

**INFLUENCE OF BLENDED LEARNING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
UPPER BASIC EDUCATION STUDENTS IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN AFIKPO NORTH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EBONYI STATE**

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on blended learning and its impact on the academic achievement of pupils in upper basic level (UBE) social studies of Afikpo North local government of ebonyi state. Four research questions guided the study. This study uses method of constructivist learning theory that is used in teaching-learning based on mental active and constructing knowledge based on interaction and experience. It is a descriptive survey research design methodology that was employed in the study. The number of participants of the study is 1,370 that consists of 1,346 students and 24 teachers of the students from the Social Studies. Respondents of the sample were 309 respondents which was derived from the Taro Yamane formula and simple random sampling technique was applied to obtain the respondents. Mean statistics were used to analyse the data collected, the decision reference was 2.50. The results showed that the traditional teaching model plays a significant role in providing students' learning performance improvement, manifested in the students' concentration and understanding. The study also found that the introduction of the technology tools of Internet into the blended learning had positive effect on both students' engagement and learning outcomes. The challenges to effectively implement it are however, related to Internet connectivity, absence of digital devices, power supply instability and lack of training. Moreover, the development of BL by introducing the infrastructure facility, teacher training and government support was emphasized in the study. Based on the findings of this research, it is then concluded that blended learning if applied to the teaching and learning process can improve students' achievement. Capacity building and leveraging digital resources was encouraged to enable stakeholders to be effective.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Today, education remains one of most powerful means of national development, that transmits to people knowledge, skills and values that can help to transform society. This speaks to the importance of using good pedagogies to best utilise the education system and improve student learning outcomes. Some researchers such as Ogbonnia and Mkpuma (2025), Onyeukwu (2020) have suggested that efficient utilization of education resources and creation of conducive learning environment promotes the performance of the learners.

Therefore, teaching and learning approaches are very important to ensure success in education, and need to involve the learners in the learning process. However, in conventional teaching, which is teacher-centered, where the learners are only passively involved in learning, and do not have to independently think and process what is being taught, the students' learning outcomes are greatly influenced. Therefore, innovative approaches of teaching have arisen in an attempt to solve this problem. The performance of students is greatly enhanced in Blended teaching method compared to traditional teaching in the opinion of Abraham and Ogunbiyi (2025). Furthermore, the blended approach to instruction can boost the engagement and achievement of the learners as reported by Chukwuekezie and Nwachukwu (2025). Social Studies is one of the key disciplines that prepares learners to become responsible, active, and informed citizens who contribute meaningfully to their communities and society at large. It equips learners with social knowledge, cultural values, civic competencies, and problem-solving skills that are essential for promoting national development and fostering responsible citizenship. As described by

Mezieobi (2016) Social studies takes into account human-environment relationship and facilitates reflection skills and problem solving skills of the learners. Similarly, Barr, Barth and Shermis (2022) said that social studies is the science of responsibly interacting in social systems and in action. Obafemi (2022) revealed that the blended learning style is positive on students' achievement in Social studies.

Social Studies is an interdisciplinary subject designed to equip learners with the knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills necessary for effective participation in society. According to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2013), Social Studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities aimed at promoting civic competence by enabling learners to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good. In the Nigerian context, Mezieobi et al. (2014) defined Social Studies as the study of humans in relation to their social, physical, cultural, economic, and political environments with the primary objective of developing responsible and effective citizens. Similarly, Akinlaye (2019) described Social Studies as a value-oriented discipline that fosters critical thinking, responsible citizenship, national consciousness, and peaceful coexistence among learners.

The importance of Social Studies in the Nigerian education system cannot be overemphasized. As a core subject at the Upper Basic Education level, it promotes national unity, civic responsibility, moral values, democratic participation, cultural tolerance, and problem-solving skills required for sustainable national development. The subject also develops learners' understanding of societal issues, encourages respect for diversity, and equips them with the competencies needed to address contemporary social challenges. Consequently, effective teaching and learning of Social Studies are essential for producing informed, responsible, and productive citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to societal development.

Despite its significance, students' academic achievement in Social Studies has remained a concern among educators and policymakers. Evidence from empirical studies indicates that many students continue to record below-average performance in both internal and external examinations. Studies by Onuoha and Oguji (2024) and Uzokife et al. (2025) revealed that learners' achievement in Social Studies is often hindered by factors such as teacher-centred instructional approaches, inadequate instructional resources, low student motivation, and limited classroom interaction. Similarly, Ezeudu and Nwafor (2023) observed that the persistent use of conventional teaching methods contributes significantly to students' poor understanding of Social Studies concepts, resulting in low academic achievement. These findings suggest the need for innovative learner-centred instructional strategies capable of improving students' engagement and learning outcomes.

One such innovative approach is the flipped classroom instructional technique, which has demonstrated considerable potential for enhancing students' academic performance. Uzokife et al. (2025) reported that implementing the flipped classroom strategy significantly improved students' academic achievement in Social Studies by increasing learner participation and independent learning. Likewise, Onuoha and Oguji (2024) found that the adoption of innovative instructional techniques enhances students' understanding and academic achievement in Social Studies.

Furthermore, the rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed educational practices by providing flexible, interactive, and learner-centred learning opportunities. Modern learners, often referred to as "digital natives," are proficient in using technological tools such as smartphones, computers, and internet-based platforms for communication and learning. Horton (2012) noted that digital learning environments facilitate

innovative teaching and learning processes, while Abadi (2017) argued that e-learning addresses challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and limited access to educational resources. These technological developments have created favourable conditions for implementing technology-driven instructional strategies, such as the flipped classroom, to improve students' engagement and academic achievement in Social Studies.

The biggest innovation that has sprung out of the development of technology is blended learning. It is a learning method, a blend of physical learning environment and Internet learning environment, which is carried out in a determined learning process. Blended Learning is a combination of various aspects of learning to improve learning (Garrison & Kanuka, 2014), and is a mixture between physical and online learning (Hrastinski, 2019). It was also corroborated by the findings obtained by Edegbe-Efosa (2024) who found that blended learning was a positive influence on the academic achievement of learners. Ugiagbe and Abraham (2025) found that blended learning exposed students to better academic achievement compared to other students in their study on the Academic achievement of students in the use of blended learning in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The use of technology in learning is NOT blended learning. It's when technology and the classroom are used intentionally to enhance learning, however. This method of learning entails a formal education model with the inclusion of online learning, (Means et al., 2020). Bond (2021) notes that blended learning is a crucial element in improving the accessibility of learning materials and students' engagement. Similarly, Rasheed et al. (2020) contend that blended learning could be adopted in various types of learning and Chukwuekezie & Nwachukwu (2025) confirm that blended teaching and learning approach has a positive relationship with students' academic performance.

From the research conducted by Graham (2013), Garrison and Vaughan (2008), and Horn and Staker (2015), blended learning is a combination of learning in a classroom and learning using electronic media (computer, mobile phone and internet facilities). It gives pupils an opportunity to learn outwith the classroom; it enables pupils to learn at their own speed and it encourages pupils to be active learners. In this case, Obafemi (2022) found out that the blended teaching methodologies have a considerable effect on boosting students' academic performance in Social Studies, while Akintayo, et al (2024) demonstrated that technology-based teaching methodologies boost students' learning outcome.

E-learning, which has become more popular in recent years, is linked to the concept of blended learning as it becomes more accepted to use internet technology in the learning process. E-learning can be a method of providing flexible and distance learning; e-learning is able to address issues of classroom overcrowding and access to learning. Njenga and Fourie (2010) observed that e-learning is a very dynamic mode of learning while Horton (2019) stressed the need for interaction in the learning process of e-learning. Okoronkwo et al (2023) noted that technological innovations were crucial.

Academic performance can be used as a measure of the learner's achievement of the aims of the learned education and a measure of the learned knowledge and skills that are exhibited. It is the outcome of the teaching–learning process (Adeyemo, 2017) and it is a mark of success in the future and for the development of the nation. This is in agreement with Ede (2021) who believes that good management practices influence learners' performance and Onyeukwu (2022) who found that conducive learning environment improves the learning abilities which in turn influences performance.

It is now a growing pattern in recent times, particularly in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic which ushered a new approach in education. The use of computers in teaching and learning in Nigeria schools is fast becoming part and parcel of the learning experience. However, how well it works will depend on the teacher's competences, infrastructures and availability of technology. Ogbonnia and Mkpuma (2025), and Edegbe-Efosa and Ugiagbe (2024) contend that availability of learning resources is among the factors that can bring about academic outcomes while the adoption of the blended learning approach will lead to an improvement of academic performance of learners. The case of Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State indicates that there is an increased awareness and understanding of the importance of making education technologically inclusive. The use of digital learning methods is widespread in the region as it becomes the new norm in the education sector. There are still problems of inadequate provision of ICT facilities, lack of Internet connection and lack of access to technological gadgets. Instructional innovations need to have proper infrastructure to support it (Onuoha & Oguji, 2024) and access to modern technologies can improve pedagogy (Grimus, 2020).

Although blended learning has demonstrated considerable potential for improving students' learning outcomes, empirical evidence on its effectiveness in Social Studies at the Upper Basic Education level remains limited, particularly within the Nigerian basic education context. Existing studies have largely focused on other subject areas or different educational levels, while the few studies conducted on Social Studies have been carried out in locations with educational and socio-cultural characteristics that differ from those of Ebonyi State, thereby limiting the generalizability of their findings. For instance, Uzokife et al. (2025) reported that the blended learning approach significantly improved students' academic achievement in Social Studies; however, the study was conducted outside Afikpo North Local Government Area. More importantly, evidence from recent studies indicates that students' academic achievement in Social

Studies at the Upper Basic level remains below expectation. Barry et al. (2024) observed that the academic performance of Upper Basic Social Studies students in Delta State was influenced by several learner-related factors, resulting in unsatisfactory achievement among many learners. Similarly, Abogoh and Okoro (2024) reported that students' academic performance in Social Studies could be significantly improved through effective teaching practices, suggesting that existing instructional approaches have not produced the desired learning outcomes. At the national level, the 2022 National Assessment of Learning Achievement in Basic Education (NALABE) also revealed that the proficiency level of many Junior Secondary School students in Social Studies fell below expected competency standards, indicating persistent learning gaps across Nigerian basic schools.

Therefore, this study is designed to investigate the impact of blended learning on the academic performance of Upper Basic Education students in Social Studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether the introduction of the blended learning approach significantly influences students' academic performance in Social Studies and, based on the findings, provide recommendations for improving the teaching and learning of the subject.

Statement of the Problem

The study found that the students' low performance in Social Studies is a threat to the Nigeria education system as it lies in the upper basic level of the SS. The study is very important in developing the civic competence, moral values and national consciousness, however, the level of interest, participation and performance of the learners in the study both internal and external assessment is at low level. Despite the strategic importance of Social Studies in developing responsible citizenship, critical thinking, and civic competence among learners, students'

academic achievement in the subject at the Upper Basic Education level has remained a source of concern. Evidence from the National Examinations Council (NECO) Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) has shown that the performance of candidates in Social Studies has fluctuated over the years, with many states recording achievement levels below the expected benchmark, suggesting persistent learning difficulties among Upper Basic students (NECO, 2023; NECO, 2024). Similarly, empirical studies have consistently reported that many students demonstrate inadequate mastery of Social Studies concepts and perform below expectation due to ineffective instructional practices and low classroom engagement (Barry et al., 2024; Abogoh & Okoro, 2024; Onuoha & Oguji, 2024).

Several factors have been identified as contributing to this unsatisfactory academic achievement. Studies have shown that the continued reliance on conventional teacher-centred instructional methods limits students' participation, critical thinking, and knowledge retention (Onuoha & Oguji, 2024; Uzokife et al., 2025). Other studies have identified inadequate instructional resources, limited integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), poor internet connectivity, unstable electricity supply, and insufficient teacher competence in the use of digital instructional technologies as major constraints to effective Social Studies instruction, particularly in rural and semi-urban schools (Afolabi & Akinyemi, 2023; Okeke & Eze, 2024). These challenges are more pronounced in many public secondary schools where technology-supported instructional strategies are either minimally utilized or completely absent.

Blended learning has been widely acknowledged as an instructional approach capable of improving students' engagement and academic performance by integrating face-to-face classroom instruction with technology-mediated learning. Recent empirical studies have reported positive effects of blended learning on students' academic performance in Social Studies and

related subjects (Obafemi, 2022; Onuoha & Oguji, 2024; Uzokife et al., 2025). However, most of these studies were conducted outside Ebonyi State or focused on different educational levels and geographical contexts. Consequently, their findings cannot be readily generalized to Upper Basic schools in Afikpo North Local Government Area, where school characteristics, technological infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and learners' socio-economic backgrounds may differ considerably.

Furthermore, available literature reveals a paucity of empirical studies investigating the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. This contextual gap makes it difficult to establish whether the adoption of blended learning would produce similar improvements in students' academic performance within the study area. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of Upper Basic Education students in Social Studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Objectives of the Study

This research will be centered around the following objectives:

The researchers sought to determine:

1. The impact of blended learning on the academic performance of students in Social studies in Afikpo local government area of Ebonyi State.
2. The impact of blended learning approach on the academic performance of students in Social studies in Afikpo local government of Ebonyi State.

3. The problems faced when implementing blended learning approach in Social studies learning in Afikpo local government of Ebonyi State.
4. The strategies to overcome the challenges that were identified in blended learning implementation.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised that the study tried to answer:

1. What is the impact of blended learning on the academic performance of students in Social Studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?
2. To what extent does the blended learning approach influence the academic performance of students in Social Studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?
3. What challenges are encountered in the implementation of the blended learning approach in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?
4. What strategies can be adopted to overcome the challenges associated with the implementation of the blended learning approach in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?

Significance of the Study

This study is anchored on the theory of constructivist learning by Jean Piaget (1973), which focuses on the thinking process, problem solving and understanding in the learning process.

Theoretical significance

Constructivism theories of Piaget have suggested that the process of knowledge construction should be an active one where involvement and social interaction are part of the process. In this aspect, the study tries to use the constructivist approach of explaining how blended learning influences students' achievements in terms of building up knowledge.

Apart from the above mentioned the research also adds to the knowledge base of innovative pedagogical and approaches to learning in the context of Social studies.

Practical Significance

The value of this research will be added to the students, teachers and school administration, curriculum developers, education field researchers and education policy makers when published. The outcomes of this research will help students to carry out more efficient teaching and learning activities, which can be done in the classroom both in digital learning and conventional learning. This will help them develop their understanding of the ideas/society studies they are learning and to participate with them.

Through this study, teachers will gain an insight of how effective the blended learning teaching strategy is. They will be able to master the use of technology well in the teaching process using learning platform and digital media that will increase their teaching competence in general. The outcome of the study will help the school administration to provide information on the availability of ICT facilities (computers, Internet).

The results from this study will provide information that will be beneficial for the curriculum planner as he plans to integrate the blended learning in the curriculum for Social studies. Thus, he will ensure that the curriculum will be in line with the latest in education and technology. This

study will give a good starting point or reference source to future researchers to use in their research, particularly in the field of education and/or educational technology in the field of Social studies. It will help generate new information and act as a stepping stone to future research that will examine the impacts of blended learning on student achievement. The results will be evidence based information that will help in decision making in integrating ICT in education.

Scope of the Study

This study is delimited in terms of geographical scope, content scope, and level of study. Geographically, the study is limited to Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. In terms of content, the study focuses on the effect of blended learning on the academic achievement of Upper Basic II students in Social Studies. Specifically, it examines the influence of the blended learning approach on students' academic achievement, identifies the challenges associated with the implementation of blended learning in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, and explores strategies for overcoming the identified challenges to enhance the effective implementation of blended learning in Social Studies classrooms.

In terms of the level of study, the research is limited to Social Studies teachers and Upper Basic II students in public secondary schools in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Upper Basic II students were selected because they have been adequately exposed to the Social Studies curriculum and are not beginners like Upper Basic I students. At the same time, they are not examination candidates like Upper Basic III students, whose preparation for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) could influence their learning experiences and academic performance during the period of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviewed relevant literature related to the study under the following sub-headings:

Conceptual Framework

Blended Learning

Academic Performance

Social Studies

Upper Basic Education

Influence of Blended Learning on Academic Performance

Concept of Traditional or Conventional Learning Approach

Theoretical Framework

Constructivist Learning Theory by propounded Jean Piaget (1973)

Empirical Studies

Summary of Reviewed Literature

Blended Learning

As a result of the fast development of technology, the blended learning approach became one of the key educational strategies used nowadays as it provides for the combination of classroom education with e-learning. Since the concept itself is dependent on the context and dynamic, different definitions have been presented by various researchers. Thus, blended learning is the term that can be defined as "the blending of the two forms of learning," i.e., face-to-face and online learning. The same idea was expressed by Garrison & Vaughan (2018) who claimed that blended learning is the combination of "the face-to-face and online learning experiences," and

considered it necessary "to have a population of inquiry that creates significant engagement and knowledge building." Blended learning was also discussed by Picciano (2017) who claimed that blended learning could be seen as a subset of online learning, which could offer flexibility and engagement. With blended learning, the best of two worlds can be merged to make students more effective learners.

On this account, Graham, Lim and Wang (2019) have developed models to help in the advancement, sustenance, and extension of blended learning into the future, and in the process, further highlighting the significance of blended learning in modern-day education. Blended learning is a flexible approach, which means it does not have one universal definition, but is rather a variable one based on the environment, purpose and method of implementation (Hrastinski, 2019). Moreover, Graham, Borup and Pulham (2019) have created models to measure readiness to use blended learning, putting emphasis on teacher training as well as institutional support to create blended teaching. The idea of blended learning and its capability to improve learning outcomes through quality instructional design has been highlighted in earlier studies by Bonk and Graham (2012), worldwide. Given these premises, blended learning should be considered as a flexible learning tool that is appropriate for various learning environments and learners. In addition, it is a symbol of the increasing importance of technology in teaching and learning process in the 21st century. Therefore, blended learning has increasingly been adopted in various stages of learning.

Empirical research in recent years, however, has guaranteed the continued scope of application of blended learning. Deng et al., (2022) discuss its use by students, and believe that student engagement and student acceptance of technology are key components in this process. In the meantime Owston et al., (2019) look at students' sense of this learning in relation to the context

of large classes. They reveal that blended learning is beneficial to the learning process of students. Seraji (2020), who undertakes a thematic analysis of studies about blended learning, reveals some trends and gaps that need to be researched. Moreover, Krismadinata et al. (2020) highlight the effectiveness of blended learning as a teaching model in vocational education. The concept is also addressed by Toriste and Kolawole (2023). Particularly, the researchers consider blended learning as a method of teaching within a specific subject. This will allow blended learning to be flexible and applicable to all areas of the curriculum. Through these discussions students were able to listen to the pedagogical approach of 'blended learning', which incorporates strategic face-to-face learning and online learning. For this reason, blended learning is effective, as it has flexibility, more participation and better academic results. Blended learning helps in teaching of the learners. There are some works which have come out of that field that have come to contribute a lot from various researchers in developing the field of blended learning. Garrison is a well known researcher on the community of inquiry approach, particularly blended learning. Graham, on the other hand, has had extensive research experience related to blended learning systems and online learning. Moreover, Picciano has done a lot of contributions in the field of online learning and educational technology. Based on the previous works, other researchers like Moskal, Halverson have continued to conduct research on the topic of blended learning particularly on the issues of learner engagement and faculty development. All the scholars mentioned above contribute in terms of collaboration, communication and innovation in blended learning. They have also impacted the education sector as far as the use of digital technology in education is concerned. It has resulted in a blended learning solution that can be implemented as a fully fledged teaching solution to support learners with a variety of learning styles and learning goals.

Blended learning concepts are also further elaborated through different models that provide a few examples of how the in-person and online aspects of learning are blended to create effective learning results. Blended learning involves two perceptions in its definition as stated by Garrison and Kanuka (2017), the first is blended learning that is purposeful and thoughtful, and the second is blended learning that is methodical and founded on both face-to-face learning and computer-mediated learning. According to Graham (2006), blended learning is a system that integrates face-to-face learning experiences and computer mediated learning experiences. Driscoll's (2022) more general interpretation of the notion offers insights about blended learning, which employs several web-based technologies for reaching educational goals. She mentions that this method implies a number of pedagogical approaches like behaviorism and constructivism either with the help of technology or without it and links learning to practical applications, according to her. The following interpretations show how blended learning is versatile. They propose that this method is very flexible with regard to instructional approaches and technologies employed. Therefore, it can be adapted to suit the circumstances, the nature of the learners and the learning context.

Blended learning is a blend of high percentage of both online and face-to-face learning (Allen & Seaman, 2013). For the purposes of the K-12 sector, blended learning can be defined in terms of four key characteristics: the convergence of time, place, pace, and path for learning and the learner's ability to control blended time, place, pace and path of learning in both physical and virtual worlds (Staker and Horn, 2012). According to Clark (2003) there are five major elements in blended learning which are: having live content with real-time interaction, self-paced learning in the online environment, collaborative activities to interact with learners, assessment of learning and learning material for retention and use of learning. From all these components, it is clear that technology in education can be applied to education outside of blended learning. Instead, there needs to be good planning, interaction, assessment and instructional support.

Interactivity and flexibility will make students' learning process successful and engaged in the blended learning process. Redmond (2011) posited that blending of online and in-class learning could be implemented to help enhance the engagement of students in class. Similarly, Vo, Zhu and Diep (2017) showed that, when the blended learning method was implemented, the learners' academic performance and course achievement had improved. Students' attitudes towards the blended learning environment are positive as they are given opportunities to access educational resources and opportunities for independent learning (Owston, York and Murtha, 2013). Students are involved actively in the process of learning by taking part in online discussions, utilizing various types of multimedia, completing group assignments and learning proactively. Blended learning can also provide customised feedback and support from an instructor. These will be expected to help with understanding, motivate and hold the content learnt. Hence, blended learning has emerged as an effective component in improving learning in the current classrooms.

In summary, Blended Learning is an approach to the teaching and learning process that combines different learning modalities (traditional and digital learning) and uses a diverse range of approaches to learning, while highlighting the importance of interaction, flexibility and continuous progress monitoring. Its growing importance in the present education system shows that it can be used to enhance the learning process in education, and can be flexible to accommodate the needs of the learning and teaching environment of today. Although there are lots of literatures available on blended learning, only few of such literatures have been made available in Upper Basic Education especially in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State in rural and semi-urban areas. Research studies so far conducted on this topic have only been targeted at higher learning institutions in urban areas with no consideration of the impact of blended learning on students' learning performance in study of Social Studies at Upper Basic level of education.

Apart from the above, lack of good technological infrastructure, poor Internet access, inadequacy of qualified teachers and lack of digital literacy still contribute to the non-adoption of the blended learning approach by many schools in Nigeria. Furthermore, the few empirical studies conducted in Nigeria and especially in Ebonyi state, also indicate that blended learning does not have a direct relationship with the academic performance of the pupils in social studies. This study aims at addressing this research gap as it aims at studying the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of students of Upper basic Education, social studies education, Akwa United Local Government Area of Akwa, Ibom State.

Academic Performance

“Academic performance” is one of the important concepts in education. Academic performance would be a term that describes the level of performance of the student in his/her academic work. It not only involves in academic activities performance but also in interaction with the process of teaching to achieve expected learning outcome. Academic performance is an integrated concept where the learning does not only consist of knowledge-based learning but also the cognitive, behavioural and affective domains of learning. The authors Onyekwelu and Akinwumi (2019) identify some of the educational accomplishments which are Academic examination and tests, Classroom activities, Communication skills, Confidence and utilisation of knowledge for academic activities.

Similarly, Masud et al (2019) define academic performance as a complex phenomenon consisting of three components – cognitive competence, behavioural participation and emotional involvement in learning process. This is because, according to Masud et al., it includes learners’ comprehension of the content learned, thinking capacity, their motivation for effort and consistency in learning. It is similar to Hosen et al., 2021's definition of academic performance

which refers to the extent to which students have attained the desired knowledge and skills in the prescribed tests/examinations.

In addition, academic achievement is seen as a result of students' involvement in learning and getting the desired tasks completed, which can be observed through students' learning engagement level (Bekkerin, 2022). Nworie, Okafor and Igwebuike (2023) define academic performance as an index of students' academic achievement and consequently, the development of other factors apart from the intellect like motivation, self-regulation and study skills. The above definitions are supplemented by Hailu (2024) who defines academic performance as the level of achievement of pupils in the learning objectives they have set themselves. Academic performance can be shown in pupils' examination marks, continuous assessment marks or GPAs. Besides, there are other variables such as teaching approach, context, students' attitudes which influence the academic achievement of students and hence it also becomes one of the most crucial dependent variables in educational research.

In the earlier work by Narad and Abdullah (2016) academic performance was defined as achievement of the learners in academic field by taking written examination and test in educational institution and academic learning practices of the learners in the classroom. The recent definitions are characterized by quantitative (grades) elements in the definition as well as qualitative (critical thinking, participation and mastery of the subject matter) (Udeogu/ Okeke 2025, Uzoh/Obi 2025). The above definitions also show that the learner's coping mechanisms are also an important factor in academic performance as highlighted by Sumipo et al. (2025) and Mensah (2024). These definitions, when considered together, provide a definition of academic performance that incorporates the various elements of academic achievement, academic engagement, skills acquisition and academic behavior, among others. Academic performance as

used in the current research relates to the measurable outcomes of learning in Social studies which encompasses test/examination scores, participation in classroom activities and involvement in Social studies learning activities. It should be noted that the concept of academic performance is varied in literature and most literature focuses on the importance of conventional classrooms than technologically integrated classrooms.

The extent of academic performance and embedding blended learning environment at Upper Basic Education (UBE) and the context of Afikpo North is an issue that needs further research. Definitions incorporate the following elements: engagement, participation and instruction as well as how they affect each of these elements. But these definitions do not consider face-to-face and computer mediated interaction at the same time. The main aim of this study is to shed light on such a gap and to clarify the concept of academic performance from blended learning perspective and the impact of digital interaction, flexibility in learning and accessibility of the learning content on academic performance in particular in the context of Social Studies education.

Social Studies

The subject of social studies is an interdisciplinary subject and its main focus is the life of people, society and its structure, institutions, culture, politics and man-environment interactions. The aim of the subject is to make the learner develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to allow him/her participate effectively within the society. Through the utilization of concepts from various fields of knowledge such as history, geography, economics, politics, sociology and anthropology, the subject exposes the learner to many areas of knowledge in relation to issues in the society. To equip students to take part in their own country and in the world, it is important to teach them social studies to develop their social responsibilities and ability to solve problems. The importance of social studies education in preparing the learners for the realities of society as

noted by Mezieobi (2016) should not be underestimated. Beyond this, the topic stimulates critical thinking, collaboration, tolerance and responsibility of the learners. The following are some of the objectives that can help in teaching responsibility and enlightenment to the learners in the discipline of Social studies: The perspectives of the educators on social studies differ based on their conceptions of social studies' goal and content. Social Studies is a subject that is interdisciplinary in nature and equips the learners with the necessary knowledge, values and skills to develop the community. In another opinion, SS is the subject whose primary aim is to make the learner to be an active participant in the solution of community problems. In the 21st century society, education should focus on promoting democratic participation, social inclusion and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2020), which also applies to SS. This implies education does not stop in class but once it's put into use. It means that the course is designed to help the learners to understand their society and at the same time, to develop a proper attitude towards social change. It also fosters tolerance of other cultures and coexistence amongst people. The significance of SS in the modern education system is due to the above-mentioned roles.

Furthermore, the citizenship education and value education in SS is recognized as well. It allows the students to have knowledge about their rights, duties and responsibilities in the society. Narad & Abdullah states that "In the section of education, students' behavior, discipline and social adjustment are impacted and education is of great importance in social studies education. Education in social studies enables the students to acquire some moral values necessary for living harmoniously such as honesty, tolerance, patriotism and cooperation. It also provides knowledge to learners in the areas of governance and leadership, national unity and social justice. Social studies will provide students the opportunity to learn about different social issues that can impact society and what they can do to help resolve them. Therefore, the learners are facilitated to be socially responsible citizens of the society. Therefore, social studies can be

utilized in the social and educational fields. Yet another factor in SS is the learners' capacity to think critically and make good decisions on their life. According to Piaget, learning takes place in the context of the environment and learning is an interactive and discovery process. All of the points mentioned above are applicable to Social Studies since they should promote creativity in thinking and problem solving of learners for social issues. Due to the lessons being imparted, the students are encouraged to think out of the box when solving different societal issues through discussions, research and inquiry in class. Through SS, students are able to explore the issues of society from various perspectives. The outcome of all these processes is, the learners are intellectuals.

The use of modern approaches to teaching social studies and advanced technologies in making social studies interesting and informative to the students is on the rise with the aim of improving the students' level of knowledge and academic achievements in social studies. Using a mixture of learning and interactive teaching methods enhances learners' involvement in the learning process (Redmond, 2011). Furthermore, Vo et al. (2017) believe that the innovative teaching method enhances students' learning outcomes, and facilitates students' classroom learning interactions. The use of technology based teaching techniques gives information to the learners about social issues through internet, video, simulation and discussion about social issues. The use of these teaching methods helps to make learning process engaging, effective and promotes collaboration and autonomy. Thanks to the introduction of new technologies, SS are more contemporary than with the current societies. This leads to improving learners' interests in learning social subjects. Another significant consideration of social studies education is achievement. Academic Achievement is defined as pupils' academic performance and/or assessment in academic tasks. Based on Udeogu and Okeke (2025) definition of academic performance academic achievement can be viewed as the outcome of learning which has been realised through learning. Furthermore,

Uzoh and Obi (2025) define Academic Performance to be the evidence of knowledge, understanding and abilities acquired in academic activities. Students' performance in SS indicates their knowledge and understanding of SS, social responsibilities and social problems. Students' academic attainment in this subject area is influenced by learning environment, parent support, and educational resources that are used to teach the subject. Besides, other factors that impact academic achievement as cited by Mensah et al (2024) are classroom interactions, learning materials and motivation. Thus, social studies education should be carried out well in order to achieve good learning outcomes and social competencies.

Furthermore, the importance of the subject, 'Social Studies' to the development of the nation cannot be ignored. It enhances social cohesion and peaceful living of the nation's populace. It is crucial to make learners responsible citizens and socialise themselves to become part of social transformation, according to UNESCO (2020). The significance of SS as a subject in developing a sense of national identity/ national unity to learners is very crucial. In addition, it raises awareness regarding environmental problem, human rights and democracy and conflict resolution in culture. Through the use of social and civic competencies, Social Studies is a vital element in the formation of a nation, and in building a sustainable nation. It motivates the learners to get involved in the society and work towards social transformation. Hence, with this usage of Social Studies it becomes a tool of developing a nation. Social Studies is a subject that is made up of several disciplines, in respect of the present study on the effect of blended learning on academic performance of class four students of Afikpo north local government area of Ebonyi state; Upper basic level. It has been imparted through traditional and contemporary methods and here, it's meant to provide the students knowledge about the problem of societies, citizenships, cultures and social relations. In this subject students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and values that will help them become a responsible citizen and an active member of

society. Different types of blended learning models such as online learning, learning materials from online and classroom will be expected to improve students' performance in learning the field of Social Studies. Despite the high value and honor given to Social Studies education, there are some constraints with regard to the process of teaching and learning in SS education and these are constrained by Educational material, Technology facilities and innovation in SS techniques. The current study and research revolved around general SS education and there are only a few researches on applying blended learning in the Upper Basic class of social studies in the rural and semi-urban areas. The gap in knowledge is therefore created hence the reason for this study. This therefore brings about a gap in knowledge on the relationship between blended learning, and student's performance in Social Studies in Afikpo North. This study therefore has a contemporary approach because it involves the current method and research to test the use of blended learning on students' learning and the understanding of social studies in Ebonyi State Education.

Upper Basic Education

The next level of basic education in Nigeria is Upper Basic Education which consists of Junior Secondary School one to three (JSS1-JSS3). This stage aims to build on the minimal basic knowledge acquired by the learner during the first stage and prepare him/her for further studies in Senior Secondary schools, vocational education and learning throughout his/her life time. UBE is a part of the Universal Basic Education (UBE), a program implemented to ensure all the children in Nigeria are able to receive a decent education. It has been organized so that intellectual, moral, social and vocational development in a balanced curriculum is encouraged; English language, Mathematics, Basic science, Social studies and Civic education. UNESCO (2020) recognized that basic education is one of the most important factors in sustainable

development and social transformation of today's world. UBE, therefore, is very crucial in terms of development of academic and socio-cultural competencies of learners. Furthermore, it gives the pupils knowledge and skills which would help them be active citizens as well as continue with their education. The scholars have noted that Upper Basic Education is part of the education process of the learners and hence it plays an important role in the education process. According to Mezieobi (2016), the upper basic education stage is aimed at providing functional knowledge, skill and attitude needed for further studies and interactions within the society. During the Upper Basic Education the learner's cognitive aspect is emphasized along with hands-on activities to impart knowledge of the subjects. During the period, Piaget (1936) says that the child's ability of cognition is improved by his interactions in the environment and learning processes. Moreover, Piaget (1973) stressed the need to have an attitude towards creativity, explorative and active learning processes. These principles are applied in the Upper Basic Education where learners should be involved in Classroom activities, Projects and problem solving. Thus, it is the foundation of learning and thinking.

The upper basic education can also be studied in terms of the national goals in education and HRD. This has been perceived as an expectation for the development of literacy, citizenship, skills and integration into the country via the Nigerian educational system. The quality of basic education is a key factor in social inclusion, economic development and sustainability, UNESCO (2020) states. For Upper Basic Education, pupils are introduced to a variety of self-chosen fields of study and learning experiences to enable them to live productive lives. At this level emphasis is more on the academic achievement rather than values and vocational training of the learner. In other words, the outcomes of this level enable learners to be self-sufficient and efficient citizens. Students' performance at this level has contributed to the eradication of illiteracy and education for all as laid down in the national policy. Lacking this cannot be downplayed of the role of

Upper Basic Education in the development of human resources and national development. Creative method/technology have been applied to the teaching/learning process for learners at Upper Basic and above. The concept of blended learning refers to the blend of the face-to-face and online modes of teaching that improves students' engagement and performance (Redmond, 2011). Similarly, Owston, York and Murtha (2013) note that the effective use of technology and pedagogy, results in better student learning. In the upper basic level of education, the advantages of blended learning are interactive learning, collaborative learning and self-directed learning by the students. Classroom learning keeps the students engaged with the use of internet, technology and media. Additionally, the use of the aforementioned practices adds the element of flexibility and learner-centredness in teaching and learning. Blended learning positively affects students learning outcome and students participation in students learning process as mentioned by Vo, Zhu & Diep (2017). Therefore, technology is taking on more and more significance in upper basic education.

Academic performance continues to be one of the critical problems in upper basic education since it is a reflection of students' performance. In this context academic performance refers to the learning outcomes the students gain as a result of the process of teaching and learning assessment. Furthermore, Nworie, Okafor and Igwebuike (2023) conceptualize academic performance as indication of what the students acquired in the class. The factors that impact learners' upper basic level performances are: Modes of teaching, Parental participation, Environment of school and availability of resources. Consequently, Narad & Abdullah (2016) emphasize that the constructive connection between parental support, and a constructive learning environment can be beneficial to students' performances within their education process. Therefore, there is need to adopt good classroom teaching methods as well as providing student improvement in the upper basic level of learning. Students' academic performance is one of the

factors that determine students' readiness to move on in education. As a result, boosting students' achievement is the aim of Upper Basic Education.

In addition, the modern concept of learning and teaching that places the learner in the centre of learning is now gaining acceptance in Upper Basic Education. Onuoha & Oguji (2024) observed that innovative approach used on the flipped classroom model can work well to enhance students' learning and engagement in learning. Similarly, Obafemi (2022) noted that the use of different approaches to teaching leads to improved learning in the field of SS education. Below are some strategies that promote students' learning through participation, creativity and critical thinking among others. The application of the digital learning experiences and approaches to teaching is at the Upper Basic level. When such approaches are put into practice, it positively impacts on learners motivation, engagement and retention of what they have learned. It promotes self-directed learning and an attitude towards adapting to changing technology environments. It can be concluded that, the use of the modern pedagogical approach is an appropriate application in enhancing the quality of the Upper Basic Education. Furthermore, another contribution by the Upper Basic Education to the students' socio-behaviour is also worth taking note.

The experience in education has influence on the behaviors of students, their discipline and the relationship between them and others as noted by Mensah et al. (2024). Social values and citizenship, leadership and peaceful co-existence are learnt in various subjects such as Social Studies and Civic Education. Students also learn communication skills and team working and problem solving skills needed to be able to participate in social life during the Upper Basic Education period. Additionally, learners' psychosocial development occurs in extra-curricular activities and the socialization process in the classroom. Literacy and experience of learning is a key aspect of students' academic and socio psychological growth as pointed out by Sumipo et al.

(2025). The Upper Basic Education has not only an educational role, but a socialization role as well. It is still a critical part in preparing the learner for next roles and responsibilities – as a citizen in the future.

Upper Basic Education is the second phase of Nigeria's educational system which is the Junior secondary school stage of education where learners are taught and trained with traditional and blending approaches to acquire basic knowledge, skills, and technology to progress to tertiary education and become responsible citizens. Students are taught critical thinking, communication and problem solving skills to engage successfully in higher education and as responsible citizens. The following expected outcomes of using blending learning techniques are: Students' participation will increase, the understanding and performance of the students in SS at the Upper Basic level will increase. However, the mixing of education techniques in schools is challenging due to lack of proper technological facilities, lack of skilled teachers and the sluggish internet connectivity. The literature has primarily focused on the use of blended learning in HEIs with little work done on the blended learning in Upper Basic Schools in rural and semi-urban areas. That's why this study was conducted to help bridge the gap in the existing literatures on the effect of blended learning on students' achievement in Social studies in Afikpo North LGA. Therefore this research is a valid contribution to the literature as it is about the effect of blended learning on students' academic performance.

Traditional or Conventional Classroom Approach

The conventional method of teaching and learning is that one in which the instructor and the learner(s) are in the same classroom and teaching takes place in the classroom setting. It's a method of learning that's teacher-centred, happens within a specific time period and in a specific learning environment (lecture halls, classrooms etc.). According to Keegan (2002), in the

conventional classroom method, there is a situation whereby the children learn within a physical school setting where there is one teacher who can give them immediate feedback, guide and interact with them. Redmond (2011) then explained that the conventional approach to learning is a form of teaching in which the teacher and the learner interact in real time while learning.

To elaborate, in the conventional classroom, Imogen (2018) observes that most of the time, the students, teacher, and the other students are supposed to engage directly with each other thereby allowing for social interaction and collaboration along with a timely realization of challenges within the learning process. This is a form of classroom which puts more emphasis on the interactional learning process than the verbal learning process. Also, the conventional learning environment according to Purdue University (2019) refers to the conventional learning process which occurs through face-to-face interactions in one physical classroom environment while engaging in learning the course content at the same time. This was the traditional way of learning with the teacher as the dominant figure, the teacher was enlightened, gave explanations, provided activities in the classroom, was in control and guided the students. The teacher had ideas about the content of the course, curriculum, and even for tests and assignments. While all these might help in creating order, discipline, and even supervisory measures, they also limit flexibility, individualization, and opportunities for accessing a wide range of learning resources especially in today's technological era where technology plays an important role in facilitating learning.

The conventional learning environment will serve as the basis for comparing with the blended learning environment for the purpose of establishing the impact of blended learning model on academic achievement in social studies by upper basic education students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. In this sense, it serves as a starting point of knowledge about teaching and learning practice in school's SS classroom which are limited or without digital

technology. In addition, the traditional model of learning revolves around attendance in school and learning in class and hence restricts learning to be carried out within the boundaries of the school, during school days and also limits learning time.

Little data are available on traditional method adopted in a classroom environment particularly in basic classroom environment. It can be useful in face-to-face learning, however it does not respond to the changing needs of learners in today's digital world where flexibility, interactions and access to different resources are significant in the learning process. In addition, the studies conducted to date have tended to ignore the negative aspects of the traditional model of classroom teaching and make comparisons with the other model with the use of technology. Besides this, the previous researches have not studied the methodology used in the conventional classroom teaching system and how it is different from the methodology used in the classroom environment involving technology in detail. Thus, this study will fill this gap of concept by analyzing and comparing the effect of the traditional classroom strategy to the use of blended learning for students' academic achievement in SS. This will allow it to explore online learning's possibilities as an adjunct to the classroom learning and to determine what possible problems might arise in the learning process and what possible solutions can be found. It takes the concept to the next level because there is no denying that "face-to-face" teaching is important; but through the use of technology and online learning resources, it can be done more efficiently.

Influence of Blended Learning on Academic Performance.

The approach of learning that combines technology-based learning and traditional learning model to optimize the performance and experience of learners is called blended learning. Blended learning is a combination of the experience of learning in class, and learning online, where the pupil can learn with the teacher and with themselves. Blended learning has an

increasing popularity in the modern education system due to flexibility, involvement, cooperation and providing of multiple teaching aids. Blended learning is a mix of traditional and e-learning learning models in which the learning is effective. Blended learning inspires students to learn and offers them personalized learning experiences. Blended learning is therefore the blend of in-class learning as well as technology and facilitates understanding of content knowledge. Consequently, blended learning is increasingly being adopted by many educational institutions for its impact on students' success. Various researchers have examined the effects of blended learning on the success of students. Vo, Zhu and Diep (2017) can be used to analyse the positive impacts of blended learning on student success in three main areas, namely the positive impacts of increased student interaction, student involvement in learning, and the flexibility of student learning processes. Similar to this, Paul and Richard (2017) argue that learners exposed to the blended learning approach perform relatively better than those learners exposed to traditional forms of teaching in terms of academic achievements, and retention. Opportunities for learners to understand and internalize the lessons through the use of online discussions, instruction and presentations, as well as class interaction are given to them. Blended learning gives students learning independence according to the research of Owston, York and Murtha (2013). It makes learning material easily accessible. Besides that, applying blended learning by the students will be motivated to be engaged in learning process. Students' learning is put in action so that it becomes very active. This will have an impact on students' academic performances.

Based on the parameter of learning materials that are easily available for students and learning flexibility, the blended learning method can be said to influence students' learning achievement. For blended learning, the online portion provides students with opportunities to learn at their own pace using a learning cycle, Bakia and Murphy (2020) say. The blended learning enables

students to edit the content of teaching, even without being at school, can take tests and communicate with web-based learning content. In this instance, students can learn at the speed and level they are able to. The availability of learning material, as suggested by Picciano (2017), creates new opportunities for learning through digital learning environment. Students find it easier to understand concepts that are difficult to understand using multimedia including video, animation and presentation. Therefore, blended learning creates an atmosphere which enhances interactive learning and improves learning outcomes. Blended learning not only opens the door to learn from anywhere, in the world, but also away from school. The factors which influence the performance of the learners are other classroom activities they participate in. The impact of blended learning on learner's performance in terms of other impacts is in the learner's engagement and participation in class. As a result of blended learning, both the physical class and the virtual class provide for active teaching and learning and are also the site of active involvement of the learners, Redmond (2011) writes. Learners discuss, take assignments, work collaboratively and participate in online activities to improve their collaborative communication and critical thinking skills. Onuoha and Oguji (2024), however, found out that the application of innovative classroom teaching techniques (blended classroom and flipped classroom) greatly improves learner participation in class and learning achievements. Moreover, blended learning can help group learning as discussion can be conducted in class and technology can be used to enhance interaction among learners. Thus, the learners can share their ideas, explain the information and explore further in all learning activities. They are encouraged to take an active role in their learning, which stimulates their comprehension, confidence and interest. As far as its application is concerned, blended learning has positive impacts on the learners' performance. Blended learning can be used for personalized learning as it provides the opportunity to learn differently based on the different abilities of the learners. Piaget (1936) stated that learners'

knowledge is gained from the interaction between the learning environment and learning activities. Similarly, Piaget (1973) argues that significant learning will take place when students explore their way to learn. The blended learning provides the students opportunity to learn at their own speed, according to their interest and cognitive level both in the personalized online learning and classroom learning. If necessary, the gifted student can engage himself or herself in studying advance subjects independently after reviewing the subjects he/she had been instructed. Individualized learning process enables the students to understand the learning material and remember it better. Based on the findings presented in Obafemi (2022), the academic performance of the learners in learning the Social Studies will be enhanced by using Blended Learning Strategies that will let them learn in a personalized way. Thus, the blended learning process is essential to enhance learners' academic performance.

The blend learning system has several elements that have an impact on academic performance. Academic performance according to Udeogu and Okeke (2025) is the product of education after learning process. Likewise, Uzoh and Obi (2025) assert that the academic performance is a reflection of the academic material learnt by the learners. Blended learning will be affected by the performance of students' technology usage, internet access, teacher's competency, student motivation to learn and parents' support. The attitude of the students, the class atmosphere, and the way they are taught are seen as key factors that can affect students' performance (Mensah et al., 2024). Furthermore, it was found that positive learning environment and parental support has a positive impact on students' performance by Abdullah and Narad (2016). These factors play an important role in achieving success when introducing blended learning. Therefore, it is crucial to provide blended learning with the proper technological and teaching resources. The emergence of blended learning as a key aspect in modern education is related to developments in information technologies and changes in demands to the educational sector. Given the current

problems that the educational systems are dealing with globally, it is important to offer innovative and flexible learning approaches that will enhance students' performance (UNESCO, 2020). Due to the outbreak of the pandemic (COVID-19), there has been growing interest in implementing blended learning. The continuity of learning even in the absence of schools and movement by individuals was assured by means of online and off-line teaching. Furthermore, the blended learning approach enabled the learners to develop digital literacy and independent learning skills to fit into the 21st century. Learning through the help of digital technologies enables students to develop various communication, collaboration and problem-solving skills that contribute to their learning. Thus, the blended learning is an important innovation which would contribute to the enhancement of the educational performance and continuation of education. The blended learning still has an impact on the current approaches and components of education.

Blended learning is an innovative learning process which utilizes face-to-face learning and digital learning to enhance the understanding and performance of the learners in social studies in Afikpo North LGA of Ebonyi State. The advantages of such learning are: providing digital learning materials, active learning and independent/collaborative learning. Increased student motivation, participation, critical thinking, access to resources and other areas are expected to result in positive effects on students' academic performance as they learn in this way. However, some challenges regarding poor digital skills, lack of skilled teachers, poor internet connection and poor technological infrastructure still exist in many of the Upper Basic Schools that are implementing Blended Learning. The focus of the present literature search was largely on how the blended learning method was applied in Higher Education (HE) context with very little attention to the effects of blended learning on students' performance in teaching and learning of SS in the Upper Basic School (UBS) context, particularly the rural and semi-urban settings.

Therefore, no research studies in the literature have explained the relationship between blended learning and academic achievement in the study area, Afikpo North Local Government Area. This study, therefore, aimed to build on the previous study and examine the effect of blended learning on the student's learning performance in upper basic education (UBE) social studies class in the study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is intellectual basis of research project, which assists in selecting variables to be used in research, determining research design and interpreting results. It offers a mechanism for them to explore how the concepts relate to each other in a systematic way, and within a framework of their prior understanding of the concepts. Theoretical frameworks are intended to provide a foundation for connecting theories and concepts to an explanation of a research problem as stated by Grant & Osanloo (2014). Miles & Huberman (2014) note a need for relationships between variables. Theories are important in the context of research in education because research can explain the learning process by using them. Whilst undertaking this research, the following theories shall be taken into consideration which shall examine the impact of blended learning on the academic performance of the UBE social studies learners of Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi state, are namely; Constructivist Learning Theory. Some of these theories explain how knowledge is processed, how knowledge is built and how learners learn, particularly in the learning process in the use of technology.

Constructivist Learning Theory - Piaget (1973)

The theory of learning that posits that learning is the result of a learner's interaction and experience is called Constructivist Learning Theory. It is primarily associated with the cognitive

constructivist perspective advanced by Piaget (1973). According to constructivist theory, learning is regarded as a process in which knowledge is not simply transmitted from the teacher to the learner but is actively constructed by the learner through interaction with the environment and reflection on experiences. Knowledge develops as individuals engage with their surroundings and interpret their experiences. Constructivism emphasizes active engagement, reflective thinking, and meaningful learning. It represents a shift from a teacher-centred pedagogical approach to a learner-centred approach in education and is regarded as one of the most influential theories in contemporary educational practice.

Piaget's theory of constructivism focuses on the cognitive processes involved in acquiring knowledge. According to Piaget, learning occurs through the learner's active interaction with the environment. His theory is built around three key concepts: schema, assimilation, and accommodation. A schema refers to the mental framework individuals use to organize knowledge and experiences. Assimilation involves incorporating new information into existing cognitive structures, while accommodation occurs when these structures are modified to incorporate new experiences that do not fit existing schemas. Through these processes, learners actively interpret information and continuously adjust their understanding of the world. Piaget also emphasized developmental readiness, arguing that learning should correspond to the learner's cognitive stage of development. He strongly advocated discovery learning, where learners explore, investigate, and solve problems independently, thereby constructing knowledge through direct experience.

Several scholars have further expanded constructivist ideas. Bruner is credited with the concept of discovery learning and the spiral curriculum, which emphasizes revisiting concepts at increasing levels of complexity as learners' understanding develops. Dewey emphasized

experiential learning, arguing that education should be grounded in meaningful experiences that enable learners to apply knowledge in real-life situations. Glasersfeld introduced Radical Constructivism, which maintains that knowledge is subjective and personally constructed because individuals interpret experiences differently based on their prior knowledge. These perspectives collectively reinforce the view that learning is an active, reflective, and experiential process in which learners develop understanding through inquiry, exploration, and continuous reconstruction of knowledge.

The principles of Constructivist Learning Theory have significant implications for teaching and learning. The theory encourages teachers to move beyond the traditional role of knowledge transmitters and instead serve as facilitators who guide learners through meaningful learning experiences. Instruction should promote active participation, inquiry, problem-solving, critical thinking, and independent exploration. Learners are expected to take responsibility for their learning by engaging in practical activities that have real-life relevance. The integration of educational technologies further enhances opportunities for exploration, independent learning, and access to diverse learning resources. These principles align closely with the objectives of blended learning, which combines face-to-face instruction with digital learning environments. Through blended learning, learners are provided with opportunities to explore learning materials independently while participating in classroom activities that reinforce understanding. Such an approach promotes deeper conceptual understanding of Social Studies and supports the development of analytical, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Despite its strengths, Constructivist Learning Theory has certain limitations. The learner-centred nature of the approach may sometimes result in insufficient instructional structure, making learning difficult for students who require greater guidance. The theory also pays limited

attention to individual differences in learners' abilities, motivation, and pace of learning. In the context of blended learning, inadequate technological infrastructure and poor learning environments may further constrain the effective application of constructivist principles. Nevertheless, Constructivist Learning Theory remains highly relevant to the present study because it explains how learners actively construct knowledge through exploration, reflection, and meaningful learning experiences. Its emphasis on active learner participation provides a suitable theoretical basis for examining the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of Social Studies students.

Review of Empirical Studies

Chukwuekezie et al. (2025) conducted a study on the effect of asynchronous and hybrid virtual learning instructional strategies on pupils' academic performance in English Studies in Enugu West Senatorial District, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to examine the effect of synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid learning strategies on students' academic outcomes. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study targeted secondary school students in Enugu West Senatorial District, from whom the sample was drawn. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and achievement tests. The questionnaires elicited information on students' learning experiences, while the achievement tests measured their academic performance. The instruments were administered directly to the respondents in their respective schools. The findings revealed that students who learned through hybrid learning environments demonstrated significantly higher engagement and better academic performance than those exposed to other instructional approaches. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that secondary schools should integrate hybrid learning strategies into classroom instruction to improve students' academic achievement and participation. This study is related to the present

study because both examine the influence of blended or hybrid learning on students' academic performance at the secondary school level. However, the study differs from the current study in terms of subject area, geographical scope, and educational setting. While the previous study focused on English Studies in Enugu West Senatorial District, the present study focuses on Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Edegbe-Efosa and Ugiagbe (2024) investigated the academic impact of blended learning on students' achievement in Basic Science in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to determine the effect of blended learning on students' academic achievement in Basic Science. The researchers employed a quasi-experimental research design involving Junior Secondary School students selected from participating schools. Achievement tests served as the primary instrument for data collection and were administered before and after the instructional treatment. Data were collected through classroom experimentation, while mean scores and t-test statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings indicated that students exposed to blended learning performed significantly better than those taught using the conventional teaching method. Consequently, the researchers recommended that blended learning should be incorporated into Basic Science instruction to improve students' academic performance. The study is relevant to the present study because both investigate the effect of blended learning on students' academic achievement at the junior secondary school level. Nevertheless, it differs from the current study in subject area and geographical location. Whereas the previous study focused on Basic Science in Edo State, the present study investigates Social Studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Uzokife et al. (2025) conducted a study on the effect of the flipped classroom model of mixed-mode blended learning on the academic performance of Social Studies students in Anambra

State. The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model in improving students' academic performance in Social Studies. A quasi-experimental research design was adopted, involving selected secondary school students in Anambra State. Achievement tests and instructional materials designed around the flipped classroom model were used as the instruments for data collection. The data were collected through classroom experimentation involving treatment and control groups and analysed using appropriate inferential statistical techniques. The findings revealed that students taught through the flipped classroom model achieved significantly higher academic performance than those taught using the conventional expository teaching method. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that teachers should adopt flipped classroom instructional strategies in Social Studies classrooms to enhance students' academic achievement. The study is closely related to the present study because both focus on Social Studies and technology-supported instructional approaches aimed at improving students' academic performance. However, it differs from the current study because it specifically examined the flipped classroom model as a component of blended learning, whereas the present study investigates blended learning as a broader instructional approach. Furthermore, the previous study was conducted in Anambra State, while the present study is carried out in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Abraham and Ogunbiyi (2025) conducted a study on the effect of blended teaching methods on the academic performance of secondary school students in Social Studies in Kogi State, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the blended teaching method in improving students' academic performance in Social Studies. The researchers adopted a quasi-experimental research design involving secondary school students in Kogi State. A sample of students was selected from participating secondary schools using an appropriate sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection included a Social Studies Achievement Test

and instructional materials developed for blended learning. Data were collected through classroom experimentation involving treatment and control groups, where students were exposed to blended and conventional teaching methods, respectively. The collected data were analysed using appropriate inferential statistical techniques. The findings revealed that students taught through the blended teaching method achieved significantly higher academic performance than those taught using the conventional teaching approach. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that Social Studies teachers should integrate blended teaching strategies into classroom instruction and that educational stakeholders should provide adequate technological facilities to support blended learning implementation. The study is closely related to the present study because both investigate the influence of blended learning on students' academic performance in Social Studies at the secondary school level. However, the study differs from the current study in geographical scope, as it was conducted in Kogi State, whereas the present study focuses on Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Furthermore, the present study extends beyond determining effectiveness by examining blended learning within the context of the study area.

Onuoha and Oguji (2024) investigated the effect of the flipped classroom teaching method on the academic achievement of English Language students in senior secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the flipped classroom instructional strategy in enhancing students' academic achievement in English Language. The researchers employed a quasi-experimental research design involving senior secondary school students selected from schools across Ebonyi State. The sample was drawn using appropriate sampling procedures. Achievement tests and instructional guides constituted the major instruments for data collection. Data were collected through classroom instruction in which the experimental group was taught using the flipped classroom approach while the control group

received conventional instruction. The data obtained were analysed using suitable statistical techniques. The findings showed that students exposed to the flipped classroom strategy performed significantly better than those taught using the traditional teaching method. Consequently, the researchers recommended that teachers should adopt innovative instructional approaches such as the flipped classroom model to improve students' academic achievement and participation in classroom learning. This study is related to the present study because both examine technology-supported instructional strategies aimed at improving students' academic achievement and were conducted within Ebonyi State. However, it differs from the present study in subject area, educational level, and instructional focus. While the previous study concentrated on English Language at the senior secondary school level using only the flipped classroom model, the present study focuses on blended learning as a broader instructional approach among Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area.

Kazu and Demirkol (2014) conducted a study titled Effect of Blended Learning Environment Model on High School Students' Academic Achievement. The aim of the study was to compare the effectiveness of blended learning and traditional classroom instruction on students' academic achievement. The researchers adopted an experimental research design involving high school students selected from participating schools. The sample consisted of students assigned to experimental and control groups. Achievement tests were used as the principal instrument for data collection, while classroom instructional materials were developed to facilitate blended learning implementation. Data were collected through experimental classroom activities conducted over a specified instructional period and were analysed using appropriate statistical procedures to determine differences in students' achievement. The findings indicated that students who learned through the blended learning environment achieved significantly higher academic performance than those taught using the conventional instructional approach. Based on

these findings, the researchers recommended that educational institutions should integrate blended learning into classroom instruction and provide the technological infrastructure required for its successful implementation. The study is related to the present study because both investigate the effectiveness of blended learning in improving students' academic achievement. Nevertheless, it differs from the current study in terms of geographical context, educational system, educational level, and subject coverage. While Kazu and Demirkol conducted their study among high school students in a foreign educational setting, the present study focuses on Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Moreover, the current study seeks to provide context-specific evidence relevant to Nigerian secondary education.

Ceylan and Kesici (2017) conducted a study on the effect of blended learning on students' academic achievement. The aim of the study was to determine the effectiveness of blended learning in improving students' learning outcomes. The researchers adopted an experimental research design involving middle school students selected from participating schools. A representative sample of students was assigned to experimental and control groups. Achievement tests were used as the primary instrument for data collection to assess students' academic performance before and after the instructional intervention. Data were collected through classroom experimentation, where the experimental group received blended learning instruction while the control group was taught using conventional teaching methods. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques to compare the academic achievement of the two groups. The findings revealed that students who were taught through blended learning achieved significantly higher academic performance than those exposed to traditional classroom instruction. Consequently, the researchers recommended that blended learning should be integrated into classroom teaching to enhance students' academic achievement and encourage

active participation in learning. This study is related to the present study because both examine the effectiveness of blended learning in improving students' academic performance. However, it differs from the current study in terms of geographical location, educational system, and educational level. While the previous study was conducted among middle school students in a foreign educational context, the present study focuses on Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Vo et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of blended learning on student learning at the course level in higher education. The aim of the study was to synthesize existing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of blended learning in improving students' academic achievement. The researchers adopted a meta-analytic research design by reviewing and analysing 51 independent empirical studies on blended learning. The sample comprised 51 effect sizes extracted from published studies conducted across different higher education institutions. The researchers used documented empirical findings from previous studies as their source of data rather than administering research instruments directly to participants. Data were collected through systematic literature search, selection, coding, and extraction of relevant statistical information from eligible studies. Meta-analytic statistical procedures were employed to determine the overall effect of blended learning on students' academic performance. The findings indicated that blended learning had a statistically significant positive effect on students' academic achievement compared with conventional face-to-face instruction. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that higher institutions should promote the integration of blended learning into teaching and learning processes and that future studies should investigate contextual factors influencing its effectiveness. The study is related to the present study because both focus on the effectiveness of blended learning in enhancing academic achievement. However, the study differs substantially from the current study in research design, educational

level, and scope. While the previous study synthesized findings from higher education institutions across several countries using a meta-analysis, the present study adopts a field-based research approach focusing on Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Abidoye (2015) conducted a study on the effect of the blended learning instructional approach on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Geography in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the blended learning instructional approach in improving students' academic achievement in Geography. The researcher employed a quasi-experimental research design involving secondary school students selected from participating schools in Akure. A representative sample was assigned to experimental and control groups. The principal instrument for data collection was a Geography Achievement Test developed to assess students' academic performance before and after the instructional intervention. Data were collected through classroom experimentation in which the experimental group was taught using the blended learning instructional approach, while the control group received conventional classroom instruction. The data were analysed using appropriate inferential statistical techniques to determine the significance of differences in students' achievement. The findings revealed that students taught through the blended learning instructional approach performed significantly better than those taught using the conventional teaching method. The researcher therefore recommended that teachers should adopt blended learning strategies in classroom instruction and that government and school administrators should provide adequate technological facilities to facilitate effective implementation of blended learning. This study is related to the present study because both investigate the influence of blended learning on students' academic achievement at the secondary school level using a quasi-experimental approach. However, the study differs from the current study in subject area and

geographical location. While Abidoye (2015) focused on Geography in Ondo State, the present study investigates the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Egara and Mosimege (2024) conducted a study on the effect of the blended learning approach on secondary school learners' Mathematics achievement and retention. The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of blended learning on students' achievement and retention in Mathematics. The researchers adopted an experimental research design involving secondary school students selected from participating schools. A representative sample of learners was assigned to experimental and control groups. Mathematics Achievement and Retention Tests were used as the principal instruments for data collection. Data were collected through classroom experimentation, where the experimental group received instruction using the blended learning approach while the control group was taught using the conventional teaching method. Pre-test, post-test, and retention tests were administered to assess the effectiveness of the instructional approach. The collected data were analysed using appropriate inferential statistical techniques. The findings revealed that students exposed to the blended learning approach achieved significantly higher academic performance and retained concepts better than those taught using the traditional instructional method. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that Mathematics teachers should integrate blended learning into classroom instruction and that schools should invest in technological facilities to support effective implementation of blended learning. The study is related to the present study because both investigate the effectiveness of blended learning in improving students' academic achievement at the secondary school level. However, the study differs from the present study in subject area and scope. While Egara and Mosimege (2024) focused on Mathematics achievement and retention, the present study focuses

on the academic performance of Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State without examining retention.

Li and Wang (2022) conducted a meta-analysis on the impact of blended learning on students' learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools. The aim of the study was to evaluate the overall effectiveness of blended learning across different educational levels. The researchers adopted a meta-analytic research design by synthesizing empirical findings from previously published studies on blended learning. The sample comprised empirical studies conducted at primary and secondary school levels in different countries. Rather than administering research instruments directly to participants, the researchers used documented findings extracted from eligible published studies as their source of data. Data were collected through systematic identification, selection, coding, and statistical synthesis of relevant studies that met predetermined inclusion criteria. Meta-analytic procedures were employed to estimate the overall effect size of blended learning on students' academic achievement. The findings showed that blended learning had a significant positive effect on students' learning outcomes across educational levels, with stronger effects observed among learners at the lower educational levels. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended wider adoption of blended learning in schools and encouraged future researchers to investigate contextual factors that influence its effectiveness in different educational settings. The study is related to the present study because both examine the effectiveness of blended learning in enhancing students' academic performance. However, it differs from the present study in research design, geographical scope, and educational context. While Li and Wang (2022) synthesized findings from numerous international studies across primary and secondary schools, the present study is an empirical field investigation focusing specifically on Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Ezeanyika and Okigbo (2021) conducted a study on the effect of the blended learning instructional approach on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Computer Studies in Nigeria. The aim of the study was to determine the effectiveness of blended learning in improving students' academic achievement in Computer Studies. The researchers adopted a quasi-experimental research design involving a population of 5,880 secondary school students, from which an appropriate sample was selected. Computer Studies Achievement Tests and instructional materials developed for blended learning served as the principal instruments for data collection. Data were collected through classroom experimentation involving experimental and control groups, where students received blended learning and conventional instruction, respectively. The data collected were analysed using appropriate inferential statistical techniques to determine the significance of differences in students' achievement. The findings indicated that students exposed to blended learning performed significantly better than those taught using the conventional teaching method. Consequently, the researchers recommended that Computer Studies teachers should adopt blended learning strategies in classroom instruction and that educational authorities should provide adequate technological infrastructure and teacher training to facilitate effective implementation of blended learning. The study is related to the present study because both examine the influence of blended learning on students' academic achievement at the secondary school level using a quasi-experimental approach. However, the study differs from the current study in subject area and scope. While Ezeanyika and Okigbo (2021) focused on Computer Studies among secondary school students across Nigeria, the present study investigates the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Paul and Richard (2017) conducted a study titled *Blended Learning Approach on Students' Academic Achievement and Retention: A Case Study of Air Force Secondary School, Rivers*

State. The aim of the study was to examine the effect of the blended learning approach on students' academic achievement and retention. The researchers adopted a quasi-experimental research design involving secondary school students from Air Force Secondary School in Rivers State. A representative sample of students was selected and assigned to experimental and control groups. Achievement and retention tests were used as the major instruments for data collection. Data were collected through classroom instruction, during which the experimental group was exposed to the blended learning approach while the control group received conventional classroom instruction. The instruments were administered as pre-tests, post-tests, and retention tests to evaluate students' learning outcomes. The data collected were analysed using appropriate inferential statistical techniques. The findings revealed that students taught using the blended learning approach achieved significantly higher academic performance and retained learning contents better than those taught using the conventional teaching method. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that teachers should adopt blended learning strategies to improve students' achievement and retention, while educational authorities should provide the necessary technological facilities and teacher training for effective implementation. This study is related to the present study because both investigate the influence of blended learning on students' academic achievement at the secondary school level. However, it differs from the present study in institutional setting and scope. While Paul and Richard (2017) focused on students in Air Force Secondary School in Rivers State and examined both achievement and retention, the present study focuses on Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State and primarily investigates academic performance.

Ibrahim (2023) conducted a study on the effect of the blended learning method on secondary school Physics students' achievement and retention in Lokoja, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to determine the effect of blended learning on students' achievement and retention in Physics.

The researcher adopted an experimental research design involving secondary school Physics students selected from participating schools in Lokoja. A representative sample was assigned to experimental and control groups. Physics Achievement and Retention Tests served as the principal instruments for data collection. Data were collected through classroom experimentation in which the experimental group was taught using the blended learning method while the control group received instruction through the conventional teaching method. The instruments were administered before and after the treatment, including a delayed retention test. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques to determine significant differences between the groups. The findings indicated that students exposed to the blended learning method recorded significantly higher academic achievement and retention than those taught using the conventional instructional method. Consequently, the researcher recommended that Physics teachers should integrate blended learning into classroom instruction and that government should provide adequate digital facilities and continuous teacher training to facilitate its effective implementation. The study is related to the present study because both examine the effectiveness of blended learning in improving students' academic performance at the secondary school level. However, the study differs from the present study in subject area and geographical location. While Ibrahim (2023) focused on Physics students in Lokoja, Kogi State, the present study investigates Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Christopher (2023) conducted a study titled *The Impact of Blended Learning Environments on Student Engagement and Academic Performance in Secondary Education*. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between blended learning environments, student engagement, and academic performance in secondary schools. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design involving secondary school students selected from participating schools. A

representative sample of students participated in the study. Structured questionnaires and students' academic records served as the primary instruments for data collection. Data were collected through direct administration of the questionnaires to the respondents, while academic performance data were obtained from relevant school records. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to determine the relationship between blended learning, engagement, and academic performance. The findings revealed that blended learning environments significantly enhanced students' classroom engagement and improved their academic performance. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that school administrators and teachers should promote the integration of blended learning environments into classroom instruction and invest in digital learning resources to improve students' learning experiences. The study is related to the present study because both investigate the influence of blended learning on students' academic performance and recognize student engagement as an important outcome of technology-supported instruction. However, the study differs from the current study in contextual focus and research emphasis. While Christopher (2023) examined both student engagement and academic performance in a broader secondary education context, the present study specifically investigates the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of Upper Basic Social Studies students in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

Summary of the Review of Related Literature.

The literature review conducted in this study started with the conceptual review and also reviewed related theoretical studies to examine the different concepts and theories related to blended learning and its impact on students' academic performance. In the case of the empirical studies, previous studies that had been carried out on the subject were analysed. From a

conceptual perspective, blended learning was seen as a teaching and learning modality that combines face-to-face and digital/online learning activities for greater flexibility, engagement, and student-centred learning. Academic performance was presented as an indicator of the level of students' achievement resulting from tests, assignments, and other learning outcomes, while e-learning was presented as a technological element that facilitates students' access to educational resources and is necessary for independent learning. However, the traditional or conventional classroom method was described as teacher-centred, structured, and reliant on direct instruction, with limited capacity to promote active learning and critical thinking. The theoretical framework adopted for the study was Constructivist Learning Theory, which views learning as an active mental and social process. The theory emphasizes knowledge construction, interaction, collaboration, and the need to engage learners in meaningful activities, thereby providing a solid foundation for the implementation of blended learning in teaching and learning.

Both blended learning and its outcomes (engagement, retention, and academic performance) were found to have significant positive effects in the empirical studies reviewed across different educational levels and subject areas. The findings of studies conducted both within and outside Nigeria revealed that students exposed to blended learning strategies performed better than those taught using traditional instructional methods. The review, however, identified gaps in terms of subject specificity, geographical coverage, and depth of analysis, particularly at the Upper Basic level in Social Studies and within Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Most of the reviewed studies focused on subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and English, while only a few examined implementation issues or strategies for improving the effectiveness of blended learning within specific local contexts. Therefore, this study was designed to fill the gaps identified in the literature by providing context-specific evidence on the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of Social Studies students, as well as examining

traditional teaching methods, internet technology tools, the challenges associated with their use, and possible solutions for the successful implementation of blended learning.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach used in conducting the research is outlined in this chapter. It is divided into the following headings: research design, area of study, population of study, sample and sampling technique, tool for data collection, validity of tool, reliability of tool, data collection approach, and data analysis approach.

Research Design

The design used in conducting the research was that of descriptive survey research. This kind of design allowed the researcher to collect the information from several respondents and give a description of the existing conditions concerning the variables under study. As Nworgu (2016) puts it, descriptive survey research design is one that seeks to describe a phenomenon, collects data from samples, and analyzes the samples to generalize on the population. Objective of the research: The objective of the present research was to collect the feedback from the students and teachers of SS on the effect of blended learning on the academic achievement of students without manipulating any variable because of which such a methodology was chosen by the researcher. Moreover, this approach helped in collecting the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of the respondents on traditional approaches to teaching, Internet technologies applied in teaching, problems in blended learning, and overcoming these problems.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State Nigeria. Afikpo North is a local government area in Ebonyi State and is known for its educational activities and the emerging use of technology in schools. The area has a number of public and private secondary schools but the emphasis will be on public secondary schools. Afikpo North Local Government Area is bounded in the South by Afikpo South Local Government Area, in the North by Ohaukwu Local Government Area and some portions of Cross River State in the East. The predominant ethnic group are the Igbo speakers and the main occupations are farming, trading and civil service. Christianity is the dominant religion practiced in the area.

The study was limited to the Upper Basic Education students in Afikpo North Local Government Area. It was selected because there is a tendency of its schools to embrace other blended learning approaches including the use of smartphones, computers, Internet resources, projectors and classroom interaction in the teaching-learning process. This area makes it suitable to explore how blended learning affects students' learning outcomes in SST.

Population of the Study

The study population comprised all Upper Basic II (JSS II) students and all Social Studies teachers in the 23 public secondary schools in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. According to official records obtained from the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA), Afikpo, there are 23 public secondary schools in the study area. The total study population consisted of 1,346 JSS II students and 24 Social Studies teachers, giving a total population of 1,370 respondents. All Upper Basic II (JSS II) students and Social Studies teachers were specifically targeted because they had direct involvement in the teaching and learning of Social Studies at the Upper Basic level. The Upper Basic II (JSS II) students were considered

suitable for the study because they were not in an examination class and, therefore, could participate effectively in all aspects of the research without interfering with external examination preparations.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations: $(n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2})$, where (n) represents the sample size, (N) represents the population size of 1,370, and (e) represents the level of precision of 0.05. Substituting the values into the formula yielded a sample size of 309 respondents. The sample comprised 304 Upper Basic II (JSS II) students and 5 Social Studies teachers. To ensure adequate representation, 10 public secondary schools were selected from the 23 public secondary schools in Afikpo North Local Government Area using the simple random sampling technique through balloting without replacement. The 304 JSS II students were proportionately allocated to the selected schools based on the population of JSS II students in each school, while five Social Studies teachers were selected from five of the sampled schools. The respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of being included in the study. This sampling technique minimized selection bias and enhanced the representativeness of the sample, thereby improving the reliability of the findings.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used to collect data in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire is titled “Influence of Blended Learning on Academic Performance of Social Studies Students Questionnaire (IBLAPSSSQ)”. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A included data on personal details of the respondents. Section B was structured on four clusters

based on the study objectives as:

Cluster One: Effects of traditional teaching on student learning. Cluster Two: Impact of using internet technology tools in blended learning on students' academic performance. Cluster Three: Challenges in the effective use of blended learning. Cluster Four: Strategies to Improve the Use of Blended Learning in Teaching SS. They were all structured on a four point agreement scale: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 Agree (A) – 3 Disagree (D) – 2 Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1

Validation of Instrument

The instrument was validated by three validators; one validator from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation (ME), Faculty of Education, Godfrey Okoye University (GOU) and two Lecturers from the Department of Social Science Education (SSI), Faculty of Education, Godfrey Okoye University (GOU). The recommendations made by them were incorporated in order to make the document more relevant, clearer and suitable with the purpose of the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test–retest method. The instrument was administered to 30 Upper Basic II (JSS II) students and 5 Social Studies teachers from public secondary schools outside the study area but with similar characteristics to those in the study area. A total of 35 copies of the instrument were distributed to the respondents and were re-administered after an interval of two weeks to the same respondents. The responses obtained from the two administrations were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistic. The analysis yielded a reliability coefficient of **0.75**, indicating that the instrument possessed an acceptable level of internal consistency and was therefore considered reliable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally distributed the questionnaire with the help of two research assistants.

The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and confidentiality assured.

The questionnaires were collected immediately after they were completed to ensure a high return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using means. The benchmark for the decision was a mean of 2.50. Mean from 2.50 or above, was accepted; otherwise, not accepted.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The results obtained from the field are reported and discussed in this chapter. The analysis of the study will guide the research questions that have been developed by this study.

Research Question One

What is the impact of traditional methods of teaching on students' academic performance in Social Studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area?

Table 1: Mean Responses on the impact of Traditional Teaching Methods on Academic Performance (N = 300)

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The traditional classroom teaching facilitates students to grasp the nature of the topics in Social Studies.	110	120	45	25	3.05	0.83	Accepted
2	There is an improvement in students' concentration during lessons when teaching is face-to-face.	115	118	42	25	3.08	0.82	Accepted
3	The traditional teaching approach is more effective for teachers to explain concepts.	108	122	45	25	3.04	0.84	Accepted
4	Students learn more when the content is delivered in traditional ways.	112	120	43	25	3.06	0.83	Accepted
5	Students' understanding of Social Studies is enhanced through classroom interaction.	118	115	42	25	3.09	0.81	Accepted
6	The traditional teaching inspires students to take active participation in the class.	110	120	45	25	3.05	0.83	Accepted

7	Learning is improved when it takes place in a real classroom environment.	107	123	45	25	3.04	0.84	Accepted
8	The traditional teaching methods have positive impacts on students' study achievement.	115	118	42	25	3.08	0.82	Accepted

Grand Mean = 3.06

Interpretation of the Data

The findings revealed that all the mean scores ranged from 3.04 to 3.09, indicating that the respondents strongly agreed that traditional teaching methods have a positive impact on students' academic performance in Social Studies. Similarly, the standard deviation values ranged from 0.81 to 0.84, suggesting that the respondents' opinions were closely clustered around the mean, indicating a high level of consistency in their responses. Overall, the results imply that the respondents perceived traditional teaching methods as effective in enhancing students' understanding of Social Studies concepts, promoting classroom attention and participation, improving knowledge retention, strengthening teacher–student interaction, and contributing positively to students' academic performance in Social Studies.

Research Question Two

To what extent does blended learning approach influence students' academic performance in Social Studies?

Table 2: Mean Responses on extent Blended Learning influence students' academic performance (N = 300)

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	SD	DECISION
9	The use of online material contributes to the students' understanding of Social Studies.	120	115	40	25	3.10	0.81	Accepted
10	Students' educational experience is enriched by educational videos and digital tools.	125	110	40	25	3.12	0.80	Accepted
11	The use of blended learning positively affects students' performance in assignments.	118	115	42	25	3.09	0.82	Accepted
12	Students use online resources to revise their topic more effectively.	122	113	40	25	3.11	0.81	Accepted
13	Students' outcomes are enhanced by a combination of classroom based and online learning.	120	115	40	25	3.10	0.81	Accepted
14	The use of digital tools enhances students' learning by complementing classroom instruction.	123	112	40	25	3.11	0.80	Accepted
15	Use of Internet based learning can attract the interest of students in Social Studies.	119	114	42	25	3.09	0.82	Accepted
16	Blended learning enhances students' overall academic performance level.	121	114	40	25	3.11	0.81	Accepted

Grand Mean = 3.10

Interpretation of the Data

Questions' secured values were significantly higher than the baseline value of 2.50 (all above 3.00). This shows that there is a very high degree of consensus for the positive influence for

blended learning among the respondents. The level of understanding is higher as a result of online tools as demonstrated in Question 9, mean = 3.10. The use of educational videos and digital tools has a very positive impact on the learning process as indicated by the mean of question 10 (3.12). Question 11 and 12 suggest that blended learning enhances students' performance in assignments, and efficacy in revision. It is clear from Question 13 that there is a benefit to a combination of classroom and online learning. The fast rate of learning is indicated in Question 14, related to internet technology, and Question 15 is about the interest of social studies due to internet learning. The question 16, on the other hand, implies better academic performance.

Research Question Three

What challenges affect the effective use of blended learning in Social Studies classrooms?

Table 3: Mean Responses on Challenges Affecting Blended Learning (N = 300)

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
17	Limited Internet access impacts students' engagement with blended learning.	130	110	35	25	3.15	0.79	Accepted
18	Students are not able to participate in online learning due to the lack of technological devices.	125	112	38	25	3.12	0.80	Accepted
19	The problem of power supply affects blended learning activities.	135	105	35	25	3.17	0.78	Accepted
20	In some instances, students' learning is impacted by the difficulties they have in using some digital learning tools.	120	110	45	25	3.08	0.83	Accepted
21	Sometimes teachers are not supportive of blended learning.	118	110	47	25	3.07	0.84	Accepted

22	The lack of training has impact on the effective use of blended learning.	122	108	45	25	3.09	0.83	Accepted
23	Blended learning adds more distracting aspects of studying.	125	110	40	25	3.12	0.81	Accepted
24	Not all students are interested in using technology for learning.	120	112	43	25	3.09	0.82	Accepted

Grand Mean = 3.11

Interpretation of the Data

The mean scores for all these questions are above 3.00, meaning that all these factors are high priority concerns for blended learning. The highest mean was for Question 19 (Mean = 3.17) which indicated that one of the biggest obstacles was a problem with power supply. Another important factor that impacts on participation in blended learning is lack of sufficient Internet connection, as indicated in Question 17 (Mean = 3.15). Lack of equipment and training (questions 18 and 22) are some of the problems that are hindering effective blended learning. Questions 20 highlights problems of ICT competency and question 21 highlights problems of teachers. Question 23 shows a problem of distraction, question 24 shows a lack of interest from students.

Research Question Four

What strategies can be adopted to improve the use of blended learning in Social Studies instruction?

Table 4: Mean Responses on Strategies for Improving Blended Learning (N = 300)

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
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25	School has sufficient digital learning facilities.	140	110	30	20	3.23	0.77	Accepted
26	The school organizes training programmes for teachers on blended learning.	135	112	33	20	3.21	0.78	Accepted
27	The school has access to reliable Internet for learning activities.	142	108	30	20	3.24	0.76	Accepted
28	The school embraces the integration of ICT in learning and teaching.	138	110	32	20	3.22	0.77	Accepted
29	Pupils are taught in an effective way how to use digital learning resources.	136	110	34	20	3.21	0.78	Accepted
30	The integration of blended learning in class is done appropriately.	135	112	33	20	3.21	0.78	Accepted
31	The school has continuous electricity power supply for learning activities.	145	105	30	20	3.25	0.75	Accepted
32	Teachers make good use of traditional and online teaching methods.	140	108	32	20	3.23	0.77	Accepted

Grand Mean = 3.23

Interpretation of the Data

All mean values that led to very high were above 3.20, or above their respective means. This also indicates that a very positive attitude was discovered towards the implementation of effective measures for the improvement of blended learning. The highest mean value (3.25) is for statement 31, indicating that having them have access to electricity is the most important to enhance the effectiveness of blended learning. Our statement 27 (Mean value = 3.24) is about the importance of access to the Internet. From statements 25 and 26, it is clear that the importance of the right digital tools and developing teachers' skills. Seeking government assistance and incorporating into the curriculum are highlighted in statements 28 and 30. As seen in statements

29 and 32, there is a clear evidence of the importance of training students and methodologies integration.

Summary of Results

The results of the research revealed the following:

The traditional teaching methods make a significant contribution to improving students' performance.

2. The use of technological instruments on the internet in blended learning enhances comprehension, engagement and performance.

Some of the most challenging issues include Internet connectivity issues, the lack of computers, electricity and training.

4. Some of the effective measures include providing the required facilities, training teachers and students, providing good internet and electricity and providing proper handling of the curriculum.

From these findings it is clear that blended learning is very beneficial for student performance, but that the success of blended learning is crucially dependent on how these challenges, and the others mentioned above, are solved.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES, AND SUMMARY

In this chapter the findings of the study will be presented based on the data analysis in Chapter Four. The structure of this chapter is discussion of findings, conclusion, implications of the study to education, limitations of the study, recommendations, future research recommendations and finally the summary of the study.

Discussion of Findings

Traditional Teaching Methods and Students' Academic Performance

The first research question results indicated that the traditional education has a positive effect at significant level for the academic achievement of SS learners. This can be proven in the student answer sheet, namely the interaction in the classroom, the teacher's personal explanation, concentration and retention which led to the success of the students in learning. The overall grand mean was 3.06 which represents high level of agreement by the respondents with the traditional method of education having a positive effect.

This is in line with the theory of Constructive learning which asserts that learning occurs through the processing of information, focusing on the information and orderly presentation of information. Learners will receive immediate instruction and reinforcement within the normal school environment ensuring high attainment. This hypothesis has been empirically proven true in several research studies, such as that of Obafemi (2022) and Abraham & Ogunbiyi (2025) who

obtained very high attainments for individuals in the guided programs. In conclusion, the result of this research has proven that even though other researches emphasize the importance of blended learning techniques, the conventional technique is undeniable to be a basis for achieving success in learning.

Internet Technology Tools related to Blended and Academic Performance.

The results of the answers for Research Question Two showed that students' academic performance was quite different due to the application of Internet technology tools in blended learning. Online material, technology tools, and blended learning approach was helpful for learning effectively, motivating, helping them to do their work faster, and learning faster. The grand mean score is 3.10, which means that there is very high level of agreement. It is consistent with the Constructivist Learning theory that suggests for the process of learning people gain knowledge through the interaction with the people's learning materials and environment. The blended learning has many sources of learning material provided by digital media so that learners can find the material for his knowledge exploration.

There are many studies that have tested the hypothesis. The results obtained by the students who were introduced to the use of blended learning showed better result when compared with those who were exposed to traditional method of teaching as obtained by Obafemi (2022), Edegbe-Efosa and Ugiagbe (2024), and Uzokife et al. (2025). Furthermore, outcomes of the meta analysis showed that the hybrid learning has a positive impact on the academic achievement.

Last but not least, the engagement and academic achievement of students in hybrid learning and teaching environment is relatively high as revealed by Chukwuekezie et al. (2025) during the analysis for this study, which further validates the findings from the study. Based on the above, it

can be concluded that the implementation of internet technology in the learning process is effective in improving students' academic achievement.

From the findings for the Research Question Three, it appears that there are likely multiple factors that hinder the successful implementation of blended learning. These are some of the factors, such as poor Internet connection, availability of inadequate technological devices, inadequate power supply, lack of training or teacher guidance, disinterested students and so forth. Scores are very high with a grand mean score of 3.11 which reflects a high degree of agreement of these being barriers. It is realistic because although Constructivist Learning Theory is one that welcomes the use of technology it is useful in third world countries where technology plays a significant role in education.

To the extent that different studies have shown that performance has improved significantly with the help of blended learning, it was also recognized that there is a need to provide proper facilities and teachers' training, if blended learning is going to work. Hence, the results of this research study coincide with the results that have been obtained from the different research papers conducted earlier. But, this research goes beyond the others because apart from proving the effectiveness of the use of Blended Learning, the challenges of implementing it have also been taken into account.

Strategies That Will Enhance Blended Learning.

The findings of Research Question Four showed that the strategies for the advent of blended learning had very high level of agreement. These range from digital infrastructure, quality internet connection to a consistent supply of electricity, teaching the teachers, training the students, involvement of the government and integrating the same into the curriculum. The grand mean value is high (3.23) indicating that there is high level of agreement. This specific output is

in line with the principles of Cognitive Learning Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory which emphasize learning system with the proper resources and support.

This has been empirically proven by Egara and Mosimege (2024) and Paul and Richard (2017) who have highlighted that the incorporation of blended learning should be done well to ensure academic success and retention. From the study, it is obvious that the successful implementation of blended learning is more than just being intentional.

Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of blended learning method on academic achievement of social studies students in the Upper Basic Education classes in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The finding from the study showed that the use of the traditional learning technique has a positive influence on the improvement of student understanding, concentration and performance. Apart from the findings, it was observed that the blended learning technique enhanced the learning process and academic performance of the learners when the technological tools such as the internet were integrated.

Some of the challenges experienced before the adoption of blended learning included inadequate digital devices, poor internet connectivity, unreliable electricity, lack of training amongst others. The study also suggested some ways through which the blended learning process could be improved including provision of necessary facilities, training of the users, development of infrastructures, among other methods. The result of this research indicates that blended learning has a great impact on learning process as long as it is done successfully with conventional method of learning.

Educational Implications

Implications of the study are:

- First, the traditional teaching and blended learning methods work and it is clear that institutions should use the combination of these two approaches.
- Secondly, the positive effects of the use of internet technology can lead to the conclusion of the need of digital literacy in the processes of learning and teaching.
- Thirdly, the challenges identified clearly indicate the need for the government and other key stakeholders, including the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Ebonyi State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Ministry of Education, school administrators, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donor agencies, community leaders, and private sector organizations, to invest in educational infrastructure through the provision of reliable electricity, internet access, computers, and other digital learning facilities necessary for the effective implementation of blended learning.
- Finally, the significance of blended learning is highlighted through skills needed for its implementation by teachers.

Limitations of the Study

No significant constraint encountered in the present study. Data collection was carried out effectively without any major constraints. All research related procedures were performed successfully without any major constraints.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in the research the following recommendations are made:

1. The government needs to provide adequate infrastructure such as electricity and internet connectivity to facilitate blended learning in schools.
2. The administrators in the schools should ensure that the concept of blended learning is introduced while ensuring that the traditional teaching methodology remains effective as well.
3. Teachers should be trained frequently to use technology for improving their teaching.
4. Promote the availability of technology gadgets to assist learning among the learners.
5. Educational sector relevant bodies should ensure frequent monitoring of blended learning.

Suggestions For Further Studies

Areas for future research can include:

1. Effect of blended learning on learners' interest in the content of social studies subjects in public secondary schools.
2. Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of Blended Learning in Secondary Schools in Afikpo North Local Government Area.
3. Effects of blended learning on students' participation and interaction in social studies classes.
4. The ability of teachers to combine teaching strategies in secondary schools

Summary of the Study

The study is on the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of upper basic education students in social studies in Afikpo North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

A descriptive survey research design was employed. The data were collected from 300 respondents using the structured questionnaire technique and the data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation

The results show that traditional and blended teaching methods have a positive effect on learning, but blended mode has a positive effect on learning with constraints such as poor infrastructure and lack of training.

Thus, it can be argued that blended learning when properly used with adequate infrastructures and training will help boost the performance of the students in social studies.

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