

EFFECTS OF PEER TUTORING AND SOCIAL SKILLS ACQUISITION ON STUDENTS' LEARNING OUTCOMES IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper investigated the effects of peer tutoring and social skills acquisition on students' learning outcomes in Social Studies in Benue State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The study is anchored on Albert Banduras' social learning theory, Lev Vygotsky's social interactions theory and Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory. The design for the study was quasi-experimental of non-equivalent pre-test and post-test control group type. The population of the study consisted of 18,580 JSS 2 students from 152 public secondary schools. The sample comprised 196 JSS 2 selected using multi-stage sampling technique. Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) with reliability co-efficient of 0.75 was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Finding revealed that there is significant difference in the mean social skills ratings in Social Studies between students taught using peer tutoring and those taught using role play ($P=0.00<0.05$). The result further indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean social skills ratings of male and female students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring ($P=0.53>0.05$). Based on these findings, it was recommended that Social Studies teachers should employ peer tutoring in their classroom interaction since it has the capacity to improve students' intellectual skills, interpersonal skill and their academic performance.

Keywords: Peer tutoring strategy, Social Studies, learning outcomes, social skills, gender.

Introduction

Social Studies occupies an indispensable position in the socio-cultural, political and economic advancement of any society. This is because of the important role it plays as a tool for social transformation, socialization, humanization, conscientization and mobilization of citizens in Nigeria. It is a parent substitute. It describes the operation and interaction of man with his physical and social environments. Ali, (2020) defines Social Studies as the integrated study of the social science and humanities to promote effective citizenry. It provides a coordinated and systematic study by drawing its contents from disciplines such as Economics, History, Geography, Anthropology, Archaeology, Law, Philosophy, Political Science, Religion and Sociology. Man is the core of the study of Social Studies. Social skills implies when a learner is adequately trained in the use of the whole range of study such as those of leadership, social communication and intellectual skills. Such skills include those of

speaking listening, reading, writing, observing, questioning and imagination, experimenting, hypotheses formulation, variable manipulation, prediction, locating information and evaluating information (Ayashagba, 2021).

The justification for inclusion of any programme in the curriculum is best found in the objectives of that programme. Based on this, the main objectives of Social Studies as contained in the Social Studies curriculum for lower and middle basic education include: the inculcation of the right types of values, attitudes for survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the training of the mind in the understanding of the ever increasing world around; and the acquisition of the appropriate skills, abilities and development of mental, physical and social skills, and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2025) National policy on education.

The performance of students in Social Studies has not been encouraging in Benue State as shown in the Upper Basic School Certificate Examination results Agwapah and Raskoyi (2020). Previous researches by Anikweze (2020) and Ali (2020) indicated that students' poor academic performance in Social Studies could be caused by inappropriate teaching strategies. It has been observed that teachers often adopt sterile strategies that are teacher-centered and non-interactive. As a response to the inappropriate use of instructional methods, some research studies have employed many strategies of teaching Social Studies. These include inquiry strategy, peer tutoring strategy, role play strategy, dramatization strategy, discussion strategy, simulation and games strategy (Ato, 2020; Ojotule, 2022). This study focuses on the effects of peer tutoring strategy on students' learning outcomes and acquisition of social skills in Social Studies.

Peer tutoring strategy is a process by which a learner with guidance from a teacher helps one or more students at the same grade level to learn a skill or concept (O'Donnell, and King2021). In the opinion of Johnson and Johnson (2020), peer tutoring typically involves pairing students with different levels of understanding or skills. An example, a more knowledgeable student (MKS) who is the tutor is paired with a student who needs help (the tutee). Vygotsky's (1962) more knowledge order (MKO) can be likened to peer tutoring strategy's MKS because Vygotsky's MKO refers to anyone who has a higher knowledge level than the learner with respect to a particular task or concept. It is pertinent to note that, the tutor, that is the MKS or MKO as the case may be, guides the tutee through a specific topic or task, explaining concepts and providing feedback. By this, the tutor (MKS) reinforces their own understanding by teaching, and the tutee (the learner) gets personalized help. Similarly, Goodlad and Hirst (2020) view peer-tutoring as a teaching and learning process whereby one child, who has proficiency in a skill, teaches another child of the same age or status with the teacher in supervision. The authors further explained that peer tutoring strategy could act as a filter to discover what students find most difficult. Once students are used to peer-tutoring, they can be encouraged to explain to small groups or the class as a whole. In this strategy, students operate with their peers at the same level and are more comfortable to share ideas. This enhances learning, improves co-operation and cross fertilization of ideas. It also allows the faster learners to teach the slower ones and gives them a chance to ask for clarifications on some misconceptions without embarrassment since students relate on horizontal basis.

Peer tutoring strategy encourages students to develop and use the skills required to check or evaluate their own work and to clarify in their own minds (Miller, and Miller 2021). Peer tutoring strategy could enable them to learn the skill faster, and make fewer errors. It is a strategy that can get students to express and improve their understanding. It encourages

learners' active participation in the class against passive listening. The pairing of higher and lower-achieving students is intended to enable students gain knowledge from one another through practice and reinforcement, which in turn could affect students' performance in Social Studies. Aremo (2020), conducted a study on efficacy of peer checking instructional strategy on students' achievement in English. Finding of the study showed that students taught English using peer checking instructional strategy performed significantly higher than those taught English using the conventional lecture method. Madojemu (2021), investigated the effect of guided inquiry strategy on students' achievement and interest in Social Studies in Kogi East Senatorial District of Kogi State. The result revealed that guided inquiry instructional strategy was superior to conventional instructional method in facilitating students' achievement in Social Studies.

In Social Studies, gender is a factor that could influence students' academic performance in Social Studies. Biological difference in males and females cannot influence the development of social skill in students' academic performance (Amoli, 2023). In contrast, Abdu-Raheem (2020), observed that gender interaction between students positively influences their academic performance in schools as they engaged themselves in brainstorming to see who performs better. The author explains that some conventional strategies have helped to create the awareness that boys and girls are different only at the biological level. In academic performance, social and economic realms, both boys and girls can compete side by side. This study examined the rating of male and female students' acquisition of social skills and their academic performance in Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy. Edulek and Abowu (2020), reported that male students slightly performed better than female students when they were taught with peer-tutoring strategy. Abdu-Raheem (2020) discovered that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students in Social Studies after the treatment, although male students performed slightly better than their female counterparts.

It can be deduced from the foregoing that students' academic performance in Social Studies has been poor over the years. Experience has also indicated that learners are not given opportunities to interact and learn from one another in the classroom. It behooves teachers to adopt interactive and student-centered strategies that could make them participate actively and effectively in the learning process. It is against this background that this paper investigated the effects of peer-tutoring and social skills acquisition on students' learning outcomes in Social Studies in Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What is the effect of peer tutoring and role play strategies on Upper Basic students' mean ratings in the acquisition of social skills in Social Studies?
2. What is the effect of peer tutoring strategy on JSS 2 male and female students' mean social skills ratings in Social Studies?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significant difference

1. There is no significant difference in the mean students' acquisition of social skills in Social Studies between students taught using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using role play strategy.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean acquisition of social skills rating of male and female students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy.

Research Method

This study employed quasi-experimental design of non-equivalent pre-test and post-test and control group type. The research area was Benue State Zone C North-Central, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of 18,580 JSS 2 students from 152 public junior secondary schools for 2025/2026 academic session. A total of 196 JSS 2 students made up the sample. The study adopted purposive multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, random sampling technique was used to select two local government areas. Two schools were selected from each local government area. Secondly, purposive sampling technique was adopted to select only co-educational schools with graduate Social Studies teachers with minimum of 5 years teaching experience. Again, only schools with only one arm were selected. In the third stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select four schools, two from each selected local government area. Two schools were assigned to the experimental strategy, while the other two schools were assigned to role play strategy.

Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) designed by the researchers was used for data collection. It consists of 50 multiple choice objective items with four options lettered A to D. The SSPT was developed based on topics such as culture and identity, religion, marriage, drug abuse and transportation which were drawn from JSS 2 Social Studies curriculum. The SSPT was used for the pre-test and the post-test for both the experimental and control groups.

The instrument and lesson plans were validated by two experts in Social Studies and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the Faculty of Education, Rev. Father Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi (MOAUM), formerly Benue State University, Makurdi. The suggestions made by the experts were used to review the SSPT and the lesson plans. The SSPT was trial-tested on students in a secondary school within the area of study but outside the schools used for the main study. Kuder Richardson (KR-21) formula was used to compute the reliability of the SSPT. It yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.75. Psychometric indices were computed for SSPT after which the initial 60 items were reduced to 50.

The researchers recruited and trained two research assistants who were the regular teachers of Social Studies in the schools. Intact classes were assigned to experimental and control groups. The researchers with the help of the research assistants administered the SSPT in each of the selected schools. Three months were for familiarization, training of research assistants on effects of peer tutoring strategy and administration of pre-test. 4-9 months were used for the treatment. 10-11 months were for administration of post-test and marking of scripts of the post-test. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The decision rule was that null hypotheses were rejected if the P-value was less than or equal to 0.05 and not rejected if otherwise.

Results

The results of the data analysis and interpretation were presented according to the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What is the effect of peer tutoring and role play strategies on Upper Basic students' mean ratings in the acquisition of social skills in Social Studies?

Table 1: Effects of Peer Tutoring and Role Play Strategy on Upper Basic Students' Mean Ratings in Acquisition of Social Skills in Social Studies.

Strategy		Pre Social Skill	Post Social Skill	Mean Gain
Peer Tutoring	Mean	3.07	3.75	0.68
	N	98	98	
	Std. Deviation	.49	.25	
Lecture	Mean	3.06	3.88	0.82
	N	107	107	
	Std. Deviation	.44	.23	
Mean difference				0.14

Table 1 shows that the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy is 3.07 with a standard deviation of .49 during pre-test and 3.75 with a standard deviation of .25 in post-test. The mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using role play strategy is 3.06 with a standard deviation of .44 during pre-test and 3.88 with a standard deviation of .23 in post-test. Table 1 further shows that the mean gain of the group taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy is 0.68 and those of role play strategy is 0.82. The difference between the mean gains of students exposed to peer tutoring and role play strategy is 0.14 in favour of peer tutoring strategy.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of peer tutoring strategy on Upper Basic male and female students' mean social skills ratings in Social Studies?

Table 2: Effects of Peer Tutoring on Upper Basic Male and Female Students' Mean Social Skills Ratings

Gender		Pre SocialSkill	Post SocialSkill	MeanGain
Male	Mean	3.05	3.76	0.71
	N	54	54	
	Std. Deviation	0.51	0.24	
Female	Mean	3.09	3.73	0.64
	N	44	44	
	Std. Deviation	0.47	0.26	
Mean difference				0.07

Table 2 reveals that the mean social skills rating of male students using peer tutoring strategy is 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.51 during pre-test and 3.76 with a standard deviation of 0.24 in post-test. The mean social skills rating of female students is 3.09 with a standard deviation of 0.47 during pre-test and 3.73 with a standard deviation of 0.26 in post-test. Table 2 further indicates that the mean gain of male students is 0.71 that of female students is 0.64. The difference between the mean gains of male and female students' mean social skill ratings in Social Studies is 0.07 in favour of male students.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean students' acquisition of social skills in Social Studies between students taught using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using role play strategy.

Table 3: ANCOVA of Mean Acquisition of Social Skills Ratings in Social Studies between Students that were Taught Using Peer Tutoring Strategy and those Taught Using Role Play Strategy

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.08 ^a	2	.54	9.43	.00
Intercept	73.28	1	73.28	1275.36	.00
Pre Social Skill	.16	1	.16	2.78	.10
Method	.92	1	.92	15.98	.00
Error	11.61	202	.06		
Total	2999.55	205			
Corrected Total	12.69	204			

a. R Squared = .085 (Adjusted R Squared = .076)

Table 3: reveals that $F(1, 204) = 15.976$; $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Since p is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the mean social skills ratings in Social Studies between students taught using peer tutoring strategy and those taught using role play strategy.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean acquisition of social skills rating of male and female students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy.

Table 4: ANCOVA of Mean Acquisition of Social Skills Ratings on Male and Female Students that were Taught Social Studies Using Peer Tutoring Strategy

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected	.34 ^a	2	.17	2.84	.06
Intercept	40.99	1	40.99	687.40	.00
Pre Social Skill	.31	1	.31	5.17	0.03
Gender	.02	1	.02	.39	.53
Error	5.67	95	.06		
Total	1381.88	98			
Corrected Total	6.00	97			

a. R Squared = .056 (Adjusted R Squared = .037)

Table 4 shows that $F(1, 97) = 0.391$; $p = 0.53 > 0.05$. Since p is greater than 0.05. The null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean social skills of male and female students taught Social Studies using peer tutoring strategy.

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that there is significant difference between the mean social skills ratings in Social Studies between students taught using peer tutoring and role play strategies. This shows that the use of peer tutoring strategy had better effect on students' acquisition of social skills rating. This could be due to the fact that when peer tutoring strategy is adopted, students learn from one another under the supervision of their teacher. There is more interaction among learners in such a learning situation than in a role play learning setting, where learners will be only watching and are passively engaged. Thus, the improvement of students' performance in Social Studies could be attributed to students' engagement in collaborating learning as they aided one another. This finding agrees with that of Aremo, B. (2020) that students taught English using peer checking instructional strategy performed

significantly higher than those taught English using the conventional lecture method. The teaching strategy has been found to contribute to students' academic performance in Social Studies.

The result further revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean social skills rating of male and female students taught using peer tutoring strategy. However, Male students slightly outperformed their female counterparts. This implies that the use of peer tutoring strategy in teaching Social Studies is not sensitive to gender as evident in the improvement in the mean performance scores of both male and female students. This finding agrees with Abdu-Raheem (2020), that gender interaction between students positively influences their academic performance as they involve themselves in brainstorming to see who performs better. The teacher ensures that both male and female students collaborate and cooperate among themselves to ensure quality teaching and learning for better academic performance of students in Social Studies. The equal opportunity provided for male and female students in peer- tutoring oriented class is responsible for the no significant difference.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study has established that peer tutoring strategy is efficacious, problem solving and learner-centered than the role play strategy which is passively engaged. The study also concluded that peer tutoring strategy was beneficial to both male and female students and the strategy was not gender sensitive. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. All students should be exposed to peer tutoring strategy to enable them to be active members of the class and not passive listeners.
2. Peer tutoring strategy should be included in the training package of teacher education programme both in colleges of education and at University level to ensure that teacher trainees acquire necessary skills to impactsame to learners.

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