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Innovative Pedagogical Strategies and Knowledge Retention of Students in Social Studies in Oron Education Zone, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study explored the relationship between innovative pedagogical strategies and knowledge retention among Social Studies students in public secondary schools within the Oron Local Education Zone, Akwa Ibom State. Employing a correlational research design, the investigation was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The population comprised 2,608 Junior Secondary School Two (JSS2) students from seven public schools, from which a sample of 260 students was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Random sampling was employed to choose five schools, and the hat and draw method was used to select 52 students from each selected school. Data were gathered using a self-structured instrument, the Innovative Pedagogical Strategies and Knowledge Retention in Social Studies Students Questionnaire (IPSKRQ). The instrument's reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.75 for instructional strategies and 0.88 for academic performance items. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between teacher-student interactive and questioning strategies and knowledge retention among Social Studies students. The study concluded that students' active engagement and encouragement to seek relevant knowledge through innovative instructional approaches significantly enhance retention. Based on these findings, it was recommended that teachers should consistently create opportunities for students to participate actively in classroom activities and foster environments that encourage independent exploration and deeper understanding, as these practices are likely to improve long-term academic outcomes.

Keywords: Innovative, Pedagogical Strategies, Knowledge Retention.

Introduction

Education is widely regarded as a transformative force and a crucial driver of social development, enhancing individual skills and improving societal well-being (Alade, 2014). The debate over effective teaching methods—whether teacher-centred or student-centred—has persisted for decades, yet recent discourse increasingly emphasises the value of innovative pedagogy (William, 2012). Innovative pedagogy encompasses the integration of new knowledge, ideas, and tools that foster productive and meaningful learning experiences (Okoya, 2012). Such approaches enable teachers to actively engage and challenge learners, thereby strengthening knowledge retention. The growing influence of science and technology in society further highlights the necessity for innovation in education, requiring teachers to employ creative and interactive lesson delivery methods to encourage students' active participation (William, 2012).

Within the educational context, innovation is understood as changes in behavioural patterns through the introduction of new knowledge and instructional methods (McGrown, 2011). The adoption of innovative teaching strategies improves engagement and learning effectiveness (Okwor, 2016). Innovative pedagogy involves proactive, diverse instructional practices aimed at enhancing learning outcomes and ensuring inclusivity. At its foundation, innovation in education seeks to make learning processes more accessible and relevant, thereby promoting student involvement (McGrown, 2011). When teachers use innovative approaches, students become more engaged, leading to improved integration into classroom activities. This systematic refinement of educational practices results in more enriching and effective learning experiences for diverse learners (Okwor, 2016).

A key facet of innovative pedagogy is the teacher–student interactive strategy, which merges both teacher-centred and student-centred elements to foster continuous engagement (Sebthamara, 2018). This approach enhances critical thinking, stimulates learner interest, and creates enjoyable learning environments (Hesson & Shad, 2017). Interactive strategies encourage learners to independently explore and construct knowledge, thereby supporting retention and skill development. Dialogue-driven interaction enables a comprehensive exchange between teachers and students, while questioning strategies further promote engagement and deeper understanding (Atanasesch & Dumitru, 2017). High-quality questioning, in particular, is essential for cognitive development and academic achievement, as it challenges students to think critically and connect new concepts to prior knowledge (Vogler, 2015; Isa et al., 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognised value of innovative pedagogical strategies in enhancing positive knowledge retention across school subjects, the researcher observed that students in the Oron Local Education Zone appear to remain largely passive learners and consequently underperform academically. This underperformance is attributed to poor knowledge retention, which is further exacerbated by the inadequate utilisation of innovative instructional strategies. On several occasions, students have expressed concerns that their teachers dominate the teaching–learning process through traditional "talk and chalk" methods rather than adopting approaches that make lessons more engaging. While a few teachers attempt to present lessons in realistic and relatable forms, many rely solely on verbal explanations, a practice that adversely affects students' retention and their ability to recall prior knowledge. This situation has become increasingly troubling, as some students have begun to report a diminishing interest in certain subjects, highlighting the urgency of integrating more effective and learner-centred pedagogical practices.

Theoretical Perspectives

The theory of symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective that examines the interactions occurring between human beings. Developed by Herbert Blumer in 1969, the theory posits that symbols are anything that conveys meaning within social interactions. Body gestures, for instance, function as symbols that facilitate communication between teachers and learners, serving as guides or movements that enhance understanding. According to the theory, comprehension of human behaviour in any interactive context is contingent upon the conditions and circumstances in which symbols are employed. Symbolic interactionism, therefore, focuses on the nature of individuals' day-to-day, face-to-face interactions and the effects of such interactions on those involved. This theoretical framework is particularly relevant to the present study, as it elucidates the relationship between teacher–student interaction strategies and students' academic performance. It suggests that the interpretation of symbols can significantly influence learners' knowledge retention and engagement in the classroom.

Methods and Materials

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 2,608 Junior Secondary School Two (JSS 2) students from the seven public secondary schools within the Oron Local Education Zone (State Secondary Education Board, 2024). A sample of 260 JSS 2 students was selected through a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure representativeness. Data were collected using a self-structured instrument titled the *Innovative Pedagogical Strategies and Knowledge Retention Questionnaire* (IPSKRQ). The questionnaire was developed on a four-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, to Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Before administration, the instrument was subjected to expert validation by two measurement specialists who reviewed and refined some items. Following data collection, the responses were scored and analysed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical technique to determine the relationships between variables. The results obtained are presented and discussed below.

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion of Findings

A total of 260 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents of the sampled schools. 260 copies questionnaire were correctly filled and returned, which were used to analyse the data. Research questions were answered using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics and were presented in tables. The r-value or the correlation value was used to determine the magnitude or weight of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

Research Question I: What is the relationship between teacher-students interactive strategy and knowledge retention in social studies in public school in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State?

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics was used for answering this research question as presented in Table 1

Table 1: Correlation analysis on the relationship between teacher-student interrace strategy and knowledge retention in social studies students

Variables	N	∑X ∑y	∑X² ∑y²	∑Xy	R-value	Remark
Techer-students interactive strategy (x)	260	2751	2651	44217	0.74	Very High Positive relational
Knowledge retention in Social studies (y)	260	5826	4298			

Field work, 2025

Result in table 1 show a very high positive relationship between teacher-student interactive strategy and knowledge retention in students in public secondary schools in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom state. This is shown on the correlation result of 0.74. the implication of this result is that students are most likely to perform better in social studies if they are given opportunities to partake in learning activities.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between questioning strategy and knowledge retention in social studies students in public secondary schools in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State?

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics was used for answering this research question as presented in Table 2

Table 2: Correlation analysis on the relationship between questioning-strategy and knowledge retention in social studies students

Variables	N	∑X ∑y	∑X² ∑y²	∑Xy	R-value	Remark
Techer-Students Interactive Strategy (x)	260	2968	3423	53492	0.74	Very High Positive relational
Knowledge retention in Social Studies (y)	260	5826	4298			

Field work, 2025

Result in table 2 show a very high positive relationship between questioning strategy and knowledge retention in students in public secondary schools in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State. This is shown on the correlation result of 0.74. the implication of this result is that students are most likely to perform better in social studies if questioning strategy is adequate used by the teacher. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics was used for hypotheses testing. This was done by comparing the r-value with the critical value so as to determine the significance of relationship between variables.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teacher-students interactive strategy and knowledge retention in social studies students in public secondary schools, in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics was used for testing these hypotheses as presented in Table 3

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis on the relationship between teacher-student interactive strategy and knowledge retention in social studies students

Variables	N	∑X ∑y	∑X² ∑y²	∑Xy	R-value	r-crit.	Remark
Teacher-students interactive strategy (x)	260	2751	2651	44217	0.74	0.088	Rejected H_0
Knowledge retention in Social studies (y)	260	5826	4298				

Field work, 2025

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.74 exceeded the critical value of 0.088 at the degree of freedom of 258 and at 0.05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, while the alternate hypotheses is retained. This implies that there is a significant relationship between teacher- student interactive strategy and knowledge retention in social studies student in public secondary schools, in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant relationship between questioning strategy and knowledge retention in social studies student in public secondary schools, in Oron Local Government Area.

Moment Correlation (PPCM) statistics was used for testing hypothesis as presented in table 4.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis on the relationship between questioning strategy and knowledge retention in social studies students

Variables	N	∑X ∑y	∑X² ∑y²	∑Xy	R-value	r-crit.	Remark
Techer-students interactive strategy (x)	260	2968	3423				
				53492	0.79	0.088	Rejected H_0
Knowledge retention in Social studies (y)	260	5826	4298				

Field work, 2025

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.79 exceeded the critical value of 0.088 at the degree of freedom of 258 and at 0.05 significant level. Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is retained. This implies that there is a significant relationship between questioning strategy and knowledge retention in social studies students in public secondary schools in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study were presented according to the research questions answered and null hypotheses tested. Results from research question one and hypothesis one revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between teacher-student interactive strategy and knowledge retention in social studies students in public secondary schools in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State. The finding corroborates the findings of the study conducted by Boma (2019), who found that a significant relationship exists between interactive teaching strategy and students' academic performance in school subjects such as business studies. This finding is also in tandem with the finding of the study conducted by Falode, Adewale, Iiiobeneke, Falode and Robinson (2015). The authors found that the interactive strategy was most effective in promoting student achievement and knowledge retention. Therefore, it is observed from this finding that teachers' involvement of students in learning activities increases students' chances of performing better in social studies.

Results from research question two and hypothesis two showed a very high positive and significant relationship between demonstration method and academic performance of social studies in public secondary, in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State. The finding corroborates the findings of the study conducted by Isa *et al. (*2020), which revealed that the demonstration method was more effective in students' retention, interest in school work and performances than the lecture method. This is because the demonstration strategy instils into students the urge to participate in class activities. Hence, it is observed from this finding that inadequate use of the demonstration method can prevent students not to performing well in social studies.

Results from research question three and hypothesis three showed a very high positive and significant relationship between questioning method and academic performance in social studies among Junior secondary school students in Oron Local Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State. This finding is in agreement with the findings of the study conducted by Isa, Mammam, Badar and Bala (2020) which finding revealed a significant relationship between questioning method and students' academic performance. This is true because questioning strategy can help students indicate much interest in learning, while enhancing students' academic progress, and assessing

students' critical thinking. Questions asked by the teacher in the course of teaching can contribute to the collective understanding of the class, which could subsequently enhance academic performance by the students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the questioning method and teacher-student interactive method are prerequisites for effective learning and knowledge retention in social studies in Junior Secondary School II.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from the findings of the study:

1. Teachers should always give students opportunities to actively participate in learning activities and encourage them to search for relevant knowledge that enhances positive performance in school subjects.
2. Teachers should use the demonstration method in teaching, particularly when the subject content involves exhibition of concepts, diagrams or pictures so that students may understand easily and respond positively during the examination period.
3. Teachers should always ask students questions to know their level of mastery of the concept or learning and comprehension of what is taught. This will go a long way in helping students' performance in examinations.

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