Effects of Pictorial, Games-Based, and Simulation Methods of Teaching on the Development of Creative Writing Skills of Nigerian Secondary School Students

By

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of pictorial, games-based, and simulation methods of teaching on the development of creative writing skills among secondary school students in Nigeria. The study was motivated by the persistent poor performance of students in creative writing and essay composition, which has continued to attract concern among educators and examination bodies. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design was adopted for the study. The population comprised Senior Secondary School II students in public secondary schools within the study area, while a sample of 240 students selected from four public secondary schools participated in the study. The participants were assigned to four groups: Pictorial Method Group, Games-Based Method Group, Simulation Method Group, and Control Group. Data were collected using the Creative Writing Achievement Test (CWAT) and the Creative Writing Rating Scale (CWRS). The instruments were validated by experts in English Language Education and Measurement and Evaluation, while reliability coefficients of 0.84 and 0.87 were obtained for the CWAT and CWRS respectively. Data were analyzed using mean scores, standard deviations, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that pictorial, games-based, and simulation instructional methods significantly improved students' creative writing achievement compared with the conventional teaching method. Among the three approaches, simulation instruction produced the highest achievement gains, followed by games-based instruction and pictorial instruction. The study further revealed that gender had no significant influence on students' creative

writing achievement under the instructional methods. The study concluded that learner-centred instructional approaches provide effective means of enhancing students' creativity, imagination, idea generation, and written expression. It was therefore recommended that English Language teachers adopt innovative instructional strategies that actively engage learners in the creative writing process.

Keywords: Creative Writing, Pictorial Instruction, Games-Based Learning, Simulation Method, Secondary School Students.

1. Introduction

English language occupies a central position in Nigeria's educational, administrative, political, and socio-economic systems. As the official language of the country and the principal medium of instruction in schools, English serves as a vital instrument for national communication, academic advancement, and international interaction. The language is used in government institutions, business transactions, mass media, and educational activities, making proficiency in English essential for learners seeking academic success and participation in contemporary society (Bamgbose, 2011). Consequently, effective teaching and learning of English language skills remain a major concern among educators, curriculum planners, and policymakers in Nigeria.

Among the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, writing is often regarded as the most complex and demanding. Writing requires learners to generate ideas, organize thoughts logically, select appropriate vocabulary, apply grammatical rules accurately, and communicate meaning effectively to a target audience (Hyland, 2019). Unlike speaking, which allows immediate clarification and feedback, writing demands deliberate planning, reflection, revision, and creativity. It is therefore both a linguistic and cognitive activity that requires learners to draw upon various forms of knowledge and experience.

Within the context of English language education, creative writing represents a particularly important aspect of writing instruction. Creative writing refers to imaginative and expressive forms of writing through which individuals communicate experiences, emotions, ideas, and perspectives in original and

engaging ways. It encompasses narrative essays, short stories, descriptive compositions, drama, poetry, and other forms of imaginative discourse (Cremin & Myhill, 2012). Creative writing provides learners with opportunities to explore language creatively, develop critical thinking skills, and express personal viewpoints while adhering to acceptable linguistic conventions.

Despite its importance, evidence from public examinations indicates that many Nigerian secondary school students experience considerable difficulties in creative writing. Reports from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) consistently reveal weaknesses in students' essay writing performance. Common problems identified by examiners include poor content development, inadequate organization of ideas, weak vocabulary usage, lack of originality, incoherent presentation, and frequent grammatical errors (WAEC, 2023). These deficiencies often result in poor achievement in composition writing and contribute significantly to students' overall low performance in English language examinations.

The persistent poor performance of students in creative writing has attracted the attention of researchers and educators. Several studies have attributed the problem to a combination of learner-related, teacher-related, and instructional factors (Ibrahim, 2022; Yusuf & Enesi, 2018). Among these factors, instructional practices have received considerable attention because they directly influence students' learning experiences and opportunities for active engagement. In many Nigerian secondary schools, writing instruction is still dominated by conventional teaching methods characterized by teacher-centred explanations, note copying, and memorization of model essays. Such approaches often encourage passive learning and provide limited opportunities for learners to engage in imaginative thinking, collaborative learning, and meaningful writing experiences.

One instructional approach that has gained attention in language education is the pictorial method. Pictorial instruction involves the use of pictures, photographs, illustrations, cartoons, and other visual materials to facilitate learning. Visual stimuli have the capacity to stimulate learners' imagination, trigger idea generation, and provide concrete contexts for writing activities. According to Paivio's dual coding perspective, information presented visually and verbally

enhances comprehension and retention because learners process information through multiple cognitive channels (Paivio, 2006). In creative writing classrooms, pictures can serve as prompts that inspire learners to develop stories, descriptions, and narratives based on visual observations.

Empirical evidence suggests that pictorial materials can significantly improve students' writing performance. Hussain et al. (2023) reported that secondary school students exposed to visual aids and pictorial prompts demonstrated higher achievement in creative writing than students taught through traditional instructional approaches. Similarly, Imran and Liaquat (2023) found that picture-based writing activities enhanced learners' imagination, vocabulary development, and ability to organize ideas effectively. These findings suggest that pictorial instruction may provide a valuable means of improving creative writing achievement among secondary school students.

Another learner-centred strategy that has received growing attention is games-based learning. Games-based instruction involves the integration of educational games into classroom teaching to promote engagement, motivation, and active participation. Educational games create interactive learning environments in which students learn through exploration, collaboration, competition, and problem-solving. In writing instruction, games may include storytelling games, vocabulary games, character-building activities, role-playing exercises, and other creative tasks designed to stimulate imagination and writing skills.

The effectiveness of games-based learning has been supported by several studies. Guo et al. (2024), in a review of empirical research on game-related methods in writing classrooms, concluded that game-based approaches significantly enhance students' writing performance, engagement, and motivation. Similarly, Ramadhanti and Pratiwi (2025) found that gamified instructional activities improved students' writing achievement and grammatical competence. Because games encourage active participation and reduce anxiety associated with writing tasks, they may provide effective opportunities for students to develop creative writing skills.

Simulation-based instruction represents another innovative approach that may support creative writing development. Simulation refers to instructional activities that recreate real-life situations and allow learners to assume roles, make decisions, and interact within authentic contexts. Examples include courtroom simulations, press conferences, market scenes, mock elections, and emergency response activities. Through simulations, learners engage in experiential learning that connects classroom instruction with real-world experiences.

Simulation activities are particularly relevant to creative writing because they provide learners with meaningful experiences that can be transformed into written narratives, reports, and descriptive compositions. Experiential learning theorists argue that authentic experiences promote deeper understanding, reflection, and knowledge construction (Kolb, 1984). Studies have shown that simulation-based instruction improves learners' engagement, critical thinking, communication skills, and academic achievement (Obro et al., 2021; Umeh, 2015). By immersing students in realistic scenarios, simulations may facilitate richer idea generation and more detailed writing.

Given the persistent challenges associated with creative writing instruction, the increasing emphasis on learner-centred pedagogies, and the limited comparative evidence regarding innovative instructional methods, there is a need for empirical research examining the effectiveness of pictorial, games-based, and simulation methods in enhancing creative writing achievement among Nigerian secondary school students. The present study therefore investigates the effects of these instructional approaches on students' creative writing skills and examines their relative effectiveness in improving writing achievement.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Creative writing remains one of the most challenging aspects of English language learning among Nigerian secondary school students. Despite the importance of writing for academic success and effective communication, many students continue to demonstrate poor performance in essay writing and creative composition. Examiners' reports from public examinations frequently highlight deficiencies in originality, vocabulary usage, organization of ideas, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. These weaknesses adversely affect students' achievement

in English language and limit their ability to communicate effectively through writing.

One factor that may contribute to this problem is the continued dominance of conventional instructional methods in many classrooms. Traditional teaching approaches often emphasize teacher explanations and rote learning rather than active learner participation, creativity, and experiential engagement. Consequently, students are provided with limited opportunities to develop imagination, generate ideas, and practice authentic writing experiences necessary for creative writing development.

Although innovative instructional approaches such as pictorial instruction, games-based learning, and simulation activities have shown promise in enhancing learning outcomes, there is limited empirical evidence comparing their effectiveness in developing creative writing skills among Nigerian secondary school students. Furthermore, the extent to which gender influences students' achievement under these instructional approaches remains insufficiently explored. This situation creates a need for systematic investigation. Therefore, this study investigates the effects of pictorial, games-based, and simulation methods of teaching on the development of creative writing skills among Nigerian secondary school students.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the effects of pictorial, games-based, and simulation methods on students' creative writing achievement.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the effect of pictorial instruction on students' creative writing achievement?
2. What is the effect of games-based instruction on students' creative writing achievement?
3. What is the effect of simulation instruction on students' creative writing achievement?
4. Which of the three instructional methods is most effective?

5. What is the influence of gender on students' creative writing achievement under the three instructional methods?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant effect of pictorial instruction on students' creative writing achievement.
H02: There is no significant effect of games-based instruction on students' creative writing achievement.
H03: There is no significant effect of simulation instruction on students' creative writing achievement.
H04: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of pictorial, games-based, and simulation instructional methods.
H05: Gender has no significant influence on students' creative writing achievement under the three instructional methods.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Creative Writing

The concept of creative writing has been defined differently by scholars depending on their theoretical orientations and educational perspectives. Generally, creative writing refers to imaginative and expressive writing that allows individuals to communicate ideas in original and engaging ways. According to Hyland (2019), creative writing is a process through which writers generate, organize, and communicate ideas creatively while employing appropriate language structures and stylistic devices. This definition highlights the dual nature of creative writing as both a creative and communicative activity.

Similarly, Cremin and Myhill (2012) describe creative writing as a form of composition that encourages writers to explore imagination, personal experiences, emotions, and perspectives through narratives, descriptions, poetry, drama, and other literary genres. From this perspective, creative writing goes beyond the mere reproduction of information and focuses on the creation of original texts that reflect individual creativity and self-expression. Tompkins (2014) further explains that creative writing provides learners with opportunities to experiment with language, construct meaningful narratives, and develop confidence in expressing their thoughts through writing.

Within the context of secondary school education, creative writing often includes activities such as story writing, narrative essays, descriptive compositions, personal reflections, dramatic scripts, and imaginative essays. Students may be required to create stories from given topics, complete unfinished narratives, describe events or situations vividly, or compose essays based on real-life and imaginary experiences. Such activities encourage learners to think critically, generate ideas, and organize information meaningfully before presenting it in written form (Graham et al., 2020).

Contemporary scholars view creative writing as a multidimensional process involving both cognitive and linguistic operations. Writing requires learners to plan, generate ideas, organize information, select vocabulary, monitor language use, revise content, and evaluate the effectiveness of communication (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Consequently, creative writing is not merely a product-oriented activity but a complex process that demands creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and language proficiency. Learners must continuously make decisions regarding content, structure, language choice, and audience expectations throughout the writing process.

One of the defining characteristics of creative writing is originality. Originality refers to the ability of learners to generate unique ideas, perspectives, and storylines rather than merely reproducing familiar information. Originality allows writers to create distinctive narratives and imaginative compositions that reflect personal creativity and innovation (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). In educational settings, originality is often considered an important indicator of creative achievement because it demonstrates learners' ability to think independently and produce novel responses to writing tasks.

Another important characteristic of creative writing is imagination. Imagination enables learners to create mental images, fictional situations, characters, and events that may not exist in reality. Through imagination, writers are able to explore alternative possibilities, construct engaging narratives, and develop meaningful storylines that capture readers' interest (Cremin & Chappell, 2021). Imagination therefore serves as the foundation upon which creative texts are built

and contributes significantly to the richness and depth of students' written compositions.

Creative writing is also characterized by flexibility and fluency of expression. Flexibility refers to the ability of writers to approach ideas from different perspectives and adapt their thinking to various writing situations. Fluency involves the capacity to generate numerous ideas and express them effectively through written language (Runco & Acar, 2012). Students who demonstrate flexibility and fluency are generally able to produce more elaborate and engaging compositions than those who struggle with idea generation and organization.

Organization and coherence also constitute fundamental characteristics of creative writing. Although creative texts encourage originality and imagination, they must still follow logical structures that facilitate understanding. Ideas should be presented systematically, events should be connected meaningfully, and transitions should ensure continuity within the narrative (Graham et al., 2020). A well-organized composition enables readers to follow the writer's thoughts clearly and appreciate the intended message.

Creative writing also promotes cognitive development by encouraging higher-order thinking skills. Learners are required to generate ideas, solve problems, make decisions, and organize information logically during the writing process. These cognitive demands contribute to the development of critical thinking, reasoning, and analytical abilities that are valuable both within and beyond academic settings (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2013). The process of creating stories and narratives further encourages learners to examine situations from multiple perspectives and develop deeper understanding of human experiences.

Within the Nigerian educational context, creative writing assumes additional significance because it constitutes an important component of English language examinations conducted by WAEC and NECO. Success in narrative and descriptive composition contributes substantially to students' overall performance in English language examinations and influences educational progression. However, persistent reports of poor performance in essay writing suggest that many students have not developed the creative writing competencies required for

academic success (Ibrahim, 2022). This situation underscores the need for effective instructional approaches capable of enhancing students' creative writing skills.

Moreover, creative writing supports communicative competence by enabling learners to express ideas clearly and effectively in diverse contexts. As globalization and technological advancement increase the demand for effective communication skills, the ability to write creatively and coherently becomes increasingly valuable. Educational institutions therefore have a responsibility to provide instructional experiences that foster the development of creative writing abilities among learners (Graham et al., 2023).

2.2 Dimensions of Creative Writing Achievement

Creative writing achievement is a multidimensional construct that reflects a learner's ability to generate, organize, and communicate ideas creatively and effectively through written language. Unlike objective forms of assessment that focus primarily on factual knowledge, creative writing assessment requires the evaluation of several interconnected dimensions that collectively determine the quality of written compositions. Researchers have consistently argued that effective creative writing involves not only linguistic accuracy but also originality, creativity, organization, coherence, and appropriate language use (Hyland, 2019; Graham et al., 2020). Consequently, the assessment of creative writing achievement should consider multiple indicators that capture both the creative and communicative aspects of writing performance.

In the present study, creative writing achievement is conceptualized in terms of six major dimensions: originality, creativity, vocabulary usage, organization of ideas, coherence, and grammatical accuracy (See Figure 1). These dimensions are widely recognized in writing assessment literature and provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating students' creative compositions (Bamgbose, 2011; White, 2013; Huot et al., 2019; Yancy, 2023).



Figure 1: Dimensions of Creative Writing Achievement

Originality

Originality refers to the ability of learners to generate novel, unique, and uncommon ideas in response to writing tasks. It is one of the most important indicators of creative performance because it reflects the writer's capacity to move beyond conventional thinking and produce fresh perspectives or imaginative content (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Originality is demonstrated when students develop unusual storylines, create distinctive characters, present innovative solutions to problems, or explore topics from unique viewpoints.

Educational psychologists regard originality as a fundamental component of creativity because it involves divergent thinking and the generation of ideas that differ from routine or predictable responses (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). In creative writing classrooms, students are often encouraged to develop stories that reflect personal imagination rather than merely reproducing familiar narratives. Originality enables learners to express individuality and contributes to the aesthetic quality of written compositions. Research has shown that instructional environments that encourage exploration, imagination, and independent thinking tend to promote originality in writing (Cremin & Chappell, 2021). Consequently, originality serves as an important criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional approaches designed to enhance creative writing achievement.

Creativity

Although originality and creativity are closely related concepts, creativity encompasses a broader range of abilities involving imagination, innovation, flexibility, and meaningful expression. Creativity refers to the capacity to produce ideas, stories, or written texts that are both original and appropriate within a given context (Sternberg, 2018). A creative composition is not merely different; it is also meaningful, engaging, and relevant to the writing task.

In creative writing, creativity manifests through imaginative descriptions, vivid characterization, effective plot development, emotional depth, and the ability to sustain readers' interest throughout a narrative. Students demonstrate creativity when they transform ordinary experiences into compelling stories, employ imaginative details, and create engaging literary expressions (Tompkins, 2014).

Contemporary educational scholars emphasize that creativity is increasingly recognized as a critical twenty-first-century skill because it supports innovation, adaptability, and problem-solving (Lucas & Spencer, 2017). Creative writing activities provide learners with opportunities to develop creative thinking by exploring alternative possibilities, experimenting with ideas, and constructing meaningful narratives. Therefore, creativity constitutes a central dimension of creative writing achievement and remains an essential criterion in writing assessment.

Vocabulary Usage

Vocabulary usage refers to the range, appropriateness, and effectiveness of words employed by learners in written communication. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in creative writing because it enables writers to express ideas precisely, vividly, and persuasively. Students with rich vocabulary knowledge are generally better able to describe events, portray emotions, and communicate complex ideas than those with limited lexical resources (Ogundele, 2013).

Effective vocabulary usage involves selecting words that accurately convey intended meanings while enhancing the quality and readability of the composition. In creative writing, learners are expected to employ descriptive language, figurative expressions, sensory details, and varied sentence structures to enrich their narratives. Appropriate vocabulary use contributes to the clarity, vividness, and aesthetic appeal of written texts (Hyland, 2019). Research indicates that vocabulary knowledge is strongly associated with writing achievement because learners rely on lexical resources to generate and communicate ideas effectively (Graham et al., 2023). Furthermore, instructional activities that expose students to meaningful language experiences often promote vocabulary development and improve writing performance. Consequently, vocabulary usage remains a significant dimension in the assessment of creative writing achievement.

Organization of Ideas

Organization refers to the logical arrangement and sequencing of ideas within a written composition. Effective organization enables writers to present information systematically and ensures that readers can follow the progression of ideas without confusion. In narrative writing, organization involves the coherent presentation of events, including an introduction, development of action, climax, and conclusion (Tompkins, 2014).

A well-organized composition demonstrates clear structure, logical transitions, and appropriate paragraph development. Writers must decide how ideas should be introduced, elaborated, and connected to achieve coherence and communicative effectiveness. Poor organization often results in fragmented narratives, abrupt transitions, and difficulties in understanding the intended message.

Writing researchers argue that organization reflects learners' ability to plan and structure information before and during the writing process (Graham et al., 2020). Effective organization also indicates cognitive maturity because it requires learners to establish relationships among ideas and arrange them logically. As a result, organization constitutes a critical component of creative writing achievement and serves as an important indicator of writing quality.

Coherence

Coherence refers to the extent to which ideas within a composition are meaningfully connected and contribute to a unified message. While organization focuses on structural arrangement, coherence emphasizes the logical flow and consistency of ideas throughout the text. A coherent composition allows readers to understand relationships among events, characters, and ideas without difficulty (McNamara et al., 2014).

Coherence is achieved through the use of appropriate transitions, logical sequencing, consistent themes, and clear connections between sentences and paragraphs. In narrative writing, coherence ensures that events unfold logically and that readers can easily follow the storyline. Students who demonstrate coherence are able to maintain focus on the topic, avoid unnecessary digressions, and establish meaningful links among ideas.

Scholars consider coherence an essential indicator of communicative competence because it reflects the writer's ability to guide readers through the text effectively (Hyland, 2019). Compositions lacking coherence often appear disjointed and difficult to understand, regardless of the originality of ideas presented. Therefore, coherence remains a crucial dimension in the evaluation of creative writing achievement.

Grammatical Accuracy

Grammatical accuracy refers to the correct use of language structures, including sentence construction, tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, spelling, and other conventions of written English. Although creative writing emphasizes imagination and originality, effective communication requires adherence to acceptable grammatical standards (Myhill & Watson, 2014).

Grammatical accuracy contributes significantly to the clarity and comprehensibility of written compositions. Frequent grammatical errors can obscure meaning, distract readers, and reduce the overall quality of writing. Consequently, learners are expected to demonstrate competence in applying grammatical rules while expressing ideas creatively.

Studies in second language writing indicates that grammatical competence remains an important predictor of writing achievement because it influences both readability and communicative effectiveness (Graham et al., 2023). While creativity allows writers to generate interesting content, grammatical accuracy ensures that such content is communicated clearly and appropriately. Therefore, grammar constitutes an indispensable dimension of creative writing assessment.

2.3 Pictorial Method and Creative Writing

The pictorial method is an instructional approach that utilizes visual materials such as photographs, illustrations, cartoons, paintings, diagrams, and picture series to facilitate teaching and learning. The method is based on the premise that visual representations enhance learners' understanding by providing concrete and meaningful experiences that support knowledge construction. In language education, pictorial materials serve as powerful instructional resources because they stimulate observation, interpretation, imagination, and communication. Through visual prompts, learners are encouraged to explore ideas and express their thoughts creatively, making the method particularly suitable for writing instruction (Mayer, 2021; Tomlinson, 2020).

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the pictorial method is its emphasis on visual learning. Unlike conventional teaching approaches that rely heavily on verbal explanations, pictorial instruction engages learners through images that attract attention and stimulate curiosity. Visual materials provide learners with concrete representations of people, places, events, and situations that may otherwise be difficult to describe or imagine. The method is also learner-centred because it encourages active participation through observation, discussion, interpretation, and reflection. Rather than receiving information passively, learners interact with visual stimuli and construct meaning from what they observe (Mayer, 2021).

Another notable characteristic of the pictorial method is its ability to stimulate imagination and creativity. Pictures often contain details that invite multiple interpretations, encouraging learners to think beyond what is immediately visible. Different students may derive different meanings from the same image, leading to diverse ideas and perspectives. This flexibility creates opportunities for creative thinking and self-expression, both of which are essential components of effective writing. The method also promotes engagement because visual materials tend to be appealing and capable of sustaining learners' interest throughout instructional activities (Cremin & Chappell, 2021).

In English language classrooms, the pictorial method can be applied in various ways to support writing instruction. Teachers may present a single picture and ask students to develop a story based on the scene depicted. Learners may also be provided with picture sequences that require them to construct narratives by arranging events logically. Photographs depicting social, cultural, environmental, or historical situations can be used as prompts for descriptive essays and creative compositions. Similarly, cartoons and illustrations may be employed to stimulate discussions that later serve as foundations for written expression. These activities encourage learners to observe details carefully, generate ideas, and organize information coherently before writing (Tompkins, 2014).

Picture description activities represent another important classroom application of the method. Students may be required to describe actions, emotions, settings, and relationships portrayed in visual images. Such tasks encourage learners to use descriptive language and expand their vocabulary. Teachers may also employ visual storytelling techniques in which learners create narratives based on photographs or illustrations, thereby strengthening their ability to develop plots, characters, and settings. These applications demonstrate the versatility of pictorial instruction in promoting language learning and writing development.

The educational benefits of the pictorial method have been widely acknowledged in educational research. One major benefit is improved learner motivation. Visual materials attract attention more effectively than lengthy verbal explanations and often increase students' willingness to participate in classroom activities (Mayer, 2021). The method also enhances comprehension because pictures provide

contextual clues that support understanding and interpretation. Learners are able to connect abstract ideas with concrete visual representations, thereby facilitating meaningful learning experiences.

Pictorial instruction also contributes significantly to vocabulary development. As learners attempt to describe images and explain what they observe, they are exposed to new words and expressions that enrich their linguistic repertoire. The method encourages the use of descriptive language, adjectives, action verbs, and figurative expressions that improve language proficiency and communicative competence (Nation, 2013). Furthermore, visual materials promote memory retention because information associated with images is often easier to recall than information presented solely through words.

2.4 Games-Based Method and Creative Writing

Games-based learning is an instructional approach that incorporates educational games into classroom activities to facilitate learning and skill development. Educational games differ from recreational games because they are intentionally designed to achieve specific learning objectives while maintaining elements of challenge, enjoyment, interaction, and engagement. In language education, games-based learning provides opportunities for learners to acquire knowledge and develop skills through participation in structured activities that promote communication, collaboration, and problem-solving (Plass et al., 2020).

The increasing adoption of games-based learning reflects a broader shift from teacher-centred instruction to learner-centred pedagogies. Rather than relying solely on lectures and rote memorization, games-based learning encourages students to participate actively in the learning process. Learners engage with tasks, make decisions, solve problems, and receive immediate feedback, thereby transforming learning into an interactive experience. This active involvement promotes deeper understanding and enhances learners' motivation to learn (Gee, 2015). Several characteristics distinguish games-based learning from traditional instructional approaches. One characteristic is the presence of clearly defined goals and objectives. Educational games are designed to guide learners toward specific outcomes while maintaining engagement through challenges and rewards. Another characteristic is active participation. Learners are required to

interact with content, peers, and instructional materials rather than passively receiving information. Games also incorporate elements of competition or collaboration that encourage learners to remain engaged throughout the learning process.

Teachers may also employ narrative competitions, digital storytelling games, role-playing activities, and collaborative writing challenges. These activities create opportunities for learners to generate ideas, organize information, and express themselves creatively. Because games often involve interaction and discussion, they encourage students to share perspectives and learn from one another, enriching the quality of classroom experiences. The educational benefits of games-based learning are substantial. One of the most widely recognized benefits is increased motivation. Learners are generally more enthusiastic about participating in activities that incorporate elements of enjoyment, challenge, and achievement. Motivation is particularly important in writing instruction because many students perceive writing as a difficult and demanding task. Games create positive learning experiences that encourage participation and persistence (Dörnyei, 2021).

The relevance of games-based learning to creative writing development is evident in its ability to stimulate imagination, idea generation, and narrative construction. Creative writing requires learners to generate content, develop plots, create characters, and organize events effectively. Games provide engaging contexts within which these skills can be practiced and refined. Storytelling games, for instance, encourage learners to create original narratives, while role-playing activities provide experiences that can later be transformed into written compositions.

Games-based learning also supports originality and creativity by encouraging divergent thinking. Learners are often required to imagine possibilities, explore alternatives, and generate unique responses to challenges. Such activities strengthen creative thinking skills that are directly relevant to writing. In addition, games contribute to vocabulary development because learners must communicate ideas clearly and effectively during gameplay. The language acquired through these experiences often transfers to writing tasks.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Social Constructivist Theory

This study is anchored on the Social Constructivist Theory propounded by Lev Vygotsky in 1978. The theory emerged as a response to views of learning that emphasized individual cognitive processes without sufficient consideration of the social and cultural contexts in which learning occurs. Social constructivism posits that knowledge is not passively received from teachers but is actively constructed by learners through interaction with their environment, peers, teachers, and instructional resources. Learning is therefore regarded as a social process in which individuals develop understanding through participation in meaningful activities and collaborative experiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

A central assumption of Social Constructivist Theory is that learning occurs through social interaction. According to Vygotsky, learners develop higher mental functions when they engage in communication and collaborative activities with more knowledgeable individuals. Through interaction, discussion, questioning, and shared experiences, learners gradually internalize knowledge and skills that become part of their independent cognitive functioning. The theory emphasizes the importance of language as a tool for thinking, communication, and knowledge construction. Consequently, classroom activities that promote interaction and active participation are considered essential for meaningful learning.

The relevance of Social Constructivist Theory to pictorial instruction lies in its emphasis on active meaning-making and interaction with learning materials. Pictures, photographs, illustrations, and visual prompts serve as stimuli that encourage learners to observe, interpret, discuss, and construct meanings collaboratively. Through classroom discussions and writing activities based on visual materials, students actively engage in the learning process rather than passively receiving information. The pictorial method creates opportunities for learners to share interpretations, exchange ideas, and develop creative responses to visual stimuli. These interactions support knowledge construction and facilitate the development of creative writing skills.

The theory is equally relevant to games-based learning because educational games promote active participation, collaboration, and social interaction. Games-based

activities often require learners to work together, negotiate meanings, solve problems, and exchange ideas while pursuing instructional goals. Through these interactions, learners construct knowledge collectively and develop communication skills that support writing development. The collaborative nature of games aligns closely with the social constructivist view that learning occurs through engagement with others. Furthermore, games provide immediate feedback and opportunities for scaffolding, enabling learners to progress from simpler tasks to more complex writing activities.

Social Constructivist Theory also provides a strong foundation for simulation instruction. Simulation activities immerse learners in realistic situations where they assume roles, make decisions, and interact with others within meaningful contexts. Such experiences create authentic learning environments that encourage active participation and collaborative problem-solving. Through role-playing and simulated experiences, learners construct understanding based on direct engagement with situations that resemble real-life events. These experiences provide rich content for creative writing and support the development of imagination, critical thinking, and communicative competence.

The choice of Social Constructivist Theory for this study is therefore appropriate because the three instructional methods under investigation pictorial instruction, games-based learning, and simulation instruction are learner-centred approaches that emphasize active participation, collaboration, interaction, and experiential learning. The theory provides a conceptual explanation for how these instructional methods can enhance creative writing achievement by creating opportunities for learners to construct knowledge, generate ideas, and develop writing skills through meaningful social and learning experiences.

2.8 Empirical Review and Gap in Literature

Empirical studies on creative writing instruction have increasingly emphasized the role of learner-centred pedagogical approaches in improving students' writing achievement. One of the studies closely related to the present research is that of Hussain et al. (2023), who investigated the impact of visual aids and pictorial images on the creative writing skills of English as a Second Language (ESL) students at the secondary school level. Using an experimental research design, the

researchers compared students taught with pictorial materials and those taught through conventional methods. The findings revealed that learners exposed to visual stimuli demonstrated significantly higher achievement in creative writing. The study concluded that pictures enhanced imagination, idea generation, and vocabulary development. However, the study focused solely on pictorial instruction and did not compare its effectiveness with other innovative teaching approaches.

Similarly, Imran and Liaquat (2023) examined the use of pictures in English language classrooms for developing creative writing among secondary school learners. The researchers reported that students taught through picture-based instructional activities showed improvements in descriptive writing, narrative development, and organization of ideas. The study further indicated that visual prompts increased students' motivation and confidence during writing tasks. Although the findings support the effectiveness of pictorial instruction, the study was conducted outside Nigeria and therefore may not adequately reflect the realities of Nigerian classrooms.

In another study, Rahman and Akter (2022) investigated the effectiveness of picture-based storytelling on students' writing performance. The researchers found that learners who participated in picture storytelling activities produced more detailed and creative narratives than those in the control group. The study highlighted the role of visual stimuli in fostering originality and creative expression. Nevertheless, the research concentrated primarily on narrative writing and did not examine other dimensions of creative writing achievement.

Kurniawan and Fitriani (2021) explored the use of picture series in improving students' narrative writing skills. Their findings revealed significant gains in coherence, organization, and creativity among students exposed to picture-sequence instruction. The researchers concluded that picture series provided learners with a logical framework for constructing narratives. While the study demonstrated the instructional value of visual materials, it did not investigate gender influence or compare pictorial instruction with alternative learner-centred methods.

Beyond pictorial instruction, researchers have also examined the effectiveness of games-based learning in writing development. Guo et al. (2024) conducted a scoping review of twenty-two empirical studies on game-related methods in writing classrooms. The review revealed that games-based learning significantly enhanced students' writing engagement, creativity, motivation, and academic performance. The researchers concluded that educational games create interactive environments that support writing development. However, the review synthesized findings from diverse educational settings and did not provide direct evidence regarding Nigerian secondary school students.

Likewise, Ramadhanti and Pratiwi (2025) investigated the impact of gamification on secondary school students' writing achievement. Using a quasi-experimental design, the researchers found that students exposed to educational games demonstrated significant improvements in grammar, vocabulary usage, and overall writing quality. The study emphasized that games-based activities reduce learning anxiety and increase active participation. Despite these positive findings, the study focused primarily on grammar mastery and did not examine broader dimensions of creative writing such as originality and creativity.

Similarly, Sun and Gao (2023) investigated collaborative writing games and their influence on students' creative thinking and writing achievement. The study revealed significant improvements in vocabulary development, organization of ideas, and creativity among students exposed to game-based activities. The researchers concluded that collaborative games create opportunities for meaningful language use and creative expression. Nonetheless, the study did not compare games-based learning with other instructional approaches.

Simulation-based instruction has also attracted considerable scholarly attention. Umeh (2015) examined simulation games as a strategy for achieving educational objectives among Nigerian secondary school students. The findings revealed that simulation activities enhanced students' participation, critical thinking, and learning outcomes. Although the study was not conducted specifically within English language instruction, it demonstrated the educational value of experiential learning approaches in Nigerian classrooms.

Similarly, Obro eta al. (2021) investigated the effects of simulation games and brainstorming strategies on students' learning outcomes. Using an experimental design, the researchers reported that students exposed to simulation activities achieved significantly higher scores than those taught through traditional methods. The study concluded that simulation promotes active learning and deeper understanding. However, the research focused on Social Studies rather than creative writing.

Another related study was conducted by Adebayo and Olatunji (2022), who examined role-play and simulation strategies in language instruction. The findings revealed that learners exposed to simulation-based activities demonstrated better communication skills and higher levels of engagement than their counterparts in conventional classrooms. The researchers argued that authentic learning experiences encourage learners to generate ideas and communicate effectively. Nevertheless, the study did not specifically assess creative writing achievement.

In the Nigeria, Ibrahim (2022) investigated the effect of writing rubrics on creative writing achievement among senior secondary school students in Sokoto State. The findings revealed significant improvements in students' writing performance following exposure to structured assessment techniques. Although the study focused on assessment rather than instructional methods, it identified dimensions such as creativity, vocabulary usage, organization, and grammatical accuracy as important indicators of writing achievement. The study, however, did not examine the influence of learner-centred instructional strategies on these dimensions.

Abdulkareem (2024) examined the impact of inquiry-based learning on expository writing skills among Nigerian learners. The study reported significant improvements in students' writing achievement and participation. The findings suggest that active learning approaches can positively influence writing development. However, the focus was on expository writing rather than creative writing, and the instructional strategy investigated differed from the approaches considered in the present study.

Similarly, Fash and Mmegwa (2024) investigated the effects of graphic organizer instruction on secondary school students' comprehension skills. The findings indicated that visual instructional strategies significantly improved learning outcomes. Although the study concentrated on reading comprehension, it provided evidence supporting the effectiveness of learner-centred and visually oriented teaching approaches in language education. Further evidence was provided by Graham, Harris, and Koster (2023), whose review of writing instruction studies demonstrated that instructional approaches promoting active participation, collaboration, and meaningful engagement consistently improve students' writing performance. The review emphasized that writing achievement is influenced not only by language competence but also by the quality of instructional experiences provided to learners. However, the review did not focus specifically on Nigerian secondary school students or compare the instructional approaches examined in the present study.

The review of empirical studies reveals that most existing studies have investigated pictorial instruction, games-based learning, and simulation instruction separately. There is a scarcity of studies that compare the relative effectiveness of these three instructional methods within a single research framework. Consequently, the current study provides comparative evidence regarding the relative effectiveness of pictorial, games-based, and simulation instructional methods in enhancing creative writing achievement among secondary school students. Such information is valuable for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers seeking effective instructional approaches for writing instruction.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design to investigate the effects of pictorial, games, and simulation methods of teaching on the development of creative writing skills among secondary school students. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to compare the effectiveness of the three instructional methods with the conventional teaching method while controlling for initial differences among participants through the administration of a pretest. Four groups participated in the study: Pictorial

Method Group (PMG), Games Method Group (GMG), Simulation Method Group (SMG), and Control Group (CG). The participants were exposed to different instructional treatments for a period of eight weeks after which a posttest was administered to assess their creative writing achievement.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised Senior Secondary School II (SS II) students in public secondary schools within the study area. SS II students were selected because they had acquired foundational writing skills and were actively engaged in composition writing as part of the English Language curriculum. In addition, students at this level possessed sufficient cognitive and linguistic maturity to participate effectively in the instructional activities designed for the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 240 SS II students was selected from four public secondary schools. The sample was drawn using a multistage sampling procedure. Initially, four schools with similar academic characteristics and adequate facilities for the implementation of the instructional treatments were selected. Thereafter, one intact SS II class was selected from each school. The use of intact classes was necessary to avoid disruption of the normal school programme and to preserve existing classroom structures.

The selected students were assigned to four groups consisting of sixty students each. The groups included the Pictorial Method Group (PMG), Games Method Group (GMG), Simulation Method Group (SMG), and the Control Group (CG). The experimental groups received instruction using the respective innovative teaching methods, while the control group was taught using the conventional lecture-based approach commonly employed in English Language classrooms.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used for data collection. These were the Creative Writing Achievement Test (CWAT) and the Creative Writing Rating Scale (CWRS).

The Creative Writing Achievement Test (CWAT) consisted of structured creative writing tasks designed to assess students' ability to generate ideas, organize

content, and express themselves effectively in written form. The test required students to produce original compositions based on given prompts. The prompts were carefully selected to stimulate imagination, creativity, and meaningful written expression.

The Creative Writing Rating Scale (CWRS) was used to evaluate students' written compositions. The scale assessed six major dimensions of creative writing achievement: originality, creativity, vocabulary usage, organization of ideas, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. Each dimension was assigned specific scoring criteria to ensure consistency in assessment. The combined scores obtained from the six dimensions constituted the overall creative writing achievement score of each participant.

Validity of the Instruments

The instruments were subjected to face and content validation before administration. Copies of the Creative Writing Achievement Test and the Creative Writing Rating Scale were presented to one senior lecturer in English Language Education and two lecturers in Measurement and Evaluation from a federal university. The lecturers examined the instruments with respect to clarity of instructions, appropriateness of the writing tasks, relevance of the assessment criteria, and suitability of the instruments for measuring creative writing achievement among secondary school students.

The observations and suggestions provided by the validators were incorporated into the final versions of the instruments. This process ensured that the instruments adequately measured the variables they were designed to assess and reflected the objectives of the study.

Reliability of the Instruments

A pilot study was conducted using students who were not part of the main study. The purpose of the pilot testing was to determine the consistency and stability of the instruments before their administration to the actual participants. Students' responses were scored using the Creative Writing Rating Scale, and the resulting scores were analyzed to determine the reliability of the instruments.

To ensure objectivity in scoring, detailed scoring guidelines were developed for each dimension of the rating scale. Independent scoring of selected scripts was also carried out to ascertain consistency in assessment. The CWAT yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84 using Cronbach's Alpha, while the CWRS produced an inter-rater reliability coefficient of 0.87 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. These coefficients indicated that the instruments were sufficiently reliable for the study.

Treatment Procedure

The treatment lasted for eight weeks. During the first week, the pretest was administered to all participants using the Creative Writing Achievement Test. The subsequent weeks were devoted to the implementation of the instructional treatments.

Students in the Pictorial Method Group were taught creative writing through the use of pictures, photographs, illustrations, and visual prompts. The visual materials served as stimuli for idea generation, description, narration, and story development. Learners were encouraged to observe, interpret, and construct creative texts based on the images presented. The Games Method Group received instruction through educational writing games designed to promote participation, imagination, collaboration, and vocabulary development. Activities such as story-building games, vocabulary challenges, character creation tasks, and narrative sequencing exercises were employed to enhance students' engagement in creative writing. Students in the Simulation Method Group participated in role-play and simulated real-life situations before undertaking writing activities. They assumed different roles in scenarios such as market interactions, press conferences, courtroom proceedings, and community events. These experiences provided authentic contexts that stimulated idea generation and enriched students' written compositions.

The Control Group received instruction through the conventional teaching method. Lessons were conducted primarily through teacher explanation, note-taking, and guided classroom discussions without the use of pictorial, games-based, or simulation activities. At the end of the treatment period, the posttest was

administered to all participants using the same assessment procedures employed during the pretest phase.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions and determine students' achievement levels under the different instructional methods. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The use of ANCOVA enabled the researcher to control for pre-existing differences among participants by adjusting the posttest scores based on the pretest results.

4. Results

Descriptive Results

The results of the study are presented in this section in line with the research questions and hypotheses, using descriptive statistics and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the effects of the instructional methods on students' creative writing achievement.

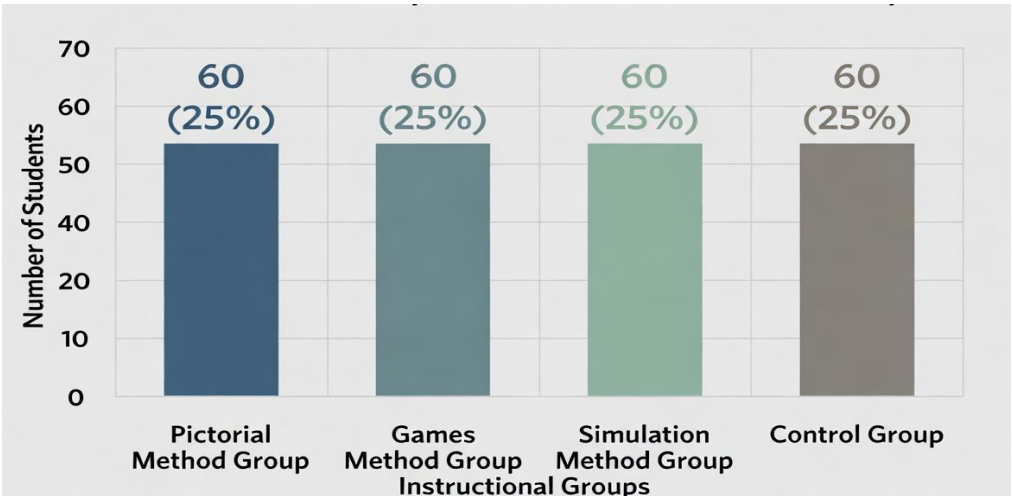


Figure 2: Distribution of Participants across Instructional Groups

Figure 2 presents the distribution of participants across the experimental and control groups. The figure shows that an equal number of students (60 each) were

assigned to the pictorial, games, simulation, and control groups, representing 25 percent per group. This equal distribution ensures group balance and strengthens the internal validity of the experimental design by minimizing group size bias.

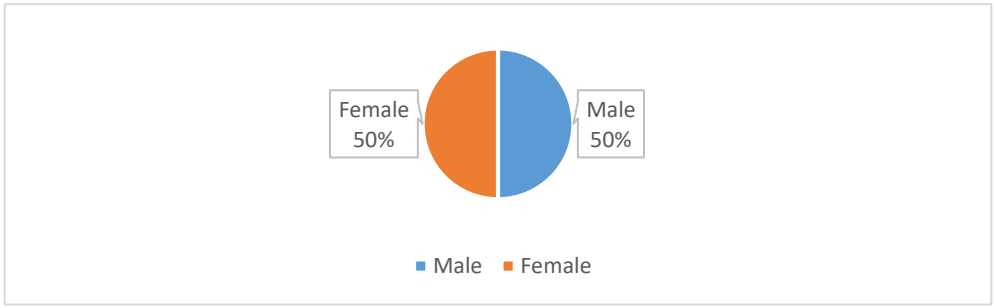


Figure 3: Gender Distribution of Participants

Figure 3 illustrates the gender distribution of participants in the study. The figure shows an equal representation of male and female students, with each group constituting 50 percent of the total sample. This balanced distribution ensures gender comparability across the study and provides a suitable basis for examining the influence of gender on students' creative writing achievement under the different instructional methods.

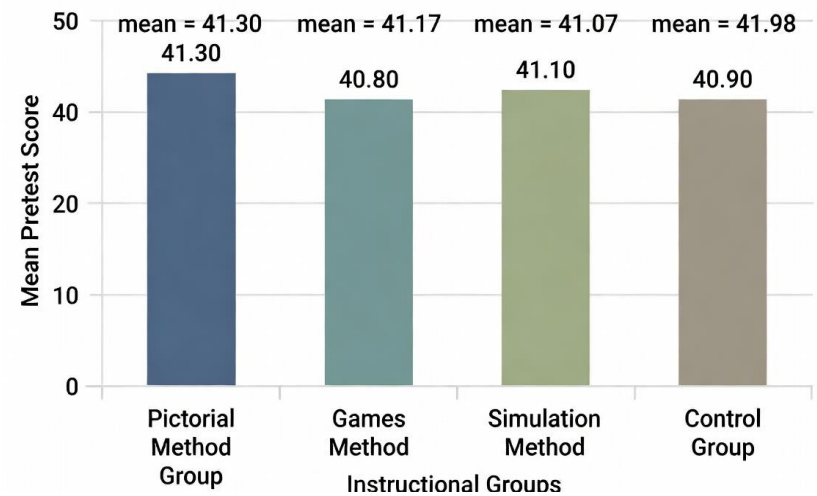


Figure 3: Pretest Mean Scores by Instructional Group

Figure 4 presents the pretest mean scores of students across the four instructional groups. The figure indicates that all groups recorded closely similar mean scores at the pretest stage, with only minimal variation among them. This demonstrates that the participants were relatively equivalent in their creative writing ability before the commencement of treatment. The observed similarity in baseline performance justifies the use of ANCOVA in controlling initial differences during analysis of posttest scores.

Research Question 1
What is the effect of pictorial instruction on students' creative writing achievement?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Students Exposed to Pictorial Instruction and Conventional Method

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Pictorial Method Group	60	41.30	6.24	68.50	7.12	27.20
Control Group	60	40.90	6.11	52.40	6.84	11.50

Table 1 shows that students exposed to the pictorial method obtained a mean gain score of 27.20, while those in the control group recorded a mean gain score of 11.50. This indicates that pictorial instruction improved students' creative writing achievement more than the conventional method.

Research Question 2
What is the effect of games-based instruction on students' creative writing achievement?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Students Exposed to Games-Based Instruction and Conventional Method

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Games Method Group	60	40.80	6.18	73.60	6.75	32.80
Control Group	60	40.90	6.11	52.40	6.84	11.50

Table 2 reveals that students exposed to games-based instruction recorded a mean gain score of 32.80, while students taught through the conventional method obtained a mean gain score of 11.50. The result suggests that games-based instruction had a positive effect on students' creative writing achievement.

Research Question 3
What is the effect of simulation instruction on students' creative writing achievement?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pretest and Posttest Scores of Students Exposed to Simulation Instruction and Conventional Method

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Simulation Method Group	60	41.10	6.09	78.90	6.41	37.80
Control Group	60	40.90	6.11	52.40	6.84	11.50

Table 3 indicates that students taught through simulation instruction achieved a mean gain score of 37.80 compared to 11.50 obtained by students in the control group. This suggests that simulation instruction substantially improved students' creative writing achievement.

Research Question 4
Which of the three instructional methods is most effective?
Table 4: Mean Gain Scores of Students Exposed to the Three Instructional Methods

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain	Rank
Simulation Method Group	60	41.10	78.90	37.80	1st
Games Method Group	60	40.80	73.60	32.80	2nd
Pictorial Method Group	60	41.30	68.50	27.20	3rd
Control Group	60	40.90	52.40	11.50	4th

Table 4 shows that the simulation method produced the highest mean gain score (37.80), followed by the games method (32.80) and pictorial method (27.20). The control group recorded the lowest mean gain score (11.50). Therefore, simulation instruction was the most effective instructional method.

Research Question 5

What is the influence of gender on students' creative writing achievement under the three instructional methods?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Posttest Scores by Gender across Experimental Groups

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	122	73.14	7.28
Female	118	74.02	6.95

Table 5 shows that female students obtained a slightly higher mean score (74.02) compared to male students (73.14). However, the difference is minimal, indicating that gender had little influence on students' creative writing achievement across the experimental groups. The nearly equal distribution of male (122) and female (118) participants further suggests a balanced sample for gender comparison.

Test of Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant effect of pictorial instruction on students' creative writing achievement.

Table 6: ANCOVA Summary for Effect of Pictorial Instruction on Creative Writing Achievement

Source	Type III SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η^2p
Corrected Model	4321.48	2	2160.74	24.18	.000	0.296
Pretest	1018.22	1	1018.22	11.40	.001	0.090
Group	2876.36	1	2876.36	32.21	.000	0.219
Error	10261.74	115	89.23			

Since p (.000) < .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Pictorial instruction had a significant effect on students' creative writing achievement. The pictorial instruction had a **large effect** on creative writing achievement (η^2p = 0.219), indicating substantial practical influence beyond statistical significance.

H02: There is no significant effect of games-based instruction on students' creative writing achievement.

Table 7: ANCOVA Summary for Effect of Games-Based Instruction on Creative Writing Achievement

Source	Type III SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η^2p
Corrected Model	5687.83	2	2843.92	31.86	.000	0.357
Pretest	946.27	1	946.27	10.60	.002	0.084
Group	3941.15	1	3941.15	44.15	.000	0.277
Error	10267.51	115	89.28			

Since p (.000) < .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Games-based instruction had a significant effect on students' creative writing achievement. Games-based instruction showed a **large effect size** (η^2p = 0.277), suggesting strong improvement in students' creative writing achievement.

H03: There is no significant effect of simulation instruction on students' creative writing achievement.

Table 8: ANCOVA Summary for Effect of Simulation Instruction on Creative Writing Achievement

Source	Type III SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η^2p
Corrected Model	6942.11	2	3471.06	39.54	.000	0.408
Pretest	892.46	1	892.46	10.16	.002	0.081
Group	5121.83	1	5121.83	58.35	.000	0.336
Error	10095.82	115	87.79			

Since p (.000) < .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Simulation instruction had a significant effect on students' creative writing achievement. Simulation instruction produced the **largest effect among the three methods** (η^2p = 0.336), indicating very strong instructional impact.

H04: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of pictorial, games-based, and simulation instructional methods.

Table 9: ANCOVA Summary Comparing the Three Instructional Methods

Source	Type III SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	12481.53	4	3120.38	36.47	.000
Pretest	1068.34	1	1068.34	12.49	.001
Treatment	9473.82	3	3157.94	36.91	.000
Error	14824.27	173	85.69		
Total	718632.00	178			

Since p (.000) < .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant difference in the effectiveness of the three instructional methods.

H05: Gender has no significant influence on students' creative writing achievement under the three instructional methods.

Table 10: ANCOVA Summary for Influence of Gender on Creative Writing Achievement

Source	Type III SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	7812.61	3	2604.20	28.67	.000
Pretest	1124.15	1	1124.15	12.38	.001
Gender	126.43	1	126.43	1.39	.240
Error	16089.56	177	90.90		
Total	725417.00	180			

Since p (.240) > .05, the null hypothesis was accepted. Gender had no significant influence on students' creative writing achievement under the three instructional methods.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that pictorial, games-based, and simulation methods significantly enhanced students' creative writing achievement when compared with the conventional teaching method. The result presented in Table 1 showed that students exposed to the pictorial method recorded a substantially higher mean gain score (27.20) than those in the control group (11.50). This finding suggests that pictorial instruction enhanced students' ability to generate ideas, develop narratives, and organize written content more effectively than the conventional method. The improvement may be attributed to the capacity of visual stimuli to stimulate imagination and provide concrete contexts for creative expression. This finding supports the study of Hussain et al. (2023), who reported that secondary school students taught with visual aids and pictorial images demonstrated significantly higher creative writing performance than students taught through traditional instructional approaches. Similarly, Imran and Liaquat (2023) found that pictures promoted idea generation and descriptive writing among English language learners. The present finding also aligns with Fash and Mmegwa (2024), who observed that visual instructional resources improved students' engagement and comprehension. However, the magnitude of improvement observed in this study appears greater than that reported in some

previous studies, possibly because the pictorial activities were systematically integrated into creative writing instruction over an extended treatment period.

The findings in Table 2 indicated that students exposed to games-based instruction achieved a mean gain score of 32.80, which exceeded the gain score recorded by the control group. This result suggests that educational games provided a stimulating learning environment that encouraged active participation and creative thinking. The finding corroborates the conclusion of Guo et al. (2024) that game-related instructional methods positively influence writing achievement, learner motivation, and creativity. Likewise, Ramadhanti and Pratiwi (2025) reported that gamified language activities enhanced students' writing performance and vocabulary development. The present finding further supports studies emphasizing that games create opportunities for collaboration, experimentation, and immediate feedback, all of which contribute to improved writing outcomes. Nevertheless, some earlier studies reported only moderate improvements in writing achievement through gamification. The stronger gains observed in this study may be explained by the use of diverse writing-oriented games such as story-building, character creation, and narrative sequencing activities, which directly targeted creative writing skills.

The result in Table 3 revealed that students in the simulation group obtained the highest mean gain score (37.80), significantly outperforming both the control group and the other experimental groups. This finding suggests that simulation instruction provides authentic and experiential learning opportunities that enrich students' creative writing development. Through role-play and participation in realistic scenarios, students were able to generate richer content, construct more coherent narratives, and produce more imaginative compositions. This finding is consistent with the work of Obro et al. (2021), who found that simulation-based instructional strategies significantly improved students' learning outcomes and engagement. Similarly, Umeh (2015) reported that simulation activities enhanced students' participation and learning effectiveness in Nigerian classrooms. The superior performance of the simulation group also lends support to contemporary views that experiential learning promotes deeper cognitive processing than passive instructional approaches. Unlike pictorial and games-based methods, simulation allows learners to experience situations directly before transforming

those experiences into written narratives, thereby strengthening content development and originality.

The comparative analysis presented in Table 4 showed that simulation instruction ranked first, games-based instruction ranked second, and pictorial instruction ranked third in terms of mean gain scores. The significant treatment effect reported in Table 9 confirms that the three instructional methods did not contribute equally to students' creative writing achievement. While all three methods improved performance, simulation emerged as the most effective approach. This finding extends previous studies that examined these methods separately by providing direct comparative evidence of their relative effectiveness within the same instructional context. The result suggests that instructional approaches involving higher levels of learner participation and experiential engagement may produce stronger improvements in creative writing achievement.

Finally, the findings presented in Table 5 and confirmed by the ANCOVA results in Table 10 indicated that gender had no significant influence on students' creative writing achievement under the three instructional methods. Although female students recorded a slightly higher mean score than male students, the difference was not statistically significant. This finding supports studies that reported minimal gender differences in language achievement when learners are exposed to engaging and learner-centred instructional strategies. The result suggests that pictorial, games-based, and simulation methods are equally beneficial to both male and female students in the development of creative writing skills.

6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effects of pictorial, games-based, and simulation methods of teaching on the development of creative writing skills among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that all three instructional methods significantly improved students' creative writing achievement when compared with the conventional teaching method. Students exposed to pictorial instruction demonstrated notable improvement in idea generation, content development, and narrative construction, while those taught through games-based activities showed increased engagement, creativity, and writing performance. The simulation method produced the highest achievement

gains among the three instructional approaches, indicating its superior effectiveness in promoting authentic learning experiences that enrich students' creative expression and writing competence.

The study further established that significant differences existed among the three instructional methods, with simulation instruction ranking first, games-based instruction second, and pictorial instruction third in terms of effectiveness. These findings suggest that learner-centred instructional approaches that actively involve students in meaningful learning experiences contribute substantially to the development of creative writing skills. The study also found that gender had no significant influence on students' achievement under the three instructional methods, implying that the approaches are equally beneficial to male and female learners.

The study contributes to English language pedagogy by providing empirical evidence that innovative instructional methods can enhance students' creative writing achievement more effectively than conventional teaching practices. The findings underscore the need for English language teachers to adopt instructional strategies that stimulate imagination, encourage participation, and create authentic opportunities for written expression. Such approaches have the potential to improve students' writing competence and address the persistent challenges associated with creative writing performance in secondary schools.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. English Language teachers should incorporate pictorial, games-based, and simulation activities into creative writing instruction to enhance students' writing achievement and engagement.
2. Schools should provide adequate instructional resources, including visual materials, educational games, and facilities that support simulation-based learning activities.
3. Teacher education institutions and professional development programmes should train teachers on the effective use of innovative learner-centred instructional methods for teaching writing.

4. Curriculum planners should integrate pictorial, games-based, and simulation strategies into English Language curricula and instructional guides.
5. Educational authorities should encourage and support the adoption of experiential and interactive teaching approaches capable of improving students' creative writing competence and overall language development.

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