**EFFECT OF PLACE-BASED LEARNING METHODS ON STUDENTS’ ACHIEVEMENT AND INTEREST IN BASIC SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN MINNA, NIGER STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the effect of place-based learning method on students’ achievement and interest in basic science and technology. Place-based learning allows students to discover specific information by themselves before they make generalization. Six research questions and six null hypotheses guided the study. Quasi-experimental design was adopted for the study, specifically, non-equivalent control group design. The study was carried out in Minna Education Zone of Niger State. The sample for the study comprised of 80 JSS II students from two intact classes in two secondary schools in Minna Education Zone of Niger State, drawn using multi stage sampling techniques. The experimental group were taught using place-based learning method, while the control group was taught using conventional lecture method. The treatments lasted for four weeks. Two instruments were used for data collection in the study namely; Basic science and technology Achievement Test (BSTAT) and Basic science and technology Interest Inventory Scale (BSTIIS). Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The results revealed that place-based learning instructional method was superior to conventional instructional method in facilitating students’ achievement and interest in basic science and technology. There was no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students in basic science and technology after the treatment, although male students performed slightly better than their female counterpart. On the test of interaction, it was revealed that mode of instruction (method) and gender had a significant ordinal interaction effect on students’ achievement and interest in basic science and technology. Place-based method was more effective than the conventional method. Based on the findings of the study, the educational implications of the findings were highlighted and the following recommendations were proffered among others: that science teachers, and science teacher educators should adopt place-based learning instructional method when teaching in order to enhance students’ achievement and interest in basic science and technology. Finally the limitations of the study and suggestions for further studies were made.

**Keywords:** Place-based learning, basic science and technology, achievement, interest

**INTRODUCTION**

Science is a systematic enterprise that builds and organizes knowledge in the form of explanations and predictions about the universe. Science education on its own is the field concerned with sharing science content and process with individuals not traditionally considered part of the scientific community. The target individual may be children, college students or adult within the general public. The field of science education comprises science content, some social sciences and some teaching Pedagogy (Berube, 2008). The standard for science education provides exceptions for the development of understanding for students throughout their entire course of the study.

The national policy on Education encourages all processes geared towards producing educators and scholars that will encourage the spirit of inquiry (FME.2008); One of the objectives of primary and junior secondary school Education in Nigeria is to inculcate in children permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.

The teacher’s role in a student-centred learning environment is, at most, one of facilitator and guide. The students are in control of their own learning and the power and responsibility are the students concern. Learning may be independent, collaborative, cooperative and competitive. The utilization and processing of information is more important than the basic content. Learning takes place in relative contexts and students are engaged in constructing their own knowledge (Furtak, 2010).The teacher who utilizes the student centered method effectively is constantly on the move. The teacher may be engaged with the students as a classroom collective, individually or in groups. Their involvement would include questioning, disciplining, guiding, validating, monitoring, motivating, encouraging, suggesting, modeling and clarifying (McKenzie, 2005). This student centered method is in line with the National Policy on Education.

Places are localities that can be explained meaningfully by the human experiences that take place in them. The sense of place reflects a set of meanings of and attachment to places assigned by individuals or groups (Semken, 2015). Personal experiences in a place have a significant impact on the sense of place. Moreover, the level of individuals’ sense of their local environment could affect their recognition of other environments. Educational activities play an important role in the recognition of the local environment and sense of place. Therefore, teachers should be the creators of the curriculum instead of being the implementers of curricula developed by others. They should be able to establish connections between students’ performance standards determined by region or district and the unpredictable events that could occur outside the classroom. Teachers and group members should neglect the hypothesis which premises that suitable education can only be conducted in classrooms (Smith, 2012). By adopting the democratic education perspective, schools should promote the meaningful introduction of the place-building process to the students (the process that shapes what our place would be) (Gruenewald, 2013). This can be achieved through a place-based perspective. Place-based pedagogies are needed, since they can directly affect citizen education and also affect the welfare of the social and ecological places where individuals live (Gruenewald, 2013). This reinforces the necessity of examining place-based education.

Place-based education is used in several fields of education for different purposes. According to Woodhouse and Knapp (2000), place-based education refers to community-focused schooling, ecological education, and bioregional education. Although place-based education is rooted in environmental education, this approach can be distinguished from conventional environmental education, because the pioneers of place-based education focused on both social and natural environments (Smith, 2007). In fact, five thematic models were mentioned in place-based education; these included cultural studies, nature studies, real-world problem solving, internship and entrepreneurial opportunities, and induction into community processes (Smith, 2002). Thus, place-based education is an approach based on the natural environment; it is also considered a growing trend in the wide landscape of education reform (Resor, 2010). The place-based education method is an interdisciplinary and experienced learning approach which uses the local environment and society (Kuwahara, 2010). In other words, place-based education can be identified as an educational approach which uses the local environment for its education and learning context. The primary objective of place-based education is to encourage students to get interested in their local society and allow them to take action to build a better future for their community (Russel Ciardi, 2016). Place-based education is grounded in resources, issues, and values of the local community and focuses on using local community as an integrating context for learning. By enhancing the growth of cooperation between schools and their communities, the place-based education method not only helps student boost their achievements but also improves the quality of the community’s environmental, social, and economic welfare simultaneously (Powers, 2004).

Achievement according to Adeyemi (2008) is the scholastic standing of a student at a given moment. It has to do with the successful accomplishment of goal(s). The purpose of testing an achievement is to help the teacher and the students evaluate and estimate the degree of success attained in learning a given concept. It is also useful in testing the retention of information and skill. It is equally appropriate in determining the efficiency of instruction. One of the issues at stake in education today is students’ achievement measure in relation to teaching and the overall success of learning outcome, Use of place-based learning teaching method in teaching simple machine by basic science and technology teachers may make Basic science and technology lesson objective stimulating and interesting to the students

Interest is an important variable in learning because when one is interested in an activity, one is likely to perform positively. Chukwu (2011) stated that interest can be expressed through simple statement made by individuals of their like and dislikes. Lack of interest according to Chukwu may be caused by uninteresting teaching methods. Also Obodo (2012) described interest as the attraction which forces or compels a child to respond to a particular stimulus .This point that a child develops interest if a particular stimulus is attractive and arousing or stimulating This shows that interest comes as a result of eagerness to learn not by force (Harbor Peters,2002). The development of interest in basic science and technology as an objective of the basic science and technology teaching, may likely promote achievement in the course. Place-based learning method uses the same idea as scientists do when they conduct experiment, thereby making the students become mini scientists. When students are learning about inquiry they should become familiar with the processes used by scientists and the new knowledge that results. Okwor (2017) classified place-based approaches into guided, unguided/open and modified/coupled inquiry. Our interest from the above information is on place-based learning. The researcher wishes to investigate the above teaching methods on student’s achievement and interest in junior secondary school basic science and technology .irrespective of gender.

**Statement of Problem**

There is high rate of poor achievement of students in basic science and technology in Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE) over the years. This could be as of the teachers use ineffective methods and strategies in science teaching which among other factors have contributed to the student’s poor achievement in basic science and technology at the junior secondary school. This poor achievement in integrated science has necessitated the need for basic science and technology in junior secondary school by the Federal Government. The available literature on methods of teaching in science education suggests the need to employ new and innovative teaching strategy such as place-based learning method.

Based on the fact that basic science and technology is a new area in the Nigerian system of education, it evolved from integrated science which was reviewed to provide a holistic presentation of science and technology with the theme ‘’you and technology’’. There is need to explore more into the best methods of teaching specific topics in basic science and technology in other to enhance students’ achievement. Therefore, the problem of this study is posed as a question; what is the effect of place-based learning and lecture teaching methods on student’s achievement and interest in basic science and technology?

**Purpose of the Study**

1. The effects of place-based learning and lecture teaching methods on students’ mean achievement scores in basic science and technology
2. The effects of place-based learning and lecture teaching methods on students’ mean interest scores in basic science and technology
3. The influence of gender on mean achievement scores of students in basic science and technology

**Research Questions**

1. What is the relative effect of place-based learning and lecture methods on students’ mean achievement scores in basic science and technology?
2. What is the relative effect of place-based learning and lecture methods on students’ mean interest scores in basic science and technology?
3. What is the influence of gender on mean achievement scores of students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning and lecture method?

# Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses (Ho) were formulated and will be tested at 0.05% level of significance:

HO1**:** There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning and lecture methods.

HO2**:** There is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of students taught basic science and technology using the two methods.

HO3**:** There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught basic science and technology using the two methods.

**METHODOLOGY**

The design for the study was quasi-experimental design. The study was carried out in Minna Education Zone of Niger State. All the Junior Secondary Two (JSS2) students in all the government owned coeducational secondary schools in Minna Education Zone formed the population of the study. Eighty (80) JSII students formed the sample for this study. Multi-Stage sampling technique was used in composing the sample. Multi-staged sampling technique was chosen because it enable the researcher sample the students along the three local government areas in the zone.

Two instruments: Basic science and technology Achievement Test (BSTAT) and Basic science and technology Interest Inventory Scale (BSTIIS) was developed by the researcher to collect data for the study. The BSTAT consists of 30 multiple choice items with four options, A, B, C, and D. Each of the items in the BSTAT carries one mark. The test items was developed using basic science and technology text books based on the content to be taught in the lesson. The research instruments (Basic science and technology Achievement Test and Basic science and technology Interest Inventory Scale) faced validation by two experts from the Department of Technology Education, School of Science and Technology Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna. The Basic science and technology achievement test was subjected to trial testing. The trial testing was carried out at Government Secondary School Chanchaga which is not within the study area. The school was excluded from the schools to be sampled for the study of population. The trial testing was done by administering 20 copies of the BSTAT to the students and the data obtained from the responses of the students will be used to estimate the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the BSTAT will be determined using Kuderdson formula. The trial testing to enabled the researcher to determine the clarity of the test items, its readability, appropriateness and adequacy as well helped to determine the appropriate time for the test. An internal consistency of 0.091 was obtained

Basic science and technology teachers in the sampled schools helped the researcher in collection of data. The teachers collected the data before and after the experiment, after which the researcher collected and organize the data accordingly for data analysis. The scores obtained from the pre and post test was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for testing the hypotheses at 0.05% level of significance. ANCOVA was used to test the hypotheses because the experiment involved pretesting of the subjects. ANCOVA was used to remove the effect of the covariate or pretest.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question One**

What is the relative effect of place-based learning and lecture method on students’ mean achievement scores in Basic science and technology?

**Table 1: Mean ( ) and Standard Deviation (SD) Scores of Students’ Mean Achievement Scores in Basic Science**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **Pre-test** | | **Post-test** | | **Mean gain score** |
|  |  | X1 | SD1 | X2 | SD2 | X |
| Place-based learning | 47 | 38.96 | 11.63 | 65.72 | 16.63 | 26.76 |
| Lecture method | 33 | 41.79 | 10.96 | 57.89 | 10.51 | 16.1 |

The data on students’ achievement in table 1 revealed that students taught Basic science and technology using place-based learning method had mean score of 65.72 with standard deviation of 16.63 while the mean achievement score of students taught with conventional lecture method was 57.89 with standard deviation of 10.51. Also the place-based learning group had a gain score of 27.51 over the lecture group who had a gain score 16.1, of Students taught Basic science and technology using place-based learning method therefore, performed better than students taught using the conventional lecture method.

**Research Question Two**

What is the relative effect of place-based learning and lecture methods on students’ mean interest scores in basic science and technology?

**Table 2: Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) S**X **cores of Students’ Mean Interest Scores in Basic science and technology**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **Pre-test** | | **Post-test** | | **Mean gain score** |
|  |  | X1 | SD1 | X2 | SD2 | X |
| Place-based learning | 47 | 1.55 | 0.65 | 2,56 | 0.66 | 1.01 |
| Lecture method | 33 | 1.51 | 0.63 | 2.24 | 0.94 | 0.73 |

The data on students’ interest in table 2 revealed that students taught Basic science and technology using place-based learning method had mean interest score of 2.54 with standard deviation of 0.66 while the students taught with conventional lecture method had mean interest scores of 2.23 with standard deviation of 0.94. The students taught basic science and technology had gain score of 1.01 while their counterpart taught using conventional method had mean gain score of 0.73. This revealed that students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning method therefore, had higher interest in Basic science and technology than students taught using the conventional lecture method. Therefore, guide place-based method is superior to conventional method.

**Research Question Three**

What is the influence of gender on mean achievement scores of students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning and lecture method?

**Table 3: Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) of influence of gender on students’ mean achievement score in Basic science and technology**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **N** | **Pre-test** | | **Post-test** | | **Mean gain score** |
|  |  | X1 | SD1 | X2 | SD2 | X |
| Male | 42 | 41.08 | 11.23 | 65.11 | 15.58 | 24.03 |
| Female | 38 | 39.26 | 11.57 | 60.11 | 13.95 | 20.85 |

Data in Table 3 revealed mean achievement score of 65.11 with standard deviation of 15.58 for male students, while the female students had mean achievement score of 60.11 with standard deviation of 13.95. Male students had mean gain score of 24.03 in basic science and technology while their female counterparts had mean gain score of 20.85. Male students therefore, performed better than their female counterparts in basic science and technology.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning and lecture methods.

**Table 4: Analysis of Covariance of Students’ Mean Achievement Scores in Basic science and technology**

**Sources of sum of df mean f sig**

**Variation squares square**

Corrected model 11613.487 4 2903.372 37.258 .000

Intercept 2623.714 1 2623.714 33.669 .000

Pretest 9974.333 1 9974.333 127.996 .000

Method 2128.256 1 2128.256 27.311 .000

Gender 146.749 1 146.749 1.883 .174

Method x Gender 1.156 1 1.156 .015 .903

Error 5844.501 75 77.927

Total 329833.000 80

Corrected total 17457.987 79

Data in table 4 showed that there is a significant mean effect for mode of instruction on students achievement in basic science and technology f(1, 80) p<.000. The null hypothesis therefore was rejected, indicating that there was significance difference in the mean achievement score of students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning method and those taught using conventional instructional method.

**Hypothesis 2**:

There is no significant difference in the interest scores of student taught basic science and technology using the two methods.

**Table 5: Analysis of Covariance of Students’ Mean Interest Scores in Basic science and technology**

Sources of sum of df mean f sig

Variation squares square

Corrected model 30.339 3 10.113 38.304 .000

Intercept 430.050 1 430.050 1628.871 .000

Method 2.875 1 2.875 10.888 .001

Gender 27.852 1 27.852 105.493 .000

Method x gender 2.585 1 2.585 9.789 .002

Total 522.504 80

Corrected total 50.404 79

Data in table 5 showed that there is a significant mean effect for mode of instruction on students interest in basic science and technology f (1, 80), p<.001. The null hypothesis therefore was rejected, indicating that there was significance difference in the mean interest score of students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning method and those taught using conventional instructional method.

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught basic science and technology using the place-based learning method and conventional method.

Table 4 revealed no significant mean effect of gender on students’ achievement in basic science and technology f (1, 80), p> .174. The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that there was no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning method.

**Discussion of Results**

The place-based learning method of instruction was superior to the conventional method in facilitating student’s achievement in basic science and technology. The differences in performancemight have been because of the fact that the students were required to find out facts for themselves, thereby imbibing the scientific processes involved in learning basic science and technology, which enabled them to perform better than their counterparts taught basic science and technology using conventional method. When the students generate their own question, analyze and discuss their findings and finally construct their understanding they seemed to understand their own information better than the ones the teachers introduced to them. The place-based learning method may have been more effective because the instructions were characterized by active student’s involvement, thereby capturing the interest of the students and maximizing comprehension of the subject matter. This is in line with the observations of Nwagbo (2009) and Ibe (2014) who indicated that place-based approaches prove to improve student’s achievement in sciences more than the traditional instructional methods like lecture, demonstration. Also Timothy and Rushmere (2009) revealed a significant difference between inquiry and lecture method in improving student’s performance in biology achievement test in favour of the place-based approach.

The findings of this study are in line with that of similar studies by Semken (2015) who carried out a study on the effects of place-based learning and demonstration methods of teaching on science process skills acquisition among secondary school biology students. Their finding revealed that the student taught through place-based learning method performed significantly better than those taught through demonstration and conventional (lecture) methods.

Results obtained from the study showed that students taught with place-based learning method had high interest in basic science and technology than their counterparts that were taught with conventional method.

The finding is in agreement with that of Ezeudu (2010) who found out that student centered instructional approach enhances student’s interest in science. Okoro (2011) found out that student’s interaction pattern promotes student’s interest in biology than the conventional instructional approach. Students perform better when they work in groups, they share ideas. This increase their interest especially when taught basic science and technology using place-based learning method.

The results of the study showed that male students performed better than their female counterparts in basic science and technology (Mandore, 2012).. This could be as a result of the different socialization processes of male and female students in which the male persons are expected to explore their environment while the female ones are to conform or maintain their existing environment notwithstanding, male students performed significantly better than female students in basic science and technology. The finding supports the finding of Nwagbo (2009) who found out that male students performed better than their female counterparts in biology. The finding did not support that of Rushmere (2009) and others who found that girls achieved more than boys in science subjects, and that female learners show some superiority over male learners. Obiekwe (2008) and Okoro (2011) also found that male students achieve higher than their female counterparts in science, Okeke (2017) and Nzewi (2010), are of the view that females achieve as high as their male counterparts when given equal opportunities. Ibe (2014) reported that there was no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students used to determine the effect of place-based learning and demonstration methods on science process skill acquisition among secondary school Biology students. Males perform better than their female counterparts when taught with place-based learning method probably because males tend to explore their environment more than the females who tend to conform to the environment they found themselves

**Conclusion**

From the results obtained in the study on the effects of guided inquire method on student achievement in basic science and technology, it was found out that;

* Students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning method performed better than their counterparts taught basic science and technology using the lecture method.
* Students taught basic science and technology using place-based learning method had higher mean interest score in basic science and technology than their counterparts taught basic science and technology using the lecture method.
* Gender did not significantly influence students’ achievement in basic science and technology, even though the posttest mean scores of male students was slightly higher than that of their female counterparts.

**Recommendations**

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

* In view of the fact that the place-based learning method was more effective in teaching basic science and technology and enhancing student’s achievement and interest in basic science and technology, the Ministries of Education should ensure that textbook authors incorporate place-based learning methods in the instructional methods for secondary schools.
* Mode of instruction had no differential effects on male and female students’ achievement in basic science and technology. Hence, teacher should make teaching and learning of science gender unbias
* Ministry of Education should ensure that their teachers are trained regularly on the use of innovative instructional approaches e.g. place-based learning method.

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