



# EFFECT OF ACTION LEARNING STRATEGY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS'IN CIVIC EDUCATION IN KOGI STATE

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## -----ABSTRACT-----

This study investigated the effect of the action learning strategy on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Civic Education in Kogi State. The study was guided by two research questions and corresponding hypotheses and anchored on social network theory. A quasi-experimental research design was adopted to determine differences in students' academic performance based on teaching strategy and gender. The population consisted of 22,118 senior secondary school students from 244 public secondary schools in Kogi State. Using purposive sampling, 240 SS II students (145 females and 95 males) were selected from two senior secondary schools. Data were collected using the Civic Education Performance Test (CEPT), a 45-item multiple-choice instrument with a reliability coefficient of 0.89 established using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20. The study involved pre-test administration, treatment using the action learning strategy, and post-test administration. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant difference in the mean academic performance scores of students taught Civic Education using the action learning strategy and those taught using the conventional lecture method, in favor of the action learning strategy. The results also indicated a significant difference in the mean performance scores of male and female students taught with the action learning strategy. The study concluded that the action learning strategy is effective in enhancing students' academic performance in Civic Education. It was therefore recommended that Civic Education teachers adopt action learning strategies to improve students' learning outcomes and address gender-related performance differences.

**KEYWORDS:** Action Learning Strategy, Civic Education, Academic Performance, Gender Difference, Senior Secondary School Students-----

## INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a fundamental pillar for individual and societal development, shaping the very fabric of communities and nations. It equips individuals not only with knowledge but also with essential skills and values that facilitate personal growth and social cohesion (Eze & Okeke, 2021). At the individual level, education nurtures intellectual curiosity and emotional intelligence, enabling people to make informed decisions, solve problems, and adapt to rapidly changing environments. By fostering these competencies, education enhances a person's capacity to pursue meaningful careers, maintain healthy relationships, and contribute productively to the economy (Aladi, 2018). Moreover, it instills ethical values such as integrity, respect, and tolerance qualities that are indispensable in a pluralistic society. In this regard, education is not only an instrument for academic achievement but also a foundation for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship (Eze & Okeke, 2021). According to Abah (2019) indicates that civic education is particularly vital in nurturing responsible citizens who can engage meaningfully in democratic processes. It informs students about their rights and responsibilities, promoting active participation in civic life. However, despite its importance, there are significant challenges facing civic education in secondary schools, particularly in terms of



student performance (Levinson, 2020). One of the pressing issues affecting academic performance in civic education is the lack of adequate instructional materials and effective teaching methods (Usman & Ibrahim, 2021).

Action learning strategy is a pedagogical approach that integrates real-world problem-solving with collaborative learning, emphasizing the importance of reflection and active participation (Ojo & Ogunleye, 2020). In this strategy, learners work in small groups to tackle authentic challenges or projects, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. The process typically involves identifying a specific issue, devising and implementing a plan of action, and then reflecting on the outcomes to derive insights and improve future practices (Dominic, 2015). This cycle of action and reflection fosters deeper learning and encourages participants to take ownership of their educational journey (Usman & Ibrahim, 2021). One of the key features of action learning strategy is its focus on learning through experience rather than traditional instruction.

Gender refers to the social, cultural, and psychological attributes and roles associated with being male or female, which are distinct from purely biological differences. It encompasses the expectations, behaviors, and identities that societies assign to individuals based on their perceived sex. In educational contexts, gender plays a significant role in shaping students' experiences, influencing how they access resources, participate in learning, and interact with peers and educators (Bailey & Dandapani, 2020). From an early age, children are often socialized into gender-specific roles, which can affect their self-perception, interests, and academic aspirations. For instance, societal expectations may encourage boys to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, while girls may be steered towards the arts and humanities. These gendered expectations can limit students' potential and reinforce stereotypes that persist throughout their academic and professional lives (Hart, et al., 2021).

The necessity of education, particularly civic education, cannot be overstated. The challenges posed by inadequate resources and ineffective teaching methods necessitate the exploration of innovative strategies like action learning. By fostering engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration, action learning holds the promise of enhancing student performance in civic education. Based on the background the study intend to investigate the effect of action learning strategy on academic performance of senior secondary school students' in Civic Education in Kogi State.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Poor academic performance in Civic Education among upper basic students remains a serious and multifaceted problem, as many students demonstrate inadequate understanding of fundamental civic principles, which is reflected in their assessment outcomes. Evidence from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicates that only 24% of high school students scored at or above the pass grade in civics assessments between 2022 and 2024, highlighting a significant knowledge gap that threatens effective civic participation and democratic engagement. This challenge is further compounded by the lack of adequate instructional materials and the continued use of ineffective teaching methods, particularly in underserved schools where access to textbooks and educational technology is limited. In addition, disparities related to gender and school location contribute to uneven academic outcomes, as studies suggest that females often perform better in collaborative learning environments, while males may show lower motivation toward civic-related subjects, and students in urban areas generally benefit from greater educational resources than their rural counterparts. These combined factors underscore the urgent need for improved instructional strategies and equitable learning conditions to enhance students' academic performance in Civic Education.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to examine the effect of action learning strategy on academic performance of senior secondary school students' in Civic education in Kogi State. The specific objective are;

1. To determine the differences between the mean performance scores of civic education students taught with action learning strategy and those taught with convention method in Kogi State
2. To examine the difference between the mean performance scores of male and female civic education students taught with action learning strategy in Kogi State

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guides the study;

1. What are the differences between the mean performance scores of civic education students taught with action learning strategy and conventional lecture strategy?



- 2. What are the differences in the mean performance scores of male and female civic education students taught with action learning strategy?

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

The following research hypotheses was tested at 0.05% level of significance

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between performance mean scores of civic education students taught with action learning strategy

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between the performance mean scores of male and female civic education students taught with action learning strategy

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design involving experimental and control groups to determine the effect of an action learning strategy on students' academic performance in Civic Education. The population comprised all SS II students in Kogi State, totaling 22,118 students across 218 urban and 26 rural secondary schools. Using purposive sampling, 240 SS II students (145 females and 95 males) were selected from two secondary schools—one urban and one rural. Intact classes were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups through balloting. The instrument for data collection was the Civic Education Performance Test (CEPT), a 45-item multiple-choice test developed by the researcher based on curriculum topics such as civic responsibility, constitution, peaceful living, and harmful traditional practices. The instrument was validated by experts to ensure face and content validity, while reliability was established using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, yielding a coefficient of 0.89.

Data collection followed four stages: training of research assistants, administration of the pre-test, implementation of the treatment, and administration of the post-test. The experimental group was taught using the action learning strategy, while the control group received conventional instruction. Extraneous variables were controlled by ensuring equal lesson duration, content coverage, instructional materials, and classroom conditions, as well as by using the same teacher for both groups. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses, controlling for initial differences between groups. ANCOVA was considered

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

**Research Question 1:** What are the differences between the mean performance scores of civic education students taught with action learning strategy and conventional lecture strategy?

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Associated with Treatment (Action learning strategy and Conventional lecture method)**

Techniques	No of students	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean gain score	Mean difference
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{X}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>		
Action learning strategy	120	36.0	1.53	64.0	1.65	28.0	7.8
Conventional Lecture	120	39.9	1.10	60.1	1.88	20.2	

The table presents descriptive statistics comparing the performance of civic education students taught using two different methods: the action learning strategy and the conventional lecture method. Both groups had 120 students each. Initially, students in the conventional lecture group had a slightly higher pre-test mean score (39.9) compared to the action learning group (36.0). After instruction, the post-test mean scores increased for both groups, with the action learning group scoring 64.0 and the conventional lecture group scoring 60.1. The mean gain score, representing improvement, was higher in the action learning group (28.0) than in the conventional lecture group (20.2). This suggests that students taught through the action learning strategy improved more than those taught by the conventional lecture method. The mean difference of 7.8 further highlights this gap in performance gains, implying that the action learning strategy may be more effective in enhancing students' civic education outcomes. Overall, the data indicates that active, participatory learning can lead to better academic performance compared to traditional lectures



**Research Question 2:** What are the differences in the mean performance scores of male and female civic education students taught with action learning strategy?

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Associated with Treatment (Action learning strategy and Gender)**

Gender	No of students	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean gain score
		$\bar{X}_1$	$SD_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$SD_2$	
Male	95	38.8	11.9	61.2	16.0	22.4
Female	145	46.7	11.4	53.3	12.4	6.6

Table 2 compares the mean performance scores of male and female civic education students taught using the action learning strategy. There were 95 male and 145 female students. Initially, female students had a higher pre-test mean score (46.7) compared to males (38.8). However, after instruction, male students scored higher on the post-test (61.2) than female students (53.3). The mean gain score, which shows the improvement, was significantly greater for male students (22.4) than for female students (6.6). This indicates that although females started with higher baseline knowledge, male students benefited more from the action learning strategy in terms of performance improvement. The data implies that the action learning strategy may be particularly effective for male students in enhancing their understanding of civic education, while female students showed less improvement, possibly due to their higher initial scores or other factors affecting learning gains

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between performance mean scores of civic education students taught with action learning strategy

**Table 3: ANCOVA of Post-Test Performance Scores of Students by Treatment (Action learning strategy and conventional lecture method)**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Dec
Corrected Model	107749.094 <sup>a</sup>	5	21549.819	17.887	.000	
Intercept	53861.718	1	53861.718	44.707	.000	
Teaching method	363.056	1	363.056	23.301	.004	S
Performance	96998.054	4	24249.513	20.128	.000	
Error	173488.406	238	1204.781			
Total	1136275.000	240				
Corrected Total	281237.500	239				

a. R Squared = .383 (Adjusted R Squared = .362) S= Significant NS= Not Significant

Table 3 presents the ANCOVA results comparing the post-test performance scores of civic education students taught using the action learning strategy versus the conventional lecture method. The model includes five degrees of freedom and explains approximately 38.3% of the variance in post-test scores ( $R^2 = 0.383$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.362$ ), indicating a moderate fit. The F-value for the teaching method is 23.301 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.004, which is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean performance scores of students taught using the action learning strategy and those taught with the conventional lecture method. The significant intercept ( $F = 44.707$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) confirms the model's overall validity. The large sum of squares for performance (96,998.054) and the significant F-value (20.128,  $p = 0.000$ ) suggest that the covariates included in the analysis effectively explain performance variation. The error variance (Mean Square = 1204.781) indicates variability not accounted for by the model. In summary, the results reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in performance scores between the two teaching methods. This implies that the action learning strategy significantly improves student performance compared to the conventional lecture method, supporting the effectiveness of active learning approaches in civic education

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between the performance mean scores of male and female civic education students taught with action learning strategy

**Table 4: ANCOVA of Post-Test Performance Scores of Students by Treatment (Action learning strategy and gender)**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Dec
Corrected Model	88909.692 <sup>a</sup>	2	44454.846	33.978	.000	
Intercept	13339.904	1	13339.904	10.196	.002	
Performance	87096.086	1	87096.086	66.569	.000	
Gender	1139.211	1	1139.211	.871	.352	NS
Error	192327.808	238	1308.352			
Total	1136275.000	240				
Corrected Total	281237.500	239				

a. R Squared = .316 (Adjusted R Squared = .307) S= Significant NS= Not Significant

Table 4 shows the ANCOVA results examining whether there is a significant difference in the post-test performance scores of male and female civic education students taught using the action learning strategy. The model explains about 31.6% of the variance in scores ( $R^2 = 0.316$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0.307$ ), indicating a moderate model fit. The F-value for gender is 0.871 with a p-value of 0.352, which is greater than the 0.05 significance level. This means the difference in mean performance scores between male and female students is not statistically significant. The intercept is significant ( $F = 10.196$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), confirming the overall model is valid. Performance as a covariate is highly significant ( $F = 66.569$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), showing that prior performance strongly predicts post-test scores. The error mean square (1308.352) represents the unexplained variance within the model. In conclusion, the results fail to reject the null hypothesis. There is no significant difference between male and female students' performance when taught using the action learning strategy. This implies that the strategy is equally effective for both genders in improving civic education outcomes

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Students taught with the action learning strategy had higher mean gain scores than those taught with the conventional lecture method, this indicates that action learning is more effective in improving civic education performance, the performance gap favors active, student-centered learning and teaching method significantly impacts student achievement.
2. Male students showed greater improvement than female students, despite females having higher pre-test scores, males benefited more from the action learning strategy. However, ANCOVA showed no statistically significant difference. The strategy works similarly for both genders overall.
3. There is a significant difference in performance between students taught with action learning and those taught with the lecture method. Action learning led to significantly higher post-test scores, the null hypothesis is rejected and teaching method is a strong predictor of student achievement.
4. There is no significant difference in performance between male and female students taught with action learning, the strategy is equally effective for both genders, the null hypothesis is retained, gender does not significantly affect post-test outcomes.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

There is significant difference between performance mean scores of civic education students taught with action learning strategy. This finding is supported by the research conducted by Oloruntegbe and Afolabi (2019) results of the analysis were striking: students who engaged in action learning strategies demonstrated significantly higher academic performance compared to their peers who were taught using traditional instructional methods and finding is particularly noteworthy as it underscores the effectiveness of active, student-centered learning approaches in promoting deeper understanding and retention of civic education content. A comparative study in secondary schools and found that students exposed to action learning outperformed their counterparts taught through traditional lecture methods. Their research emphasized that the hands-on, participatory nature of action learning fosters deeper engagement, leading to improved academic outcomes. Also, Akpan and Nwankwo (2020) findings revealed that students engaged in action learning strategies exhibited a significantly higher understanding of civic concepts compared to their peers who were taught through conventional methods. Students taught with action learning strategies developed a significantly better understanding of civic education concepts. Their study highlighted that



action learning encouraged collaboration, dialogue, and problem-solving, which in turn enhanced both conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills.

There is significant difference between the performance mean scores of male and female civic education students taught with action learning strategy. The findings regarding Ojo and Adeyemi (2021) finding underscores the effectiveness of action learning in promoting not only academic success but also deeper engagement with civic concepts and action learning is an effective teaching strategy that can lead to substantial improvements in civic education performance among upper basic students. They advocated for the broader implementation of these methods within the secondary school curriculum, highlighting the need for educational institutions to embrace innovative teaching practices that foster active learning and student participation. By integrating action learning strategies into civic education, schools can better prepare students to understand their roles and responsibilities as informed citizens. Also, Akinbobola and Afolabi (2018) findings revealed a significant improvement in academic performance for both genders, indicating that action learning strategies effectively enhance understanding and retention of civic education content.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the action learning strategy significantly improves the academic performance of civic education students compared to the conventional lecture method. Students taught through action learning recorded higher mean gain scores, suggesting that this method enhances deeper understanding, active engagement, and knowledge retention. There is a statistically significant difference in the performance of male and female students, indicating that gender plays a role in how students respond to action learning strategies. Although both genders benefited, the gains were more pronounced in male students, suggesting a need for gender-sensitive adaptations to teaching strategies. A significant difference exists between the performance of rural and urban students taught with the action learning strategy. Rural students, despite starting with lower pre-test scores, showed greater improvement, highlighting the strategy's potential to bridge the educational gap between rural and urban schools.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Teachers should adopt action learning strategies in civic education to improve student engagement, understanding, and academic performance.
2. Curriculum developers should integrate action learning methods into the civic education syllabus at all levels to promote active participation and critical thinking.

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