Effect of Role-Playing on Students’ Academic Achievement in Government in Senior Secondary Schools in Awka Education Zone, Nigeria

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Abstract: Due to persistent poor performance in Government by secondary school students, the study investigated the effect of Role-playing on senior secondary school students’ academic achievement in Government in Awka Education zone, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study while two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels. Quasi-experimental design was employed. The sample consists of two intact classes of 103 students drawn from 9,874 populations through purposive sampling. The instrument for data collection was Government Achievement Test (GAT). This was validated by three experts and trial tested for reliability using Kuder-Richardson 20, which yielded 0.95. Mean was used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. The result revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Government using role-playing over those taught using lecture method. It further revealed that gender is not a significant factor on students’ achievement. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that school authorities should ensure that role-playing is used by Government teachers in their classroom lessons for active participation of students.

Keywords: Role-playing; Academic achievement; Government; Gender.

INTRODUCTION

The act of teaching is an interactive process through which knowledge and skills are shared with students, with a view to improving their understanding and ability to manipulate their social, economic, political, as well as physical environment to enhance their survival and participation in issues affecting their lives. The main objective of every educational process is to bring about a desirable change in the behaviour of learners. Students are expected to develop adequate knowledge and skills which could help them in solving problems and improving human lives (Asogwa & Echemazu, 2011). In most cases especially in classroom situations, it is the teacher who initiates the instructional process and influences students to think in a particular way; the teacher authoritatively leads communication throughout the instructional process, thereby making learning teacher-centered instead of learning being participatory (Njoku, 2004).

The teacher-centered learning is preferred by some teachers because they feel it makes their work easier. However, the use of lecture, storytelling and prepared speech, although advantageous in certain situations such that it saves time and is used to teach a large number of students, have been reported in Dana (2012) research work as inefficient. This implies that students’ active participation is minimal, and often depends on the teacher’s directives. Tanner (2009) found that teachers dominate classroom talk while students talk only when called upon to answer questions. This makes the students passive listeners with less motivation and interest in the learning process, even in the learning of an interesting subject such as Government.

Government is one of the subjects studied in the senior secondary level of education. The foundation for Government as a subject is laid with Social Studies which is offered in the junior secondary level. The curriculum for Government as a subject aims at developing a student’s ability to define the concept of government and show their understanding of its principles, institution and process; explain the various system of government such as monarchy, confederal, and republican and its workability in our present day government; recognize their role as informed citizens and their contributions towards the achievement of national development; evaluate the success, failures and problems of government in West Africa; analyze the constitutional developments and process of colonial and post-independent government and appreciate the role of their country as members of the international community (National Policy on Education, 2015).
These aims of government as a subject depict its importance in the effective functioning of students as citizens of the country. One can say that these aims emphasize practicing government rather than learning government. It therefore requires a participatory learning process, where students can actively participate in the learning process and acquire the knowledge and skills, not just to pass examinations but to internalize and carry out their functions as citizens of the country as noted in the curriculum.

Despite these laudable objectives of Government as articulated in the Nigerian school curriculum, there has been a gap in the expected outcome of students in examination in Government. The performances of students in certificate examinations in the subject have not been so impressive (Uwadie, 2012). The West African Examination Council (WAEC) results for six secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State in three consecutive years; 2016 - 2018 reveal that, the number of candidates that registered for Government has been discouraging over the years, while their percentage pass at credit level in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) has been following a downward trend. In the years 2016 for instance, only 40.9% passed Government at credit level (Anambra State Ministry of Education, 2018). Currently, the numbers of candidates that enroll in Government have reduced as a result of shift in emphasis to science and entrepreneurship education. According to WAEC result for 2017 and 2018 on Government, there is low performance of students in Government in WAEC, 63.08 % failed, while 36.92% passed. The number that failed is greater than the number that passed and it’s a source of worry to stakeholders in the educational industry.

A number of factors such as school environment, lack of instructional materials and textbooks have been indicated in numerous studies as the cause of students’ incessant failure in external examinations (Ekeh & Njoku, 2013). Prominent among them are the instructional process and materials. It is disheartening to note that such activity-based subject as Government is centered on certain factors such as “what to teach”, “when to teach” and “how to teach”. Teachers do not only teach students the most relevant, meaningful and useful materials, but must recognize and adopt a good and well-researched materials and activity based teaching which guarantee better understanding, as well as stimulates and promotes students’ academic achievement (Abduhamid, 2010).

Academic achievement denotes the students’ academic outcome after having gone through a particular educational program over a given period of time. Academic achievement is the degree or level of success attained at the end of an academic endeavour (Omebe, 2015). The yardstick for measuring one’s level of achievement is by assessing the academic performance of an individual through test and observation. Academic achievement helps in proper evaluation of students and identification of their strengths and weaknesses. However, in the context of this study, academic achievement is the relative change in behaviour of students as a result of effective teaching of Government in secondary schools. It is the researchers’ opinion that employing a good teaching process such as role-playing could improve students’ achievement in Government in senior secondary schools, irrespective of their gender.

Gender refers to different roles played by male and female students in learning and how it affects their achievement in school work. Gender in the context of this study is the difference between males and females as well as their relative achievement in Government in the learning process. Ikwuka and Adigwe (2017) found that gender has no significant effect in the academic performance of students’ who were taught CRS with ICT instructional package. Melton and Serep (2007) reported that women perform better than men in French in schools, while Echemazu (2011) found that the effect of gender on students’ academic achievement in Agricultural science is statistically significant, that males perform better than females. Gender is a very important variable in this study because personal orientation and thinking style of male and female students could play a crucial role in achievement in Government when exposed to Role playing.

Role-playing in the classroom can generally foster the interaction between the learner and other learners and between the learner and the content of instruction irrespective of their gender.
The essence of this a lot of required meaty interaction within the room thus creates gap between what is schooled within the room and also the experiences and activities the learners meet outside the room (Sirisirimangkorn & Suwanthep, 2013). It is important to note that students’ active involvement in Government could be achieved through effective utilization of role-playing, thereby enhancing students’ achievement in the subject.

Statement of the Problem

This poor tutorial accomplishment in Government has been connected to ineffective teaching/learning process as a result of the use of lecture by many teachers. This lecture being teacher-centered does not inspire students’ interest enough towards the learning of Government in senior secondary faculties. The students’ may end up therefore having poor academic achievement in Government in schools. There are very few available studies in literature known to the researchers on the effect of role-playing for improving students’ academic achievement. One wonders the extent the use of role-playing could enhance the achievement of the goals of Government education. Therefore, the problem of this study posed as question are “what is the effect of Role-playing on senior secondary school students’ academic achievement in Government in Awka Education Zone in Anambra State, Nigeria? Could gender be a militating factor on students’ academic achievement in Government?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the mean achievement scores of students taught Government using role-playing and that of those taught using lecture?
2. What are the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Government using role-playing?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of students taught Government using role-playing and those taught using lecture.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Government using role-playing.

METHOD

The study employed quasi-experimental non-randomized pre-test, post-test control group design in determining the effect of role-playing on students’ academic achievement in Government. The population of the study comprised all the 9,874 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students offering Government in Awka Education zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. The sample was made up of 103 SS2 students (53 males and 50 females) from two intact classes. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two secondary schools out of the 61 schools in the education zone on the basis of gender, qualified teachers and good environment. The two intact classes comprised one experimental group of 51 students (26 males and 25 females) and one control group of 52 students (27 males and 25 females) respectively.

The two intact categories were initially pre-tested to work out their educational equivalence before they were tutored and post-tested. The instrument used for data collection was researchers developed 20-items multiple choice questions on Government Achievement Test (GAT). The GAT items were taken from WAEC past questions based on the three Government topics of confederal government, Monarchy and Republican government as contained in the senior secondary two (SS2) Government curriculum. The GAT was validated by three experts from curriculum and instruction and educational technology, their comments and suggestions were used in the production of the final test items. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the 20 multiple choice items were administered to a trial testing group of 20 students who were not part of the study but shared same characteristics with the study group. Kuder-Richardson 20 was used to establish coefficient value of 0.95.

The study covered a period of six weeks using normal school time table allotted to Government. The SS2 Government teachers of the two schools served as research assistants. The teachers were given detailed information and instruction concerning the study. The first week was used for visiting the participating schools and training the research assistants. In the second week, the two groups were pre-tested to determine their equivalence before teaching commenced. The two groups were taught six periods of 40 minutes lesson by the two-trained research assistants using lesson plan prepared by the researchers, and this lasted for three weeks. The experimental group was taught Government concepts using role-playing, while the control group was taught the same concepts using lecture. One week was used for revision and post-testing, and the items used for the pre-test were rearranged and used for the post-test. The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre-test Mean</th>
<th>Post-test Mean</th>
<th>Gain in Mean</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>36.37</td>
<td>62.75</td>
<td>26.38</td>
<td>More Effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 1, it is observed that the mean gain for the experimental group is 26.38 and the mean gain for the control group is 14.08. It shows that the experimental group which was taught Government using role-playing performed better than the control group taught Government using lecture.

From Table 2, it is observed that the mean gain of male students is 25.46 and that of the female students is 27.76. Though the male students mean scores in both pre-test and post-test are higher than those of their female counterparts, it is noted that the female students made a remarkable improvement. The female students’ achievement in Government was reflected in their mean gain score. Hence, the female students did better using role-playing.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of students taught Government using role-playing and those taught using lecture.

Data in Table 3 reveal that significance for the two tailed test under role-playing and lecture (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05) that is $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Government using role-playing and those taught using lecture is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Government using role-playing and those taught using lecture in favour of group taught Government using role-playing.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference between the mean posttest achievement scores of male and female students taught Government using role-playing.

Data in Table 4 reveal that significance for two tailed test under gender (0.526) is greater than the level of significance (0.05) that is $p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Government is not rejected. This means that gender is not significant on students’ achievement in Government and that role-playing is gender friendly.

**DISCUSSION**

**Effect of Role-playing on the achievement of students’ in Government**

A significant difference was observed in the mean achievement scores of students exposed to role-playing over those exposed to lecture. The outcome of students’ result in the experimental group both male and female students was a manifestation that role-playing enhanced students’ achievement in Government tasks. The experimental group taught Government using role-playing had a mean achievement score of 62.75 whereas the control group taught Government using lecture had a mean achievement score of 51.56. This showed that the difference between the mean gain
achievement scores of the experimental group and the control group was significant in favour of the experimental group.

This finding is in agreement with the research findings of Sirisrimangkorn and Suwanthep (2013), who found that learning process that appeal to activities improve students’ achievement in various subjects in secondary schools.

Effect of Role-playing in influencing gender achievement in Government

In this study, both male and female students in the experimental group performed remarkably well in their achievement tasks hence, gender was not significant on students’ achievement in Government and role-playing was gender friendly. The male students’ recorded a mean achievement score of 63.27 whereas their female counterparts had a mean achievement score of 62.20. The mean achievement scores of the male students were slightly higher than their female counterpart. The difference between the mean gain scores of male and female students’ in each case was not significant. This finding shows that male and female have equal educational opportunity but the learning activities adopted by the teacher could affect students’ achievement in Government in school work. This finding agrees with that of Petel (2007) who found that gender of students is not a significant factor on students’ achievement in school work. It also concurs with the findings of Ikwuka and Adigwe (2017) that the effect of ICT instructional package on students’ performance in CRS is gender friendly.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that role-playing was found to be more effective than lecture on students’ achievement in Government in secondary schools. One can therefore conclude that students’ achievement in Government can be enhanced by incorporating role-playing into the teaching and learning of Government in secondary schools. It was also concluded that role-playing is gender friendly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations were made as follows:
1. Secondary school authorities should encourage Government teachers to employ role-playing for active participation of students in order to improve students’ achievement in the subject.
2. The Nigerian government in general and Anambra State in particular should provide enough fund so as to organize workshops and seminars for training and re-training Government teachers on the way to utilize role-playing for effective teaching and learning.

REFERENCES

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