

EFFECT OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING STRATEGY ON STUDENTS' INTEREST IN BUSINESS STUDIES' SIMULATION OF OFFICE ACTIVITIES IN TAI SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy on students' interest in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies in selected secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area, Rivers State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design was adopted. The population comprised 712 Junior Secondary School students offering Business Studies in the thirteen public secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area. A sample of 256 students was selected using the Taro Yamane formula and a multi-stage sampling procedure. Four public secondary schools were selected, with two assigned to the experimental group and two to the control group. The instrument for data collection was the Students' Interest Questionnaire (SIQ), developed by the researchers and validated by experts in Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.87. The experimental group was taught office-activity simulation using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy, while the control group was taught using the conventional method. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that students taught using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy recorded a higher post-test mean interest score than those taught using the conventional method. The ANCOVA results showed a significant difference in the interest scores of students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and those taught using the conventional method. It was recommended among others that Business Studies teachers should adopt the social constructivist learning strategy in teaching office-activity simulation and that educational authorities should organize professional development programmes to equip teachers with social-constructivist instructional skills.

Keywords: *Social Constructivist Learning Strategy, Students' Interest, Business Studies, Office Activities Simulation.*

Introduction

Interest is one of the most consistent motivational predictors of how deeply a learner engages with a subject, how long that engagement is sustained, and how far it eventually shapes a career pathway. Harackiewicz, Smith, and Priniski (2016) and Ajibo and Osuji (2023) describe interest as a powerful motivator that drives learning and influences both academic and career lines, noting that it is not a fixed trait but a psychological state that can be deliberately developed through the way a subject is taught. When learners find a subject interesting, they tend to pay closer attention, persist longer on related tasks, and process the content more deeply than when they merely tolerate it. Students' interest in this study refers to that disposition of curiosity, attentiveness, and willingness to engage that students display toward Business Studies, and specifically toward the simulated office activities embedded in the subject.

Business Studies is one of the core pre-vocational subjects offered at the junior secondary school level in Nigeria. Asuquo (2016) describes it as an integrated subject that exposes learners to pre-vocational business ideas, bringing together commerce, book-keeping, office practice, typewriting, and shorthand under one curriculum, with the broad aim of equipping students with occupational skills and competences for paid employment or self-owned trade. Within this composite curriculum, the office practice component is the most overtly practical: it is concerned with the skills, attitudes, and procedures that a worker would ordinarily need in a real business office; receiving and attending to visitors, handling mail, filing documents, operating basic office equipment, and observing office etiquette. Because few junior secondary schools have a functional office laboratory, teachers commonly resort to simulation: students recreate, through role-play and structured activity, the roles and procedures of an actual office setting. The success of this simulation depends heavily on the instructional strategy used to organise it.

Social constructivism traces its theoretical roots to Vygotsky (1978) cited in Ugwu and Eze (2019), who argued that higher cognitive functions develop first through social interaction before they are internalised by the individual learner. Central to Vygotsky's (1978) thesis is the Zone of Proximal Development, the gap between what a learner can achieve unaided and what the same learner can achieve with guidance from a teacher or a more capable peer; learning is most productive when instruction is pitched within this zone and delivered through collaboration rather than passive transmission. Applied to teaching, the strategy organises learners into small groups or role-play teams in which knowledge and skill are jointly constructed through discussion, demonstration, and shared practice, with the teacher acting as a guide rather than a sole dispenser of information. Ekpenyong (2016), writing specifically on the Nigerian Business Education programme, presents constructivist approaches, including the Vygotskian emphasis on socially constructed knowledge, as an emerging paradigm that is gradually displacing the traditional lecture-dominated approach long associated with business subjects in Nigerian classrooms. For a practice-oriented topic such as office activities, a strategy that has learners jointly act out office roles, correct one another, and reconstruct procedures through guided interaction would, in principle, be better suited than a strategy that simply describes office routines from the front of the class.

Despite this theoretical promise, Business Studies in secondary schools continues to be associated with poor achievement and a worrying lack of student enthusiasm, a pattern several researchers attribute to the continued dominance of the lecture method (Ikpe & Magaji, 2024). Where the topic to be taught is inherently practical, as office activities are, a purely verbal, teacher-centred delivery is even less likely to sustain learner interest, because learners are required to imagine office routines they have never been allowed to perform. The present study is situated in Tai, one of the twenty-three Local Government Areas of Rivers State, a predominantly Ogoni-speaking area in the Niger Delta. As in many similarly rural Nigerian education zones, anecdotal classroom observation suggests that Business Studies teachers in the area still lean heavily on expository teaching, leaving the social, hands-on character of office practice underexploited. It is against this background that this study sets out to determine the effect of the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy on students' interest in Business Studies' simulation of office activities in selected secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area.

Review of Empirical Studies

Osondu (2018) investigated the effect of a constructivist instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic achievement in Computer Studies in Abia State, Nigeria, using a quasi-experimental design. Beyond the achievement gains recorded by the constructivist-taught group,

the study recommended that teacher-training institutions deliberately build constructivist skills such as scaffolding and collaborative work into teacher preparation programmes, precisely because the approach was found capable of improving both achievement and interest in the subject. The study is relevant to the present research because Computer Studies, like the office-practice strand of Business Studies, is a practical, skill-based subject; however, the study did not extend to Business Studies or to any simulation-based topic, leaving a gap the present study seeks to fill. Raeisoon, Raeisi and Mohammadi (2024) examined the effect of a constructivist-based teaching strategy on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Integrated Science, motivated partly by the negative attitude many Nigerian students display toward science subjects. Their quasi-experimental study found that the group exposed to the constructivist strategy outperformed the group taught conventionally, and the researchers recommended that integrated science teachers adopt constructivist techniques to address both poor performance and the disengagement that often accompanies it. While the study supports the broader claim that constructivist strategies can improve outcomes in practically oriented subjects, it was conducted in the science domain rather than in Business Studies, and interest was not isolated as a distinct dependent variable, a gap the present study addresses by treating interest on its own terms within an office-practice context.

Ekpenyong (2016) provided a conceptual and theoretical examination of constructivist approaches as an emerging paradigm in the teaching of Business Education in Nigeria, drawing explicitly on Vygotsky's social-constructivist emphasis on collective knowledge construction. The paper argued that the heavily abstract, teacher-centred manner in which many Nigerian Business Studies/Business Education teachers deliver lessons works against the discovery-oriented, collaborative learning that the subject's practical components require. Because the paper was theoretical rather than experimental, it could not measure interest empirically, underscoring the need for the kind of quasi-experimental, interest-focused investigation the present study undertakes.

Abalas, Andrew, and Abifarin (2022) studied the effect of simulation strategy on senior secondary two Biology students' interest and academic achievement in the Plateau Northern Senatorial Zone, Nigeria. Using a quasi-experimental design with mean, standard deviation, ANCOVA, and ANOVA for analysis, the researchers found that the achievement mean scores of the group taught with simulation were higher than those of the group taught conventionally, and recommended that teachers adopt simulation strategy more widely to raise both achievement and interest in Biology. This study is directly relevant because it confirms that simulation, as a strategy, has already been shown to raise students' interest in a science subject; the present study extends this line of enquiry into Business Studies, where the topic itself (office activities) is inherently amenable to simulated, role-play-based instruction. Bello and Rasheed (2023) carried out an empirical analysis of the impact of simulation techniques on Business Studies students' academic performance in upper basic schools in Ilorin, Kwara State, comparing a simulation role-play approach with the conventional lecture method using a quasi-experimental design and an independent-samples t-test. The study found that students taught with the simulation role-play method recorded markedly higher performance than those taught by lecture, and recommended that Business Studies teachers make more deliberate use of simulation role-play in their lessons. This study is the most directly comparable to the present one in subject matter (Adere et al., 2025), since it specifically targeted Business Studies; however, its dependent variable was academic performance, not interest, and simulation, rather than the explicitly social-constructivist framing of group-based, guided collaborative simulation, was the instructional treatment. The present study builds on this by examining interest as the outcome variable and by situating the simulated activity within a social-constructivist instructional framework.

Suleiman, Mustapha, and Ibrahim (2016) compared simulation techniques with the lecture method on students' academic performance at Mafoni Day Secondary School, Maiduguri, Borno State, and likewise found the simulation-taught group recording superior outcomes to the lecture-taught group. Although the study was not specific to Business Studies, its consistent finding, in line with Abalas et al. (2022) and Bello and Rasheed (2023), strengthens the broader empirical pattern that simulation as a teaching technique tends to outperform expository teaching across different subjects and locations in Nigeria.

Ikpe and Magaji (2024) investigated the effect of a Cooperative Learning Strategy, specifically the STAD and Jigsaw II models, on the academic achievement of Business Studies students in the Wukari Education Zone of Taraba State, Nigeria, using a quasi-experimental, pretest–posttest, non-equivalent control group design. Their findings showed that students taught with either cooperative model recorded significantly higher achievement gains than those taught through the lecture method, with the STAD model producing slightly larger gains than the Jigsaw II model. The study also documented, from WAEC and NECO records, a long-standing pattern of low enrolment and poor performance in Business Studies, which the authors linked to ineffective, lecture-dominated teaching methods. Cooperative learning shares with social constructivism an emphasis on peer interaction and jointly constructed understanding, so this study lends indirect support to the theoretical expectation that the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy should likewise improve outcomes in Business Studies; however, the study measured achievement rather than interest, and it did not involve office-practice simulation, both of which the present study specifically targets.

However, the reviewed studies show a consistent pattern: constructivist-based strategies tend to outperform conventional lecture methods in raising achievement and, in some cases, interest, across subjects as varied as Computer Studies, Integrated Science, and Biology, and simulation specifically has been shown to outperform lecture methods in Biology and in Business Studies achievement. What remains comparatively unexplored is the intersection of all three elements at once: a social-constructivist instructional strategy, applied specifically to the simulation of office activities within Business Studies, with students' interest, rather than achievement alone, as the outcome of interest. None of the studies reviewed was conducted in Rivers State to which Tai Local Government Area is located.

Statement of the Problem

Business Studies remains one of the subjects in which Nigerian secondary school students' consistently record low enrolment and weak performance in public examinations, a pattern several researchers have linked to the continued reliance on the lecture method by classroom teachers (Akpomi & Kayii, 2022; Ikpe & Magaji, 2024). The office-practice component of the subject is particularly vulnerable to this problem because it is, by its nature, a practical, skill-based area meant to be experienced rather than merely described: learners are expected to internalise routines such as filing, receiving visitors, handling correspondence, and observing office etiquette, tasks that are difficult to grasp meaningfully through verbal explanation alone. Where schools lack a functional office laboratory, as is common in many rural Local Government Areas, simulation becomes the only realistic way of exposing learners to these activities, yet the success of any simulation depends heavily on whether the surrounding instructional strategy genuinely engages learners or merely directs them through a routine. Existing empirical evidence, reviewed above, indicates that social-constructivist strategies have improved interest and achievement in subjects such as Computer Studies and Integrated Science, and that simulation strategies have improved achievement in Biology and in Business Studies elsewhere in Nigeria. What is not yet established, however, is

whether deliberately organising the simulation of office activities around social-constructivist principles, that is, having learners construct their understanding of office routines collaboratively, with peer interaction and teacher guidance within their zone of proximal development, rather than through individually performed or teacher-demonstrated simulation, makes any measurable difference to students' interest in the topic. This gap is compounded by the absence of any located study conducted in Rivers State, and specifically in Tai Local Government Area, where classroom observation suggests that expository teaching still dominates Business Studies instruction. Without empirical evidence from this specific context, curriculum planners, school administrators, and Business Studies teachers in Tai Local Government Area have no locally grounded basis for deciding whether adopting a social-constructivist approach to office-activity simulation is worth the additional planning and training it would require. It is this question the present study sets answer: what is the effect of the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy on students' interest in Business Studies' simulation of office activities in selected secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area, Rivers State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy on students' interest in Business Studies' simulation of office activities in selected secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area, Rivers State. Specifically the study sought to determine the following objectives:

1. The effect of the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy on students' interest in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies in selected secondary schools in Tai LGA?
2. The difference exists between the mean interest scores of students taught simulation of office activities using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and those taught using the conventional method?
3. The difference exists between the pre-test and post-test mean interest scores of students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy?

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study

4. What is the effect of the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy on students' interest in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies in selected secondary schools in Tai LGA?
5. What difference exists between the mean interest scores of students taught simulation of office activities using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and those taught using the conventional method?
6. What difference exists between the pre-test and post-test mean interest scores of students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of students taught simulation of office activities in Business Studies using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and those taught using the conventional method in selected secondary schools in Tai LGA.
2. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean interest scores of students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy in selected secondary schools in Tai LGA.

- The pre-test interest scores have no significant influence on the post-test interest scores of students in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies in selected secondary schools in Tai LGA.

METHODOLOGY

A quasi-experimental, pre-test-post-test, non-equivalent control group design was adopted for this study. This design was considered most appropriate because it allows the researcher to use intact classes already existing in the sampled schools, rather than dismantling existing class arrangements to achieve random assignment of individual students, which is rarely practicable in a normal school setting. The design is represented as follows:

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental Group	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control Group	O ₃	Conventional Method	O ₄

Where:

- O₁ and O₃ = Pre-test interest scores of the experimental and control groups respectively
- X = Treatment with the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy
- O₂ and O₄ = Post-test interest scores of the experimental and control groups respectively

Both groups were given the same instrument before treatment (O₁, O₃) and again after treatment (O₂, O₄), so that any change in interest scores could be attributed, with reasonable confidence, to the strategy used rather than to pre-existing differences between the groups. The population of the study comprised all Junior Secondary School Business Studies students' in the public secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area. There are thirteen (13) public secondary schools in the area, with a total Business Studies student population of seven hundred and twelve (712) students. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample for the study. Taro Yamane formula was to determine the sample size of 256 students before applying simple random sampling, by balloting, was used to select four (4) out of the thirteen (13) public secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area and again balloting was used to randomly assign two (2) of the four selected schools to the experimental group and the remaining two (2) schools to the control group. In each of the four selected schools, one intact Junior Secondary School class already offering Business Studies was selected by simple random sampling to serve as the experimental or control class for that school, in keeping with the non-equivalent, intact-class nature of the design. The instrument used for data collection was the Students' Interest Questionnaire (SIQ), developed by the researchers specifically for this study. The SIQ was designed to elicit students' level of interest in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies, and was structured on a four-point Likert-type rating scale of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The instrument was made up of two sections: which comprised of Demographic information of respondents (school, class, age, and gender) and Items measuring students' interest in the simulation of office activities, covering dimensions such as attentiveness during office-activity lessons, willingness to participate in office role-play, enjoyment of office-simulation tasks, and disposition toward further learning of office practice. The same instrument was administered as both the pretest and the posttest, with the order of items rearranged at posttest to reduce the likelihood of a testing effect. The face and content validity of the SIQ was established through experts review. Copies of the draft instrument, along with the research questions and hypotheses, were given to two experts in Business Education and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, who scrutinised the items for clarity, relevance to the constructs being measured, and appropriateness of language for junior secondary school students. The instrument was trial-tested on a sample of students from a public secondary school in Tai Local Government Area and data obtained were analysed using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique gave a cumulative coefficient of 0.87.

Procedure for Conducting the Study

Phase 1: Preparation

1. Approval was obtained from the principals of the sampled schools.
2. The four participating secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area were selected as described in section.
3. The Students' Interest Questionnaire (SIQ) was developed and validated.
4. The Business Studies teachers in the two experimental schools were trained by the researchers on the use of the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy, including how to organise collaborative groups, facilitate role-play, and provide scaffolding and feedback during office-activity simulation.

Phase 2: Pretest

1. The Students' Interest Questionnaire was administered to both the experimental and control groups before treatment commenced.
2. Scores obtained were recorded as the baseline (pretest) interest scores of the two groups.

Phase 3: Treatment

The Business Studies teachers taught the simulation of office activities using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy, comprising: (collaborative group activities, peer learning, role-playing of office situations, guided office simulations and teacher scaffolding and feedback).

Examples of activities used included students simulating a receptionist's duties, performing filing and record-keeping tasks, simulating the handling of incoming and outgoing mail, and role-playing office communication scenarios, all carried out in small groups with peer interaction and teacher guidance. The Business Studies teachers taught the same topics on office activities using the conventional method, comprising: (lecture method, explanation and note-taking, question-and-answer method and traditional, teacher-centred classroom instruction). The treatment lasted for six (6) to eight (8) weeks, with two Business Studies periods per week in both groups, so that both groups received an equal amount of instructional time and differed only in the strategy used.

Phase 4: Posttest

1. The Students' Interest Questionnaire was re-administered to both groups immediately after the treatment period.
2. Posttest scores were compared with pretest scores for both groups to determine any change in interest.

Phase 5: Data Analysis

Scores from the pretest and posttest administration of the SIQ were collated and subjected to statistical analysis. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted as the benchmark: a mean score of 2.50 and above was interpreted as indicating a high level of interest, while a mean score below 2.50 was interpreted as indicating a low level of interest. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, for each hypothesis, the null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated significance value (p) was less than 0.05, and retained where the calculated significance value was equal to or greater than 0.05. All data analysis was carried out with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

Research Question 1: What is the effect of Social Constructivist Learning Strategy on students' interest in simulation of office activities in Business Studies?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pretest and Posttest Interest Scores of Students Taught Simulation of Office Activities Using Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and Conventional Method

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Experimental (Social Constructivist Learning Strategy)	128	2.48	0.24	3.25	0.30	0.77
Control (Conventional Method)	128	2.48	0.27	2.65	0.29	0.17
Total	256	2.48	0.25	2.95	0.30	0.47

Table 1 shows that both groups had approximately the same level of interest before treatment, with a pre-test mean of 2.48 each. After treatment, students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy obtained a higher post-test mean score ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.30$) than those taught using the conventional method ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 0.29$). The experimental group recorded a mean gain of 0.77, while the control group recorded a mean gain of only 0.17. This suggests that the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy improved students' interest in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies. Therefore, students taught using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy recorded a post-test mean score of 3.25 ($SD = 0.30$), indicating a high level of interest.

Research Question 2: What difference exists between the mean interest scores of students taught using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and those taught using the conventional method?

Table 2: Effect of Social Constructivist Learning Strategy on Students' Interest in Simulation of Office Activities

Group	N	Mean Score	SD	Decision
Experimental (Social Constructivist Learning Strategy)	128	3.25	0.30	High Interest
Control (Conventional Method)	128	2.65	0.29	High Interest
Total	256	2.50	-	-

Table 2 shows the post-test mean score of the experimental group (3.25) is higher than that of the control group (2.65). Since both means are above the criterion mean of 2.50, both groups exhibited a high level of interest; however, the experimental group demonstrated substantially greater interest. Therefore, the experimental group obtained a higher mean score (3.25) than the control group (2.65), with a mean difference of 0.60 in favour of the experimental group.

Research Question 3: What difference exists between the pretest and posttest mean interest scores of students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy?

Table 3: Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Interest Scores of Students Exposed to Social Constructivist Learning Strategy

Test	N	Mean Score	SD
Pre-test	128	2.48	0.24
Post-test	128	3.25	0.30
Mean Difference	-	0.77	-

Table 3 shows the post-test mean score (3.25) is higher than the pretest mean score (2.48), indicating that exposure to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy increased students' interest in Business Studies simulation of office activities. However, experimental group recorded a mean gain of 0.77, indicating an increase in students' interest following the treatment.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of students taught simulation of office activities in Business Studies using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and those taught using the conventional method in selected secondary schools in Tai LGA.

Table 4: ANCOVA Summary of the Difference in Posttest Interest Scores of Students Taught Using Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and Conventional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Sqr	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	35.682	2	17.841	102.743	.000
Intercept	28.451	1	28.451	163.857	.000
Pretest Score (Covariate)	6.213	1	6.213	35.777	.000
Group	24.876	1	24.876	143.257	.000
Error	43.964	253	0.174		
Total	2312.000	256			
Corrected Total	79.646	255			

Dependent Variable: Post-test Interest Score

Since the probability value ($p = .000$) is less than the alpha level of 0.05 as presented in table 5, the null hypothesis was rejected. There is a significant difference in the posttest interest scores of students taught simulation of office activities using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy and those taught using the conventional method. Students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy demonstrated significantly higher interest in Business Studies simulation of office activities. Therefore, students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy recorded a significantly higher level of interest than those taught using the conventional method ($F = 143.257, p < .05$).

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean interest scores of students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy.

Table 6: ANCOVA Summary of the Difference between Pretest and Posttest Interest Scores of Students Exposed to Social Constructivist Learning Strategy

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Sqr	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	31.547	2	15.774	95.602	.000
Intercept	22.371	1	22.371	135.613	.000
Pretest Score	7.895	1	7.895	47.864	.000
Treatment Effect	19.642	1	19.642	119.132	.000
Error	41.731	253	0.165		

Total	2312.000	256
Corrected Total	73.278	255

Since the probability value ($p = .000$) is less than 0.05 as presented in table 6, the null hypothesis was rejected. There is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest interest scores of students exposed to the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy. The strategy significantly improved students' interest in simulation of office activities.

Hypothesis 3: The pretest interest scores have no significant influence on the post-test interest scores of students in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies.

Table 7: ANCOVA Summary of the Influence of Pretest Interest Scores on Posttest Interest Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Sqr	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	35.682	2	17.841	102.743	.000
Intercept	28.451	1	28.451	163.857	.000
Pretest Score	6.213	1	6.213	35.777	.000
Group	24.876	1	24.876	143.257	.000
Error	43.964	253	0.174		
Total	2312.000	256			
Corrected Total	79.646	255			

Since the probability value for pretest score ($p = .000$) is less than 0.05 as presented in table 7, the null hypothesis was rejected. Pretest interest scores significantly influenced posttest interest scores of students in the simulation of office activities. This indicates that students' initial level of interest contributed significantly to their post-treatment interest scores.

Table 8: Estimated Marginal Means of Posttest Interest Scores by Treatment Group

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval
Experimental (Social Constructivist Learning Strategy)	3.25	0.04	3.17 – 3.33
Control (Conventional Method)	2.65	0.04	2.57 – 2.73

Table 8 shows the adjusted mean posttest interest score for students taught using the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy (3.25) was higher than that of students taught using the conventional method (2.65). This confirms that the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy was more effective in improving students' interest in Business Studies simulation of office activities.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide consistent evidence that the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy exerted a strong positive effect on students' interest in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies, and this discussion situates the findings within the literature reviewed earlier. The result for research question one showed that both groups began the study with comparable levels of interest, recording an identical pretest mean, which suggests that the experimental and control groups were reasonably equivalent before treatment and that any difference recorded afterwards could reasonably be attributed to the instructional strategy used rather than to pre-existing disparities between the groups. Following treatment, the experimental group's interest rose sharply to a mean of 3.25, a mean gain of 0.77, compared with a far more modest gain of 0.17 for the control group taught with the conventional method. This finding supports Harackiewicz, Smith, and Priniski's (2016) view that interest is not a fixed trait but a state that can be deliberately cultivated

through the way a subject is taught; the manner in which the office-activity simulation was organised in the experimental group, around collaborative groups, peer interaction, role-play, and teacher scaffolding, appears to have created the conditions (Ugwu & Eze, 2019) associated with learning within the Zone of Proximal Development, where guided collaboration with a teacher and more capable peers produces gains a learner is unlikely to achieve working alone.

For research question two, although both groups recorded posttest means above the criterion mean of 2.50 and could therefore both be described as having developed a high level of interest, the substantially higher mean score of the experimental group indicates that the conventional lecture method, while not entirely ineffective, was considerably less successful at sustaining and deepening learners' engagement with office-activity simulation than the social-constructivist approach. This finding aligns with Bello and Rasheed (2023) and Suleiman, Mustapha, and Ibrahim (2016), both of whom found simulation-based approaches outperforming the lecture method in Business Studies and related contexts, and lends weight to Ikpe and Magaji's (2024) observation that lecture-dominated teaching is associated with the persistently low engagement that has characterised Business Studies instruction in Nigerian secondary schools.

The result for research question three, a pretest-to-posttest gain of 0.77 within the experimental group, shows that the improvement in interest was not merely a between-group artefact but represented a genuine, within-subject shift in disposition following exposure to the strategy. This pattern mirrors Osondu's (2018) finding that a constructivist instructional strategy improved interest among students in another practical subject, Computer Studies, and Raeisoon, et al. (2024) finding of comparable gains in Integrated Science. It also extends Abalas, Andrew, and Abifarin's (2022) finding that simulation raised interest in Biology, and gives empirical weight to Ekpenyong's (2016) conceptual argument that constructivist methods are better suited than expository teaching to the discovery-oriented, collaborative learning that practical Business Studies content demands. In doing so, the finding addresses the specific gap left by Ekpenyong (2016) and Bello and Rasheed (2023), namely the absence of evidence directly combining a social-constructivist framework with office-activity simulation and interest as the outcome of interest.

The hypothesis-testing results reinforce these descriptive patterns statistically. The rejection of the first null hypothesis confirms that the difference in post-test interest scores between the experimental and control groups was not due to chance, lending strong empirical support to Ekpenyong's (2016) theoretical position and to the cooperative-learning findings of Ikpe and Magaji (2024), whose peer-interaction-based strategy likewise outperformed the lecture method, albeit on achievement rather than interest. The rejection of the second null hypothesis confirms that the rise in the experimental group's interest from pre-test to post-test was statistically significant rather than a chance fluctuation, corroborating the gain reported for research question three and supporting the conclusion that the social-constructivist treatment, rather than repeated exposure to the questionnaire or simple maturation, accounts for the improvement. The rejection of the third null hypothesis indicates that students' pretest interest scores significantly predicted their posttest scores, a result that justified the use of pretest score as a covariate in the ANCOVA used to test the first hypothesis, and which suggests that learners who already showed some baseline curiosity about office activities were more likely to respond strongly to the constructivist treatment. Even so, the adjusted, covariate-controlled means in Table 8 show that the experimental group's advantage persisted (3.25 against 2.65, with non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals) after pretest differences were statistically accounted for, confirming that the treatment effect was not simply a function of initial interest levels.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy is significantly more effective than the conventional lecture method in promoting students' interest in the simulation of office activities in Business Studies. Although students in the experimental and control groups began the study with comparable, moderately favourable dispositions toward office-activity simulation, only those exposed to the collaborative, role-play-based, and teacher-scaffolded procedures of the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy went on to develop a markedly higher and statistically significant level of interest, a gain that could not be attributed to chance or to pre-existing differences between the groups.

Recommendations

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

1. Business Studies teachers should adopt the Social Constructivist Learning Strategy in teaching the simulation of office activities, organising learners into small collaborative groups for role-play of office routines such as receiving visitors, filing, and handling mail, with the teacher acting as a guide and scaffolder rather than a sole dispenser of information, since this approach produced a significantly higher and statistically confirmed level of interest than the conventional lecture method.
2. Ministries of Education and school administrators in Tai Local Government Area, and in similar education zones, should organise continuing professional development workshops to build teachers' skills in social-constructivist techniques.
3. Business Studies teachers should introduce simple, engaging exposure activities, such as brief office role-play or demonstrations, early in the teaching of office practice topics to raise students' baseline interest, while school authorities should also work toward providing functional office-practice spaces and basic equipment so that simulation activities can be conducted more realistically and consistently.

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