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Prognosis of Project-Based Instructional Package on Public Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement in Economics in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The researcher investigated the prognosis of project-based instructional package on public secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Three (3) specific purposes, three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study employed quasi-experimental research design and the population of the study was two thousand, nine hundred and one (2,901) senior secondary two (SS11) students in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was Economics Achievement Test (EAT). Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for all research questions and analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) was applied to test the null hypotheses at alpha level of 0.05. The findings of the study revealed among others that students' academic achievement in Economics improved significantly when taught using project-based instructional package. The implication of the study is that findings of the study justify the urgent need for public secondary school teachers to effectively apply project-based instructional package for Economics classroom instruction in order to improve students' academic achievement in Economics in both internal and external examinations. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended among other things that Economics teachers in public secondary schools need to re-access their classroom instructional practices which make students passive listeners and emphasize those practices that engage students in teaching and learning processes. Useful suggestions for further studies were made.
Keywords: Project-Based Instructional Package, Economics, Academic Achievement.

Introduction

Digital classroom teaches learners how to learn real life problems and functional strategies applied to proffer solutions to those problems. It also makes teaching and learning more interesting and pleasurable. It is also applied to make connections; add flesh to instructional processes and concretizes the abstract concepts in any school subject. Secondary school teachers can utilize digital instructional classroom in teaching of Economics to ensure the improvement of students' achievement in the subject. Economics is one of the subjects taught in both secondary school level and tertiary institution because of its uniqueness in national development.

Economics is one of the most popular subjects offered at the senior secondary school level. The popularity of the subject is as a result of its unique roles in equipping students with basic knowledge and skills for appreciating the nature of economic issues in the society, challenges faced in the economy and its ability to enhance job and wealth creation for sustainable national security and development. Economics has been defined differently by many scholars. Economics can be seen as an inquiry into nature and the causes of wealth of a nation. Economics is a subject that concerns itself with how and why a nation accumulates wealth (Awoke, Ede, Inyiogwe & Oke, 2005). Economics is the practical science of production and distribution of wealth of any nation. Miller (2004), viewed Economics as a study of how people allocate their limited resources in an attempt to satisfy their unlimited wants. Economics can be seen as the study of wealth creation, distribution of services and critical management of the resources to proffer solution to variety of problems which both nation and individual want to solve. The subject is mainly focused on allocation of scarce wealth and services among competing ends. Its foci were mainly on driving forces

of human interactions and particularly government and individual actions in certain direction. It's the study of how individual and government apply their scarce wealth and materials in production of valuable goods and services, distribute them for satisfaction of both individual and societal wants. According to Oloyede (2013), the study of Economics throws more lights on all aspects of a country's economy such as how a country used its resources and how much time is devoted to work and leisure, the effect of taxes on population and how business succeeds or fails.

As a curriculum content to be offered in senior secondary school level, its implementation is concerned with human behavior in wealth creation, service, distribution and consumption of tangible and intangible goods in the world of choice and scarcity. The implementation of Economics curriculum contents provides student with knowledge and skills as well as understanding of instrument of economic analysis and productions. On the other hands, Economics curriculum contents are planned and implemented to achieve a capacity to enhance the mutual relationships and interdependence of various elements in the system of economy and take account of them in handling economic issues. It is also a capacity to proffer solution to economic problems; and to ensure the application of economic models in drawing logical conclusions from available information. The implementation of Economics curriculum content in both secondary schools and at the tertiary level is to ensure efficient and effective wealth creations and services as well as its critical management of nations' wealth for sustainable security and development of any country. The economic security and development can be determined by teacher's creativity in economics curriculum content implementation to ensure effective students' academic achievement in the subject

Academic achievement is a gain score achieved after teachers and students' interactional activities. These interactions cannot only be in conventional schools but anywhere in form of formal or informal learning provided these interactions can be measured by any measuring instrument to obtain the loss or gain as it concerns learners. According to Oleabhiele and Nwoko (2019), academic achievement is the learning outcome of the students which can be measured by any form of assessment techniques to ascertain their academic gain. Academic achievement is the learning outcome which students' knowledge, skills and experiences gained in both classroom and laboratory practices are measured with required tools to ascertain their gain or loss scores in a particular test. On the other hands Abonyi (2003), maintained that students' academic achievements are determined by factors such as teacher's ability, motivation, interest and meaningfulness of the subject matter, method of instruction and learners' ability. In general students' academic achievement is one of the major concerns of teachers and entire educational stakeholders which can be resolved with conscious utilization of prject based instructional package in mechanics of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, Oleabhide and Nwoko (2019), noted that students' academic achievement in Economics is low in both internal and external examinations. According to Ahiakwo (2013), a number of factors can be attributed to students' poor academic achievement in many subject areas. These factors include curricula contents, teachers, methods of teaching, parents, government, inadequate facilities among others. In a nutshell Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2014), attributed students' poor academic achievement to instructional methods adopted by teachers in the process of instructional delivery. In support of the above Ogala (2021), held that students' academic achievement is determined by teachers' creativity in mechanics of teaching and learning. According to the author, teachers' creativity triggers students' active participation that could lead to mastering of the subject matters taught in the classroom. The implication of the above scenario is the change of classroom mechanics to reflect digital classroom instructional strategies. The digital Economics classroom model that could enhance students 'hands-on activities to improve their academic achievement seems to be project based instructional package.

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Project based instructional package according to Curriculum Development Center (2016), is the activity that require students to identify ways to solve problems. Project based instructional package is one of the child based pedagogies that involves dynamic classroom approaches when it is applied in the Economics classroom activities. It could help students to gain deeper level of knowledge and skills when it is applied in Economic classroom activities. In the view of Burcu and Ozlem (2018), project based instructional package seems to be one of the effective ways to make students realize real life problems around them. According to the authors, it makes them to take up more active roles in the learning environment to make them find different solutions to those problems and maintain learning process. According to Burcu and Ozlem (2018), project based instructional package consists of the following stages: defining the topics and sub-topics, organizing the group, creation of the project environment, applying the project, planning the presentation and evaluation of the project. The main reason for applying project based instructional package in teaching and learning of Economics is that; it makes students to acquire exploration skills and discover their own learning styles and techniques. It could also help students to retain both knowledge and skills they learnt through exploration of real problems in the world. Teachers act as facilitators and make the whole process easier, pleasurable and interesting till the end of the programme(s). According to Isa and Abdullah (2021), project based instructional package improves the students' skills needed to meet with demands of the global community. Furthermore, Isa and Khatalber (2020), maintained that project based instructional package supports students learning outcomes and develops students' abilities especially in communication, cooperation, creativity, and critical thinking. Project based instructional package, if it is applied in the Economics classroom activities could help students to participate actively in teaching and learning processes. This could lead Economics students to develop a better understanding of the content and required skills for greater achievement. According to Chiu (2020), project instructional package is a group-work approach in teaching and learning through which students are exposed to situations regarding real-life issues and practice.

Project based instructional package involves series of complex tasks that occupy students' minds by working on a particular topic or task. On the other hands, open-ended, problem solving, decision-making or investigative activities, are employed to achieve desired goals and evaluate their performance and progress (Issa & Abdullar, 2021). Economics projects are designed based on issues at hand and needs that students are expected to define and proffer reliable solutions to. As students take part in the learning process, this develops a better understanding of the contents taught and the required skills for carrying out certain work, and realities of life in general (Bell, 2010). In general, project based instructional package is a teaching strategy that provides students with active, varied psychomotor and cognitive patterns such as encouragement, curiosity, tenderness, skills, and self-reliance in solving societal problems. This instructional package could lead students to mastering of skills, critical thinking, creativity and problems solving skills through negotiation and cooperation of the facilitator. Again, learners could redefine their learning skills to be able to overcome emerging global challenges. Project based instructional package helps students to enrich their knowledge and various mental skills (Kembara, Rozak, & Hadian, 2019). This strategy could aid students in assimilation of required skills, in development of psychomotor, emotional and mental skills needed to participate effectively in Economics classroom activities to combat negative influence of traditional classroom that emphasizes only rote learning and recitation of Economics curriculum contents. Project based instructional package (PBIP) is one of the teaching strategies that have confronted the traditional approach and its negative routine methods that have eroded the spirits of creativity among learners. Additionally, teachers develop empathy, tenderness and care when working with students using this approach in exploring real life problems. Teachers use this pedagogy to inculcate learning, how to learn, empathy,

creativity and foresightedness into the students. These create scenarios that test skills transfer and ability to predict future. Students need to be taught with strategies that could promote the competency to apply skills, concepts, knowledge, attitudes, values and learning experiences they develop in one context to another. Project based instructional package can encourage transfer of learning experiences across gender

Gender misunderstanding is a big problem facing schools around the globe. The controversy of whom achieves better in relation to gender in every school subject persists in schools unresolved. Gender, according to Unamba, Ugochukwu and Ewunonu (2020), refers to a biological and physiological reality of being a male or female in a given society. It would also be viewed as a terminology that categorizes human beings into man or woman (Ogala, 2021). The present state of students' poor academic achievement in Economics irrespective of gender calls for immediate attention. One of the best ways to combat this negative trend among Economics students could be the application of interactive pedagogies in every location where schools are sited.

School location is another interesting factor for any desirable learning experiences to be achieved. It seems that the application of different interactive teaching strategies depends on where the school is sited; this can be narrowed down to urban and rural schools (Ikwumelu & Oyibe, 2014). In relation to differences in the process of implementation of Economics curriculum contents in rural and urban public secondary schools, there could be dearth of qualified Economics teachers in rural schools. Most of the highly experienced and qualified teachers in rural public schools seek to be posted to urban schools where social amenities are available. According to Apia (2015), competent and experienced teachers choose to work in urban secondary schools where there are available modern amenities such as electricity, pipe borne water and other recreational facilities that make life easier. The public secondary schools in rural areas are known for having shortage of staff more especially the experienced ones, inadequate instructional media, poor building, poorly equipped laboratories and libraries as well as unconducive environment for teaching and learning.

From the foregoing such factors such as school location, social amenities, provision of instructional media and conducive classrooms and effective Economics curriculum contents delivery in public secondary schools. It seems also that they influence how teachers go about Economics curriculum contents implementation process to enhance students' academic achievement in the subject. Absence of these factors are likely to discourage students' active participation in Economics classroom activities and therefore militate against their achievement in the subject. To proffer solution to aforementioned problems motivated the researcher to investigate the potency of project based instructional package on SS II students' academic achievement in Economics in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Statement of the Problem

Economics teachers in public secondary schools seem not to be responsive in relation to accepting desirable changes in process of implementation of Economics curriculum contents. They also seem to assume center stage when delivering their lessons by applying traditional chalk-and-talk method that merely emphasizes rote learning and recitation of the main subject matter. This can only make students bored and lose interest in participating actively in Economics classroom activities. This also could have contributed to students' poor academic achievement in Economics in Nigeria. The declining students' academic achievement in Economics is not satisfactory and this was confirmed by West African Examination Council (WAEC) Chief Examiners reports of 2019, 2020 and 2021 academic session. Many students did not understand the demand of questions which made them only to state points instead of detailing explanation as demanded. The situation seems to demand the application of other instructional packages to see if students' academic achievement in Economics could be improved. Hence, the adoption of project based instructional package becomes

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necessary to examine its impacts on students' academic achievement in Economics.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to determine the prognosis of project based instructional package on secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study aims at:

1. Discovering the prognosis of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of secondary school students in Economics in Ebonyi State.
2. Determining the prognosis of project based instructional package on the mean achievements of male and female secondary school students in Economics in Ebonyi State.
3. Finding the prognosis of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of urban and rural secondary school students in Economics in Ebonyi State

Research Questions

The researcher formulated the following research questions to guide the study.

1. What is the prognosis of project based instructional package on secondary school students mean achievement in Economics in Ebonyi State?
2. What is the prognosis of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of male and female secondary school students in Economics in Ebonyi State?
3. What is the prognosis of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of urban and rural students in Economics in Ebonyi State?

Hypotheses

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

Ho_1: There is no significant main gain of project based instructional package on secondary school students mean achievement in Economics.

Ho_2: There is no significant gain of project based instructional package on mean achievement of male and female secondary school students in Economics.

Ho_3: There is no significant gain of project based instructional package on mean achievement of urban and rural secondary school students in Economics.

Methodology

The research design employed by researcher in conducting this study was none equivalent, Pre-test, post-test control group. The study was a quasi-experimental research design. It is a type of research design which lacks the basic procedures required in pure experimental research that has to do with laboratory test (Abonyi,2003).

The design is considered appropriate for the study because intact class in co-educational school were used and randomly selected and assigned into both experimental and control group respectively. The intact class in co-educational schools were used during normal school lesson period to avoid disruption of the process.

Table 1: Design of the study

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post –test
E	YI	X	Y2
C	YI	-	Y2

Key; E = experimental group; C = Control; Y1 = Pre-test; Y1=Posttest; Y2= Posttest; X=Treatment (independent variable); - = No treatment

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of two thousand, nine hundred and one (2,901) senior secondary schools two (SSII) students offering Economics in all pubic secondary schools in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. SS 11 students in co-educational schools were chosen for the study because the class was suitable and they have been exposed to basic rigors and rubrics in teaching and learning of Economics in senior secondary schools.

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Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size of the study was two hundred and four (204) students selected through simple random sampling techniques from six (6) public secondary schools, two (2) from each of the three (3) Education Zones in Ebonyi State. Out of these six (6) schools, three (3) schools were assigned as control groups while the remaining three (3) schools were assigned as experimental groups through simple random sampling technique by balloting without replacement. In addition, out of the two hundred and four (204) students selected, one hundred and six (106) were female while ninety-eight (98) were male students. One hundred and nine (109) students were exposed to project based instructional package and ninety-four (94) students were exposed to traditional teaching method (conventional).

Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection in this study was Economics Achievement Test (EAT), constructed by the researcher with thirty-five (35) multiple choice items with options lettered A to D (A-D). The EAT was made up of two sections A and B. Section A was used to collect the personal data of the respondents while section B dealt with the research items.

The reliability of the instrument was confirmed with thirty –five (35) items which were subjected to reliability test using Kuder Richardson 20 (K- R 20) using twenty-five (25) student outside the study area. By this analysis, a reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained which showed a high internal consistency, thereby making the instrument suitable for use in the study

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was organized using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while ANCOVA was used in testing the null hypotheses at an alpha level of 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the prognosis of project based instructional package on secondary school students' mean achievement in Economics in Ebonyi State?

Data collected from Economics Achievement Test (EAT) were used to answer the research question and mean scores obtained from pre-test and posttest were statistically adjusted to take care of the group difference. Summary of data analysis were presented in table 1.

Table 1: Pre-Test-Posttest Mean Scores of Students' Achievement in Economics

		Pre-Test		Post-Test		
Instructional Strategy	**No**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean Gain**
Project based I	109	67.481	9.631	72.144	10.505	4.663
Conventional method	94	66.979	11.878	69.709	13.349	2.730

From the results presented in Table 1, it was observed that the experimental group (project based instructional package) obtained a high mean gain score of 4.663 against the control group (Conventional method) that obtained mean gain score of 2.730. This implies that application of project based instructional package enhanced students' achievement in Economics more than the use of conventional method.

Ho_1: There is no significant main gain of project based instructional package on secondary school students' mean achievement in Economics.

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Table 2: Analysis of Co-Variance for Secondary School Students' Mean Achievement in Economics based on Project based Instructional Package

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	Df	Mean of Square	F	Sig of F
Covariates	5365.288	1	5365.288	102.848	.000
Pretest	5365.288	1	5365.288	102.848	.000
Main Effects	999.067	2	499.533	9.576	.000
Strategy	2029.109	1	2029.109	41.606	.000
2-way Interactions	245.601	1	245.601	4.708	.032
Explained	6609.956	4	1652.489	31.677	.000
Residual	5529.738	106	52.167		
	12139.694	110	110.361		

Significant at P <0.05

In the ANCOVA Table, the result of hypothesis 1 presented in Table 2 showed that the value of F-sig (.000) is lower than the value of F-cal (41.606) at 0.05 level of significance, this indicated that hypothesis 1 is rejected. This implies that there is a significant main gain of project based instructional package on secondary school students' achievement in Economics.

Research Question 2

What is the prognosis of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of male and female secondary school students in Economics in Ebonyi State? The mean scores of male and female students taught Economics using project based instructional package for pretest and posttest for the experimental group (project based instructional package) were used to answer the research question.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Male and Female Secondary School Students Taught Economics using Project Based Instructional Package

		Male			Female		
Method	**Test**	**No**	**Mean**	**Mean Gain**	**No**	**Mean**	**Mean Gain**
Project based instructional Package	Pre-test	49	70.096		60	71.218	
				1.914			1.835
	Posttest	49	72.010		60	73.053	

The results of data analysis presented in Table 3 revealed that female students had pretest mean score of 71.219 and posttest means score of 73.053 while the male students had pretest mean score of 70.096 and posttest mean score of 72.010. Male students had higher mean gain score of 1.914 against the lower mean gain score of 1.835 for the female students. This implies that male students perform slightly better than the female students in Economics when project based instructional package is used in the classroom.

Ho_2: There is no significant main gain of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of male and female secondary school students in Economics.

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Table 4: Analysis of Co-variance for Students' Achievement Based on Project Based Instructional Package and Gender

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	Df	Mean of Square	F	Sig of F
Covariates	5365.288	1	5365.288	102.848	.000
Pretest	5365.288	1	5365.288	102.848	.000
Main Effects	999.067	2	499.533	9.576	.000
Strategy	2029.109	1	2029.109	41.606	.000
Gender	1.964	1	1.964	.038	.847
2-way Interactions	245.601	1	245.601	4.708	.032
Strategy Gender	2.955	1	2.955	.061	.806
Explained	6609.956	4	1652.489	31.677	.000
Residual	5529.738	106	52.167		
			12139.694	110110.361	

Significant at P <0.05

The summary of results as presented in Table 4 showed that the value of F-sig (0.806) is greater than the value of F-cal (0.061) at point (P) 0.05. This indicated that the null hypothesis 2 was accepted on the ground that the value of F-sig (0.806) is greater than the value of F-cal (0.061) at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is no significant main gain of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of male and female secondary school students in Economics in Ebonyi State.

Research Question 3

What is the prognosis of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of Economics students in urban and rural secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

The pretest and posttest mean scores of students in urban and rural secondary schools taught Economics using project based instructional package for the experimental group (project based instructional package only) was used to answer the research question. Summary of results of data analysis were presented in table 5.

Table 5: Mean Scores of Students in Urban and Rural Secondary Schools taught Economics using Project Based Instructional Package

Location	Mean	SD	NO
Urban	75.250	8.792	67
Rural	67.915	11.240	42

The results of data analysis presented in Table 5 revealed that the project based instructional package had more differential effects on students from secondary schools in urban area compared to their counterpart from secondary schools in rural area. This is because students from secondary schools in urban area had a mean score of 75.250 and a standard deviation score of 8.792, while the students from secondary schools in rural area had a mean score of 67.915 and a standard deviation score of 11.240. Judging from the results of data analysis presented in Table 5 it was clear that students from secondary schools in urban area performed better than the students from secondary schools in rural area in Economics when project based instructional package was used in the classroom.

Ho_3: There is no significant main gain of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of Economics students in urban and rural secondary schools.

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Table 6: Analysis of Co-Variance for Students' Achievement Based on Project Based Instructional Package and Location

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	Df	Mean of Square	F	Sig of F
Covariates	12903.578	1	12903.578	332.205	.000
Pretest	12903.578	1	12903.578	332.205	.000
Main Effects	9.081	2	4.540	.117	.980
Strategy	2029.109	1	2029.109	41.606	.000
Location	8.651	1	8.651	.233	.847
2-way Interactions	60.388	1	60.388	1.555	.216
Strategy location	60.388	1	60.388	1.555	.216
Explained	12973.047	4	3243.262	83.498	.000
Residual	3418.115	106	38.842		
			16391.161	110 178.165	

Significant at P <0.05

In the ANCOVA table, the summary of result of hypothesis 3 presented in Table 6 showed that the value of F-cal (1.555) is greater than F-sig (0.216) at 0.05 alpha level significance. This indicated that this implies that there was significant gain of project based instructional package on mean achievement of students in Economics in urban and rural secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Discussion

The findings revealed that using project based instructional package was better than conventional method in enhancing secondary school students' achievement in Economics. This implies that application of project based instructional package enhanced students' achievement in Economics more than the use of conventional method.

In addition, the findings of test of the significant effect of strategy on the mean achievement of students taught Economics using project based instructional package and those taught Economics using conventional method revealed that there was a significant effect on mean achievement of secondary school students taught Economics using project based instructional package than those taught Economics using conventional method.

The finding is in line with the view of Chiu, (2020), who stated that "the use of innovative project based instructional package promotes deeper level of learning". Bell (2010), opined that project based instructional package involves students in making connections between new and already known ideas or facts, engaging in dialogues in which hypotheses are formed, predictions made, doubt expressed, uncertainties subsequently clarified and the orthodox/traditional views modified by new ideas. This is to say that project based instructional package encourages the development of critical thinking through discussion, negotiations and clarifications of basic content or ideas because in project based instructional package, students enjoy the liberty to advance their own ideas and to benefit from the ideas and views of others.

The findings showed that project based instructional package seemed not to have much differential effect on male and female students mean achievement scores in Economics. The test of the hypothesis also corroborated the finding as there was no significant main effect of project based instructional package on the mean achievement of male and female secondary school students in Economics in Ebonyi State. The findings of this study disagreed with the finding of Olatubosun (2015) who held that male students perform better than female students in any classroom instructional activities that involve calculation. Also, Chukwuagu (2016) pointed out that female students perform better in languages and arts, while male students perform better in Mathematics and related Science subjects.

From the findings, project based instructional package seemed to have much differential effects on students from secondary schools in urban areas compared to their counterpart from secondary schools in rural areas. This is because students from secondary schools in

urban areas had a higher mean score than the students from the rural areas. Judging from the results of data analysis. This finding is in line with the observation made by Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2014), who held that the secondary school students in urban are more likely to do better than their counterpart in the rural areas because, there are high concentration of government and other educational agencies in the urban areas than in the rural areas. In addition, teachers as well as learning and social facilities that encourage learning are more in the urban areas than the rural areas.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that students taught Economics using project based instructional package performed better than those taught Economics using conventional method of teaching. The study also proved that female students in both experimental and control groups seem to perform better compared to the performance of male students in Economics classroom instruction, but mean gained were slightly in favour of male students.

Recommendations

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

1. Federal and State Government through its educational agencies should lay more emphasis on utilization of project based instructional package by secondary school teachers in Economics classroom instructional delivery.
2. Both Federal Government and Ministries of Education should organize seminars and workshops for training and retraining of Economics teachers for effective curriculum contents delivery.
3. Economics teachers in the public secondary schools should re-assess their classroom instructional practices because there is a need for a shift from instructional practice, which makes learners passive listeners to the practice that engages learners actively in the instructional processes.

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