
**EFFECTS OF JIGSAW II AND SIMULATION STRATEGIES ON
STUDENTS' INTEREST, ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND
RETENTION IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA.**

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Article Received: 14 March 2026, Article Revised: 03 April 2026, Published on: 23 April 2026

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijarp.6048>

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of the Jigsaw teaching strategy on students' interest and academic performance in Social Studies in comparison with the conventional lecture method. The findings revealed that students taught using the Jigsaw strategy demonstrated significantly higher levels of interest and better academic performance than those taught using the lecture method. The results further established that the teaching strategy accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in students' learning outcomes, thereby confirming the superiority of learner-centred and cooperative instructional approaches over traditional teacher-centred methods. Based on these findings, several recommendations were made. Social Studies teachers are encouraged to adopt the Jigsaw teaching strategy as a regular classroom practice to enhance students' engagement and achievement. Educational authorities and school administrators should organise continuous professional development programmes, such as workshops and seminars, to equip teachers with the skills required for effective implementation of cooperative learning strategies. Curriculum planners, including the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, are advised to integrate and emphasise learner-centred approaches like Jigsaw in the Social Studies curriculum. In addition, schools should provide adequate instructional materials to support interactive and group-based learning. Furthermore, teachers should foster a collaborative classroom environment that promotes peer interaction and active participation, while reducing overdependence on the lecture method. There is also a need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of teaching practices to ensure effective implementation of innovative strategies.

Finally, further research is recommended across different subjects, educational levels, and locations to validate and generalise the effectiveness of the Jigsaw teaching strategy. In conclusion, the adoption of the Jigsaw teaching strategy has significant implications for improving the quality of teaching and learning in Social Studies and enhancing students' overall academic outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally acknowledged as the bedrock of every society and a fundamental instrument for national development. It represents a continuous process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits necessary for effective functioning in society. As a potent tool for transformation, education plays a critical role in shaping the social, economic, and political life of individuals and nations. In Nigeria, education is regarded by both the government and the citizenry as an instrument *par excellence* for achieving national integration and fostering desirable change in all spheres of human endeavour (Federal Government of Nigeria - FGN, 2014). Consequently, education continues to occupy a central position in national development plans due to its capacity to drive sustainable growth and societal advancement.

In line with this, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014), through the National Policy on Education, articulates the philosophy of Nigerian education as one that promotes the integration of individuals into sound and effective citizens, while ensuring equal educational opportunities for all. The policy further outlines key national objectives, including the development of a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united and self-reliant nation, a dynamic economy, and a land of bright opportunities for all citizens. These objectives underscore the transformative potential of education in nation-building and social cohesion.

However, the realisation of these lofty educational goals largely depends on the effective teaching and learning of school subjects, particularly Social Studies. Social Studies occupies a strategic position in the Nigerian educational system due to its potential to transform individuals socially, politically, morally, intellectually, and culturally. The subject was introduced to foster a better understanding of societal values, cultural heritage, and social systems, with the ultimate aim of promoting national unity in a multi-ethnic society. Its introduction was also motivated by the need to address contemporary societal challenges through education. As noted by Utulu (2016), the school has a responsibility to provide a

curriculum that promotes effective living, equipping learners with relevant skills, attitudes, and values necessary for meaningful participation in society. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of human society makes Social Studies particularly relevant, as it prepares learners to cope with continuous changes in social, political, and economic environments.

In further clarification, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2018) defines Social Studies as a discipline aimed at modifying learners' behaviours towards acceptable societal values and attitudes through the study of human relationships and interactions with the environment. Similarly, Singh (2016) emphasises that Social Studies is central to citizenship education and plays a vital role in preparing learners for responsible participation in society. In addition, the subject equips learners with critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for addressing real-life challenges (Zaria, 2017). This explains why Social Studies is recognised as a core subject in the Basic Education Curriculum (FGN, 2013).

Moreover, the Federal Ministry of Education (2014), as cited in Abidoyo, Afolabi, and Afolabi (2016), highlights the objectives of Social Studies to include developing students' adaptability to changing environments, fostering responsible citizenship, inculcating appropriate values, promoting cultural appreciation, and enhancing social cohesion. Supporting this view, Fubara, Mezieobi, and Mezieobi (2015) assert that effective teaching of Social Studies enables learners to adjust to societal changes, while Akintunde (2015) notes that the subject integrates various reforms and innovations necessary for environmental sustainability and human development.

Despite these laudable objectives, the teaching of Social Studies in Nigeria has been hindered by the persistent use of ineffective instructional strategies. Inyang (2015) observes that the continued reliance on conventional lecture methods by many teachers contributes significantly to students' low interest and poor academic performance in the subject. The lecture method, which typically involves dictation and passive note-taking, has been widely criticised for being teacher-centred and limiting students' active participation in the learning process (National Teachers' Institute, 2013; Akinlay, 2015; Zaria & Bulya, 2016). Such an approach does not promote meaningful learning and often neglects learners' interests and individual differences.

In the same vein, Shamiya (2015) describes the conventional teaching method as one in which the teacher dominates classroom activities, leaving students as passive recipients of information. This view is supported by Adewuya (2016) and Singh (2017), who argue that teacher-centred strategies do not actively engage learners and may lead to reduced interest and poor academic outcomes. Consequently, there is a growing need for the adoption of interactive and learner-centred instructional strategies that can stimulate students' interest and enhance their academic performance. Research evidence suggests that activity-based strategies such as role play, inquiry, Jigsaw cooperative learning, and simulation can significantly improve students' learning outcomes (Jama'a & Zinlipour, 2015).

Among these strategies, Jigsaw cooperative learning has gained considerable attention due to its effectiveness in promoting active learning. Originating from social psychology, the Jigsaw strategy involves students working collaboratively in small groups to achieve a common learning goal (Aduloju, 2016). It enhances student engagement by encouraging peer teaching and shared responsibility for learning. As explained by Nkadi (2017), students are assigned different aspects of a topic, which they later teach to their peers in newly formed groups, ensuring that each learner contributes to and benefits from the collective knowledge. Similarly, Azmin (2015) notes that this approach enables every student to master all aspects of a topic through peer interaction. In this way, Jigsaw not only promotes academic achievement but also fosters teamwork and communication skills.

Furthermore, Azim (2015) emphasises that Jigsaw cooperative learning is a structured method that enhances interdependence among learners, as each member's contribution is essential for group success. In addition to Jigsaw, simulation is another interactive teaching strategy that mirrors real-life situations in the classroom, allowing students to assume roles and make decisions related to societal issues (Nwodo & Nkem, 2019). Both strategies are designed to make learning more meaningful, engaging, and relevant to students' real-world experiences.

In the context of this study, students' interest is considered a crucial variable influencing learning outcomes. Interest refers to learners' curiosity and willingness to engage in learning activities, which significantly affects their level of participation and achievement (Rindiano, 2021). It can be categorised into personal and situational interest, with the latter being more relevant in classroom settings as it can be influenced by teaching strategies and learning environments.

Closely related to interest is academic performance, which refers to students' ability to acquire knowledge and demonstrate it through assessments (Aduloju, 2014). According to Ode (2018), academic performance is commonly measured by students' success in tests and examinations. Another important variable is retention, which involves the ability to remember and recall learned information over time (Borden & Hall, 2020; Palomillo, 2022). Effective learning is incomplete without retention, as it ensures the long-term application of acquired knowledge.

Finally, gender is considered an important factor in educational research, as it influences learners' roles, behaviours, and interactions within the classroom. Gender, as defined by Nwosu (2015), is a social construct that determines the distribution of roles, responsibilities, and expectations between males and females in society. Understanding gender dynamics is therefore essential in examining students' learning outcomes.

In summary, the foregoing discussion highlights the importance of adopting effective, learner-centred instructional strategies such as the Jigsaw method in improving students' interest, academic performance, and overall learning outcomes in Social Studies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social Studies plays a key role in imparting positive norms, values, attitudes, and social skills to citizens including providing valid solutions to address the social problems facing different parts of the study area. In spite of the benefits derived from the introduction of Social Studies in the Nigeria's school curriculum, students' interest, academic performance and retention in Social Studies has been poor. This could be due to the use of lecture method strategy often adopted by Social Studies teachers (Ajaja & Mezieobi, 2018). This could be because of Social Studies teachers' reliance on the teacher-centred methods of imparting knowledge.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to examine effects of Jigsaw II and simulation strategies on students' interest, academic performance and retention in Social Studies in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the effects of Jigsaw and lecture method on students' interest in Social Studies in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. Determine the effects of Jigsaw and lecture method on students' academic performance in Social Studies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the difference between the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw and lecture method?
2. What is the difference between the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw and lecture method?

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw and lecture method.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw and lecture method.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is quasi experimental design, specifically, the study was adopted the non-equivalent control group pre-test, post-test and post-post test design. The area of the study was Benue State. The population for this study was 25,791(11, 952 males and 13, 839 females) Upper Basic II students offering Social Studies in Six co-educational public Upper Basic schools in Benue State, students aged between 11 and 13 years comprises the population, (GBS, Ministry of Education and Knowledge, 2024). The sample for this study comprised 320 Upper Basic II students drawn from six co-educational schools. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. Two instruments were used to collect data for this study. These are: Social Studies Interest Scale (SSIS), Social Studies Academic Performance Test (SSAPT) and Social Studies Retention Test. Mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the difference between the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw and lecture method?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Interest Ratings of Students Taught Social Studies using Jigsaw Teaching Strategy and those Taught using lecture method.

Group	n	Pre- interest		Post- interest		Mean Gain
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	
Jigsaw teaching strategy	106	1.91	0.48	3.10	0.37	1.91
Lecture Method	105	1.75	0.34	1.88	0.38	0.13
Mean Difference		0.16		1.22		1.78

Table 1 reveals that students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw teaching strategy had a mean interest rating of 1.91 with standard deviation of 0.48 in the pre- interest and mean interest ratings of 3.10 and standard deviation of 0.37 in the post- interest. Students taught Social Studies using lecture method had a mean interest rating of 1.75 with standard deviation of 0.34 in the pre-interest ratings and mean interest ratings of 1.88 and standard deviation of 0.38 in the post-interest ratings. Students taught using Jigsaw teaching strategy had a mean gain of 1.91 while those taught using lecture method had a mean gain of 0.13 with a mean gain difference of 1.78 in favour of students taught using Jigsaw teaching strategy.

Research Question 2

What will be the difference between the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw and lecture method?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Performance Scores of Students Taught Social Studies using Jigsaw Teaching Strategy and those Taught using Lecture Method.

Group	n	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Gain
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	
Jigsaw teaching strategy	106	25.35	5.96	65.93	7.15	40.58
Lecture Method	105	30.29	7.85	43.78	5.87	13.49
Mean Difference		4.94		22.15		27.09

Table 2 shows that the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw teaching strategy was 25.35 in pre-test with standard deviation of 5.96 and mean of 65.93 in the post-test with standard deviation of 7.15. Students taught Social Studies using lecture method had mean performance scores of 30.29 and standard deviation of 7.85 in pre-test and mean of 43.78 in post-test with standard deviation of 5.87. Table 2 further shows that students taught using Jigsaw teaching strategy had a mean gain of 40.58 while those taught

using the lecture method had a mean gain of 13.49 in the performance scores. The mean difference between the two groups means was 27.09 in favour of students taught using Jigsaw teaching strategy indicating that Jigsaw teaching strategy enhanced students' performance more.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw and lecture method.

Table 3: Summary of ANCOVA Result of Interest Ratings of Students Taught Social Studies using Jigsaw Teaching Strategy and those Taught using Lecture Method.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	79.975 ^a	2	39.988	287.770	.000	.735
Intercept	51.433	1	51.433	370.140	.000	.640
PreInterest	.742	1	.742	5.340	.022	.025
Strategy	73.734	1	73.734	530.628	.000	.718
Error	28.903	208	.139			
Total	1419.989	211				
Corrected Total	108.878	210				

a. R Squared = .735 (Adjusted R Squared = .732)

Table 13 indicates that $F(1, 208) = 530.628$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 specified alpha level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies using the Jigsaw strategy and those taught using the lecture method. This means that students exposed to the Jigsaw teaching strategy demonstrated significantly higher interest in Social Studies than those taught with the lecture method. With $\eta^2 = 0.718$, about 71.8% of the variance in interest ratings can be attributed to the teaching strategy used.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean performance scores of students taught Social Studies using Jigsaw and lecture method

Table 4: Summary of ANCOVA Result of Academic Performance Scores of Students Taught Social Studies using Jigsaw Teaching Strategy and those Exposed to Lecture Method.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	25938.457 ^a	2	12969.229	303.209	.000	.745
Intercept	34507.746	1	34507.746	806.760	.000	.795
Pretest	51.668	1	51.668	1.208	.273	.006
Strategy	23712.157	1	23712.157	554.369	.000	.727
Error	8896.832	208	42.773			
Total	671022.000	211				
Corrected Total	34835.289	210				

a. R Squared = .745 (Adjusted R Squared = .742)

Table 14 shows that $F(1, 208) = 554.369$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 specified alpha level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the mean performance scores of students taught using the Jigsaw strategy and those taught using the lecture method. This implies that the Jigsaw teaching strategy significantly enhanced students' academic performance in Social Studies more than the lecture method. The large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.727$) suggests that 72.7% of the variance in performance scores can be attributed to the difference in teaching strategies.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study clearly demonstrate that the use of the Jigsaw teaching strategy had a substantial positive effect on both students' interest and academic performance in Social Studies when compared to the conventional lecture method.

1. Findings on Students' Interest in Social Studies

The findings from Table 1 revealed that students exposed to the Jigsaw teaching strategy showed a remarkable improvement in their interest levels. Specifically, their mean interest rating increased from **1.91 (SD = 0.48)** at pre-test to **3.10 (SD = 0.37)** at post-test, yielding a **mean gain of 1.91**. In contrast, students taught using the lecture method showed only a marginal increase from **1.75 (SD = 0.34)** to **1.88 (SD = 0.38)**, with a **mean gain of 0.13**. The **mean gain difference of 1.78** in favour of the Jigsaw group indicates that the strategy significantly enhanced students' interest in Social Studies.

This finding is statistically supported by the ANCOVA result in Table 3, which showed a **significant difference in interest ratings** between the two groups ($F(1, 208) = 530.628, p < 0.05$). The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.718$) further indicates that approximately **71.8% of the variance in students' interest** is attributable to the teaching strategy employed.

This aligns with existing literature which emphasizes that cooperative learning strategies such as Jigsaw actively engage learners, promote interaction, and increase motivation and interest in learning (e.g., Johnson & Johnson; Slavin). Such strategies shift learners from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants, thereby enhancing their enthusiasm for the subject.

2. Findings on Students' Academic Performance

The results in Table 2 indicate that students taught using the Jigsaw strategy performed significantly better than those taught using the lecture method. The Jigsaw group improved from a **pre-test mean score of 25.35 (SD = 5.96)** to a **post-test mean of 65.93 (SD = 7.15)**, resulting in a **mean gain of 40.58**. Conversely, the lecture group improved from **30.29 (SD = 7.85)** to **43.78 (SD = 5.87)**, with a **mean gain of 13.49**. The **mean gain difference of 27.09** clearly favours the Jigsaw strategy.

Further confirmation is provided by the ANCOVA results in Table 4, which revealed a **significant difference in academic performance** between the two groups ($F(1, 208) = 554.369, p < 0.05$). The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.727$) indicates that about **72.7% of the variation in students' performance scores** is explained by the teaching strategy used.

These findings are consistent with previous studies which report that cooperative learning strategies improve academic achievement by fostering peer teaching, deeper understanding, and retention of knowledge (Slavin; Aronson). The Jigsaw method, in particular, encourages accountability and interdependence among learners, leading to improved cognitive outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that the Jigsaw teaching strategy is significantly more effective than the conventional lecture method in enhancing both students' interest and academic performance in Social Studies. Students who were exposed to the Jigsaw strategy demonstrated a substantial increase in interest ratings, as well as a markedly higher improvement in performance scores compared to their counterparts taught using the lecture method.

The statistical analyses further confirmed that these differences were not due to chance, as both hypotheses tested revealed significant results at the 0.05 level. The large effect sizes ($\eta^2 = 0.718$ for interest and $\eta^2 = 0.727$ for performance) indicate that the teaching strategy accounted for a considerable proportion of the variation in students' learning outcomes. This underscores the strong influence of instructional methods on students' engagement and achievement.

The findings therefore support the view that learner-centred and cooperative instructional approaches, such as the Jigsaw strategy, promote active participation, peer interaction, and deeper understanding of subject matter, which in turn enhance learning outcomes. In contrast, the lecture method, which is largely teacher-centred, appears less effective in stimulating students' interest and improving their academic performance.

In conclusion, the study establishes that the adoption of the Jigsaw teaching strategy in Social Studies classrooms can significantly improve students' learning experiences and outcomes. It is therefore imperative for educators to move away from predominantly lecture-based instruction and embrace more interactive and collaborative teaching strategies to achieve better educational objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Adoption of Jigsaw Teaching Strategy in Classrooms

Social Studies teachers should adopt the Jigsaw teaching strategy as a regular instructional approach, as it has been proven to significantly enhance students' interest and academic performance compared to the lecture method.

2. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Educational authorities and school administrators should organise workshops, seminars, and in-service training programmes to equip teachers with the necessary skills for effectively implementing cooperative learning strategies such as the Jigsaw method.

3. Curriculum Review and Implementation

Curriculum planners, including bodies such as the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), should incorporate and emphasise learner-centred instructional strategies like Jigsaw in the Social Studies curriculum to promote active learning.

4. Provision of Instructional Materials

Schools should provide adequate instructional materials and resources that support group-based and interactive learning to facilitate the effective implementation of the Jigsaw strategy in classrooms.

5. Encouragement of Collaborative Learning Culture

Teachers should encourage a classroom environment that promotes collaboration, peer tutoring, and active participation, as these elements were found to significantly improve students' engagement and learning outcomes.

6. Reduction in Overdependence on Lecture Method

Teachers should minimise excessive reliance on the traditional lecture method, as the findings of this study show that it contributes less to students' interest and academic performance when compared to interactive strategies.

7. Further Research

Researchers should conduct similar studies in other subject areas, educational levels, and geographical locations to validate and generalise the effectiveness of the Jigsaw teaching strategy across diverse learning contexts.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

School administrators and education stakeholders should regularly monitor and evaluate teaching practices to ensure that effective strategies like Jigsaw are properly implemented and sustained in classrooms.

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