EFFECTS OF ASSIGNMENT TEACHING METHOD ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN BUSINESS STUDIES IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

The study investigated the effects of assignment teaching method (ATM) on academic achievement of students in business studies in Oyo State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and 1 hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population for the study was all junior secondary school business studies students in Oyo State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 93 students for the study. Pre-test, post-test non-equivalent groups quasi-experimental design was used for the study and the instrument for data collection were programmed book in business studies and business studies achievement test (BSAT) which were developed by the researchers and validated by two experts. A reliability co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained for the test items using split-half reliability technique. Mean was used to analyse data relating to research questions while analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that students taught business studies using ATM achieved better with higher post-test mean score than those taught using conventional teaching method. Findings revealed that no interaction effects of teaching methods and gender on students' academic achievement in business studies. It was recommended that business studies teachers should use assignment method in teaching so as to enhance students' academic achievement in the subject.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Business Studies, Assignment Teaching Method

Introduction

Nigeria as a country is faced with many socio-economic problems which education and educationists must provide solution. The efficient teaching and learning of business studies being a vocational subject is capable of addressing socio economy problem, and social crises threatening the stability of Nigeria. Mustapha in Adeagbo (2014) observed that the teaching and learning of business skills is gaining prominence in many schools and colleges. The author

maintained that this is caused by the need to produce educated, skilled and motivated workforce. Business studies as a subject is taught in junior secondary schools and it encompasses office practice, commerce, typewriting, book-keeping and shorthand.

Many strategies have been employed by the teachers to teach business studies in schools. Some of these common strategies used by teachers include: traditional method of teaching, project, lecture, play way, demonstration, problem solving among others. Igboko and Ibeneme (2006) noted that traditional education practices like demonstration and lecture methods alone have proved incapable of producing desired skills needed to cope with the present challenges of explosion in technology and economic development. They argued further that teachers are strongly advised to use the students' activity based and inquiry mode, involving substantial workshop activities in their teaching so as to ensure proper achievement and learning of concepts in the classroom. One of the methods in this regard that is activity and inquiry based is assignment teaching method (ATM).

Assignment method has to do with investigation and solving of problems either by an individual or a group of individuals. For the Teachers (2017) maintained that students learn best when instruction is appropriately challenging, based on real world problems and situation, purposeful, meaningful, interesting and gives them chance to practice what is being taught in a meaningful and interesting context. One of the ways to actualize this is assignment method. Assignment method is a method that allows learners to decide how they will demonstrate that they have learned the required information or skills in a manner of ways either by writing, speaking, drawing, illustrating and building (Jones & Bartlett, 2014).

Assignment method can be used to imagine students' academic achievement as assignment and home work are considered to be one of the factors contributing to improvement in students' academic achievement (Carr, 2013; Dean, Hubbell, Pitler & Stone, 2012). Supporting this claim, Dueck (2014) noted that teachers who used assignment outside the school have the benefit of instilling good work ethics into their students. But for an assignment to be effective, it should allow students to think critically, generate their own answers or ideas, make them emotionally engaged, solve a particular problem, compete with others, use their imagination and be creative. Also, it is important to state that assignments should not be engaging and thought provoking alone but should be in line with the stated learning objectives (Vantterot, 2009; Huisman, 2016).

This suggests that assignment should aim at improving students' knowledge, ideas and attitudes. On the part of the teacher, it should be noted that this method is used as a guide to inform the teacher about what the students know or have learned and understood and therefore should not be used as a means of punishment so as not to make it undesirable exercise (Carr, 2013; Dean etal, 2012). The teachers' pre-occupation is to find out how far each student has gone with his /her own assignment so as to provide assistance where needs arise. The use of assignment now accommodates the various simple home works given by the teacher to the students in other to supplement class teaching. Therefore, assignment could take the form of exercises for students to practice from home either from a topic just concluded or a topic to be taught in the next class.

Assignment method of teaching has many advantages. Huiti in Adeagbo, (2014) identified main advantages of assignment method to include promotion of freedom and responsibility, self-reliance and co-operation. Freedom and responsibility are attained by allowing students to work on their own. This will stimulate six things in students as asserted by Ikeoji, Agwubike and Disi (2007) to include motivation, autonomy, active engagement, independence, creativity and problem-solving skills. To achieve self- reliance, students are taught to think independently therefore, opportunity to work individually strongly influences their motivation and assignment could be used to achieve this. Smith (2011) opined that students' self-reliance means autonomy in work, finding their own solution method, having to solve problems themselves and complete assignment more effectively and efficiently together with proper use of available learning time. Assignment method helps students to actively use their imagination, instinct and creativity effectively for learning and starting team spirit in school. Starting and learning team spirit in school is an important aspect in business training, the assignment method offers the opportunities to achieve this principle by allowing students to work together either as classmates or group and help them to develop attitudes that supports co-operation.

Co-operation is characterized by people working together, helping and respecting each other. Iyiola (2012) opined that Dalton schools promote co-operation in education as the crucial principle through which activities aimed at co-operation, co-ordination and effective communication, students are able to see their classmates in totally different ways that they used to. William (2016) argued that the advantages of assignment include compelling students to study, improve their analytical and problem-solving skills, increase their persistence and endurance, teach them how to manage time and enable research on internet. The author however remarked that the shortcomings of assignment include student nightmares as a result of short deadlines for submission of assignment and lowering of their grades as a result of ignorance or failure to submit their assignments. However, assignment in this study is a method of teaching where the teacher gives homework or exercise to students to work on it on their own or in group so as to enhance the learning of needed idea(s) and concepts in line with behavioural objectives.

The concept of academic achievement means different things to different authors. Wikipedia (2017) defined academic achievement as the extent to which a learner, teacher or an institution is achieving or has achieved their overall educational goals. The authors posited further that it is commonly measured through examinations or continuous assessment and there is no agreement on the best way to assess it. This definition also supports that of Emaikwu (2012) who opined that academic achievement is used to measure students' success in educational institutions or how well students meet standards set out by institutions or examination bodies. This definition suggests that academic achievement is a measure of students' and teachers' attainment of educational goals irrespective of methods and perspectives of measurement. Although, scholars agreed that there is no best way of testing academic achievement or the most important aspect to be tested but academic achievement vary significantly when lecture, discussion or activity methods are used, (Emaikwu, 2012; Spinath, 2012). This implies that business studies teachers should aspire to invent, develop and apply learning approaches that would encourage students to participate actively in the teaching and learning processes so as to achieve to a better level, the educational objectives of business studies particularly in junior secondary schools.

Another factor used as moderating variable in this study is gender, Sikora and Propopeks (2012) reported that males have more confidence than females in their science ability and students who have science abilities are more likely to consider a career in science. Also, Vleuten, Jaspers, Maas and Lipe (2016) opined that gender ideology can affect educational choices of students by influencing their competence beliefs, occupational values and subject preferences. Thus, male find it difficult to choose subject presumed to be feminine in nature and this may account for reasons why business education is feminine dominated in colleges of education and universities but masculine dominated at the post graduate levels (Adeagbo, Mafikuyomi & Oluwafemi, 2015)

Spinath, Eckert and Steinmayr (2014) concluded that gender differences in students individual characteristics contributes significantly to gender differences in school achievement as girls are somewhat able to adapt favourably to school environment because of their verbal intelligence, higher agreeable stronger self-discipline as well as motivation to learn while a change of certain aspects of school environment might help boys to better succeed in school. This implied that gender and environment are interdependent in predicting students achievement in vocational education and suggests that girls can cope with their environment academically while boys cannot. Therefore, teachers and educational planners should endeavour to create conductive learning environment to support learning irrespective of gender. Frawley (2012) asserted that teachers must learn to note and reduce gender bias because it can hinder students ambitions and academic achievement.

Business studies is one of the commercial subjects being taught in junior secondary schools. In fact, it is the major aspect of commercial literacy at the junior secondary school level of education in Nigeria. The Curriculum Online (2017) defined business studies as that part of curriculum which enables the learner to make better informed decisions in the everyday business of living which in turn contributes to the learners understanding of the business world, encourage a positive attitude to enterprise development and develops appropriate skills in the field of business. Supporting this claim, Igbokwe (2015) asserted that business studies curriculum in Nigeria has been reformed in order to achieve national educational goal by giving the children an idea of business enterprise and by introducing consumer education into the business studies curriculum. To realize these objectives, the business studies curriculum covers these area according to NERDC (2012); the ideal office, office activities that aid commerce, entrepreneurial skills, consumer and society, bookkeeping as an effective tool in business, bookkeeping documents, bookkeeping applications, basic keyboarding skills, and keyboarding skills. These reformations in curriculum is a pointer to the fact that there is the need to look for more effective strategy/strategies for teaching business studies. This study therefore, sought to examine the effects of assignment as a teaching strategy on the academic achievement of students in business studies.

Statement of the Problem

The academic achievement of junior secondary school students in schools subject has been a great concern to teachers, parents, educational administrator and government. Despite all their efforts, it is observed that many students are finding it too difficult to pass school subject including business studies judging by their learning outcomes in both internal and external examinations (Adebule, 2014) The reasons for this difficulty may vary but could be ascribed to

teaching strategies adopted by business studies teachers to disseminate instruction to students during classroom situations. For instance, Adeagbo, Mafikuyomi, and Oluwafemi (2015) observed that poor academic performance of students is caused by poor strategies and approaches of teaching, lack of instructional materials and wrong teaching strategies.

The researchers observed that the common conventional teaching methods do not sufficiently fit the demand of present-day students whose motive is to seek freedom and creativity because the methods do not give them the opportunity to participate in the classroom and therefore do not acquire skills and knowledge they require. Eze, Ezenwafor and Molokwu (2015) maintained that poor performance of students can be linked to deficiency in the methods of teaching adopted by the teachers which is always teacher-centered in an attempt to cover more grounds and this in turn creates frustration, learning difficulties and in-active participation of students. Moreover, Umar, Abdulahi and Hassan (2015) asserted that students-centered strategy is capable of improving academic achievements in school subjects significantly than the conventional teaching methods. If this study is not conducted, students' academic achievement in business studies may stagnate or even worsen. Therefore, the effects of assignment teaching method on academic achievement of students in business studies in Oyo State needed to be studied.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the effect of assignment teaching method on the academic achievement of students in business studies. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the effect of assignment teaching method on academic achievement of business studies students in Oyo state
2. examine the effect of gender on academic achievement of students taught with assignment teaching method

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of assignment teaching method on business studies students' academic achievement in Oyo state?
2. What is the effect of gender on academic achievement of business studies students taught with assignment teaching method in Oyo state?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were tested and would be tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant treatment effect of assignment teaching method on the academic achievement of business studies students in Oyo state.

Methodology

The study adopted quasi experimental research design in which intact class of 93 junior secondary school II business studies students were used for the study. The major instrument used for data collection was a Business Studies Achievement Test (BSAT) containing 40 test items of developed by the researchers. It was face validated by two research experts and was pilot tested by using 30 students who were not part of the selected sample. A reliability co-efficient of 0.72 obtained using split-half technique indicates that the instrument was reliable. The pre-test was

administered on both experimental and control groups after which students in the control group were treated using assignment teaching method to study on their own for four weeks which implies that the experiment lasted for four weeks. At the end of the treatment, post-test was conducted on the two groups to determine the differences in the academic achievement.

Mean was used to answer the research questions while the hypothesis was tested using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Any method with higher mean score is adjudged to be better than the other while the hypothesis will be rejected if the calculated F-value is less than F-critical at 0.05 level of significance but if it was greater at 0.05 level of significance, it was not rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the effect of assignment teaching method on business studies students' academic achievement in Oyo state?

Table 1: Mean achievement scores of students taught business studies using conventional teaching method and those taught using assignment teaching method.

Groups	N	Pre-test (X_{-1})	Post-test (X_{-2})	Mean difference (X_{-D})
Control	36	32.85	36.40	
				34.08
Experimental	57	37.02	70.48	

Table 1 shows control and experimental groups post-test mean achievement scores of 36.40 and 70.48 respectively with a mean difference of 34.08 in favour of experimental group. The result therefore indicates that after treatment, the students in the experimental group achieved higher than those in control group. Therefore, assignment teaching method is more effective in teaching business studies than conventional teaching method.

Research question 2: What is the effect of gender (male and female) on the academic achievement of business studies students taught with assignment teaching method in Oyo state?

Table 2: Mean Achievement Test Scores of Students in Business Studies by Gender

Groups	**N**	**Pre-test (X_1)**	**Post-test (X_2)**	**Mean difference** **D)**
Control	16	31.80	41.60	9.80
Male	20	33.25	43.80	10.55
Female				
Experimental	27	34.90	67.88	32.98
Male	30	38.93	72.83	33.90
Female				

Table 2 shows that the mean post-test achievement score of both gender increased but the mean difference between gender favour female gender which shows that both male and female students benefited from the treatment

Test of hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant treatment effect of assignment teaching method on the academic achievement of business studies students in Oyo state.

Table 3: ANCOVA summary on conventional teaching method and assignment teaching method on students' achievement scores in business studies after the treatment

Source	Type III sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	p-value	Decision
Corrected model	26204.835	2	13102.417	154683	.000	Rejected
Intercept		1	7071.906	83.489	.000	
7071.906 Treatment		1	21739.865	256.654	.000	
21739.865 Pre-test		1	1206.790	14.247	.000	
	1206.790					
Error	7623.445	90	84.705			
Total	338842.000	93				
Corrected Total	33828.280	92				

Table 3 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 1 df, the p-value is .000 which is lower than the level of significance of 0.05. This implies that there was significant difference between the post-test mean achievement scores of students taught business studies using conventional teaching method and those taught using assignment method. Thus, null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study in Table 1 indicated that students taught business studies using assignment teaching method achieve higher than those taught using conventional teaching method. This finding agrees with the findings of Adebule (2014) who reported that there exists a significant difference between pre-test and post-test achievement scores of students taught mathematics using assignment method. The finding also agrees with that of Huisman (2016) who confirmed that students who are subjected to assignment teaching method and who usually submit their assignment usually performed better in class. This may be as a result of the experiences involve which force them to study on their own and manage their time and thus enhance academic achievement.

Furthermore, findings in Table 2 indicated that male and female business studies students taught using assignment teaching method differs significantly in their post-test scores which imply that assignment method is effective and can improve academic achievement in business studies irrespective of gender. It also shows that there was slight difference between academic achievement of male and female students in business studies using assignment teaching methods. This finding agrees with that of Dania (2014) that gender has no significant effect on students' academic achievement in school subject. However, the finding disagrees with the that of Salami (2013) who reported that gender has significant effect on academic achievement of students.

Conclusion

The findings of the study so far showed that assignment method increase students' academic achievement in business studies and that if teachers can use the method in teaching and learning process, students will acquire and possess in-depth knowledge and skills which will help them to

demonstrate and retain the concept for good achievement in test and examination as well as in daily practical activities.

Recommendations

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

1. Teachers of business studies should adopt the use of assignment teaching method in their classes.
2. Teachers of business studies should acquire the knowledge and skills for using assignment methods through in-service training, conferences, seminars, and workshops.
3. Education stakeholders and relevant professional bodies in business studies should sponsor more research on the efficacy of assignment method so as to popularize the method

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