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**EFFECTS OF CONTEXT-BASED LEARNING STRATEGY  
ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' LEARNING OUTCOMES  
IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN EJIGBO LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AREA, OSUN STATE**

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**Abstract**

*Students' performance in Social Studies in the recent years, as observed by some scholars is quite appalling and disheartening at the lower primary school level in Osun State that therefore calls for urgent remedy. Studies have revealed that factors responsible the abysmal performance, among others, is inappropriate teaching and learning methods used by teachers teaching this subject, most especially at the Lower Basic Level in Ejigbo Local Government Area, Nigeria. It is upon this premise that a relatively new context-based teaching strategy is employed to teach the subject to investigate its effect on pupils' academic performance in Social Studies in Ejigbo Local Government Area of Osun State. The study employed the non-equivalent group pretest, posttest, control, quasi experimental research design. Two schools were selected randomly through simple random sampling technique. Two instruments were used for data collection. They are: Test of knowledge in Social Studies (TKSS) and Pupils' Attitude Questionnaire (PAQ). The instruments were validated and the reliability of the instruments were 0.78*

*and 0.69 respectively derived through Pearson correlation co-efficient. The data collected were analysed using percentage and t-test. The results showed that context-based strategy has significant positive effect on the academic performance of the pupils in Social Studies. The study thus recommended that context-based learning strategy should be adopted in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools as a good teaching method in lower primary school.*

**Keywords:** Social Studies, Context-based strategy, Learning outcomes, Pupils.

### **Introduction**

Social Studies is one of the subjects being taught at the lower primary schools in Osun State in particular and Nigeria as a whole with the ultimate objective of making the pupils be responsible citizens not only to themselves but to the society at large. To achieve this, the federal government, in its wisdom decided to include this subject in all educational institutions right from primary to university levels.

However, it has been found through research that pupils at the lower level, especially in Osun State have not been performing well in Social Studies. Factors responsible for this abysmal performance are varied, among which are inappropriate methods of teaching learners at this level. Based on the foregoing, a context-based learning strategy was employed to improve the academic performance of pupils at this foundational level of education in Osun State.

Human beings are not created alike; some are talented, and some are gifted while some are average learners and are categorically based on evaluation of understanding and performances, some need to see things in real life before having an adequate understanding of what is being taught. Context-based learning enables us to learn from experience. By interpreting new information in the context of where and when it occurs and relating it to what we already know, we come to understand its relevance and meaning. In a classroom or lecture theatre, the Context is typically confined to a fixed space

and limited time. Beyond the classroom, learning can come from an enriched context such as visiting a heritage site or museum, or being immersed in a good book. Opportunities abound to create context, by interacting with our surroundings, holding conversations, making notes, and modifying nearby objects. People can also come to understand context by exploring the world around them, supported by guides and measuring instruments. It follows that to design effective sites for learning, at schools, museums and websites, require a deep understanding of how context shapes and is shaped by the process of learning.

Context is how we make sense of experience, by distinguishing between what is relevant and irrelevant. For example, when reading a book, the meaning of each word and phrase is conveyed not only by its characteristics, but also by its location in relation to other words or illustrations. Until recently, education has been designed to minimize the effects of context on learning, so that children can gain universal knowledge and take tests that are appropriate whatever the location, time of day, or surroundings. Yet many professions, such as medicine, art, or engineering, require general profession knowledge to be applied in specific contexts. They also need practical knowledge to be built up from working in many differing situations.

Context-based approach was developed by science educators to integrate scientific knowledge and real life events and they design their curriculums according to the new approach. Context-based approach aims to develop and sustain a sense of wonder and curiosity in young people about the natural world (Adpok, 2000). At the same time, a context can help students to connect scientific knowledge to real life (Lekin & Zastarsky 2001). The students are acquired to induce meanings by using contexts, thus justifying a need-to-know” approach to content. Thus, student’s interest and positive attitudes towards Social Studies have been increased.

Bennett (2003) defines context-based Teaching Strategy (CBT) as an approach adopted in teaching where contexts and application of science are used as the starting points for the development of scientific ideas, concepts and principles. This contrasts with the

more traditional approaches that present scientific ideas, concepts and principles first before considering the applications. Context-based teaching strategy (CBT) thus involves the connection of the teaching of a particular concept within its context or concept as well as its connection to student's lives in the environment. Academic achievements of students have been found to be enhanced by the use of context-based learning (Lampe, Rooze, & Tallent-Runnels, 1998; Jonhson & Johnson, 1998; Slavin, 1990, 1991; Wei, 1997). Stevens and Rose (2009) stated that, the fact that it has been linked to increases in the academic achievement of learners at all ability level is another reason for its use.

Context-based learning provides an alternative to the more traditional learning approach to teaching. Context-based learning strategy, previously called problem-based learning but changed due to the negative connotations of the world problem and the importance of utilizing context when teaching health care, is a learning concept that originated in Canada in the 1960s at Mcmasters University and was initially to prepare medical students for practices (Adams and Hamm & Marsazo, 2005). The process of CBL involves students being provided with scenario, and undertaking a student-led process of hypothesizing, which ultimately results in the development of the students own learning needs.

CBL as an inductive method of teaching and learning includes trials and error in the classroom, and group discussion is seen as a powerful enhancer of learning ( Rose, 2009), the role for educators who use CBL is to facilitate learning ( Steven, Slavin & Abrascato, 1993) and to assist students to be creative, critical thinkers in an open environment. According to Alexander et al. (2005), the main barrier to implementing CBL is the educators' hesitance to change practice from a content-driven process to a student-led process.

However, some evidence abound in literature (Ekanem, 1998; & Bennett, 2003) that revealed that some factors, either singly or in combination with instructional methods used in disseminating Social Studies-based lessons, influence students achievement in the subject. Specifically, some studies have been carried out to find out the

influence of gender (Awoniyi 2002; Aidu 2007) and location (Rose, 2009) on students achievement in social studies. Unfortunately, the findings seem to be contradicting and inconsistent. Over the years, the achievements of pupils in Social Studies in Nigerian primary schools have been very poor. This is because these pupils fail to see the inter-dependent relationship that exists between the academic contents of Social Studies subjects offered in schools and in real life. As a result there is low transfer of what is learnt in the school to the real- world. A number of innovative teaching methods have been devised to teach Social Studies at this level of education among which is context-Based learning. This is the gap that this study is construed to fill. However, the extent to which this method could be used in improving pupil's academic performances as well as their attitudes towards the learning of Social Studies has not been adequately focused and reported in literature, hence this study.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to determine the effects of context-based teaching strategy on primary schools pupils' performance in Social Studies. The study was specifically designed to:

- i. ascertain the effect of Context-Based Learning Strategy on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Social Studies in Ejigbo local government area of Osun State.
- ii. determine the interactive effect of Context-Based Learning Strategy and gender on academic performance of primary school pupils in Social Studies in the study area.
- iii. examine the effect of context-based learning strategy on pupil's attitude towards the learning of Social Studies in Primary in the study area.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were generated to guide the study in accordance with the objectives of the study:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant effect of CBLS on the pupils' performance in Social Studies in Ejigbo Local Government Area.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the interactive effect of CBLS between male and female pupils instructed with Context-Based Learning Strategy in the study area.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in the effect of CBLS on pupils' attitude towards the learning of Social Studies in the study area.

### Methods

The research design used was pretest-posttest control quasi-experimental. The sample was drawn from the 102,347 Lower Basic Schools in Osun State. Two schools were used for the study. A self-designed test and questionnaire were used to collect data for the study. They are: Test of knowledge in Social Studies (TKSS) and Pupils' Attitude Questionnaire (PAQ). The instruments were validated and the reliability value of the instruments were at 0.78 and 0.69 respectively derived through Pearson Product correlation co-efficient. Data collected were analysed using inferential statistics.

### Results

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant effect of CBLS on the performance of primary school pupils in Social Studies.

**Table 1:** t-test analysis of the performance test scores of pupils taught with Context-based Learning Strategy (CBLS) and those exposed to Teacher Expository Method (TEM) in Social Studies

| Strategies | N  | Mean  | Standard Deviation | df | t     | Sig. (2-tailed) | Remark                  |
|------------|----|-------|--------------------|----|-------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| CBLS       | 30 | 17.07 | 3.67               | 58 | 4.634 | .000            | Significant<br>p < 0.05 |
| TEM        | 30 | 12.73 | 3.56               |    |       |                 |                         |

(t = 4.643; p < 0.05)

Inferentially, results in Table 1 shows that there is significant difference in the effect of the performance test score of pupils taught with Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBLS ) and those exposed to Teacher Expository Method (TEM) at ( $t = 4.643$ ,  $p,0.05$ ) in Social Studies within the study area. Hence, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the achievement test scores of pupils taught with Context-based Learning Strategy (CBLS) in Social Studies is hereby rejected. This result implies that those pupils taught with Context-based Learning Strategy (CBLS) with a mean score of ( $x = 17.07$ ) performed better than their colleagues in Teacher Expository Method (TEM) with a mean score of ( $x = 12.73$ ) and that pupils should always be taught with Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBLS) in Social Studies.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant effect of CBLS on the achievement of primary School pupils in Social Studies based on sex.

**Table 2:** t-test analysis of the achievement test scores of male and female pupils exposed to Context-Based Learning Strategy in Social Studies

| S/N | Sex    | N  | Mean  | SD   | t     | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Remark          |
|-----|--------|----|-------|------|-------|----|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | Male   | 12 | 17.67 | 4.49 | 0.748 | 28 | .222            | Not significant |
| 2.  | Female | 18 | 16.67 | 2.85 |       |    |                 |                 |

( $t = 0.748$ ;  $p > 0.05$ )

Result in Table 2 indicated that there is no significant differences in the performance test scores of male and female pupils exposed to CBLS in Social Studies at ( $t = 0.748$ ,  $p,0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the achievement test scores of male and female pupils exposed to Context-based Learning Strategy in Social Studies is hereby not rejected. This result means that sex is not a predictor of academic performance of pupils

in the subject within the study area.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant effect of CBLS on pupils' attitude towards the learning of Social Studies in primary schools.

**Table 3:** Paired sample t-test analysis of attitudes of pupils exposed to Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBLS) towards Social Studies

| S/N | Attitudes     | N  | Mean  | SD   | t      | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Remark      |
|-----|---------------|----|-------|------|--------|----|-----------------|-------------|
| 1.  | Pre-attitude  | 30 | 30.23 | 3.72 | 43.040 | 28 | .000            | Significant |
| 2.  | Post-attitude | 30 | 31.33 |      | 3.68   |    |                 |             |

( $t = 43.040$ ;  $p < 0.05$ )

Result in Table 3 revealed that there is no significant effect of CBLS on pupils' attitude towards the learning of Social Studies at ( $t=43.040$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant effect in the attitude of pupils exposed to Context-Based Learning Strategy after treatment is hereby rejected. The result showed that after the treatment, pupils developed better attitude towards the use of CBLS in Social Studies.

### Discussions

Results of the findings showed that there is significant differences in the effect of the achievement test scores of pupils taught with Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBLS) and those exposed to Teacher Expository Method (TEM) in Social Studies which support Crosby and Owens (1993) when they found out that different Context-based learning strategies can be employed to help low ability pupils to improve achievement, who had difficulties making success in the traditional classroom.

The results of the study also indicated that there is significant difference in the effect of the achievement test scores of male and female pupils exposed to Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBLS) in Social Studies which is in agreement with Johnson and Stanne (1986) who found out that Context-based learning equalize the



status and respect for all pupils regardless of gender. In addition, studies by Steven and Slavin (1993), Bramlet (1994), Meegh (1987), Webb, trooper and Chen (2004), Jewertsz (2006), Crosby and Vansickel (1992) found that Context-based learning gains are not limited to a particular ability level or sex but to all who engage in it. Dannell (2006) found out that, in Context-Based Learning Strategy pupils experienced the lessons as significantly more reality and activity –centered than the control pupils. Scores for CBLS pupils' appreciation and perceived instructiveness of mechanics, lessons were significantly lower than those for pupils on traditional courses. According to Basir, Alinaghizadeh and Mohammadpour (2008), the satisfaction level of students and the enthusiasm of teachers about the course were positively correlated to each other, and there is a gradual improvement in the pupil's ability to deal with those problems. Cathy (2010) concluded that, there is no statistical difference between Context-Based and Traditional problem test results. Students said that Context-Based problems were more life-based, attractive and understandable than the Traditional ones, for measuring students achievement Context-Based tools should be used in central exams. Azim (2010) asserted that students conceptual learning is increased by the Context-Based materials, also students attitudes are affected positively at the end of the intervention. Akpınar and Tan (2011) revealed that, student's achievement is found higher in Context-Based questions. These results are in line with Ekanem (2006) and Azim (2002) and Daluba (2011)'s position that some traditionally used method of teaching such as demonstration, guided inquire, discovery methods could be result-oriented but have made students fail to see the inter-dependent relationship that exist between academic contents of Social Studies subject offered while in school and their real life application. Similarly, Azim (2002) in his study of the relative effectiveness of guided-inquire and expository instructional methods on student's achievements in Physics found that there is a significant difference in the transfer of learning between male and female students. In particular, the current study found out that the primary school male pupils performed significantly better in the achievement tests than

their female counterparts when taught Culture in Social Studies using the Context-Based Teaching Strategy.

Finally, the result of the study revealed that there is no significant effect in the attitude of pupils exposed to Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBL) after the treatment towards Social Studies. This result supports the findings of Basir, *et al.* (2008) who found that this approach, is intended to heighten pupil's interest and to encourage positive attitude and feelings towards the subject. In addition Research by Johnson and Johnson (1991) on learning together in an environment and learning alone showed that Context-Based Learning enhanced more positive attitude towards subject members and the teacher.

### **Conclusion**

This study concluded that context-based learning strategy is an effective strategy of improving academic performances of pupils in Social Studies in primary schools in Osun State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made that context-based learning strategy should be adopted in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools as a teaching method and government should incorporate this strategy into the lower primary school curriculum.

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