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Favour O. Atubi

Delta State University Abraka Nigeria, favouratubi20@gmail.com

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Libraries as Determinants of Guided Inquiry Learning Approach in Social Studies

ATUBI, Onamrewho Favour (Ph.D.)

Department of Social Science Education

Faculty of Education

Delta State University, Abraka

Email. favouratubi20@gmail.com, ofatubi@delsu.edu.ng

ORCID ID- <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0028-3197>

Abstract

This study is an attempt to determine how school libraries can be used to provide a guided learning approach to social studies. The case study was carried out using a group study approach, supervised by three social studies teachers and a school librarian. The population of this study comprises of one hundred and sixteen (116) Junior Secondary Three (3) students from a state owned school in Delta state, southern Nigeria. A sample of fifteen (15) students, made up of three (3) groups of five (5) students each were drawn through a purposive sampling technique. Three teachers of social studies and the school librarian participated as research assistants. A well prepared and validated questionnaire was the instrument for data collection, the instrument was used as a rating scale by the teachers to rate the students after the Guided Inquiry learning in the school library. The librarian also provided data through an interview on the role of the library on guided inquiry learning. The findings pointed to the fact that school libraries are strong determinants of Guided Inquiry in promoting the level of social studies learning in schools. Thus it was recommended that Guided Inquiry should be developed and incorporated into the learning of Social studies especially at the Junior Secondary School level.

Keywords: School libraries; Guided inquiry; Social Studies; Learning approach and Determinant.

Introduction

Education is powerful, because it gives the needed knowledge that is valuable for personal, economic, social and national development. However, education in Nigeria is at all-time low because priorities on issues of education has been misplaced due to lack of proper pedagogy in schools (Olajide & Zinn,2021). The overdependence on lecture method has dealt a severe blow to the educational system and this problem has caused reduction in the economic, political and social progression of the country. The provision of information through Guided Inquiry (GI) which is a major role of school libraries has been neglected for too long, hence the attainment of sustainable development in the education sector has been unachievable. This necessitated Tyonum and Ezeogu

(2015) to demonstrate the importance of GI education which can be provided through school libraries as a way out of the problem. GI is a method of teaching which guides students to acquire knowledge through self-discovery, while the teacher only act as a guide or facilitator.

GI promotes learner centered teaching approach, it is beneficial in handling instructional problems and providing critical solutions to educational and national problems. Moreover, contemporary and social problems like exam malpractice, poor academic performance, cultism and bullying can be drastically reduced through GI by putting the right type of academic values into learners. Grant, Swan & Lee (2017) observed that the culture of GI in learners is yet to be developed and harnessed by Social Studies teachers. Subsequently, Atubi (2021) discovered that the attitude of students towards the usage of school libraries is not encouraging. A situation where teachers and students rely on memorization or rote learning, without adequate utilization of school libraries can be address with the GI method of teaching. Hence the role of school libraries as determinant of GI should be considered at this time, but there seems to be scanty literature on the relationship between library usage, GI and social studies, this gap the study intends to fill.

School Libraries

Education and libraries are both substructures and coexist together, they are both not an end but a means to achieving an extreme end. The bedrock of education which is necessary for national and sustainable development are libraries (Elaturoti,2018). School libraries are located in a school setting and they come in various sizes and composition. Obro (2022) believed that the primary motive of establishing school libraries is for human and educational development, they are implement for national development. The development of humans/people is key to the development of countries hence the provision of good and well-furnished libraries should be a priority for governments of nations.

International Association of School Libraries (IASL) (2012) defined a school library as a defined space in a school which provides access to information mainly in the form of textbooks, print, visual and internet resources. School libraries provide the following roles:

1. Encourage the quest for learning through inquiry.
2. Maintain the school curriculum, through enlarging the resources harness able to make teaching and learning robust.
3. Offering personalize learning and professional development.
4. Equipping learners with the skills of obtaining information and at the same time introducing critical inquiry skills.
5. Promotion of literacy and the idea of reading.

Guided Inquiry (GI)

Gordon (2020) asserted that a culture of GI is still evolving from information based on research that have been carried out on the role of school libraries. The culture has attributes of reflection, self-motivation and self-improvement. This type of culture can drive decision making that will bring about best practices and directions for the future. GI by a teacher is a way of helping learners to think and learn and this creates collaborative learning in the school system. GI, requires students to search for the right answers through a process of investigating, exploring, pursuing and studying (Reeds,2016). GI engages and challenges students interest, it connects them to their school curriculum (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari,2015). Investigating searching and exploring are all strategies which explicitly support learning in schools. Lance and Maniotes (2020) supported GI through the help of libraries and librarians. Santau and Ritter (2013) posited that GI method of teaching introduces constructive approach to teaching, this approach has the capacity of stimulating veritable learning of Social Studies. The basic principle is similar, teachers or students

choose an area of interest, carry out in depth study in that area. The teacher offers support and direction, while the students find answers through reflection, observation or experiences to accomplish the work. This process gives the student the right of ownership to the work, in the long run the student becomes a competent and independent expert in that area or topic (Kuhlthau et al, 2015). Lance and Maniotes (2020) showed that GI can be integrated into social studies curriculum with school libraries as indispensable tools in helping students to search for credible information on any area of inquiry.

Related Literature

Libraries are special projects and they present great opportunities for students and teachers to learn through making inquiries. In relating libraries to GI, Marcum (2009) saw school libraries as the center for an inquiry system of learning. The library is a window for the promotion of inquiry based education at any level of social studies (Liu, Allard, Lo, Zhou, Jiana and Itsumura, 2019). Dada (2016) opined that for educational institutions to succeed, the library quality is key because a library is seen as a unit or repository for inquiring, discovery of innovations, skills and research. This portends that GI for learners should be incorporated into social studies learning at all levels using school libraries as channels. According to Rapchak (2016) libraries can improve GI model and development. Lance and Maniotes (2020) linked libraries to GI and information literacy. Olajide and Zinn (2021) investigated how school libraries support GI approach in the sciences and discovered that libraries are at the heart of inquiry where the quest for GI can be fulfilled.

One of the goal of school libraries is to develop personalized learning by helping to develop student's information literacy and inquiry culture (Sam Chu et al, (2021). Libraries make students to engage the world on their own, as their ability to solve daily problems and locate information become very high. Students tutored in GI are comfortable in examination halls and are able to

communicate and express themselves. Most importantly, their functionality as an individual or in a group is not in doubt (International Federation of Library Association and Institutions, 2015).

Hay & Fley (2009) stated that the use of school libraries creates an engaging, meaningful and resourceful learning experience for Social Studies students. Olajide and Zinn (2021) demonstrated the role of school libraries in maintaining the culture of inquiry learning in the sciences looking at the possibilities as well as the challenges in Nigerian schools. Todd (2006) maintained that school libraries are futuristic because they develop knowledgeable people by making them think constructively, informed and productive. School libraries equip people with inquiry skills which makes them to adopt good attitudes, values and confidence in shaping their future, relationship with family members and their community at large. School libraries present the best opportunity for Social Studies learning through cultivating the culture of inquiry.

Most importantly, the design and organization of school libraries are induced to promote inquiry as libraries fosters critical thinking, research, collaboration, self-management skills among many others (Marcum,2009). Therefore, it is necessary to create a conducive environment such as resources, open access, collaboration and active learning that can encourage and direct inquiry in every library (Stuart, 2016). Donham et al (2001) posited that school libraries are essential tools for inquiry based learning They help students to attain credible knowledge on different themes and topics. Similarly, AASL (2018) submitted that GI is at the center of school libraries.

For instance, the Colorado Library Research Service (2018) did a survey to ascertain how libraries assist students on guided inquiry using skills of analysis, critical thinking, problem solving and logic. Luck (2021) admitted that some states in the United States are choosing Guided Inquiry teaching design from elementary to high schools. While this idea is commendable, the skills of inquiry in Social Studies should be taken a bit further by giving students the opportunity of making

inquiry by themselves through approaching their school libraries. Processes and activities that will require students to dislodge information should be introduced by engaging the students in the school libraries.

Guided Inquiry and Social Studies

GI has become a popular topic in Social Studies as elements of inquiry has been inspired by what learners see and hear every day in and outside their classrooms. Teachers, pose challenging questions to students which require them to ask questions and source for information about their world. As teachers create an environment of GI, students become active and enthusiastic about making inquiry (Grant, Swan & Lee,2017), school libraries become a place for GI in Social Studies. GI is a reiterative process which engages students in raising questions, looking for answers and gaining critical and reflective thinking skills through exploring knowledge (American Association of School Librarians (AASL) (2018). GI in Social Studies assist students achieve lifelong and personalized learning skills which can help prepare them for higher education, career and life generally. While Harada & Yoshina, (2004) agree that GI can be well structured into the curriculum of Social Studies, the social sciences and the arts. When Social Studies teachers engage learners in GI, the library becomes the perfect destination for such students (Kuhlthau (2003) &Lance & Maniotes,2020).

Social Studies explores the physical, social, political and intellectual space therefore inquiry is of relevance to the study of social and physical events (Millard,1966). Meyerson & Secules (2001) are not happy that teachers of Social Studies teach the subject with memorization of facts to the students. This makes Social Studies to become boring as facts and information are only memorize during test or examinations and forgotten thereafter. Therefore, to make the learning of Social Studies meaningful inquiry circles should be introduced by Social Studies teachers.

In a GI, the teacher chooses a topic for the learners to carry out in-depth study on a topic or theme on their own they are expected to show/share whatever they have discovered in their inquiry either with the class or during examination. The teacher's statutory role is to act as a guardian and provide direction. Through inquiry, students develop their own questions through reflection and experiences and writing with this they gain sense of accomplishment and ownership of the work (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2015).

Chakim and Andayani (2021) proposes GI teaching methods for junior high schools, the study discovered a marked influence of GI on the stimulation and learning interest of students in Social Studies. Therefore, the authors recommended GI for the teaching and learning of Social Studies. Rosfiani and Akbar (2019) and Hardini (2017) proved that GI impact learning assessment of Social Studies students therefore developing the culture of GI in Social Studies increases the participation and achievement of students in Social Studies. Santos (2022) revealed that GI is a means through which Social Studies can be enhanced by building a culture of inquiry. Libraries enhances GI through research this in turn result to fast and independent learning. However, Lance & Maniotes (2020) noted that making use of GI approach in social studies has not been easy for teachers to implement though they are well integrated into the curriculum of Social Studies.

Methodology

This study investigated the role of secondary school libraries as determinants of GI in social studies. The study adopted a case study design, because it will be difficult to control a large number of students considering the objective of the study. The population of this study comprises of one hundred and sixteen (116) Junior Secondary Three (3) students from Government Model School, Ewreni, a state owned school in Delta state, southern Nigeria. The school was purposely picked because it had good library facilities that can be used for this study. Purposive sampling technique

was used to select a sample of three groups of five students each from an arm of the three arms of JSS 2 classes in the school. This gave a total of fifteen (15) students, the sample is small because it is a case study research. Three social studies teachers acted as instructors and facilitators. The instruments for the study was a well prepared and validated questionnaire by the researcher and an interview session with the school librarian. The questionnaire was titled “Libraries as Determinants of Guided Inquiry (LDGI) questionnaire. Based on the guidelines provided by the researcher, the teachers guided the students on three topics “Social and contemporary issues; Democracy and Nation Building and Human trafficking; The students were made to visit the school library twice every week to make research on the materials for the topics from books, printed materials and the web for a period of three months which is approximately one school term April 18th to July 22nd 2022. To synchronize the term syllabus, the topics the three groups worked on were from the syllabus for the same term. At the end of the library sessions the teachers who are the same teachers of the group of students rated each group in percentages (%), based on a test and observations. Fifty (50%) percent was used as a benchmark and item below Fifty (50%) percent was negative and any above was rated positive. The school librarian assisted students with relevant sections and sources to find the needed information for the topics in the school library, the librarian had a session with students to enhance their information seeking skills in the library’s catalogue. The school librarian also granted an interview at the end of the study.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Libraries as Determinants of Guided Inquiry Group One

s/no	Questionnaire item	Teacher’s Rating
1	Promotion of reading interest	65%
2	Skills of critical inquiry	76%
3	Knowledge on topic content	82%
4	Ability to present information	56%
5	Research capability	73%
6	Personalized learning	78%
7	Encouraging quest for learning	71%

8	Level of confidence	48%
9	Sense of responsibility	62%
10	Communication skills	55%

Table 1, shows how the social studies teacher for group one rated the performance of the students after learning with GI based on percentages. The feedback response from the teacher, showed that all the items except one was scored above 50% which is the benchmark, meaning that use of library for GI learning by the group recorded a positive result. The highest rating was (80%) for knowledge of subject matter, while the lowest of (45%) for level of confidence.

Table 2: Libraries as Determinants for Guided Inquiry for Group Two

	Questionnaire item	Teacher's Rating
1	Promotion of reading interest	73%
2	Skills of critical inquiry	71%
3	Knowledge on topic content	80%
4	Ability to present information	60%
5	Research capability	71%
6	Personalized learning	80%
7	Encouraging quest for learning	69%
8	Level of confidence	52%
9	Sense of responsibility	65%
10	Communication skills	58%

Table 2, reflects teachers rating of how libraries can influence GI for group two. The results showed all items rating above the 50% benchmark. Hence it can be concluded that libraries have a strong role to play in the promotion of GI in social studies.

Table 3: Libraries as Determinants of Guided Inquiry for Group Three

	Questionnaire item	Teacher's Rating
1	Promotion of reading interest	78%
2	Skills of critical inquiry	75%
3	Knowledge on topic content	79%
4	Ability to present information	55%
5	Research capability	68%
6	Personalized learning	72%
7	Encouraging quest for learning	64%
8	Level of confidence	45%
9	Sense of responsibility	61%

10	Communication skills	53%
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Table 3, reveals that all items scored for group three recorded a percentage score of more than 50% except for level of confidence which the teacher scored (45%). The rating by the teacher of the third group was positive all implies that libraries are center of GI.

Table 4: Comparison on Teachers Ratings on Libraries as Determinants for Guided Inquiry

s/no	Questionnaire item	Group 1 Rating	Group 2 Rating	Group 3 Rating
1	Promotion of reading interest	65%	73%	78%
2	Skills of critical inquiry	76%	71%	75%
3	Knowledge on topic content	82%	80%	79%
4	Ability to present information	56%	60%	55%
5	Research capability	73%	71%	68%
6	Personalized learning	78%	80%	72%
7	Encouraging quest for learning	71%	69%	64%
8	Level of confidence	48%	52%	45%
9	Sense of responsibility	62%	65%	61%
10	Communication skills	55%	58%	53%

A close look at table 4 will revealed the similarity in percentage scores rated by the three teachers, the difference in the ratings were not too high as there was no item that recorded a difference of ten (10) percent (%). This implies that the role of libraries in determining Guided Inquiry are the same hence they are reliable tools for Guided Inquiry.

Librarians Interview

The role of the school librarian in this study was to offer technical support and information support on where to find resources such as books, websites and others needed by the students.

When asked on how the school library can be used to promote GI in social studies?

The librarian thinks that a partnership between the students, their teachers and the school library will be an effective and productive way of promoting personalized and lifelong GI learning of social studies across schools. She also observed and submitted that the participants really enjoyed the GI learning and had minimal difficulty. More importantly, she observed that there was

remarkable improvement each time the students came for their sessions. They conducted their learning with interest and were open minded to learn

Discussion of the Findings

All the results gotten from the data collected from the teachers' ratings show significant and positive roles which school libraries play in the process of GI learning in social studies except one which is boosting students' level of confidence this may be due to the fact that they were not engaged in active communication during the library sessions but did more of self-study. The findings showed that libraries can promote the reading interest of social studies students in tandem with Obro (2022) and Reeds (2016); help them cultivate critical skills of inquiry in line with Liu et al (2019) and Rapchak (2016); absorb knowledge of the subject matter according to Kuhithau et al (2015) and present information logically in congruence with Lance and Maniotes (2020).

Furthermore, the study also discovered more positive determinants of GI through the use of school libraries such as sharpening students research capability in connection with Luck (2021) and Lance and Maniotes (2020); promote personalize learning in consonance with Gordon (2022) and Sam Chu et al (2021); enhances students quest for learning in nexus with Santau and Ritter (2013) and improve their communication and sense of responsibility in accordance with Sam Chu et al (2021) and Hey & Fley (2009). However, the study did not record high level of confidence in dissonance with Rosfiani and Akbar (2019) and Hardini (2017).

The study revealed that there was close accuracy in the ratings of all three teachers, this further goes to show how reliable and affirmation that school libraries are major players in the administration of GI in social studies and other subjects as well.

Conclusion

The study reflected the role of school libraries in GI to social studies students, it was discovered that for the goals of GI in social studies to be effective, the library must be the destination of students. The students who took part in the study benefited in various dimensions such as improvement in their comprehension; knowledge; research skills; learning interest and many others. These benefits wouldn't be possible without the availability and use of a school library. Therefore, it can be concluded that GI learning through the use of school libraries can help in fulfilling the goals, aims and objectives of social studies education.

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