



EMPLOYING STUDENT-CENTRED TEACHING METHOD FOR GSE COURSES IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA

Adejoke L. OKE-SAMUEL^{1*}, Ayotunde S. KOMOLAFE²

^{1,2}Department of General Studies, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Ondo State
oke-samuelal@aceondo.edu.ng*

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to improve the academic performance of students studying general studies courses at Adeyemi Federal University of Education (AFUED), Ondo. The research used a descriptive study design to collect data on the perception of the students, ranging from degree one (1) to degree four (4), towards the teacher-centred method used in the Harmattan (first) semester and the student-centred method used in the Rain (second) semester during the 2020/2021 academic session. A sample of three hundred and twenty-one (321) students participated in the survey through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The survey data was analyzed using the Excel package for descriptive statistics. The Chi-Square test was used to determine the level of association between the students' preference for the two teaching methods. The findings revealed a significant association between the students' preference for the two teaching methods. The study recommends further research to determine the impact of these teaching methods on academic performance.

Keywords: teaching methods, teacher-centred method, student-centred method, socio-political reconstruction

Introduction

The importance of General Studies Education (GSE) in achieving higher education goals in Nigeria cannot be underestimated. As a result, GSE was introduced into Nigerian universities and higher institutions (Nweke & Nwoye, 2016). One of the most important goals of GSE is to contribute to national development by producing high-quality manpower. This highlights the crucial role that teachers play in the progress of the nation. Since general studies courses are given significant importance in institutions of higher learning, students are expected to show a keen interest in them. However, their attitude towards these courses, which is largely based on their perception, can affect their performance. Recent academic results of Adeyemi Federal University of Education (AFUED) students in social science courses offered in the GSE department have been discouraging. In response, the department's lecturers have agreed to experiment with new teaching methods to determine the most effective way to teach GSE courses and achieve the desired learning and teaching outcomes.

All the lecturers in the GSE department have adopted the presentation-by-student method of teaching as a result of a resolution to change the teaching method. This method is a student-centred strategy that expresses the heart of education, as described by Sangoleye and Kolawole (2016). This approach is based on the existing empirical evidence that suggests that students are the most qualified to report on the productivity, informativeness, satisfaction, and worthiness of the learning experience (Theall & Franklin, 2001). While this study is ongoing, the perception of students being taught with this newly introduced learning method will help teachers access effective teaching methods that will be most suitable for the students of AFUED.



Statement of Problem

In the first semester of the 2020/2021 academic year, the teacher-focused method of teaching was used to teach SEO 001 (Fundamentals of Human Behaviour). Unfortunately, the students performed poorly, and there was a need to adhere to the minimum standards set by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) (2020). To address the situation, the student-focused method of teaching was introduced by general studies teachers in the second semester, using the presentation method to teach SEO 002 (Man and His Physical Environment). There is no single method that can be referred to as the most effective teaching method, so it's essential to investigate how students perceive the two methods of teaching to obtain better learning outcomes. The study is necessary to capture the students' perception of the teaching methods and improve the success of teaching goals, especially since the poor performance of students in social science courses in the GSE department midwife the introduction of the student-centred teaching method in the second semester.

Literature Review

The study is based on the constructivist learning theory, which is a significant idea in the field of education. This theory has numerous implications for how teachers should teach and learn to teach. To improve education for all students, it is crucial to focus on this learning theory. The constructivist learning theory suggests that students learn best when they construct their understanding based on their experiences and reflect on them. According to this theory, learning always builds upon the knowledge that a student already knows. Therefore, learning is more effective when a student is actively engaged in the learning process rather than attempting to receive knowledge passively. Various methods claim to be based on constructivist learning theory, including guided discovery, where the teacher tries to lead the student through questions and activities to discover and discuss new knowledge.

The characteristics of a constructivist classroom, according to Gray and noted by Golder (2018) and others, include the active involvement of learners, a democratic environment, interactive activities, and a teacher who facilitates a process of learning that encourages students to be responsible and autonomous. Driscoll (2000) explains that constructivist theory asserts that knowledge can only exist within the human mind and does not necessarily have to match real-world reality. Learners will constantly try to derive their mental model of the real world from their perceptions of that world. As they encounter new experiences, learners will continually update their mental models to reflect the new information and will, therefore, construct their interpretation of reality. As teachers, we must realize that student-centred learning is a core principle of constructivism. The constructivist theory helps explain how people acquire knowledge and learn. As such, it has direct application to this study, which seeks to deduce the perception of students of AFUED towards the student-centred method of teaching recently introduced to them. The theory suggests that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences. A contextual understanding of the theory is necessary for the study to actualize the goals of teaching and learning in AFUED. The benefits of constructivism, if applied effectively, are vast, as there are significant differences between the traditional classroom and the constructivist classroom.

The method of teaching used to instruct any subject plays a crucial role in how well the students understand the subject. According to Duruji, Azuh, Joshua, Olanrewaju and Okorie (2014), the performances of students are greatly influenced by the methods of teaching employed by their teachers. The teaching methods used by teachers can enhance students' learning ability. It is important to keep in mind that there is no single best approach to teaching. However, according to Ogwu (2005), any appropriate instructional method should be able to maintain the students' attention and interest until the



end of the lesson. Teaching theories are broadly categorized into two approaches: teacher-centred and student-centered. In the teacher-centred approach, the teachers are the main authority figures. Students are considered passive receivers of information, and their role is to listen to lectures and direct instructions to pass tests and assessments. On the other hand, in the student-centred approach, both the teachers and the students play an active role in the learning process. The primary role of the teacher is to coach and facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of the material.

Student learning is evaluated through various forms of assessment, including formal and informal methods such as group projects, student portfolios, and class participation. A study conducted by Duruji et al (2014) aimed to examine the relationship between teaching methods and student assimilation, and how it affects examination performance at Covenant University in Nigeria. The findings suggest that teachers need to allow students to contribute to class discussions and to ensure that their voices are heard. In other words, teachers should not only teach the students but also listen to what they have to say. This approach stimulates imaginative and conceptual thinking among students, leading to better performance. The study recommends that classrooms should adopt more discussion-based teaching strategies, with the teacher playing the role of a manager, guide, initiator, referee, and summarizer. A study conducted by Ezenwafor and Akpobome (2017) examined the teaching strategies used by business educators to teach accounting courses in tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. The study found that student-centred teaching methods were considered effective by the respondents. It was recommended that accounting teachers at all levels of the education system should use a combination of both student-centred and teacher-centred strategies for effective teaching of accounting courses. This would help equip the students with the necessary skills for success in employment.

A study conducted by Maloy and LaRoche (2010) in the United States of America spanning a decade showed that success in using student-centred teaching methods depends on how those lessons are designed and implemented by teachers. In their study, history and social studies teachers were asked to make use of student-centred teaching methods, and the study provided them with a powerful framework for continually designing, expanding, and improving their practice in the classroom. The study found important professional learning happening in two key areas of teaching practice. Firstly, the reality of designing and teaching classes to include student-centred teaching methods pushes teacher candidates outside their comfort levels, asking them to venture beyond the familiar experiences of how they were taught. Some teachers felt considerable anxiety, especially before using student-centered methods in their classes. Secondly, the opportunity to reflect and write about teaching experiences was revealing about the aspiring teachers. Putting their feelings and thoughts on paper helped reveal surprises. Instead of concluding after a frustrating experience that a student-centred teaching method is not useful for them or does not fit their style, the researchers concluded that teachers can adjust and adapt their instruction to make a method work for students. According to Maloy and LaRoche (2010) what may work well with one group of students in a particular class may not work the same way with another group in a different class. In such cases, teachers may need to make different adjustments to suit the new environment. This study concludes that the success of student-centred teaching methods depends on how teachers design and implement their lessons.

There is a significant lack of literature on the teaching methods for courses such as "Fundamentals of Human Behaviour" and "Man and His Physical Environment" in AFUED. Despite various studies on teaching methods, no empirical study has been conducted on these courses. It is important to gather student perceptions on these courses to fill this gap in the empirical literature. This study aims to fill this void by examining the viewpoints of students enrolled in these courses at AFUED.



Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered in the course of the study.

1. Which of the two teaching methods used to teach the students of AFUED SEO 001 and SEO 002 in the 2020/2021 academic session is preferred?
2. What are the outcomes of learning goals as a result of the use of the teaching methods employed in teaching SEO 001 and SEO 002 in the 2020/2021 academic session?
3. What insinuation do students offering SEO 001 and SEO 002 have on the use of a student-centred teaching method when it was introduced in the 2020/2021 academic session?
4. What is the involvement of students in the student-centred method used in the teaching of SEO 002 in the Rain semester of the 2020/2021 academic session?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses will be tested in the study

1. There is no significant level of association between the preference of students for the teacher-centred method of teaching SEO 001 and the student-centred method of teaching SEO 002.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study and it focused on providing an inductive analysis of the perception and satisfaction of students in degrees one to four of AFUED concerning the newly introduced student-centred method of teaching and learning. The research instrument used was a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire, which is a psychometric scale that allows for increased measurement precision (Smith, Wakely, Kruif, & Swartz, 2003). The guidelines for constructing the Likert-scale instruments were followed in the process of constructing the research instrument. The instrument was validated by lecturers in the social science unit of the Department of General Studies of AFUED. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms and was accessible to the respondents for four days. The study had a population of 5002 students who offered SEO 001 and SEO 002 within the 2020/2021 academic session and a sample size of 321 students. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, and the Chi-square was used to test the level of association between the preferences of the students for the two types of teaching methods as stated in the hypothesis.

Results

Research Question 1: Which of the two teaching methods used to teach the students of AFUED SEO 001 and SEO 002 in the 2020/2021 academic session is preferred?

Figure 1: Preference for teaching method of SEO 001 above that of SEO 002

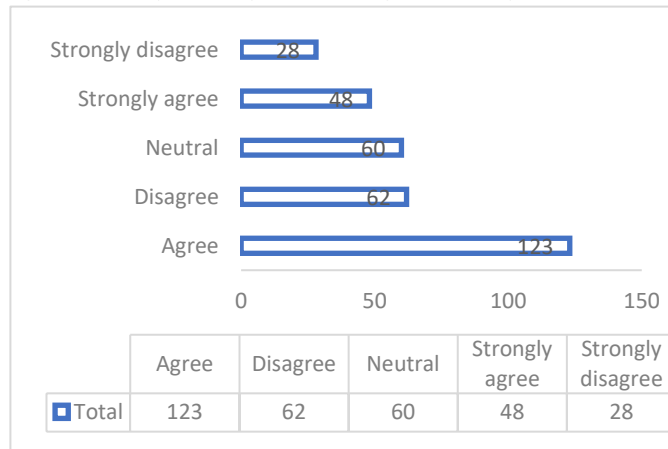
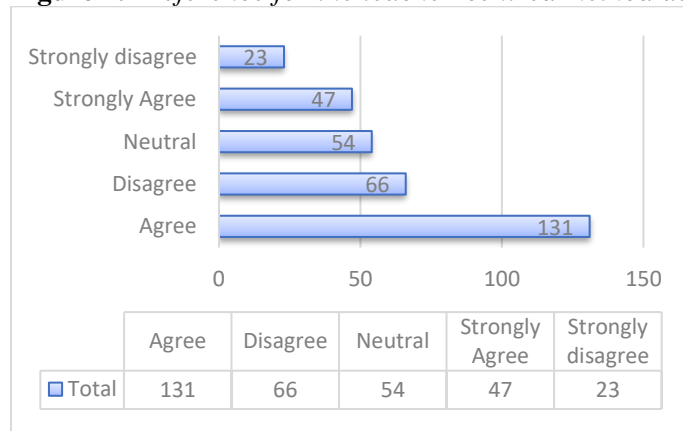


Figure 2: Preference for the teacher-centred method above the student-centred method.



The first two presentations depicted by Figures 1 and 2 are the responses of the students to the eighth and ninth survey questions which state, ‘You prefer the method used in teaching you SEO 001(Fundamentals Of Human Behaviour) more than the method used in teaching SEO 002 (Man and His Physical Environment) and ‘you prefer the former method of teaching whereby the lecturer was the one always teaching all the topics to the new method of having students being the ones to make research on the topics and then present it to the whole class. The second question was intentionally asked serially to establish the initial response. Based on the data displayed in Figures 1 and 2, the majority of degree one to four students at AFUED have indicated their preference for the teacher-centred teaching method used in SEO 001 (Fundamentals Of Human Behaviour) during the harmattan semester of the 2020/2021 session. Out of the 321 respondents, 185 (57.6%) agreed with the question, while 76 (23.7%) disagreed, and 60 (18.7%) remained neutral. Figure 2 was intended to corroborate or disagree with the responses displayed in Figure 1. As depicted in Figure 2, the responses further confirmed that the students preferred the teacher-centred teaching method, with 197 respondents (61.4%) agreeing with the preference.

Figure 3: Preference for teaching method of SEO 002 above that of SEO 001

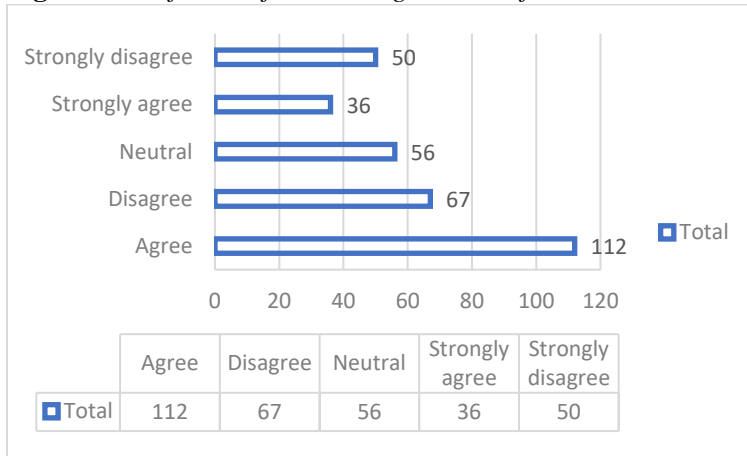
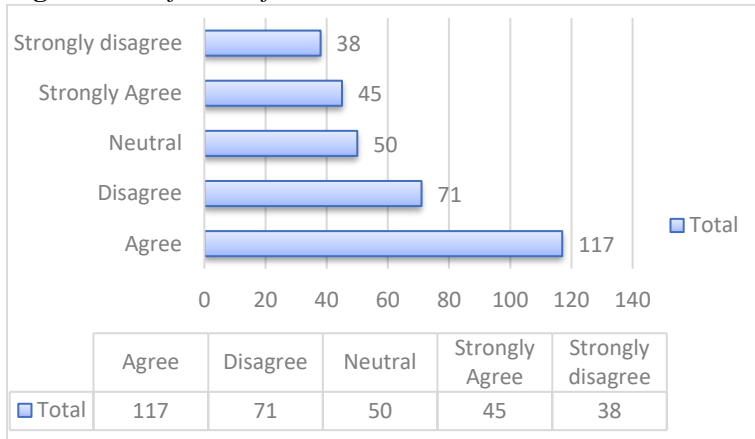


Figure 4: Preference for the student-centred method above the teacher-centred method



In an attempt to determine the preferred teaching method of the respondents, two additional questions were asked. These questions were numbered 7 and 10. Question 7 asked, "Do you prefer the teaching method used in SEO 002 (Man and His Physical Environment) more than the teaching method used in SEO 001 (Fundamentals of Human Behaviour)?" Question 9 asked, "Do you prefer the traditional teaching method where the lecturer teaches all the topics or the new method where students research and present the topics to the class?" The responses to these questions were graphically represented in Figures 3 and 4. The data from these figures corresponded with the responses depicted in Figures 1 and 2. Based on the results obtained and presented, it can be concluded that the students of Adeyemi Federal University of Education prefer the teacher-centred teaching method used to teach SEO 001 in the academic year 2020/2021 over the student-centred teaching method used to teach SEO 002 in the same academic year. Therefore, the research question seeking to establish the preference of students for the teaching methods used in courses SEO 001 and SEO 002 in the 2020/2021 academic session has been answered in the affirmative, specifically for SEO 001, where the teacher-centred method was used.

Research Question 2: What are the outcomes of learning goals as a result of the use of the teaching methods employed in teaching SEO 001 and SEO 002 in the 2020/2021 academic session?

Figure 5: Perception of respondents towards rate of understanding of topics because of the use of student-centered method of teaching

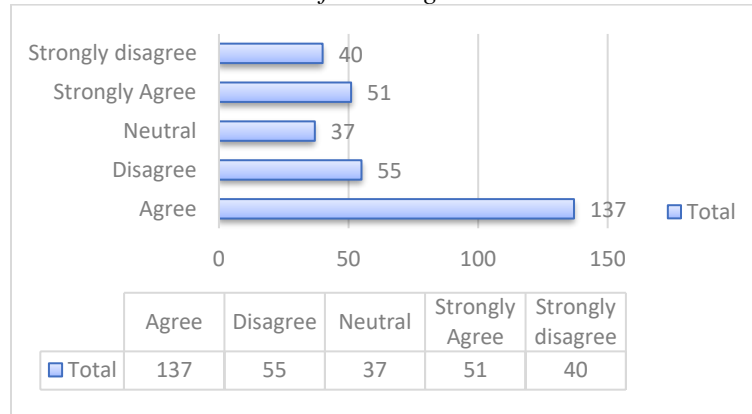
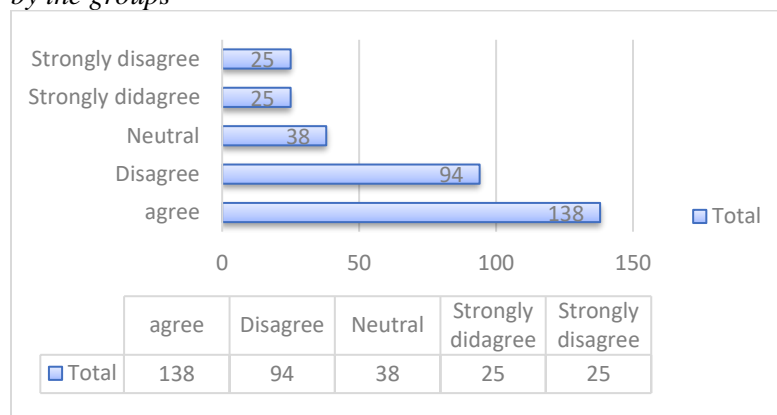


Figure 5 illustrates the perceived rate of understanding of topics taught using a student-centred teaching method in SEO 002 compared to a teacher-centred teaching method used in SEO 001, as reported by the participants. The survey question that provided insight into this indicator was number eleven (11) of the questionnaires. The question asked, "Has student participation in lecture delivery improved your understanding of topics taught more than when only the lecturer was teaching?" Note that the former method was used in SEO 001 and the latter was used in SEO 002. From the results depicted in Figure 5, 188 of the participants agreed that the use of the student-centred teaching method improved their understanding of the topics being taught, which represents 58.75% of the total sampled population. On the other hand, 95 participants disagreed that the student-centred teaching method enhanced their understanding of the topics being taught, which represents 29.69% of the sampled population. The remaining 37 respondents, making up 11.56% of the sampled population, were neutral.

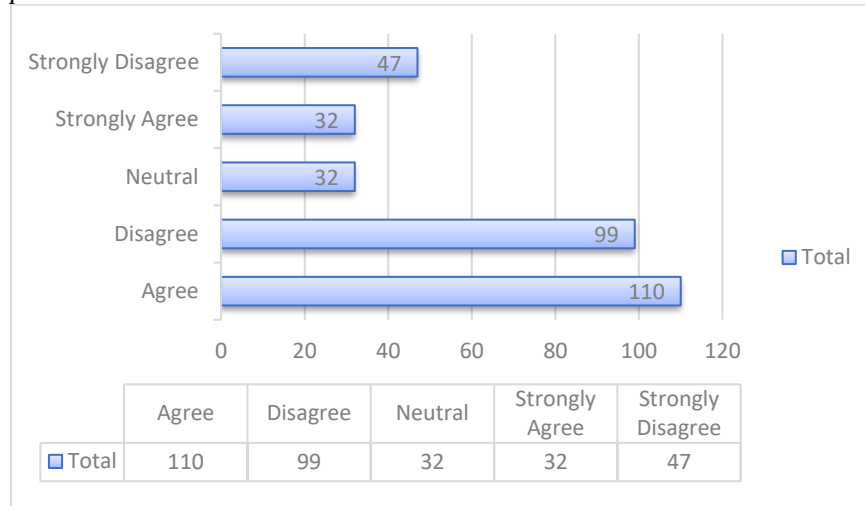
Figure 6: Actual involvement of the majority of students in the preparation of the topic being presented by the groups



Question 14 on the research tool sheds light on what Question 2 is trying to address. The question asks, "Do the majority of group members who present participate in preparing the topic?" The responses are shown in Figure 6. Based on the available data, it can be concluded that the student-centred teaching method used to teach SEO 002 during the 2020/2021 academic session did not accomplish the learning

goals. 50.94% of the respondents (163 individuals) agreed with the statement that most group members who present do not participate in preparing the topic. Conversely, 37.19% of the respondents (109 individuals) disagreed with the statement, and 11.88% (38 individuals) remained neutral. The difference between those who agreed and those who disagreed with the statement was 44 (13.75%).

Figure 7: Most members of the groups that come for presentations have no idea about what is being presented



Question 16 in the research questionnaire aims to answer research question 2. Figure 7 displays responses to this question. The question is about the perception of the audience members who come for presentations. The question states that most of them have no idea about what is being presented. According to the data presented in Figure 7, 142 respondents (43.38%) think that most students accompanying their group for presentations have no idea about the topic. However, 146 respondents (45.63%) disagree with this view, stating that most students do not lack understanding. The difference between the two views is only 4 (2.25%), which is much less than the difference observed in the preceding responses as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 8: Disposition of students towards asking questions by students in the teacher-centred and student-centred methods of teaching

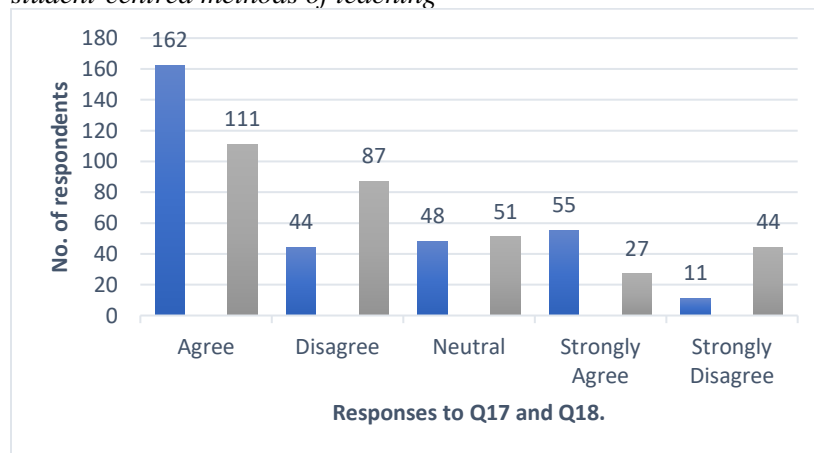
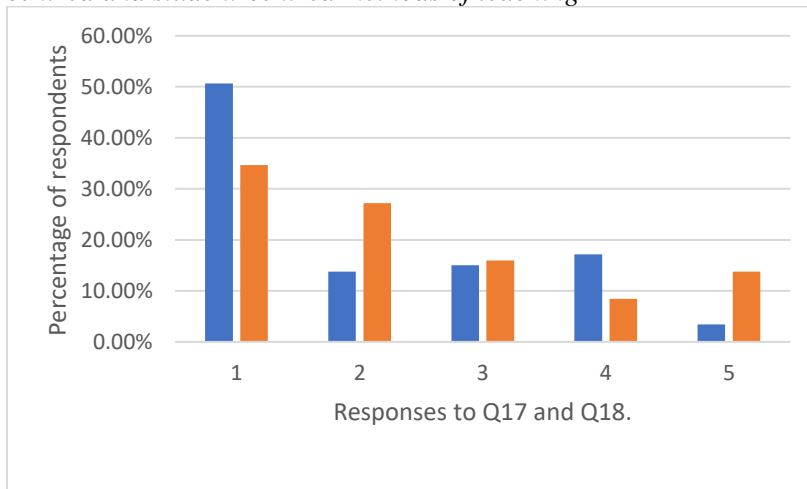
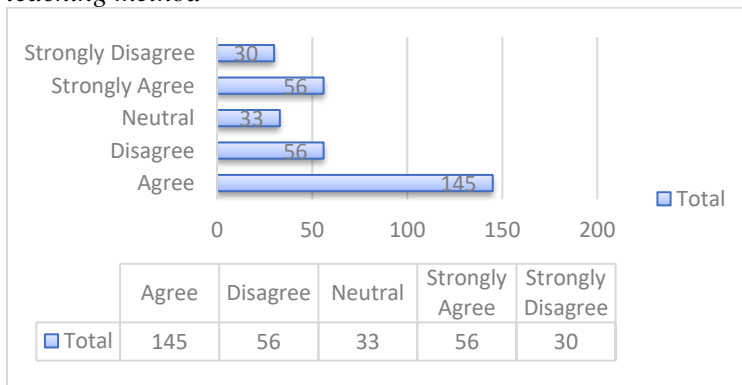


Figure 9: Disposition of students (in percentage) towards asking questions by students in the teacher-centred and student-centred methods of teaching



The study uses two questions, 17 and 18, to measure learning outcomes. These questions ask students about their eagerness to ask questions in two different teaching methods. The first method is teacher-centred, where the lecturer teaches all the topics, and the second method is student-centred, where students make class presentations. The study represents the responses to these questions in two clustered bar graphs, Figures 8 and 9. According to the graphs, 67.82% of the 217 respondents agreed that students participate more in the learning process when the teacher-centred method is used. In comparison, 43.13% of the respondents agreed that students participate more in the learning process when the student-centred method is used. This shows that 24.69% more respondents agreed that students tend to participate more in the learning process by asking questions when the teacher-centred method is used than when the student-centred method is used. To verify the responses to the first question, the second question was asked, and the responses were also represented in the clustered bar graphs.

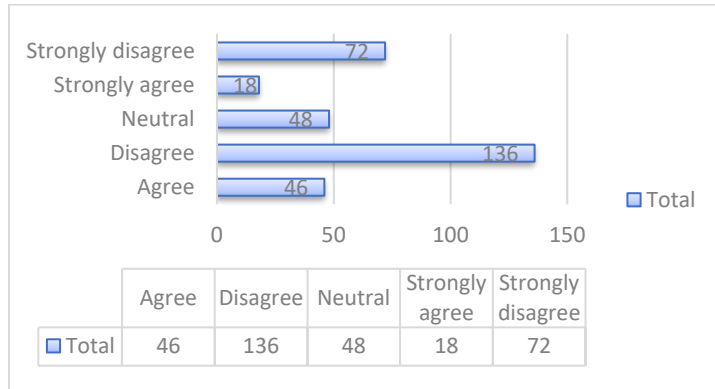
Figure 10: Perception of respondents regarding performance outcome based on the student-centred teaching method



The research tool's question 19 responses provide insights into the study's second research question. The question asks whether the new teaching method, which involves students giving class presentations, will improve their performance in Continuous Assessment (Test) and Examinations. Fig. 10 shows the responses to the question graphically. The chart indicates that the majority of respondents (201) agreed that the student-centred teaching method would help students perform better in CA (Test) and Examinations.

Research Question 3: What insinuation do students offering SEO 001 and SEO 002 have on the use of a student-centred teaching method when it was introduced in the 2020/2021 academic session?

Figure 11: *Insinuation of respondents as to why the student-centred teaching method was introduced in the 2020/2021 academic session*



As shown in Figure 11, question 22 states: "The reason why this new method of learning where students are involved in the teaching by making class presentations is being used is that lecturers are not interested in lecturing." From the data obtained and displayed, it is clear that 65% of the respondents disagree with the statement of question 22, indicating that the students do not support the idea that their lecturers are not interested in teaching. This proportion is against 20.01% who agreed with the statement and 15% who were neutral on the issue.

Research question 4: What is the involvement of students in the student-centred method used in the teaching of SEO 002 in the Rain semester of the 2020/2021 academic session?

Figure 12: *Comparison of the participation of students through the asking of questions in the student-centred teaching method and the teacher-centred teaching method*

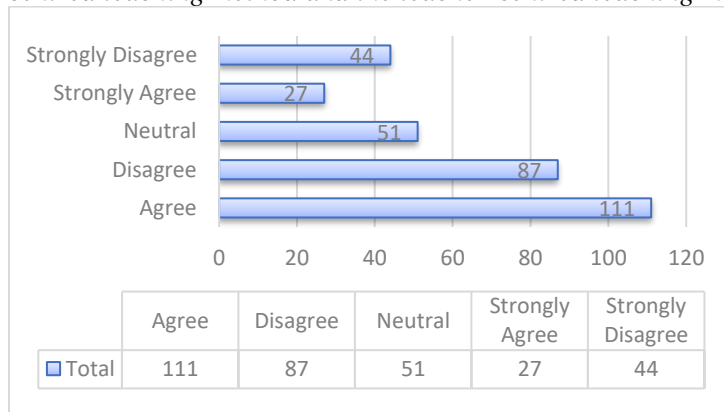
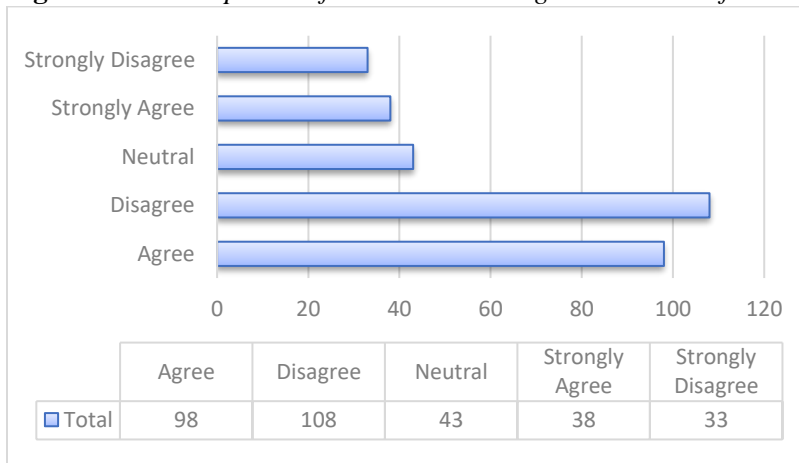


Figure 13: Participation of students in through attendance of classes after group presentations



The fourth research question of this study aims to gain insight into student involvement when the student-centred learning method was used in teaching SEO 002 during the Rain semester of the 2020/2021 academic session. To answer this question, we analyzed the responses of the respondents to question 18 on the questionnaire and created a graphical representation of the data in Fig. 12. The data shows that students were more engaged in the learning process when they asked questions during presentations. With the introduction of the student-centred teaching method and class presentation strategy, we observed that students participated more actively and asked more questions compared to the traditional teacher-centred method. Out of the 321-sample population, 138 respondents gave a positive response (agreed and strongly agreed) to question 18, while 131 respondents gave a contrary opinion (disagreed and strongly disagreed). We also asked the respondents question 20, which sought to answer whether students continued attending classes for other presentations or stopped attending classes after their presentations. The responses to this question are presented graphically in Fig. 13.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant level of association between the preference of students for the teacher-centred method of teaching SEO 001 and the student-centred method of teaching SEO 002.

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of preference of students for teacher-centred and student-centred method of teaching

		Prefer the (former method) teacher-centered					Total
		Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly disagree	
Prefer the new method (student-centered) of teaching	Agree	50	32	14	11	5	112
	Disagree	37	13	8	6	3	67
	Neutral	16	7	27	9	4	56
	Strongly agree	9	8	2	13	4	36
	Strongly disagree	19	6	3	15	7	50
Total		131	66	54	47	23	321

Table 2: Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	89.696 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	78.198	16	.000
N of Valid Cases	321		

Based on the results obtained from the Chi-Square analysis, it can be concluded that we reject the Null Hypothesis which states that there is no significant level of association between the preference of students for the teacher-centred method of teaching SEO 001 and the student-centred method of teaching SEO 002. Instead, we accept the Alternative hypothesis which indicates that there is a significant level of association between the preference of students for the teacher-centred method of teaching SEO 001 and the student-centred method of teaching SEO 002. This suggests that students have a preference for one method of teaching over the other, and in this particular study, it was discovered that students prefer the teacher-centred method of teaching SEO 001 over the student-centred method of teaching SEO 002.

Discussions

This study focuses on the opinions of degree students of AFUED who took part in two compulsory general studies courses, SEO 001 and SEO 002, offered by the General Studies Education department during the 2020/2021 academic session. The results of the study indicate that the students prefer the teacher-centred method of teaching used in SEO 001 compared to the student-centred method used in SEO 002. This preference is supported by Figures 2 and 3 of the data analysis section of the study. Moreover, the study also found a significant level of association between the preference of students for the two methods of teaching, as determined by the use of Chi-Square inferential statistics. The respondents provided reasons for the ineffectiveness of the student-centred method of teaching, which include the lack of attendance of students who have made their presentations (64.8% of respondents), and the perception that students are more eager to participate in lectures by asking questions from the lecturer in the teacher-centred method of teaching (67.9% of respondents). Only 14% of respondents felt otherwise. Considering the results of the survey and the inferential test, the study suggests that the teacher-centred method of teaching is the preferred method of teaching in the prevailing circumstances and should continue to be used in teaching SEO 001 and SEO 002.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it has been observed that the students of SEO 001 and SEO 002 prefer the teacher-centered method of teaching. This finding is different from what was reported by Tsay and Brady (2010), who found a positive correlation between students' academic performance and the student-centred method of teaching. The divergence in these findings can be attributed to the prevalent learning conditions in AFUED, Ondo. In conclusion, it can be inferred that the teacher-centred method of teaching is more suitable for the students of SEO 001 and SEO 002.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made by the study:

1. There is a need to reduce the population of students attending the class, as 66.6% of respondents identified overpopulation as a challenge. To address this challenge and accommodate more



students, the provision of larger halls with adequate and functional public address systems has been recommended.

2. Lecturers need to engage students more and focus on teaching goals. Many students are lazy and unserious, and once they have made their presentations, they stop attending classes. The student-centred method of teaching has been praised for getting students involved in the learning process. However, due to challenges faced in the Rain Semester of the 2020/2021 academic session, the study recommends sustaining the teacher-centred method of teaching. Teachers should involve students in the teaching process, aside from group presentations.
3. The challenge of overpopulation of students taking certain courses remains a recurring issue, particularly in courses such as SEO 002 and SEO 02. It is recommended that more teachers be involved in the teaching of these courses as the current number of teachers (three) is inadequate to effectively teach these courses.

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