
Effects of Learning-Together Strategy on Students' Academic Achievement at Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

AKAPO Tijani Abayomi

Department of Language, Arts and Social Sciences Education
Lagos State University, Ojo.

Prof. Abiodun Ogunyemi

Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education
Olabisi Onabanjo Ago Iwoye, Ogun State

Prof. Ayodeji Ifegbesan

Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education
Olabisi Onabanjo Ago iwoye, Ogun State

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of Learning Together Strategy on learners' achievement in civic education at the Senior Secondary School level. The population consisted of all SSII Civic Education students in public coeducational secondary schools in Lagos State's senatorial districts. Two schools were purposively selected within the area of study. The research design was a quasi-experimental design using the pre-test, post-test non-equivalent group design. The instrument used to gather data was the Civic Education achievement test (CEAT) which had a reliability coefficient of 0.76. A total of 102 SS2 civic education students participated in the study. The experimental group was taught with the Learning together Strategy while the control group was taught with the traditional lecture method. The data (pre-test and post-test scores) collected was analysed using ANCOVA since the participants were not randomly assigned to the groups. The study found a statistically significant difference between the performance of students taught using Learning together Strategy and those taught with the traditional lecture method [$F(1, 100) = 6.34; p < 0.05$]. It was also found that no statistically significant difference existed in the achievement of male and female students in the experimental group. Hence, the study concluded that Learning together Strategy is a potent approach for improving students' academic achievement in civic education. Based on the findings, it was recommended that civic education teachers should employ learning together strategy to foster meaningful learning in the classroom.

Keywords: Civic education, Achievement, Gender.

Introduction

The increasing prevalence of decadent and anti-social behaviour in the nation has raised concerns regarding Civic Education in Nigeria. Civic Education encompasses all the activities that strengthen people's beliefs, commitments, capacities, and actions as members or potential members of a group (Crittenden, et al. 2022). Lehner (2021) describes peace education as a process involving the establishment of peace and harmonious relations with adversaries, minority groups, settlers, as well as individuals from other nationalities, tribes, religions, or political affiliations. Globally, Peace Education, as an integral component of Civic Education, has been acknowledged and utilised to foster peaceful coexistence.

The preamble of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Constitution (UNESCO, 1947) highlights that because men's thoughts are where conflict originates, it is there that the defenses of peace must be built. This underscores the importance of educating and enlightening human minds to embrace peace and renounce violence within the framework of Civic Education. Young individuals, particularly secondary school students, are highly susceptible to indoctrination leading to violent behaviour. Therefore, they must be exposed to effective curriculum content and strategies aimed at instilling appropriate knowledge, skills, and values conducive to peace within their

communities. Consequently, there is a pressing need for robust Civic Education at the early stages of schooling. As elucidated by Uko, et al. (2015), early exposure to quality education significantly shapes individuals' behaviour in society. These behavioural tendencies can be assessed based on young citizens' civic knowledge, attitudes, and outcomes.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2013) outlined six key attributes essential for successful implementation of civic learning, based on insights from the Civic Mission of Schools study in the United States. Firstly, classroom instruction should prioritise analytical thinking and critical skills development, steering clear of merely imparting factual information devoid of practical relevance to students' political engagement. Secondly, the curriculum should include discussions on current affairs and contentious issues, encompassing ethnic, racial, and religious diversity. Another critical aspect highlighted by the NCSS (2013) is service learning, which involves offering students meaningful opportunities to connect academic learning with democratic principles through hands-on problem-solving in the community. Additionally, extracurricular activities should be provided to enable students to apply civic knowledge and skills effectively while honing collaborative and communication abilities (NCSS 2013). Furthermore, civic learning should entail student participation in school governance, fostering an understanding of democratic processes, respect for human rights, and essential citizenship skills

(NCSS, 2013). Lastly, simulation of democratic procedures such as voting, political trials, legislative debates, and diplomacy should be incorporated, aiming to enhance political awareness and interest. Thus, it can be conjectured that by embedding effective civic learning components within Nigerian schools, students' susceptibility to indoctrination and involvement in conflict scenarios could be mitigated, if not eradicated.

According to Oluwakemi (2020), civic education refers to a public, socially-oriented instructional framework aimed at fostering civic competence and democratic values to fulfil socialization requirements in the best interest of individuals, civil society, and the rule of law. Therefore, it can be deduced that Civic Education possesses the capacity to instil appropriate values, competencies, and democratic ethos conducive to individual development. Consequently, the objective of civic education is to nurture "good citizens" (Ogunyemi, 2014).

The term cooperative learning encompasses various organisational and instructional approaches in the classroom. Depending on its operationalisation and underlying principles, any educator can employ cooperative learning strategies. Insights from numerous researchers and theorists indicate approximately ten categories of cooperative learning techniques, including Complex Instructional (CI) (Frerejean et al., 2019), Constructive

Controversy (CC) (Toheri et al. 2019), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) (Muksin, 2021), Group Investigation (GI) (Nasyariah & Haerul, 2020), Jigsaw (Hafida et al., 2019), Learning Together (LT) (Dewi et al., 2019), Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) (Awada, 2020), Team–Games–Tournaments (TGT) (Muttaqien, 2021), Team Assisted Individualization (TAI) (Verawadina, 2020) and Jigsaw Strategy (Adam et al. 2022)

Learning Together (LT) involves assembling learners into groups of five, where they collaborate on various tasks, exchange viewpoints, and share resources to achieve specific educational objectives. This strategy entails appointing a group leader and secretary or recorder, allocating responsibilities to group members, and having the leader present the group's consensus to the entire class. The cooperative learning model of Learning Together can be utilised to foster enjoyable learning experiences (Subaidi et al., 2018). Learners engage in group work to accomplish assigned tasks, with cooperative or collaborative learning taking either formal or informal forms, but always involving group participation. Learning Together is a deliberate and structured method of employing small groups to enhance interdependence and student learning. Students are assigned tasks, often termed assignments, which they collaborate on to complete. Each member bears responsibility for fulfilling their obligations to aid in completing the assignments, ensuring that everyone contributes to the

group's success. Developing learning models is a crucial skill for teachers to enhance their professional competence (Maimunah, 2021). According to Yigit and Durukan (2022), Learning Together is an approach teachers can employ to invigorate and revitalise students' interest in learning. The Learning Together strategy has been found to significantly enhance students' reading comprehension and improve retention of reading comprehension compared to other learning techniques.

Numerous studies indicate that traditional lecture methods prevail in Nigerian Social Studies and Civic Education classrooms (Ige & Hlalele, 2017). Unlike innovative approaches like AG and LT, the lecture method involves the teacher dominating the teaching-learning process, with minimal opportunity for student input. A typical lecture consists of three main stages: introduction, presentation, and conclusion. During the introduction, the teacher introduces the topic and relates it to students' prior experiences. In the presentation stage, the teacher elaborates on different aspects of the topic, often adopting a narrative style. Finally, in the conclusion, the teacher conducts a summative review, but students have limited opportunities for participation, even at this stage of the lecture (Ogunyemi, 2014).

Problem Statement

In order to establish constitutional democracy in Nigeria, it is crucial to empower children and youth with the information, knowledge, and values

essential for civic competence. Despite the implementation of Civic Education in Nigerian schools for over 20 years as part of a national strategy to address the country's socio-economic and political challenges, social problems and political crises persist, indicating insufficient progress in effective Civic Learning. Hence, it is imperative to explore innovative approaches to tackle this issue. A preliminary literature review suggests that the traditional lecture method, still predominant in Civic Education classrooms, may be inadequate for instilling the fundamentals of civic competence at the secondary school level. Therefore, further research is needed to explore alternative teaching methods for Civic Education to enhance learning outcomes.

Learning Together is a strategy that involves grouping learners into teams of five, where they collaborate on various tasks, share opinions and materials, and work towards specific instructional objectives. This approach requires appointing a group leader and secretary or recorder, assigning tasks to group members, and having the leader present the group's consensus to the entire class. Given the relevance of Learning Together, the study aims to investigate the effectiveness of this strategy on students' academic achievement in civic education.

Research question

1. Is there any effect of Learning Together Strategy on students' academic achievement in civic education?
2. Is there any effect of gender on the academic achievement of students

taught with Learning Together Strategy?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no statistically significant effect of Learning Together Strategy on students' academic achievement in civic education
2. There is no statistically significant effect of gender on the academic achievement of students taught with Learning Together Strategy

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental design, pretest-post-test control group design. The target group for the study consisted of all SSII Civic Education students in public coeducational secondary schools in Lagos State's two senatorial districts. The SS II students were targeted as research subjects because they would have been exposed to several key concepts in Civic Education as at the time of the study. Additionally, the target students would have enough time for the experiment because they were not preparing for any external examination at the time this study was conducted. A total of three hundred and two (102) SS II students in two 'intact' classes, located in two senatorial districts in Lagos State, participated in the study. The selection of the students involved a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, a list of local government under each senatorial district was generated, then, one local government

was randomly selected in each of the senatorial district through ballot system. The second stage was, in each of the local government that was selected one school was randomly chosen also through ballot. Within each selected school, an intact SS II class was chosen through ballot where there were multiple classes. All the selected schools were co-educational to ensure the participation of both male and female students. Lastly, the selected two schools were then randomly allocated to a treatment groups (Learning-Together [LT] and the Control Group (Conventional Method) through a balloting process. Civic Education Achievement Test (CEAT) was used for data collection. The instrument had two sections and it measures the Civic Education achievement of students in the three groups. The respondents' demographic data is gathered in Section A. The information required includes student registration number, school, gender, and class. Section consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions (A-D) based on the three Civic Education concepts addressed in the research (national consciousness, national integrity, and national unity). To ensure the validity of the CEAT, a team of five experts in Social Studies and educational evaluation reviewed the initial draft of the instrument, which consisted of the 50 selected items. The experts made suggestions and recommendations for improvement, which were incorporated by the researcher through editing. Test-retest method was used to evaluate the test's dependability. In a school that was not a part of the study, 103 SSII Civic Education students were given the

test. Two weeks passed between each administration of the pilot test, which was done twice. A correlation coefficient of $r = 0.76$ was found the correlation between the first and second applications of the test, confirming the test's high reliability. The collected data were analysed using

both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of the mean and standard deviation were used to address the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question 1

Is there any effect of Learning Together Strategy on students' academic achievement in civic education?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Achievement Scores of the Learning together and conventional lecture group.

Group	N	Mean	Std
Learning together Group	91	50.75	5.48
Conventional Method Group	106	47.49	2.43

Table 1 reveals that the Learning Together Strategy group had a higher mean score (50.75) compared to the Conventional Method group (47.49). The standard deviation for the Learning Together Strategy group (5.48) is higher than that of the Conventional Method group (2.43). This suggests that there may be more variability in the scores within the Learning Together Strategy group. The higher mean score in the Learning Together Strategy group compared to the Conventional Method group indicates that students who were exposed to the Learning Together Strategy achieved higher academic outcomes in civic education. To formally test for the significance of this difference, an analysis of covariance was conducted in table 2 below.

Hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant effect of Learning Together Strategy on students' academic achievement in civic education

Table 2: ANCOVA Summary Table of Difference in the Achievement of the Learning together and conventional lecture group.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Post achievement test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	34118.172 ^a	15	2274.545	155.429	.000	.891
Intercept	20435.954	1	20435.954	1396.470	.000	.830
Pre achievement	55.710	1	55.710	3.807	.052	.013
Teaching Strategy	185.741	2	92.871	6.346	.002	.042
Error	5238.087	100	18.315			
Total	752828.000	103				
Corrected Total	6403.510	101				

R Squared = .182 (Adjusted R Squared = .139)

Table 2 reveals that at 95% confidence level and with the statistical tool having adjusted for any initial difference using the pretest achievement scores, the result of the ANCOVA shows that a statistically significant difference exists in the academic achievement of the students in the learning together and conventional lecture group, in favour of the [F(1, 100) = 6.34; p < 0.05]. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that there is no statistically significant effect of Learning Together Strategy on students' academic achievement in civic education is rejected.

Research Question 2

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Achievement Scores of male and female students.

Group	Mean	SD
Male	16.77	8.40
Female	16.62	8.00

Table 3 reveals that male student had a higher mean score of 16.77 while the female students had a mean score of 16.62. This showed that there was a difference in the academic achievement of the male and female students. To determine if this difference attain significant hypothesis 2 was tested in table 4 below.

Hypothesis II

There is no statistically significant effect of gender on the academic achievement of students

taught with Learning Together Strategy

Table 4: ANCOVA Summary Table of Difference in the Achievement of male and female students

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Post achievement test						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	34118.172 ^a	15	2274.545	155.429	.000	.891
Intercept	20435.954	1	20435.954	1396.470	.000	.830
Pre achievement	55.710	1	55.710	3.807	.052	.013
Gender	.001	1	.001	.000	.993	.000
Error	4185.328	88	14.634			
Total	377223.000	91				
Corrected Total	38303.500	90				

a. R Squared = .891 (Adjusted R Squared = .885)

Table 4 reveals that at 95% confidence level and with the statistical tool having adjusted for any initial difference using the pretest achievement scores, the result of the ANCOVA shows that a statistically significant difference does not exist in the academic achievement of male and female students in the learning together group [$F(1, 88) = 6.34; p > 0.05$]. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that there is no statistically significant effect of gender on the academic achievement of students taught with Learning Together Strategy is not rejected.

Discussion of Results

This study offers empirical evidence regarding the impact of Learning Together on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Civic Education. The results, as presented in Table 1, demonstrate that students taught using the Learning Together approach achieved significantly higher scores compared to those taught using

traditional methods. The findings indicate that Learning Together had a notable effect on students' academic achievement in civic education. Specifically, students in the experimental group exhibited considerable improvement in their academic performance in comparison to the control group. This improvement is attributed to the significant impact of the Learning Together treatment. In the Learning Together setting, student groups were diverse, comprising

both high-ability and low-ability students, with stronger students encouraged to assist weaker ones in problem-solving to achieve shared success. Under the Learning Together condition, students had opportunities to collaborate, share knowledge, and support each other's learning, leading to a notable enhancement in civic education performance in this study.

This outcome is consistent with Ulfa's (2011) findings, which indicated that the Learning Together Method enhanced students' achievement in reading. Similarly, Gokkurt et al. (2012) observed a significant difference in achievement levels between the experimental group, where Learning Together was implemented, and the control group, where traditional learning methods were employed. Likewise, Hossain (2018) reported significant effects of Learning Together on students' mathematics achievement and attitudes towards mathematics, with positive perceptions from teachers regarding its implementation.

The second research question investigated the impact of gender on students' academic achievement when taught using the Learning Together Strategy. The results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the academic achievement between male and female students in the Learning Together group. Both male and female senior school students in the experimental groups achieved similar levels of academic success, indicating minimal

disparity in their performance following the treatment. Gender has been identified as a factor influencing students' achievement in science subjects at the senior secondary school level (Adam et al. 2022). However, research on gender in cooperative learning strategies has been inconclusive, possibly due to the collaborative nature of these strategies, which foster knowledge acquisition and skills development among learners, leading to improved interactions between male and female students and between learners and teachers. This finding is consistent with Ahmed and Lawal's (2020) study, which reported that the Learning Together cooperative learning strategy enhanced students' performance in Biology compared to conventional teaching methods. Additionally, learners expressed increased interest, motivation, and self-efficacy after exposure to the Learning Together strategy.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study draws several conclusions based on its findings regarding the study variables. Firstly, it concludes that the use of the Learning Together strategy enhances students' academic achievement in civic education compared to conventional teaching methods. Secondly, it finds that gender does not significantly influence students' achievement, as both genders are capable of competing and collaborating effectively in classroom activities, thereby contributing to knowledge creation. The study also suggests that the Learning Together strategy can effectively facilitate desired learning outcomes in teaching.

Moreover, the study indicates that employing learning strategies to teach civic education concepts results in improved academic achievement among students. This approach fosters active learning, enabling students to assist one another and enhancing motivation through shared success. Based on these findings, the study offers the following recommendations:

- The Learning Together strategy should be implemented in civic education classrooms across all educational levels, including primary schools, high schools, and colleges
- The strategy should be utilised in cooperative learning classes to promote collaboration and reduce disparities among male and female students.
- Organising training sessions, seminars, and workshops for secondary school teachers on the implementation of the Learning Together strategy is essential to enhance students' performance in civic education.

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