basic schools.
2. Compare Social Studies students' performance and retention ability exposed to advance organizer instructional strategy in Upper Basic Schools

## Research Questions

The following are the guided research questions:

- i. Is there difference in the academic performance of upper basic Social Studies students exposed to advance organizer instructional strategy and those exposed to lecture method in Social Studies?
- ii. What is the difference between Social Studies students' performance and retention ability exposed to advance organizer instructional strategy in upper basic schools?

## Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of upper basic Social Studies students exposed to advance organizer instructional strategy and those exposed to lecture method in Social Studies.

## Methodology

Quasi experimental pre-test and post-test design was used for the study. The population of the study involved seventy five (75) JSS II Social Studies students selected through purposive sampling techniques from two (2) selected schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance. A 50 item multiple choice Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) was used to collect the pre-test and post-test data for the study. The test items were validated by the research experts and social studies specialists. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method for testing reliability; computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) method and the value obtained was 0.9. The experimental group was taught using advance organizer instructional strategy while, the control group was taught using conventional lecture method. The data collected from the students were analyzed using t-test for independent and paired sample

## Results

The results obtained after the test was subjected to t-test analysis as shown below:

**Table 2: t-test analysis of mean academic performance score of JSS Students exposed to Advance Organizer and Lecture Method**

Group	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t- cal	t-crit.	P. value	Remarks
Advance Org	35	65.57	9.95	73	10.02	1.99	.000	Sig.
Lecture Meth	40	43.05	9.47					

Table 2 presents t-test analysis showing significance difference in the mean academic performance score of Social Studies students exposed to Advance Organizer and lecture method. The result indicates that the t-calculated was 10.02 observed at degree of freedom of 73 with p-value of 0.00. The p-value observed 0.000 is less than the alpha 0.05 value. Similarly, the calculated *t-cal* was 10.02 being greater than the t-critical of 1.99 The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean academic performance score of Social Studies students exposed to advance organizer and lecture method is rejected. The difference is in favour of students exposed to advance organizer with the p- value of 0.000.

**Table 3: t-test analysis of significant difference in the mean academic performance and retention ability of Social Studies students exposed to Advance Organizer in Upper Basic Schools**

Group	N	Mean	Std.	Df	t- cal	P. value	Remarks
Post-test	35	65.57	9.95	34	1.84	.074	Accepted
Post-post-test	35	61.31	11.64				

$P \leq 0.05$  Level of Significance

Table 3 presents the t-test analysis of significant difference in the mean academic performance and retention ability of Social Studies students taught the concept of citizenship exposed to advance organizer. Result indicates that the t-value calculated is 1.84 observed at degree of freedom of 34 with .074, significance level which is greater than the alpha 0.05 value. The hypothesis which stated that there was no significant difference in the mean academic performance score and retention ability of Social Studies students taught the concept of citizenship exposed to advance organizer is accepted. With a p-value of .074

### Discussion of Findings

Finding on specific objective, research question and hypothesis one reveals that there was significant difference in the mean academic performance score of Social Studies students in JSS exposed to advance organizer and lecture method. Students taught using advance organizer

performed better than those exposed to lecture method. The finding agrees with previous studies of Theodore and Mumuni (2015), Oyeniyi and Owolabi (2020) who in their studies found that students taught using advance organizer performed better than their counter part taught using conventional lecture method.

Additionally the study reveals that there was no significant difference in the mean academic performance score and retention ability of Social Studies students taught the concept of citizenship exposed to advance organizer. This agrees with that of National Teachers' Institute (2012) which found that students who are very successful in their academic performance and retention have the value of prior knowledge in learning. It is generally accepted that what a student already knows could aid and enhance academic performance.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that teaching Social Studies using advance organizer enhances students' academic performance in difficult areas of Social Studies better than those taught using lecture method. For instance, citizenship as a concept in Social Studies is better taught to the understanding of students using advance organizer. This will go a long way to solve the reported difficulties or failures in BECE. Thus, students that failed persistently in Social Studies concepts can overcome through the use of advance organizer by Social Studies teachers.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Katsina state government should emphasize the training of Social Studies teachers on the use of learner centered and activity based instructional strategies like advance organizer for instructions in JSS through periodic seminars, conferences and workshop.
2. Examination bodies like BECE should emphasize the inclusion of advance organizer teaching strategy into teaching and learning Social Studies in upper basic schools.

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