

IMPACT OF ACTIVITY-BASED TEACHING STRATEGY ON ISLAMIC STUDIES STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION AMONG FEDERAL UNITY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of activity-based strategy on Islamic studies students' academic performance and retention among Federal Unity Secondary Schools in Northwest, Nigeria. Three objectives and the corresponding research hypotheses were asked and formulated respectively to guide the study. A Quasi-experimental research was employed. The population of the study comprises nine hundred and eighteen (918) SS II Islamic Studies students. Ninety four (94) participants were purposively used as sample of the study. One instrument was adapted for the purpose of data collection. Islamic Studies Performance Test (ISPT). Face and content validity of the instruments were established through experts in the field of education, Islamic studies and language. The validated instruments was pilot tested at Federal Unity Secondary School, Kaduna, using a thirty (30) student pilot group. This was to establish the practicability and the reliability indices of the two instruments. Test-retest was used for Islamic studies performance test (ISPT). PPMC was adopted for the two sets of scores. From the result r and r^2 were obtained to be 0.79 and 0.6241 respectively obtained. This indicates the ISPT ($r^2=0.6241$) is reliable enough for the study. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. (Mean, standard deviation, t-test independent sample, t-test related sample,). The findings of the study revealed among others, that, the use of activity- teaching strategy improved students' academic performance, and retention of Islamic studies concepts. Based on the findings, the study concluded that, activity-based teaching strategies positively affects performance, retention and interest. It was hence recommended among others, that, all Islamic studies teachers should adopt activity-based and concept-mapping teaching strategies.

Keywords: Activity-based, academic performance, retention

Introduction

In the context of secondary school education, Islamic studies is one of the subject by which teenagers are taught the teaching and practice of Islam as a religion and by which they are prepared for studies in Islamic education, especially with reference to the following aspects of Islamic faith: Qur'an, Hadith, Sirah and History, Fiqhu and Tauheed, Arabic Language, Shari'ah, Islamic economic and banking, Islamic political science and management including Islamic epistemology and pedagogical literature.

The Islamic studies curriculum has been designed to inculcate true and balanced values in the young Nigerian Muslim with a view that the inner stability so obtained and guiding principles so learned help him or her stand in midst of the cross-currents of ideas and rapid social change which are features of our age. Qasin (2019) submits that the objectives of teaching Islamic studies are rooted in the tasks that are beneficial to society in terms of contributing to national development.

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2008) revised the Islamic studies curriculum and emerged with fundamental themes needed by youths in unity secondary schools for effective classroom delivery. The NERDC'S intervention in curriculum enlargement and reforms in Islamic studies eventually led to the emergence of these major themes in Islamic studies curriculum, namely; a) The Qur'an, b) Hadith, c) Tauheed and Fiqhu d) S irah and Tahdhib

Academic performance represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in secondary school, college, and university. Academic performance is generally used to determine how well a student is able to assimilate, retain, recall and communicate knowledge of what has been learnt. It is usually measured using test and/or examinations scores (Abdullahi 2022) Therefore, academic performance can be the examination performance of what the students learn in a subject such as Islamic studies or skills acquired over a period of time. the reason for student's poor performance in any subject may be as result of the teaching method, such as lecture method adopted by some teachers and this make students to find it very difficult to retain what has been learn. Retention involves learners' ability to reproduce past learning experience. (Bos and Anderson as cited in Guastello, Beasely, and Sinatra, 2020) asserted that advising students to stay away from what will distract them and focus on the information the teacher communicating can help them retain knowledge, encouraging students to take notes and points from what they have read or listened, which is the same as creating a context that will help them retain knowledge and experiences acquired. Retention ability is a vital component in the learning process, as it tells the worth of a student in subject areas in terms of skills and knowledge acquired overtime. Retention is the act or power of remembering things; it is the memory, and what was retained in the mind

The researcher intended to explore teaching strategies that could explored to bring a change and improve the academic performance and retention scenarios amongst federal unity secondary schools' students in Islamic studies. The intent to fill this existing gap in knowledge acquisition is the premise on which the study stands, which is hinged on the task of exploring and employing activity-based and concept mapping strategies for enhancing students' academic performance, retention and interest in Islamic studies among Federal Unity secondary school in North-western Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The foregoing predicaments generally associated with students' poor academic performance in Islamic studies, as observed by the foregoing scholars, also bear on the view these students do not retain the knowledge, skills, ideas and values acquired during learning for a long time. By implication, the teachers of these students have relegated to the background the considerations that the cardinal objective of Nigerian educational system is to produce learners who can retain and use what they have learnt in the school and outside the school. In this perspective, these learners are not exposed to meaningful learning which could be lasting and more powerful than rote learning since the later is easily forgotten and not easily applied in new learning or problem-solving situations.

The above circumstances have led the researcher into thinking about the need to explore pedagogical procedures that could bring about a change and improvement in the academic performance, interest and retention scenarios amongst students in Islamic studies in our Federal Unity senior secondary Schools in North-West, Nigeria. Thus, in line with global challenges and to overcome problems associated with conventional methods of teaching, scholars such as Novak and Kanas (2018), Chiore (2018), National Educational Research and Development Council (2007), advocated for a paradigm shift from conventional

methods which is teacher-centered to learner-centered methods that could enhance conceptual learning and development of desirable attitudes and interests, values and skills acquisition. This development demands the exploration of innovative teaching strategies that could involve students at the centre of their learning activities and a teacher as a facilitator. This frame of reference has called for emphasis to be shifted to such teaching and learning strategies as activity-based method and concept-mapping instructional strategy. The activity-based method involve learners in such designs as discussion, simulation, collaborative designs, field trips, projects, debate, demonstration, dramatization, questioning and role playing; these designs entail active and lively involvement and participation of learners. Concept-mapping, on the other hand, constitutes one of the teaching-learning strategies which has emerged under constructivism, having its orientation in Ausubel's (1963) assimilation theory of cognitive learning, which aims at fostering meaningful learning among students (Mezieobi, 2008); it is viewed as a visual representation of conceptual understandings that can be described as the prolific use of interconnections and relationships made between these concepts and structures that organize them into meaningful ways. Isah (2019) advances that concept-mapping and activity-based teaching strategies are instructional methods that have been extensively used in teaching many subjects. He expatiates that they allow students to arrange their thinking in visual and verbal forms, as well as working cooperatively to improve their understanding of learning apart from allowing learners to observe information and related ideas and represent them in a structured manner. Thus, this research study is tailored at exploring the assets in activity-based and concept-mapping methods as teaching strategies for enhancing students' academic performance, retention and interest in Islamic studies concepts among Federal Unity secondary schools in North-West Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study is set to:

1. Investigate the impact of activity-based teaching strategy on students' academic performance in Islamic studies among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-West Nigeria.
2. Determine the impact of activity-based teaching strategy on students' retention ability in Islamic studies among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-West Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of Islamic studies students taught using activity-based teaching strategy and those taught using lecture method of teaching among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-west Nigeria.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the mean retention ability of Islamic studies students taught using activity-based teaching strategy among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-west Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted "quasi-experimental design", using pre-test, post-test, post post-test group design. At the beginning, a pre-test (O1) was administered to both experimental and control groups respectively to determine the entry behaviour of the students. After this, the EG was taught Islamic studies using activity-based teaching strategy, for a period of six weeks. While the CG was taught the same concept using lecture method. Immediately after the treatment. The target population of this study consisted all the Federal Unity Senior Secondary year II Islamic studies students. There were fifteen (15) Federal Unity Secondary

Schools offering Islamic studies within North Western, Nigeria, owned by the Federal Government. The study has a population of nine hundred and eighteen (918) SS II Islamic Studies students. The sample for this study comprised ninety four (94) SS II Islamic studies students out of the population of nine hundred and eighteen (918) from the Federal Unity Secondary Schools in the seven States of North-West Nigeria. The decision to take the samples was based on the 10% Paradigm, suggested by Furgason, (1970) as minimum sample size for experimental research.

Multi stage sampling technique was used. Northwest zone was clustered into three: Kano cluster (Kano and Jigawa), Kaduna cluster (Kaduna and Katsina), Sokoto cluster (Sokoto, Zamfara and Kebbi). Comvinium selection was used to handpick two clusters, where Katsina, Kano, and Jigawa States were selected as sample States due to less security challenges in the states compared to the remaining one cluster comprises three States (Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kebbi) purposive sampling technique was used to select the sampled schools. Similarly, sampled schools in the selected states were selected based on the fact that, they are mixed schools. Moreover, random sampling was used to select the SS II students in the selected schools.

The first Instrument adapted was titled “Islamic Studies Performance Test” (ISPT) with 50 items (see Appendix E) which consist of two sections: A and B; section A contains basic instructions and section B contains 50 items mounted on a 5-option multiple choice objective test; the items were adapted from West African Examinations Council examination (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) past question papers. This was used to measure the academic performance and retention ability of students in the experimental and control groups. Post-test was administered immediately after the treatment to measure students’ academic performance while post post-test was also administered after the interval of two weeks for determining students’ retention ability. Each correct response carried 1.0 mark with a maximum of 50 marks.

The adapted instrument was validated through face and content validity processes as well as internal consistency reliability. All the psychometric properties of the two modified instruments established during the validation have illustrated that the instruments was valid and reliable for the conduct of the study. The result collected for the two set of tests (ISPT) were compared and correlated in order to obtain the reliability coefficient (r-value). The method adopted to calculate the reliability coefficient of ISPT was test-retest using PPMC. From the result r was obtained to be 0.852, This indicates the ISPT ($r = 0.852$) is reliable enough for the study

There was a lesson, once a week, for six weeks each to both experimental and control groups. Thirdly, six week’s lesson plans for both experimental and control group were prepared. The two groups were exposed to Islamic moral education concepts. Experimental group was taught for a period of six weeks using activity-based strategy (Guided Inquiry teaching strategy). While control group was taught using the conventional method (lecture) for a period of six weeks as well. Lastly after treatment, post-tests were administered to both experimental and control groups in all the sampled schools and after two weeks interval post post-test was also administered. Inferential statistics involving t-test independent samples and t-test related samples were used to test the stated hypotheses as follows: **H₀₁**, was tested using t-test independent samples as involved establishing significant difference occurred in academic performance among students due to the impact of teaching strategy. While **H₀₂** was tested using t-test related samples as involved establishing the significant difference occurred in retention ability among students due to the impact of activity-based teaching strategy with reference to retention ability. All hypotheses were tested

at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of Islamic studies students taught using activity-based teaching strategy and those taught using lecture method of teaching among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-west Nigeria.

Table 1: t-test independent sample analysis of impact of activity-based strategy on students' Academic performance

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Experimental	32	42.38	7.815	60	4.823	.000	Rejected
Control	30	32.60	8.144				

Table 1 presents result analysis of t-test independent sample showing significant differences in the mean academic performance scores of Islamic studies students exposed to activity-based strategy and lecture method respectively. The result indicated the t-value of 4.823, the degree of freedom of 60 and p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value observed at 0.000 is less than the alpha 0.05 value, therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of Islamic studies students exposed to activity-based and lecture method is hereby rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis which stated there is significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of Islamic studies students exposed to activity-based and those exposed to lecture method. This means that activity-based strategy enhances academic performance more than the lecture method among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-west Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the retention ability of Islamic studies students taught using activity-based teaching strategy among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-west Nigeria.

Table 2: t-test related sample analysis of impact of activity-based strategy on students' retention.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value	Decision
				Correlation			
Experimental A Post-test	32	42.38	7.815	31	0.982	-1.648	0.109
Experimental A Post posttest	32	42.81	7.468				

Table 2 presents result analysis of t-test related sample of the mean retention scores of Islamic studies students exposed to activity-based teaching strategy. The result indicated that t-value was -1.648 observed at degree of freedom of 31 with p-value 0.109, the p-value observed at 0.109 is greater than the alpha-value of 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of Islamic studies students exposed to activity-based is hereby retained against the alternate hypothesis which stated that there is significant difference in the mean retention scores of Islamic studies students taught using activity-based teaching strategy among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-west Nigeria. This indicates that what they learned at performance level has been retained. This means that activity-based strategy enhances retention of what was learn.

Discussions of Findings

In terms of difference between the academic performance scores of Islamic studies students in SS II

exposed to activity-based teaching strategy and that of those taught using lecture method. The difference was found to be in favor of the experimental group. Priyono and Boed (2017) affirmed that activity-based strategy as an instructional approach foster students' active learning through various activities to enhance the three domains of learning. This finding have proved the relevance of Bruner's Constructivist Theory (1960). Bruner's constructivist theory is emphasises on the use of relevance strategy such as activity-based teaching strategy that could make students actively involve through engaging in activities that improves academic performance and develops the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning. This finding also is in line with the findings of Iqbal and Tayyaba (2023), Olarewaju and Awofala (2020), Muhammad, Niaz and Maqsood (2019), Martins-Omole, Yusuf and Guga (2019), Zekerya and Akkus (2019). While Iqbal and Tayyaba (2023), concluded, in their study, that activity-based positively affects students' academic performance in social studies, Olarewaju and Awofala (2020) found out in their study that, students exposed to activity-based performed better than those taught using lecture method; Muhammad, Niaz and Maqsood (2019) also affirmed that, students taught using activity- based teaching strategy have higher achievement in Economics at secondary level; Martins-Omole, Yusuf and Guga (2019), concluded that students exposed to activity-based method were better than those taught using lecture method in the development of academic achievement and academic self- concepts of the students; Zekerya and Akkus (2019) found out that students in activity-based teaching strategy have higher positive achievement skills than those exposed to lecture methodology. This also implies that students taught using activity-based methods perform better than those taught using the lecture method. Thus, station that activity-based teaching strategy should be considered more widely for enhancing students' academic performance. Teachers may used to incorporate hands-on activities, group work, and interactive learning experiences to engage students better and improve their academic performance

With regard to the significant difference in the mean retention scores of Islamic studies students exposed to activity-based, the finding indicates that activity-based strategy was viable in maintaining students' retention scores since there is significant difference in the mean retention scores among Federal Unity Senior Secondary Schools in North-west Nigeria. This means that activity-based strategy enhances retention of what was learn. Deepa (2014) confirmed that activity based teaching strategy is a methodology where students of different home background grouped together in one classroom and each of them learn and retained at his or her own pace. The finding have proved the relevance of Dewey's Situational Cognitive Learning Theory (1938). The theory explained that the authenticity of experiences and activities created for students occurs through structuring the activity and learning in the environment with view to make students better understanding leading to positive result. This finding conforms to the findings of Aiyedun (2020); Abdulkarim, Lawal and Salisu (2019); Obeka, Bichi and Olajide (2018); Liaquat and Umar (2018). Aiyedun (2020) revealed that animation and activity-based teaching strategies were viable in upgrading students' retention. Abdulkarim, Lawal and Salisu (2019) concluded that, activity-based strategy positively affects students on the academic attitude and retention of these students in basic science. Obeka, Bichi and Olajide (2018) also concluded in their studies that students exposed to activity-based strategy performed better than those exposed to traditional lecture method. Liaquat and Umar (2018), found out that, students taught using activity-based instructions retained the concepts for a long period of time as compared to the use of traditional lecture method. This has implications for curriculum design, as educators may want to include more dynamic, engaging activities that support retention over time. Therefore, position that activity-based teaching strategy should be considered for

enhancing students' retention. Educators may need to integrate hands-on activities, group work, and interactive learning practices to employ students better and develop their retention ability.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, activity-based teaching strategy was found to be effective in boosting Islamic studies students' academic performance and retention ability among Federal Unity senior secondary schools in Northwest, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The use of activity-based and concept-mapping teaching strategies in teaching Islamic studies in Federal Unity schools should be encouraged by stake holders in the education industries such as Federal Ministry of Education, State Ministries of Education, NERDC through workshops and seminars to teachers on how to use activity-based and concept-mapping teaching strategies in teaching/learning Islamic studies.
- ii. the academic performance and retention ability of students improved by the use of activity-based and concept-mapping teaching strategies, teachers should use the activity-based and concept-mapping to facilitate students' learning during their Islamic studies teaching.

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