

**IMPACT OF PROMPT CARDS STRATEGY ON THE ESSAY WRITING
PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KOGI STATE**

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of the prompt cards strategy on the essay writing performance of junior secondary school students in Kogi State. The sample for the study consisted of 320 Junior Secondary School II and III students that were selected from eight Junior Secondary Schools in Kogi State. Multistage sampling technique were adopted in selecting the samples. At the first stage, simple random sampling technique were used in selecting a Local Government Area (LGA) in each of the three Senatorial Districts in Kogi State which comprises ,Western Senatorial district, Central Senatorial district and Eastern Senatorial district. The second stage involved the selection of two (2) schools using stratified sampling technique from each Local Government Area earlier selected to make six (5). The selected schools were randomly assigned to one experimental and one control group at four (4) schools for each group. Two arms of intact class were used in each of the school selected. The study adopted quasi experimental design of pretest, posttest and control groups design in which there was one experimental and one control group. A self-developed instrument was used to establish the effectiveness of prompt cards strategy on writing performance of Junior Secondary School II (JSS 2 and 3) students. The instrument was tagged “Student English Performance Test (SEPT)”. Data collected were analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistics. Data gathered through pre-test and post-test were graded using a prepared marking guide. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question raised for the study while a Two Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and t-test of independent sample were used to test hypotheses formulated for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study established the significant difference and effect of prompt cards strategy on junior secondary school students’ writing performance before and after treatment, as well as on students from rural and urban locations. Gender difference was however found not to be significant. It was recommended that prompt cards strategy should be encouraged among junior secondary school students in essay writing as it enhances better academic performance of students.

Keywords: Essay writing; Kogi State; Gender; Prompt Cards; Students’ performance

Introduction

Writing is a fundamental component of language proficiency. It is both a skill that yields results and a skill that allows for the clear conveyance of thoughts and ideas. Additionally, it is a very

efficient means of communication. Communication is a method for expressing one's thoughts, emotions, and internalized experiences. Writing encompasses both a practical action and a creative expression. As an act, writing involves the psychomotor domain, which refers to the physical action of using the hand to write. On the other hand, as an art, it is cognitive in nature since it requires the capacity to compose written content. Writing, both as a process and a form of artistic expression, necessitates the precise utilization of the language of communication in order to effectively convey intended meaning.

Writing, as a productive skill, enables us to effectively convey our thoughts, sentiments, and passions. Osa Omoregie (2020) argues that writing enhances pupils' capacity for critical thinking, creativity, critical analysis, organisation of ideas, problem-solving, and the ability to summarise knowledge. Nevertheless, it is noted that among all the language talents, it is the most difficult and the most overlooked. Writing is not an inherent or instinctive action, which is why it presents difficulties for pupils, even when they are writing in their native language. The issue becomes more evident when individuals write in their second language (L2) as they are using a linguistic system that is completely distinct from their native tongue. Additionally, this writing skill necessitates the use and comprehension of the other three language abilities.

In addition, according to Ofodu (2016), writing is an intricate symbolic depiction of an individual's thoughts and images. Furthermore, writing is conveyed through visual representations or symbols. Borode (2014) argues that writing is a visual form of communication that involves the use of symbols to create impressions on a physical surface. The system consists of symbols and characters that can be inscribed on various mediums such as parchment, papyrus, animal hide, paper, stone, tablet, clay, or wood. Furthermore, Olatunji (2019) asserts that essay compositions play a crucial role in facilitating successful communication both within educational institutions and in the broader society.

Obateru (2018) argues that writing plays a crucial role in evaluating learning in the Nigerian education system. Most examinations and tests in Nigeria necessitate pupils' proficiency in written communication. Therefore, it is widely assumed that writing is equivalent to educational attainment. Shewan (2020) asserts that writing evokes intimidation among many individuals. Moreover, writing is a multifaceted endeavour that demands significant cognitive exertion.

Simultaneously, we engage in a complex and intellectual endeavour where we express our ideas through language and written documents, while also considering the structure, lexicon, coherence, accessibility, and appropriateness. Writing is an artificial skill that does not naturally develop, even in one's first language. Writing demands greater cognitive effort compared to speaking due to its formal nature. Anything that represents us must be written in order for the audience to be accurately assessed and comprehended. While we can communicate with the audience through speech, it is necessary to put in extra effort to provide a clear context when writing.

Through discussions with Junior Secondary School students in Kogi State, the researcher discovered that the students perceive writing as a challenge. They lack the knowledge of what to write and struggle with initiating the writing process. They perceive the problems of writing as immense. In addition, it was noted that teachers, both in general and specifically in Kogi State, employ conventional teaching methods to convey knowledge. Classroom instructional techniques significantly contribute to fostering student engagement in the teaching and learning process. The conventional approach to education has failed to provide opportunities for pupils to actively engage in idea generation and written expression. Consequently, the teaching and learning process has become increasingly dull due to its repetitive nature. Oniya (2018) argues that the typical approach of education is inadequate in effectively instructing an individual. The modern classroom should employ contemporary teaching approaches. Continuing to employ traditional teaching methods in the era of computers would only result in a dull classroom environment and an uninspiring teaching and learning experience.

The strategy used in this study is prompt cards. Prompt cards are otherwise referred to as non-verbal information. According to Onukaogu (2009) information photographs and illustration reinforce and clarify concepts and they make concepts interesting and attractive. Prompt cards assist students to be creative, great thinkers and writers. They also allow students to develop at their own pace and to view things from angles that teachers cannot even imagine. Moreover, they help the individual to use his imagination to generate new and relevant ideas that are quite meaningful. Its usage is a function of knowledge and imagination because every individual is born with varying degree of potentialities which are innate and hidden but can be utilized through activity- based teaching.

Another crucial factor in this study is the geographical location. The location of a school pertains to the surrounding environmental circumstances, which can either be urban or rural. As per the United Nations Development Programme (2014), an area is classified as urban if its population exceeds 2,500 individuals. The geographical location of a school is closely linked to the academic success of students in the area of essay writing. Ezike (1997) argues that the geographical location of a school can either positively or negatively impact pupils' academic progress. One of the issues that impacts teaching and learning is the location of urban schools. It is a well-established fact that many urban schools are situated in noisy locations such as marketplaces, residential areas, and record stores, which significantly disrupt the learning process.

Introducing the prompt cards technique could improve students' proficiency in essay writing. Students will be required to engage in unrestricted writing on subjects that pertain to their daily existence. It is important to acknowledge that in order to overcome problems related to writing skills faced by teachers and students, it is crucial for teachers to have a deep understanding of the subject matter and employ effective teaching methods, while students must also actively participate.

The performance of students has constantly been inadequate over the years, indicating a pressing need for a fresh method to achieve the desired outcome in student performance. Nevertheless, the researcher has noticed a lack of research on the prompt card approach in relation to writing skills. Therefore, conducting this study is crucial.

Problems of Teaching Essay Writing in English in Nigeria

Fakeye (2002) argues that writing is taught in schools to equip students with the necessary skills for more complex writing tasks, such as crafting lengthy essays, dissertations, and projects at the tertiary level. However, the teaching of composition writing faces numerous challenges, with one of the primary obstacles being interference from the students' mother tongue. The impact of previously acquired, extensively learned language or languages on a newly learned language is evident in all facets of the English language. Interference is evident in the sound system, syntax, and semantics. According to Rajini, Gomathy, and Ramya (2016), the effect of the mother tongue is a significant obstacle to acquiring the English language. According to Mustapha & Ajani (2011), learners face an inherent disadvantage when they already possess one language and are required

to learn another language. An intriguing phenomenon arises where second language learners find themselves lacking proficiency in both their first and second language.

Nigerian students inadvertently convey their thoughts and emotions in English, drawing on the framework of their native language (L1). However, due to the English language's distinct cultural context, the typical student often has difficulties in its usage. Research has shown that the process of acquiring a first language might have a negative impact on the ability to learn a second language. According to Mustapha and Ajani (2011), a significant number of secondary school pupils in Nigeria already possess different first languages prior to their enrollment in schools, which places them in a disadvantaged position. An instance of negative transfer from the native language has been recognised as a significant obstacle that hinders the acquisition of a second language.

It should be emphasised that this influence is not exclusive to a specific language. It spans across all Nigerian languages and has even generated what is known as Popular Nigerian English, which, when spoken, is comprehensible to all Nigerians. According to Maisamari (2002), a significant number of Nigerians use a variation of English called Nigerian English, which is distinct from the standard form spoken globally.

Iknone (2002) argues that globally, communicating with kids who have been exposed to Nigerian English can be exceptionally difficult. The influence of the native language was a contributing factor in the evolution of Nigerian English. Furthermore, Adokwe (2012) asserts that there are approximately four categorizations of Nigerian spoken English, one of which involves the direct incorporation of linguistic elements from the mother tongue into English.

Prompt Card Strategy

When utilised effectively in the educational setting, audio-visual materials can successfully fulfil various intricate objectives in the teaching and learning process. They offer prompts and concepts for composing texts with the purpose of entertaining, explaining, instructing, recounting, socialising, persuading, and describing. These cards can be utilised either individually or for groups within a class, allowing for sharing, discussion, and subsequent written analysis. It serves as a means to stimulate the creative thinking of young minds. The use of audio-visual materials in the teaching and learning process has several benefits.

Firstly, they provide a tangible foundation for conceptual thinking, thereby minimising students' irrelevant responses. Secondly, they offer authentic experiences, which enable learners to develop their thinking and comprehension skills. Lastly, they facilitate a shared experience among all members of a group.

Furthermore, according to Egbeji (2003), the classroom should be created in a manner that fosters an environment conducive to promoting resourcefulness, self-confidence, independence, patience, and competence. Furthermore, Maclean in Egbeji (2003) argues that a lack of diversity and low standard of circumstances might result in deprivation for any youngster. Children acquire knowledge most effectively through hands-on, tangible experiences. Frequently, a student has feelings of inadequacy and self-perceived incompetence, despite possessing genuine talent. Hence, it is incumbent upon an exemplary educator to strive to surmount this challenge, ensuring that every student in the classroom perceives their intrinsic value. When a pupil possesses self-belief, he will have the capacity to actualize his inherent abilities.

Dowdell in Larayetan (2011) argues that fostering an environment where children are allowed to voice their thoughts can contribute to the development of positive personality qualities in them. Contemporary educators exert significant effort to encourage both male and female students to articulate their viewpoints, emotions, and concepts. Fasae (2017) suggests that students who has prior experience or knowledge of the topic they are writing about tend to generate their best essays. Akinmurele (2015) proposes implementing policies to promote regular assessment of students' essay writing skills, as this will enhance their English proficiency and subsequently improve their performance in other subjects that rely on English.

Gender and Academic Performance in English Essay Writing

Language according to Obadare (2014) is a human activity and not a peculiarity of any gender. In addition, Good in Popoola (2003), submits that education encompasses all the procedures by which an individual, regardless of gender, enhances their skills, attitudes, and ethical behaviour within their society. Conversely, researchers that have examined the correlations between gender and language have reached contrasting findings.

Oladunni (1995) argues that the gender of pupils does not have an impact on their academic achievement. Tyler (1969) argues that there is no substantial relationship between education, achievement, and sex differences. On the other hand, Kelly in Adeyeye, Aregbesola & Ilugbusi

(2003) assert in their own research that, when provided with equal opportunities and sufficient motivation, sex does not play a significant role in academic achievement. Nevertheless, Jibodu and Ofodu's (2016) study reveals a statistically significant disparity in the academic achievement between male and female students. The author posits that the superior performance of female students in reading comprehension can be attributed to their more advanced left cerebrum, responsible for verbal skills. Conversely, male students' stronger right cerebrum, responsible for mathematical reasoning and spatial relationships, may explain their comparatively lower performance in this area.

In addition, Ofodu & Lawal (2010) contend that gender pertains to the attributes and actions that a particular community deems appropriate for males and females in various situations. Similarly, Ofodu (2016) contends that the primary objective of all teachers is to provide equal learning chances for every student in the classroom, regardless of their gender. Research and empirical evidence have demonstrated that gender significantly impacts learners' aptitude to excel in demanding learning tasks. In addition, Okoh (1983) argues that strict categorization of gender roles hinders creativity. Insisting that specific activities are exclusively tied to a particular sex does not contribute to fostering innovation. Language is not inherently associated with any particular gender, hence it is important for everyone to be diligent in their pursuit of acquiring it.

Studies on Location and Academic Performance of Students

The geographic location of a school is a crucial factor that greatly influences the process of teaching and learning. It is a fact that the majority of urban schools are situated in or close to noisy areas such as marketplaces, residential neighbourhoods, and record shops, which can hinder pupils' ability to study. Learning in a serene and accommodating environment is highly advantageous. Moreover, the classification of the school setting as either urban or rural has a substantial influence on the process of teaching and learning. An urban area is characterised by a large population, while a rural area is characterised by a small population. Akinwumi (2015) discovered through a study that compared the ability to infer word meanings across experimental and control groups of students in urban and rural areas, that the geographical location of the school does not affect students' attitudes towards reading comprehension.

However, schools located in rural locations are significantly distant from the town, resulting in considerable difficulties for teachers and pupils in terms of transportation before reaching the school. Teachers, for obvious reasons, strongly dislike being assigned to remote locations. Urban areas offer abundant learning opportunities, including well-equipped schools with modern facilities and dedicated teachers. In contrast, rural areas often have incomplete school buildings lacking basic amenities such as windows and laboratories.

The significance of resources in the educational/learning process is immeasurable. The training process is made more efficient by utilizing these resources, which encompass excellent classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sporting facilities. In their study, Musibau and Adigun (2010) examined how factors like as school, gender, location, and type influence the academic achievement of pupils in Kogi State. Based on the study's findings, the geographical location of schools does not significantly affect pupils' academic achievement. This suggests that the academic achievement of a student is not affected by whether they attend a high school in a rural or urban area.

Aluede & Onolemhember (2001) conducted a study that examined the impact of habit counselling on the academic achievement of high school students who were non-native English speakers. Two students from Lumen Christ High School in Uromi, Edo State, Nigeria were chosen as representatives for the 108 senior high school classes. The research findings indicated a positive correlation between pupils with effective study habits and their academic performance.

Problem Statement

The English language is a mandatory subject provided in both junior and senior schools. The significance of this subject cannot be overstated, as all other courses are instructed and evaluated in the English language. Therefore, students who possess a proficient command of the language will experience success in both formal and informal contexts. Essay writing is a significant component of the English language test. Out of the total allocation of 100% for the English language, 50% is dedicated to essay writing. Consequently, failure in essay writing inevitably results in failure in English.

Despite these revelations, the consistent underperformance of candidates in the English language section of the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination, West African Examination

Council, and National Examination Council has led to frustration among some students who are unable to gain admission to higher institutions. There has been widespread criticism in both print and electronic media on the deteriorating academic performance of pupils in secondary schools in Nigeria, particularly in English language. An observation was made that a significant number of students consistently underperform in the domain of essay writing during both internal and external tests.

The current underperformance of students in writing has been a cause for concern among language teachers, educators, and the public. This concern arises from the visible deficiencies in the kids' writing. Several explanations have been ascribed to this annual underperformance. Several factors contribute to the problem, including the constant negative attitude of pupils, ineffective teaching methods, overcrowded classrooms, and unsupportive attitudes of certain principals towards the language. Additional factors encompass the dearth of ingenuity exhibited by educators, the persistence of outdated teaching methods, the scarcity of instructional resources in educational institutions, the absence of proficient teachers, the lack of motivation among both teachers and students, the insufficiency of textbooks, governmental negligence, and a negative attitude towards education.

The apparent underachievement in writing appears to have a direct impact on students' overall academic performance in English language and is believed to be linked to the teaching methodology employed by the teacher. Furthermore, the study notes that certain school principals and instructors do not prioritize the teaching of the English language. As a result, they appoint teachers who are not professionals in English to teach it. Mere fluency in an indigenous language is not suffice to qualify a teacher to teach it. Additionally, several students hold the belief that the subject is excessively uncomplicated, rendering it unworthy of study. A positive mindset results in dedication, which ultimately leads to the achievement of objectives. This study critically examines the impact of the prompt cards approach on the essay writing performance of junior secondary school pupils in Kogi State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of prompt cards strategy on Junior Secondary School students' essay writing performance in Kogi State to this end, the specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. examine the effects of conventional writing and prompt cards techniques on the writing performance of Junior Secondary School students
- ii. investigate if there would be gender difference in the performance of Junior Secondary School students in English essay writing using prompt cards strategy.
- iii. examine if there would be difference in the performance of Junior Secondary School students in urban and rural areas using prompt cards strategy.

Research Question

The following research question was raised for this study:

1. What is the mean difference between the pretest and posttest in the experimental and control groups?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. there is no significant difference between the pre-test mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups.
2. there is no significant difference in the prompt cards strategy on male and female junior secondary school students' performance in writing.
3. there is no significant difference in the prompt cards strategy on the writing performance of junior secondary school students from rural and urban locations.

Methodology

The study adopted quasi experimental design of pre-test, post-test and control groups design in which there was one experimental and one control group. The academic performance that was used for the study was established by pretests that were conducted on both experimental and the control groups to ascertain homogeneity of the sample. Post-tests after the treatment were used to measure improvement in academic performance. The treatment (instructional strategy) was operated on prompt cards strategy.

The research design was as follows:

$O_1 \quad X_1 \quad O_2 \quad = \quad \text{Prompt cards strategy}$

$O_3 \quad C \quad O_4 \quad = \quad \text{Control group}$

Where:

$O_1, \quad O_3, \quad = \quad \text{Pre-test observations}$

O ₂ , O ₄ ,	=	Post-test observations
X ₁ ,	=	Treatment with prompt cards
C	=	No treatment

This design was considered appropriate since it helped to check the effect of the variables and interaction effect on students' academic achievement in essay writing in English language.

The sample for the study consisted of 320 Junior Secondary School II students that were selected from eight Junior Secondary Schools through multistage sampling technique. At the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used in selecting a Local Government Area (LGA) in each of the three Senatorial Districts in Kogi State which comprises, Western Senatorial District, Central Senatorial District and Eastern Senatorial District. The second stage involved the selection of two (2) schools using stratified random sampling technique from each Local Government Area earlier selected to make eight (8). The selected schools were assigned to the three experimental and one control groups at two (2) schools for each group. Two arms of intact class were used in each of the school selected.

A self-developed instrument on achievement test was used to establish the effectiveness of prompt cards strategy on writing performance of Junior Secondary School II (JSS 2) students. The instrument used was Students' English Performance Test (SEPT) which was adapted from Junior Secondary School examination past questions and it consisted of two sections A and B. Section A required the students to give information on their sex, age, location, school and Local Government Area while section B contained an essay question.

The validity of the instrument was ascertain while reliability of the instrument was determined by using the test- retest method of testing reliability. This was done by administering the test twice on 20 students who were not part of the sample within an interval of two weeks. The scores obtained from the two successive administrations were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at 0.05 level of significance. A reliability coefficients of 0.78 was obtained. This shows that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Data collected were analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistics. Data gathered through pre-test and post-test were graded using a prepared marking guide. One (1) research question raised to guide the study was answered using mean and standard deviation. The three hypotheses

formulated for the study were tested inferentially using a Two Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and *t*-test of independent sample at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question

What is the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental and control groups?

Table 1: The mean difference between the pretest and posttest in the experimental and control groups

Strategy	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Difference
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Prompt Cards	160	54.17	19.96	65.87	15.64	11.70
Conventional Group	160	54.21	19.07	58.01	11.67	3.80

The result in Table 1 on the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental and control groups showed that students in the prompt card strategy group had performance mean of (54.17) with measure of variability of (19.26) before treatment while the control group had performance mean of (54.21) and measure of variability of (19.07). On exposure to treatment, students taught using prompt card strategy had performance mean of (65.87) with measure of variability of (15.64) while those in control group had performance mean of (58.01) and measure of variability of (11.67). The difference between the performances' mean before and after treatment shows significant effect of prompt cards strategy on students' writing performance. The mean difference of prompt card strategy group was (11.70) while control group had (3.80). The table shows that there was homogeneity among the groups during pretest stage and the use of the prompt card strategy had a positive effect on junior secondary school students' writing performance during the posttest stage.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference between the pre-test mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups.

Table 2: A Two-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Summary of pre-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Post-test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power ^b	Remark
Corrected Model	41118.024 ^a	3	106.021	3.011	.031	.095	.701	Sig.
Intercept	33059.917	1	159.922	37.36	.000	.282	1.000	
Pre-test	1747.511	1	187.411	5.087	.019	.047	.605	
Group	220.878	1	220.878	.622	.421	.006	.127	
Performance	28.418	1	28.418	.074	.718	.001	.060	
Group Performance *	.012	1	.012	.003	.001	.031	.001	
Error	26636.617	76	351.122					
Total	21075.000	80						
Corrected Total	34174.814	79						

a. R Squared = .096 (Adjusted R Squared = .067)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 2 showed the result of the analysis. It was found that the variances for the students' performance are homogeneous ($F=0.074, p>0.05$). Based on this result, a two-way ANCOVA was conducted. It was found that $F(1, 76) = 0.003, p = 0.001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.31$. Since 0.001 is less than 0.05 (at the 95% level of confidence), this implies that there is a statistically significant two-way interaction effect. This indicated that there was a significant difference between the pre-test mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference in the prompt cards strategy on male and female junior secondary school students' performance in writing.

Table 3: t-test analysis of difference in the prompt cards strategy on male and female junior secondary school students' performance in writing.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t(cal)	t(tab)	Decision
Male	170	3.11	1.763	318	1.37	1.98	NS
Female	150	3.06	1.689				

P < 0.05 level of significance

NS = Not Significant

From table 3 above, the mean score of the male students (3.11) is higher than the mean score of the female students (3.06) with a mean difference of (0.05) which is marginal. The measure of variability (standard deviation) has a difference of (0.074). The t-test analysis shows that the calculated value (1.37) is less than the table value (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that male and female junior secondary school students exposed to the prompt cards strategy do not differ significantly in their essay writing performance.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the prompt cards strategy on the writing performance of junior secondary school students from rural and urban locations.

Table 4: t-test analysis of difference in the prompt cards strategy on the writing performance of junior secondary school students from rural and urban locations

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t _(cal)	t _(tab)	Decision
Urban	200	4.12	1.782	318	4.67	1.98	NS
Rural	120	3.17	1.705				

P < 0.05 level of significance

NS = Not Significant

From table 4 above, the mean score of the students (4.12) is less than the mean score of the students (3.17) with a marginal mean difference of (0.95). The measure of variability (standard deviation) has a difference of (0.077). The t-test analysis shows that the calculated value (4.67) is greater than the table value (1.98) at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there was significant difference in the prompt cards strategy on the writing performance of junior secondary school students from rural and urban locations. Hence, the null hypothesis is upheld. Since students from urban location had higher mean scores, it implies that students from urban location outperformed their counterparts from rural location when they are exposed to prompt cards strategy in writing essay.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the descriptive analysis of the study indicated that the groups were similar in terms of their performance before the intervention. Additionally, the implementation of the prompt card technique had a beneficial impact on the writing performance of junior secondary school students after the intervention. This suggests that the students' achievement in essay writing was

based on their proficiency in expressing their thoughts in writing and their capacity to comprehend and assimilate information obtained from reading texts.

Consistent with the findings of Fasae (2017) and Obateru (2018), writing is a skill that cannot be mastered solely through memorising a set of rules. It necessitates the cultivation and utilisation of a range of complex abilities throughout the writing process. Prompt cards are a self-improvement tool that allows students to express their dreams and aspirations. They serve as a creative medium and provide an outlet for one's emotions. This aligns with Ofodu's (2016) argument that regular writing not only improves one's emotional well-being but also allows them to revisit past experiences in a safe manner.

The inferential analysis of this study indicated a noteworthy impact of the prompt cards technique on the writing performance of junior secondary school pupils, both before and after treatment. The results of this study confirmed the results of previous studies conducted by Olatunji (2019) and Onukaogu (2009) that examined the impact of portfolio evaluation methodologies and prompt cards on enhancing the performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in reading, listening, and writing inside the classroom. The study's participants reported that the use of suggestion cards resulted in noticeable enhancements in students' writing abilities.

Additionally, the study revealed that there was no statistically significant disparity in average outcomes between male and female secondary school pupils who were exposed to the prompt cards technique. This suggests that there was a lack of variation in the average performance scores of male and female junior secondary school students when they were taught utilising the prompt cards technique in essay writing. This supports the claim made by Popoola (2013) that education and training are the collective procedures through which an individual, regardless of gender, enhances their ability to acquire knowledge, attitudes, and other behaviours that are advantageous to their academic pursuits. The results further corroborate Oniya's (2018) perspective, which showed that the influence of gender on academic performance was statistically negligible. Osa-Omoregie (2020) conducted a study on gender and accomplishment and concluded that there is no notable disparity in academic performance between males and females.

In contrast to Adokwe's (2012) findings, this study reveals that there is no significant association between sexuality and academic performance among students. Additionally, the study suggests

that gender does not have a significant impact on the performance of high-school students. In addition, Ofodu (2016) found that there was a significant disparity in the academic performance between male and female pupils.

Furthermore, the study revealed a substantial disparity in the average scores of students in urban and rural areas when they were subjected to the prompt card approach. Students from urban areas outperformed their counterparts from rural areas. This suggests that the geographical location of the educational institution where students are enrolled has been a crucial determinant in the teaching and learning process. This supported the conclusions of Ofodu's (2016) research, which examined how the location and level of schools, as well as gender, influence the preparation requirements of secondary students in Nigeria. The findings of the study indicate a notable disparity in the reading demands across students, as well as a substantial combined impact of geography and gender on students' reading requirements. In a study conducted by Borode (2014), it was shown that students residing in urban areas demonstrated superior academic performance compared to those in rural areas. Additionally, urban students exhibited greater aspirations for higher education and professional success in comparison to their rural counterparts.

Nevertheless, the findings contradict the research conducted by Musibau & Adigun (2010), which examined the impact of school, gender, location, and type on students' academic achievement. Based on the research findings, the geographical location of a school does not have a significant influence on pupils' academic performance. Attending a rural or urban secondary school has no impact on a learner's academic plan. The results align with Akinwumi's (2015) findings, which indicate that the location of the school, whether urban or rural, does not impact pupils' attitude towards reading comprehension.

Lastly, according to the results of this study, it can be inferred that the students' performances in essay writing were similar at the beginning of the trial. The implementation of prompt cards technique improves the consistency in the average performance scores of male and female junior secondary school pupils. Therefore, the approach of using prompt cards is not influenced by gender. Furthermore, the geographical location of a school has a substantial impact on the writing proficiency of junior secondary school students, particularly when they are introduced to the prompt cards technique.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is desirable to promote the use of prompt cards approach among junior secondary school students for essay writing, since it improves students' academic performance. Furthermore, it is imperative to provide English language educators with comprehensive orientation, training, and ongoing professional development opportunities such as workshops and seminars. These initiatives will enable them to enhance their proficiency in using prompt cards as a teaching approach and stay up-to-date with the latest advancements in this field. Moreover, English language is not gender based but a world language, so everyone should be assiduous in its perfect mastery

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