

Effect of Peer Tutoring on Achievement of Students in Business Studies in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Gassol Education Zone of Taraba State

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Abstract: This study investigated the Effect of Peer-tutoring on the Achievement of Junior Secondary Students in Business Studies in Gassol Education Zone of Taraba State. The study employed a pre-test, post-test, control group, non randomized quasi-experimental design. The population of the study comprised all junior secondary two students in the fifteen public secondary schools in Gassol Education Zone of Taraba State. One hundred and sixty seven (167) JS 2 students in four sampled schools randomly selected from the fifteen schools in the zone was used for the study. Two schools were assigned to the control group and the other two schools were assigned to the treatment group. Two instructional packages were developed, one for the control group and the other for the treatment group. The control group was taught using the conventional method while the treatment group was taught using the peer tutoring strategy. Data on students' achievements in Business studies was collected using Business Studies Achievement Test (BUSAT). The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The summary of the result showed that the relative efficacy of peer tutoring was consistent across gender groups. It improved students' achievement in Business Studies. The test of significance revealed no significant difference in performances by gender. The test of interaction showed no interaction effect of methods and gender on students' achievement in Business Studies. It was concluded that peer tutoring is an effective strategy for teaching Business studies. The implication is that peer tutoring should be adopted in the teaching and learning of Business Studies in junior secondary schools. The researcher recommended that educational stakeholders and other participants should embrace the peer tutoring approach.

Key words: Peer-tutoring • Gassol • Population • Education and stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of education in Nigeria, as stated in the National Policy on Education [1] stresses on the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society. Education enables people to achieve social competence and optimum individual development. Business education is a programme that helps in the intellectual, physical and emotional development of the recipient. According to [2], business education is concerned with the acquisition of pedagogical and professional competencies in industry and education necessary for personal use; for entry

into the business world as an employer, employee or self-employed and for effective participation in the educational industry as a professional business teacher. Business education is one of the vocational programmes offered in colleges of education, universities and other degree awarding institutions with Business studies as its foundational course done at the junior secondary school level.

Junior secondary is the Upper Basic (basic 7-9) of the recent Basic Education programme in Nigeria. It terminates at Basic 9 (JSS 3) with the Basic Education Certificate (BECE). The curriculum is a combination of the fundamentals of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA)

goals and in line with contemporary global best practices for junior secondary education. Emphasis is on value orientation, poverty eradication, peace and dialogue, human rights, health education, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, life skills as well as encouraging the application of innovative teaching and learning approaches and techniques [3].

Business studies, according to [4] is part of vocational education within the secondary school programme. Business studies is a subject that prepares and equips students with knowledge aimed at creating career awareness on saleable skills that will enable them to fit into the world of work with little or no difficulty. The subject areas in business studies are: office practice, commerce, book-keeping and keyboarding. Office practice lays an effective foundation and introduction to office procedures; primary office functions and administrative management are emphasized in the units and so, relevant, basic and marketing skills are acquired by the students for clerical/secretarial duties, reception jobs and administrative functions. Commerce (also known as the heart of business) discusses all activities involving the buying and selling of want-satisfying goods and services (Trade and Aids to Trade) on large scales including socio-economic dealings with people. It teaches the recipient entrepreneurial attitudes and skills; recognizing the legal, economic, political and socio-cultural as well as the technological systems relevant to the business environment. The Book-keeping unit of business studies teaches the students the art of careful and systematic recording of the financial aspects of business transactions in the designated books on day-to-day basis. It is described as 'business success' and so emphasizes accuracy and relationships among records. Keyboarding/computing as a communication tool is the activity involved in typing information into typewriter, computer or word processor. It teaches the students how to use the keyboard or computer to perform specific jobs/tasks. Techniques like sitting position, finger curving, key striking, sighting positions, accurate touches, proper typing position are duly emphasized.

Business studies is a skilled subject and so very necessary for proficiency in the advanced level. [5], held that Business studies is presumed to be the fulcrum on which all business-related courses are hinged, as it occupies a position from which Accounting and Book-keeping, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Office Technology and Management, Co-operative education etc emerge. As a pre-vocational subject, it exposes

students at junior secondary school level to the world of work, allowing them to make intelligent career choice and pattern of consumption. Value orientation, employment generation and wealth creation are the major thrust of business studies and so, anti-corruption education, ethical issues, consumer awareness and protection, environmental challenges, entrepreneurship education, social responsibilities etc have been carefully infused into relevant units [6]. The general objectives of business studies are to:

- Develop basic skills in office occupations
- Provide the orientation and basic skills with which to start an occupation for those who may not have opportunity for further training
- Provide basic business skills for personal use now and in the future
- Prepare students for further training in Business studies
- Relate the knowledge and skills to the national economy [7].

However, full realization of the objectives have not been possible due to series of problems and challenges associated with frequent curriculum review without adequate implementation, time allocation, supervision, manpower recruitments in number and quality, finance, infrastructural facilities [8, 9].

As a result of the above inadequacies, students' performances have not been too good especially in the Basic Education Certificate Examination. Below is a summary of performances of students in business studies for three years in the zone under study:

Poor performance of the students could further be attributed to the method of teaching business studies. Owing to poor method of teaching poor foundation on the basic knowledge of business subjects is laid for these students especially the skilled ones like typewriting and book keeping. Poor achievement could also be traced to inadequate provision of teaching facilities as well as the instructional approaches, quality and number of teachers teaching the subjects [10]. [11], asserted that teaching effectiveness of teachers due to conventional methods of teaching are relatively low and counter-productive to students' achievement. Most teachers lack knowledge of innovative teaching and strategic assessment techniques and these have been responsible for students poor performance in school subjects in various public examinations conducted in Nigeria especially in prevocational courses.

Table 1: Students Performances in Business Studies

Year	LGA/ Zone	Grades					Total
		A	B	C	P	F	
2014	Gassol	36	49	160	410	47	702
		5.1%	7.0%	22.8%	58.4%	6.7%	
2015	Gassol	25	40	110	189	38	402
		6.2%	10%	27.3%	47%	9.5%	
2016	Gassol	30	37	368	277	46	756
		4%	4.8%	48.5%	36.5%	5.8%	

Source: Gassol Zonal Office (Taraba State Post Primary Schools Management Board)

Additionally, [12] maintained that substantial research on the effectiveness of teaching methods indicates that the quality of teaching is often reflected by the achievements of the learners. Regular poor academic performance by the majority of students is fundamentally linked to application of ineffective teaching methods to impact knowledge to learners. Consistent with the observations above, [13] added that successful teaching in skilled prevocational subjects does not depend only on the teachers' mastery of the subject matter but, also on the instructional delivery method. Teaching methods have great impact on student's academic achievement.

Zeeb in [14] observed that an alignment of teaching methods with students' needs and preferred learning influences students' academic attainment. Performances can be attributed to the teaching style, orientation and the learning styles which the teachers might have introduced in the course of implementing the business studies curriculum as a prevocational subject.

Teaching methods could be traditional (conventional) which are mostly teacher-centered like the lecture method or it could be modern (innovative). Innovative learning are mostly students-centered like Active- learning strategies which is described by [15] as a structured and collaborative process of enquiry undertaken through questioning, acting, sharing experiences (talk, listen, read, write) and reflect on problem-solving in practical situations and they include: Role-play/Simulation, Co-operative learning, Concept mapping, Scaffolding, Peer-tutoring etc.

Peer tutoring is described by [16] as an instructional strategy in which students in their groups, under the guidance of a teacher, work together through a given instructional assignment with brilliant student as a peer tutor, providing assistance and instruction to others. Peer-tutoring in the view of Topping in [17] is the acquisition of knowledge and skills through active helping and supporting among learners of equal status/level. It involves people from similar social and educational groupings who are not professional teachers helping one another to learn.

On their part, [18] held that peer-tutoring is a process by which a competent pupil with minimal training and with a teacher's guidance helps one or more students at the same grade or level to learn a skill or concept. In other words, peer-tutoring is an instructional strategy whereby students are taught by their peers who had been trained or given orientation by their class teacher. The class teacher acts as an advocate, collaborator, facilitator and mentor. He organises, monitors and supervises peer-tutoring sessions and so helps to manage the problems associated with timing, meeting place, punishments and other technicalities. Peer-tutoring is based on the new learning theory which is of the notion that learning is an active process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring knowledge, that instruction is the process by which this knowledge construction is supported rather than a process of knowledge transmission; they are support efforts and collaborative opportunities [19].

Secondary schools in Nigeria can be for boys, girls or co-educational. Co-educational schools accommodate male and female students who share all resources and facilities together yet, due to gender differences, the students are inclined to certain socio-cultural patterns that directly and indirectly influence their interests, pursuits and performances. Peer-tutoring method could enhance the achievement and interest of the students in business studies irrespective of their gender.

Gender is a cluster of characteristics that differentiates males from females. According to [20], gender refers the social attributes and opportunities associated with being a male or female, woman or man and being a girl or boy; these attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learnt through socialization processes of which the school is one of the major agents. Although school subjects no longer appear to be clearly gender stereotyped, male and female students do vary in their interest in different subject areas [21]. This therefore calls for the need to ascertain the effects of peer tutoring in the performance of male and female students in business studies as well as

the interaction effect of teaching method and gender in the academic achievement and interest of students in business studies in junior secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem: The unrelenting pressures on schools and the government to improve the academic performances of students and actualize the goals of the National philosophy of education in Nigeria, are strong enough for educational stakeholders especially subject teachers, to seek for better solutions to the poor academic achievement of students in business studies. [22], observed that academic performance of students is a phenomenon that has educational, psychological and sociological connotations and so can be enhanced through identifying and manipulating each of such variables. As education is a wide field of study, it requires its operators to explore; experiment and become acquainted with several alternative strategies to instructional delivery so as to ascertain which is the most appropriate way of improving student achievements.

Business study is a foundational course for studying business subjects at advanced levels. It is an integration of Office practice, Commerce, Book-keeping and Keyboarding with the expectation that at the end of the Basic 9, skills and knowledge in the core business subjects would have been acquired by the students. A look at the summary of the results of students in Gassol education zone of Taraba State shows poor performances in business studies. Such poor achievement could be as a result of inappropriate teaching method because, poor academic achievement questions the method of teaching since instructional delivery approach; understandability and usefulness of learned materials are important in maintaining the interest and influencing the achievement of a learner. [16] observed that conventional methods of teaching like lecture method, though not without some advantages are found to be didactic, stereotyped, ineffective and non-result oriented. Although Peer-tutoring is seen as an innovative and active-learning strategy that can offer multiple perspectives for students with varying knowledge and skills which can open greater opportunity to share and solicit knowledge through constructive reasoning among peers, without empirical evidence on this assumption, expected beneficiaries may doubt this claim. Thus, the need to determine empirically, the effects of peer-tutoring strategy on achievement of junior secondary school students in business studies.

Purpose of the Study: The major purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of peer-tutoring strategy on students' achievement and interest in business studies at the junior secondary school level.

Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

- Effect of peer tutoring on the mean achievement scores of students in business studies.
- Effect of peer-tutoring on the mean achievement scores of male and female students in business studies.
- Interaction effect of teaching approaches and gender on students' mean achievements in business studies.

Research Questions: The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the effect of peer-tutoring on the mean achievement scores of students in business studies?
- What is the effect of peer-tutoring on the mean achievement scores of male and female students in business education?
- What is the interaction effect of teaching approaches and gender on students mean achievement scores in business studies?

Hypotheses: The following null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught business studies using peer-tutoring strategy and students taught using conventional methods of teaching.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught business studies using peer-tutoring strategy.

H₀₃: The interaction effect of teaching approaches and gender on students mean achievement in business studies will not be significant.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used pre-test, post-test, control group, non-randomized quasi experimental research design and the area of the study is Gassol Educational zone of Taraba

state, Nigeria. Both experimental and control groups were used and intact classes were used since there was no randomization of subjects. The population of the study comprised all 902 junior secondary school students in fifteen (15) public secondary schools offering business studies in Gassol Local Government Area. All the secondary schools are co-educational schools. Out of the four schools sampled two of them were assigned to the treatment group while the other two were assigned to the control group. The sampled schools had a total number of 167 students and all were used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a Business Studies Achievement (BUSAT) designed to measure students' achievement in Business studies.

The experimental procedure was carried out as thus: Through cumulative records, intelligent and well-behaved students were selected as peer-tutors and along with the Business studies teachers were briefed about the programme/study. A pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the experiment to determine the subjects' entry abilities in their intact classes either in treatment or control group. The researcher developed two instructional packages with the same content from the curriculum and these were used in teaching the two groups but with different model lesson plans - Peer-tutoring for the treatment group and Lecture method for the control group, in their respective schools. The lessons were carried out for 6 weeks following the schools' time table so as not to disrupt much of the school's calendar for the term. A post-test was conducted after the experiment using the former instrument. Two instructional packages were developed by the researcher. The first package was based on peer-tutoring method while the second package was based on the teachers' traditional method of teaching. The questions were drawn from the same curriculum. At the onset of the experiment, the Business Studies Achievement Test (BUSAT) was administered as pre-test to the treatment and control groups by the researcher with the assistance of four (4) Business studies teachers in their respective schools. At the end of the six weeks of experiment, the same instruments were reshuffled and administered as posttest to the two groups. The students' pre-test and posttest scores were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation whereas the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the effect of peer-tutoring on the mean achievement scores of students in business studies?

The Business Studies Achievement Test (BUSAT) scores for both the treatment and control groups were used to answer this research question. The mean for the pre-test and post-test were adjusted statistically in the analysis to take care of the initial in equivalence of the groups under study. The table below is a summary of the results.

The data presented in Table 2 above show that the Treatment group had a mean score of 51.35 and a standard deviation of 9.09, whereas the Control group had a mean score of 36.63 with a standard deviation of 7.08. This implies that peer-tutoring led to greater performance than conventional method of teaching.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of Peer-tutoring on the mean achievement scores of male and female students in Business studies?

In response to this research question, the pre-test and post-test mean achievement scores of male and female students taught using peer tutoring were collated separately.

The summary is as shown in Table 4 below:

From the results in the Table above, it could be deduced that peer-tutoring strategy does not have pronounced differential effect on males and females. Male students had a mean score of 51.62 and a standard deviation of 9.92 while their female counterparts obtained a mean score of 50.86 with 7.53 as standard deviation.

Research Question 3: What is the interaction effect of teaching approaches and gender on students mean achievement scores in Business studies?

To determine the interaction of instructional approaches and gender, the mean scores of both male and female students taught using peer-tutoring and those taught using conventional method were considered. Table 4 below Shows the Summary of the Results.

The result in Table 4 above indicates that there is no interaction effect of methods and gender on students' achievement in Business studies. There are superior performances of both male and female students that were taught Business studies using Peer-tutoring over those

Table 2: Mean Achievement Scores of Students Taught Business Studies using Peer-tutoring Strategy and Those Taught using Conventional Method

Group Teaching method/ Strategy	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Treatment Peer-tutoring	81	51.35	9.09
Control Conventional method	86	36.63	7.08

Table 3: Mean Achievement Scores of Male and Female Students Taught Business Studies using Peer-tutoring

Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Female	29	50.86	7.53
Male	52	51.35	9.92

Table 4: Interaction Effect of Gender and Instructional Approaches on Mean Achievement Scores of Students in Business Studies

Gender	Male	Female
Peer-Tutoring	51.62	50.86
Conventional Method	37.24	35.55

Table 5: Analysis of Co-variance for Student’s Achievement in Business Studies Based on Teaching approaches and Gender

Sources of Variation Square	Sum of squares	Df	Mean	F	Sig of F.
Covariates	2102.380	1	2102.380	41.752	.000
Method	9568.361	1	9568.361	190.024	.000
Gender	57.629	1	57.629	1.144	.286
2- way interactions	18.306	1	18.306	.364	.547
Method & gender Explained	11750.624	4	2937.656	58.341	.000
Residual	8157.269	162	50.354		
Total	19907.892	166	119.927		

Table 6: Analysis of Covariance for Students Achievements in Business Studies Based on Gender.

Sources of Variation Square	Sum of squares	Df	Mean	F	Sig of F.
Covariates	204.025	1	204.025	2.493	.118
Gender	26.863	1	26.863	.328	.568
Explained	230.888	2	115.444	1.411	.250
Residual	6383.433	78	81.839		
Total	6614.321	80	82.679		

that were taught using conventional method as seen in the mean scores of male 51.62: 37.24 and female 50.86: 35.55 for peer-tutoring and conventional methods respectively.

Hypotheses: The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 Alpha level. A hypothesis is accepted if the f.crit is higher than f.cal and rejected when the f.crit is less than the f.cal. at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Business studies using Peer-tutoring strategy and students taught using conventional method of teaching.

H₀₃: The interaction effect of teaching approaches and gender on students mean achievement in Business studies will not be significant.

Hypotheses 1 and 3 were tested using the Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA) and the table below is a summary of the results.

As can be observed in the Table above, for Hypothesis 1, the f.calculated (190.024) is greater than the F.critical (.000) at 0.05 level of significance. Since the decision rule is to reject the null hypothesis if the critical value is less than the calculated value and accept if the critical value is more than the calculated value the null hypothesis 1 is therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of those taught business studies using Peer-tutoring and those taught using conventional method.

As regards hypothesis 3 about the interaction effect between teaching methods and gender on the achievement of students in Business studies, the critical value at 0.05 alpha is .547 which is greater than the calculated value of .364. So the null hypothesis is upheld

because the decision rule is to uphold the hypothesis if f_{crit} is higher than f_{cal} . This means that there is no interaction between methods and gender on students' achievements in Business studies.

Hypothesis 2:

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Business studies using Peer-tutoring strategy.

Analysis of Co-variance was employed to test hypothesis 2 and the result is as shown in Table 10 below.

The Table above reveals that at 0.05 level of significance, the critical value (.568) is greater than the calculated value (.328). Since the guiding rule is to reject the null hypothesis when f_{cal} is greater than the f_{crit} , hypothesis 2 is therefore upheld because the critical value is higher than the calculated value. This means that there is no significance difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught business studies using Peer-tutor in teaching method.

DISCUSSION

Effect of Peer-tutoring on Students Mean Achievement Scores in Business Studies: The results of the analyses in Table 2 indicate that peer tutoring is more effective than conventional method in the teaching and learning of Business studies in Junior secondary schools. Furthermore, analysis in the ANCOVA Table (5) rejected the hypothesis meaning that there is significant difference in the mean achievement of students taught business studies using peer tutoring and those taught using conventional approach in favour of peer tutoring strategy. These findings are in line with the results of the study of [17] on the Effect of Peer tutoring Method on Students Academic Achievement in Home economics (a pre-vocational subject like business studies) in which case, peer tutoring proved superior to conventional method. More so, in the comparative study between Peer tutoring and Memorization Method conducted by [12], on Students Achievement in Manufacturer's Final Accounts, peer tutoring yielded greater achievement than the memorization approach and the researcher pointed out that learning outcome (achievement) of every student depends greatly on the type of teaching strategy employed by the teacher during instruction.

Effect of Peer Tutoring on the Mean Achievement of Male and Female Students in Business Studies: Table 3 reveals that peer tutoring strategy did not yield

pronounced difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in business studies. Also the test of significance upheld the hypothesis that there is no significance difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in business studies using peer tutoring strategy. This result contradicts the opinions of [8] who observed in her work on Appraisal of Teachers and Teaching Facilities Available for Teaching Business Studies in Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Urban that male students perform better in numerate and accounting-related subjects as females are scared and anxious of figures.

However, the findings in this current study is in conformity with that of [13] who discovered that there was no difference in performance by gender of students in her comparative studies on students' achievement using Peer tutoring and Memorization on Manufacturers' Final Accounts. The promotive interaction and gender sensitivity of peer tutoring does not allow for undue rivalry among the students by gender. There is mutual cooperation and joint efforts to achieve. As students are grouped in peer tutoring according to ability, everybody faces intermediate achievement risk in a way that by interaction, interdependence and socio-cognitive relationships, knowledge is constructed and achievement individually and jointly improved.

Interaction Effect of Teaching Approaches and Gender on Students Mean Achievement Scores in Business Studies: With reference to Table 4 both male and female students taught business studies using peer-tutoring did better than their peers who were taught using the conventional method. There is no interaction between teaching approaches and gender. The result in Table 9 upheld the hypothesis that there is no interaction because the comparative efficacy of peer tutoring remained superior across gender groups. This discovery is in consonance with the findings of [15] as they investigated the Efficacy of Peer-tutoring and Gender on Students Achievement in Biology. They found out that teaching methods and gender did not interact as both male and female students in peer tutoring out-performed their mates in the conventional approach. In line with this, [13] maintained that an alignment of teaching methods with students' needs and preferred learning influences students' academic achievement. However, [9] lamented that the teaching effectiveness of teachers due to conventional methods of teaching are relatively low and counterproductive to students' achievement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes as follows:

- Evidence from this study agrees with the fact that peer tutoring has a comparative advantage over the conventional method in enhancing students academic achievement in business studies.
- Peer tutoring is gender sensitive. Both male and female students performed equally well using the strategy. It does not produce significant difference based on gender.
- There is no significant interaction between methods and gender on students' achievement. Peer tutoring remained superior to conventional method across different gender groups.

Educational Implications of the Study: The study has educational implications for educational stakeholders, teachers and students alike and so should be incorporated in educational policies and programmes . They include:

- Peer tutoring allows a more brilliant or competent student to help others acquire knowledge and skill and this improves their achievements. The class teacher will only supervise and so have opportunity to attend to a greater number of students.
- In peer tutoring, tasks are assigned with recognition to gender and so males and females interrelate appropriately to construct knowledge which improves individual and group performances.
- As a two-way programme (tutor as well as tutee) achievement is assured for every active participant/student, gender not withstanding.

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

- The curriculum developers should consider adopting peer tutoring strategy to prescribe activities for topics in business studies.
- Peer tutoring appears to be new in many areas, in most of the educational levels and subject areas including business studies, so the government and school administrators should organize workshops and seminars to enlighten teachers on the necessity, processes and organization of the strategy.

- Optimal learning takes place in a dynamic and multiple ways; at any time, a trained teacher should reconcile between what he wants to teach and how best to teach it so as to ensure interest and achievement across all gender groups.

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