

**COOPERATIVE LEARNING METHOD AND JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study explored the effect of cooperative learning method on the Junior secondary students' attitude towards citizenship education in social Studies Port Harcourt local Government area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The quasi-experimental design was adopted. A total of 240 students participated in the study. There were 120 students in the experimental and control groups respectively. A validated 10-item instrument titled Students Attitude towards Citizenship Education Scale (SATCES) was used for data collection. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument used in this research work, the test- retest method was used to obtain  $r = 0.82$  as the reliability index of SATCES. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Line graph, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions whereas paired sample t-test and ANCOVA were used to test the hypotheses at .05 alpha level. The findings were that cooperative learning method significantly influenced students attitudes towards citizenship education, there was a significant main effect of treatment on the students' attitude towards citizenship education. The study recommended among others that teachers of social studies should always adopt CLM in the teaching of the subject for the enhancement of the attitudes of the students.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Cooperative learning method, junior secondary students', attitude, citizenship education, social studies,*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Cooperative learning method is a teaching strategy where students in small groups (2 or 3 persons) of varying size are given the responsibility of creating a learning community where they together participate significantly in meaningful interaction which enables them to initiate, plan and evaluate their own and each other's learning in an atmosphere or classroom devoid of any form of competition (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994). This gave credence to the efficacy of cooperative learning in inculcating knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in the students (Kagan, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Borich, 2011). However, individual interests, intentions, motives,

needs, values, desires, beliefs, religious differences, attitudes, fears and anxieties tend to threaten the effectiveness of this instructional delivery method in our junior secondary school system.

These diversities need to be positively harnessed by a school subject like social studies which strongly emphasises on the development of the affective domain that can guarantee the promotion of unity in diversity in an egalitarian society like Nigeria (Omo-Ojugo, Ibhafidon & Otote, 2009). Although, the dynamic and ever-expanding scope of societal and contemporary affairs makes social studies difficult to teach. Ezegebe (1999) suggested that social studies lessons should be presented using a learning approach like cooperative learning method that tends to inculcate good citizenship values upon junior secondary students' whose poor attitude, poor self-concept, truancy and other vices which accentuate into poor academic achievement would be greatly improved. This underscores the incorporation of students with different levels of ability into groups where a variety of learning activities are used to help all team members successfully understand and complete assignments and social studies concepts (Borich, 2011).

Iyamu (1999) defines citizenship education as a conscious effort which inculcates in the youth, a set of values and attitude contingent on the needs and problems of the society. In other words, education for citizenship is a set of practices and activities aimed at making young people and adults better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in the contemporary affairs in the society. The ability of these instilled values, behaviours and attitudes to stimulate students learning is dependent on the efficacy of an instructional delivery strategy like cooperative learning whose curriculum seeks to advocate mutual cooperation from students' who work together in groups to achieve instructional objectives and schooling outcomes (Borich, 2011).

According to Dave (2006) and Olubor and Ogonor (2007), the aim of citizenship education is to rid and transform the educational system (comprising administrators, teachers and the vulnerable young students) from plagues like violence, cultism, examination malpractice, thuggery, bribery, corruption, nepotism, truancy, poor academic attitude and other anti-social vices into responsible citizens, who understand their rights and roles in improving the quality of the educational system, production of cultured junior secondary school graduates and development of the society. The actualization of this is premised upon the teacher facilitating the creation of an academically and socially supportive environment where students develop the skills, attitudes and values which increase their capacity to construct knowledge, reflect on learning, practice good citizenship, and rationally respect the wellbeing and dignity of others.

Citizenship Education can best be taught to junior secondary students by employing teaching methods in the affective domain that conveys the body of knowledge, set of values and behavioural orientation that are considered vital and necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the people and society (Osakwe, 1993). This probably explains Omare (1999) assertion that the manifestation of citizenship education can be seen in the behavioural traits such as critical thinking, political activism, inquiry, goals and value orientation by the student. Corroborating these views, Vinson (2004) pointed out that the affective domain is critical for learning. It deals with attitudes, motivation and willingness to participate and value what is being learned and ultimately incorporates the values of the discipline into a way of life.

Yusuf (2005) emphasised that the introduction and implementation of citizenship education at all levels of education increases the likelihood of students acquiring values, beliefs, attitudes, interests, habits and lifestyle that could lead to a more stable, strong and united Nigeria. However, in spite of the lofty goals of social studies, the Nigerian society after years of being exposed to citizenship education is still associated with various unethical practices (Omo-Ojugo *et al*, 2009). This necessitates the review or implementation of the current junior secondary school citizenship education curriculum capable of helping students acquire desirable social attitudes that will result in successful learning outcomes.

### **Statement of the problem**

Students' manifestation of attitudes towards socially acceptable norms that could influence the teaching and learning of social studies in our junior secondary schools is vital to the incorporation of citizenship education that inculcates certain values and behaviours which will enable students' working together to achieve the goals of cooperative learning method. This underscores the importance of the teacher facilitating the creation of an academically and socially supportive environment or atmosphere where a variety of learning activities and appropriate instructional materials are used to: improve students understanding and performance in any subject, practice good citizenship and enhance interaction.

However, the persistent manifestations of negative attitudes towards socially acceptable behaviours among well-meaning Nigerian students, occasioned through the continued reliance on the teaching method which enhances the flourishing of plagues or vices such as bribery, corruption, nepotism, violence, truancy, poor academic attitude, examination malpractice, thuggery and cultism undoubtedly accentuate the decay in our educational system. It is against this background that this study intends to investigate the relevance of cooperative learning method on junior secondary students' attitude towards citizenship education in social studies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Aim and objectives of the study**

The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of cooperative learning method on Junior Secondary students' attitude towards citizenship Education in social studies in Port Harcourt Local government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to:

1. Determine the extent Cooperative Learning Method (CLM) influences students' attitude towards citizenship education in social studies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Explore the difference in the students' attitudes towards citizenship education in social studies before and after the experiment.
3. Investigate the difference in the students' attitudes towards citizenship education based on treatments.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent does CLM influences students' attitude towards Citizenship education in social studies in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What is the difference in the students' attitudes towards citizenship education in social studies before and after the experiment?

3. What is the mean difference in the students' attitudes towards citizenship education based on treatments?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided the study:

**H01:** There is no significant difference in the students' attitudes towards citizenship education in social studies before and after the experiment

**H02:** there is no significant mean difference in the students' attitudes towards citizenship education based on treatments.

### **METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design:** The design adopted in this study is the quasi-experimental design. The independent variable is the instructional methods while the dependent variable is the students' attitude towards citizenship education.

#### **Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The population of this study consisted of two thousand, four hundred and three (2403) JSS II students. A total of 240 JSS II students participated in the study. Firstly, simple random sampling technique was used to select four schools randomly selected from the 13 government owned junior secondary school in Port Harcourt LGA. In each of the four secondary school selected, an arm of JSS II was then randomly selected and two schools/classes were randomly designated as the experimental group and the other two as the control group. There was a total of 120 JSSII students in the experimental and control groups respectively which gave a total of 240 respondents.

#### **Instrumentation**

The validated 10-item instrument Students Attitude Towards Citizenship Education Scale (SATCES) was used for data collection. This scale aims at eliciting information on student's attitude towards socially acceptable behaviour and it consists of two parts. The first part takes care of the demographic data of the students while the second part consists of ten (10) items eliciting information on students attitude towards citizenship education. Furthermore, on this scale, a modified four-point Likert response format of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used. In order to establish the reliability of the instruments used in this research work the test-retest method of estimating reliability was used to obtain  $r = 0.82$  as the reliability index of SATCES.

#### **Experimental procedures**

Before the commencement of the experiment copies of SATCES were administered to the students before the instructions began. The researcher coordinated the administration whereas the teachers who were assigned to the various classes conducted it. First, copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents to obtain the pre-test scores before they were assigned to control and experimental groups. The cooperative learning method was used to teach the experimental groups whereas lecture method was used to teach the students in the control group. At the end of the treatment period using both methods, a post-test of the SATCES was administered to both groups. The data obtained in the pre-test and post-test were subjected to statistical analysis.

### Data analysis

Line graph, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions whereas paired sample t-test and ANCOVA were used to test the hypotheses at .05 alpha level.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Mean scores on the attitude of students on how Cooperative Learning Method (CLM) influences them towards citizenship education (N = 120).**

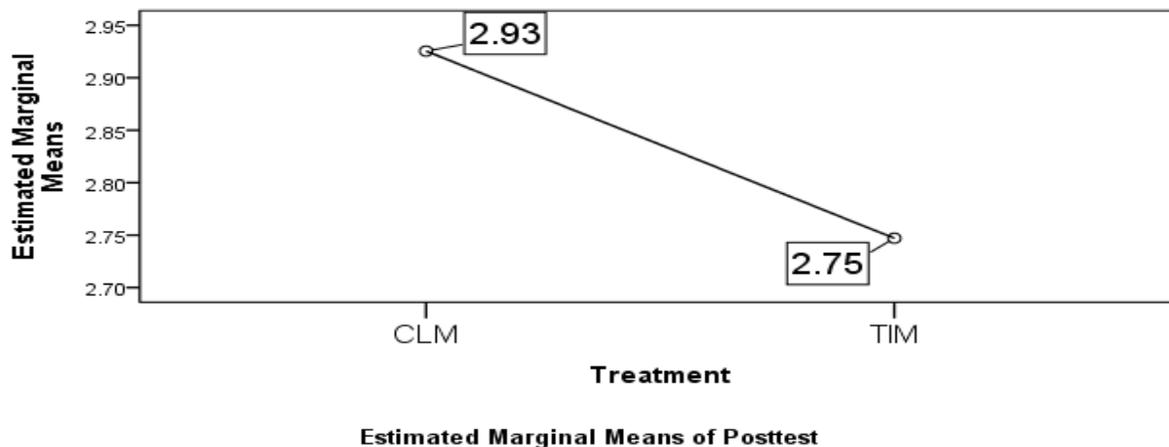
S/N	Item Statement	Pre-Attitude	Post-Attitude
1	Rights, duties and obligation are characteristics of a countries citizenship	2.10	2.82
2	Dishonest and untrustworthy citizens are those who do not perform their duties and obligations in the society	2.05	2.99
3	Voting during election is a duty expected of good citizens	2.14	3.30
4	Right to life, right to freedom of movement, etc. are citizens fundamental human rights	2.21	3.18
5	Our rights as citizens of a country can be denied us during period of undemocratic government	2.95	3.05
6	Democracy is a form of government where citizens elect their leaders	2.08	2.15
7	A patriotic person is ready to defend his country even if it cause him death	2.80	3.60
8	Working together with common objectives and goals promote national unity in a country	2.30	3.15
9	National unity and integration are promoted when every section of a country have respect for each other	2.45	3.24
10	Nigerian flag, National coat of arm, National anthem, etc are symbols of National unity	2.17	1.90
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>2.94</b>

Table 1 shows that the overall mean score on attitude towards citizenship education before treatment was given was 2.33, while after treatment was given the overall mean was found to be 2.94 for the students in the experimental groups who were taught using cooperative learning methods. The result is that Cooperative Learning Method (CLM) influences student's attitude towards citizenship education in social studies as revealed by the difference in mean values before and after the treatment was administered.

**Table 2: Mean, SD and Paired-sample t-test on the difference in the students' attitude towards citizenship education in social studies in the experimental group**

Test	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Pre-attitude	120	2.33	0.49	-9.973	119	.000
Post-Attitude	120	2.94	0.37			

Table 2 showed that the mean pre-attitude score of the students taught using the cooperative method was 2.33, SD=0.49 whereas their post-attitudes was 2.94, SD=0.37. The result further showed that the calculated t-value was 9.973 with  $p < .05$ .



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest = 2.4825

Figure 1; showed that the estimated marginal mean attitudinal score of the students towards citizenship education among students who were taught using the CLM was 2.93 whereas that of those who were taught using TIM was 2.75.

**Table 3: Summary of ANCOVA on the difference in students' attitude towards citizenship education based on treatment**

Source	Type III Squares	Sum of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2.708 <sup>a</sup>	2	1.354	8.469	.000
Intercept	74.213	1	74.213	464.234	.000
Pretest	.288	1	.288	1.799	.181
Treatment	1.727	1	1.727	10.804	.001
Error	37.887	237	.160		
Total	1971.230	240			
Corrected Total	40.595	239			

a. R Squared = .067 (Adjusted R Squared = .059)

Table 1 showed that there was a significant main effect of treatment on the students' attitude towards citizenship education ( $F_{1, 237}=10.804, p=.001$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected at .05 alpha level.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The results from Table 1 showed that students who were taught using the cooperative learning method had a positive attitude after treatment. This showed that there was an improvement ( $M=0.61$ ) in their attitudes ( $M=2.33$ ) from negative to positive (2.94) based on the criterion mean score of 2.50 on a four-point scale. The statistical test on Table 2 showed that there was a significant difference in the mean attitudes of the students before and after the experiment. Furthermore, the result Figure 1 showed that the students who were taught using CLM had a more positive post attitude towards citizenship education more than their counterparts who were taught using TIM. The Table 3 further showed that there was the significant main effect of treatment on the students' attitude towards citizenship education ( $F_{1, 237}=10.804, p=.001$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected at .05 alpha level. This indicated that the students who were taught using the CLM outperformed their counterparts over students' attitude towards citizenship education. The finding of the present study is in corroboration with the finding of Yusuf (2005) which emphasized that the introduction and implementation of citizenship education at all levels of education increases the likelihood of students acquiring values, beliefs, attitudes, interests, habits and lifestyle that could lead to a more stable, strong and united Nigeria.

## **CONCLUSION**

The cooperative learning method has proven to be significantly superior to lecture method over the improvement of students' attitudes towards citizenship education. The cooperative instructional method was capable of advancing the attitudes of the students from negative to positive over time. The implication of the present findings is that when cooperative learning method is integrated into the teaching of citizenship education in the junior secondary level of education the attitudes of students will improve towards the subject.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the present study the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers of social studies should always adopt CLM in the teaching of the subject for the enhancement of the attitudes of the students
2. The use of lecture method in the teaching of social studies should be minimised if not stopped because it appears not aid in the advancement of the attitudes of students

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