



EFFECT OF GUIDED DISCOVERY INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH ON JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TWO STUDENTS' INTEREST IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN UMUAHIA EDUCATION ZONE, ABIA STATE

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ABSTRACT: *Introduction:* Education is critical for both individual and national development, representing the most vital investment for sustainable progress. In Nigeria, social studies at the basic education level aims to foster national consciousness, instill essential values and develop skills for societal contribution. Despite these well-defined objectives, the National Teachers' Institute has noted that the implementation of social studies has not fully achieved its goals. Therefore, the Guided Discovery Method, one of the powerful instructional approaches designed to achieve these objectives, guides and motivates learners to explore information, build new ideas, and create new models of thinking and behaviour. **Aim:** The study investigated the effect of Guided Discovery Instructional Approach on the Interest level of Junior Secondary School Students in Social Studies in Umuahia Education Zone of Abia State. **Materials and Methods:** The design adopted for the study was quasi-experimental design. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated respectively. The population of the study was 6,160 and 308 junior secondary students was sampled from the population respectively. The instrument for data collection was Social Studies Interest Scale (SOSIS). The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The null hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA). **Results:** Students taught using the Guided Discovery Instructional Approach (Experimental Group) have higher post-test mean interest scores and greater mean gain in interest compared to those taught using the Expository Method (Control Group). This indicates that the guided discovery instructional approach is more effective in increasing students' interest in social studies. Female students have a higher post-test mean interest score and a greater mean gain in interest compared to male students. This indicates that the guided discovery instructional approach has a more significant impact on the interest levels of female students in social studies. Finally, the result on interaction effects of method of instruction and gender on students' interest indicated that the guided discovery instructional approach appears to be more effective in increasing interest in social studies for both male and female students, with a particularly strong effect on female students. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that the guided discovery instructional approach showed to be a better teaching method for increasing students' interest in social studies, especially among female students, thus sustaining its adoption and implementation in educational settings to achieve the desired educational results.

KEYWORDS: Guided Discovery Instructional Approach, Interest level, Junior Secondary School Students, Social Studies.



INTRODUCTION

Education is a means of achieving both individual and national development, representing the most essential investment any nation can make for sustainable development. In this regard, the provision of quality education at the basic education level might be the surest way of contributing to the achievement of a nation's development goals. Basic education is the foundation level and a determinant of the degree of success of any education system. The Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria, as stated by FME (2018), has delineated basic education as the fundamental basis for enduring and continuous learning throughout one's life. The realm of basic education in Nigeria encompasses the realm from primary to junior secondary schools, spanning a duration of nine years—comprising six years dedicated to primary education and three years to junior secondary education (FME, 2018). The primary education phase equips learners with the requisite skills to ascend the educational hierarchy towards the pinnacle of scholarly accomplishment provided a solid groundwork is established during this initial stage (Edeh et al., 2018). Subsequently, junior secondary schooling offers an avenue for graduates of primary school to acquire further knowledge over a span of three additional years, thereby priming them for advanced educational pursuits or vocational endeavors.

Teaching at the elementary education level encompasses a broad array of required foundational subjects like Social Studies, which are crucial for children who lack the necessary maturity to make decisions regarding their own development. Social Studies serves as an educational curriculum utilized by society to impart knowledge, capabilities, attitudes, and behaviors that are vital for comprehending human interactions and the global context (Edeh et al., 2018).

This discipline represents an interdisciplinary area of study that explores the interdependent connections between individuals and their surroundings, equipping them with critical thinking skills, cognitive abilities, emotional intelligence, social competencies, and vocational proficiency to analyze and tackle global challenges. The objectives of Social Studies within the foundational education framework in Nigeria are in accordance with the educational goals of the country, which encompass the promotion of national awareness and cohesion, the cultivation of essential values and mindsets crucial for personal and communal endurance, and the enhancement of abilities and proficiencies for societal engagement.

Despite these clearly defined objectives, the National Teachers' Institute (2014) has observed that the realization of the goals of Social Studies has not been fully accomplished. Dysfunctionality within the realm of Social Studies in Nigeria has been highlighted by Essien et al. (2018), with issues such as corruption, banditry, terrorism, herdsmen attacks, kidnapping, prostitution, indiscipline, and lack of respect for elders being evident. These challenges may be linked to inadequacies in the methodologies employed in teaching. A significant number of Social Studies educators in Nigeria heavily rely on the traditional lecture approach, a practice that could hinder the effectiveness of both teaching and learning (Edeh et al., 2018).

Numerous studies have provided evidence that the optimal approach to teaching involves a blend of traditional and student-focused strategies. Student-focused methodologies facilitate active participation among students instead of passive receipt of knowledge. An example of such a student-centered strategy is the Guided Discovery Instructional Approach, which encourages learners to investigate information and ideas, develop novel concepts, and formulate fresh frameworks for cognition and action (Sawant & Rizvi, 2015). According to



Hadjerrouit (2015), guided discovery techniques are deemed more effective than traditional teacher-centered approaches in enhancing interest, learning outcomes, and academic performance.

Teachers' incapacity to employ diverse learner-centered approaches in Social Studies instruction could result in issues where students may struggle to grasp the content fully and struggle to engage with their surroundings effectively. The Guided Discovery Instructional Approach offers students a chance to investigate their surroundings, enhance their problem-solving abilities, and cultivate positive attitudes and values. This particular approach motivates students to participate actively in the educational journey, consequently boosting their engagement and academic performance.

The Guided Discovery Method is distinguished by its utilization of convergent thinking, which aids in the cultivation of problem-solving abilities among students, as well as the exploration of principles and explanations (Yusuf, 2020). This approach is designed to prompt learners to engage with the course material by means of tangible experiences (Tofi et al., 2022). Within this method, educators lead students through a sequence of steps towards a predefined objective, fostering active investigation and exploration (Hassan & Salihu, 2020).

Ozioko (2015) delineated six stages essential for effective implementation of guided discovery pedagogy: delineating the subject matter, choosing pertinent tasks, executing preliminary trials, commencing the session with engaging educational resources, organizing students in proximity to accessible materials, and perpetuating investigation via interrogative techniques. This approach entails a transition in the instructor's role from being an authoritative figure to a facilitator, thereby promoting collaboration among students (Tella & Ogundiya, 2022).

Despite the potential it holds, the conventional expository approach remains widespread, highlighting the transmission of knowledge from educator to passive learners, and promoting rote memorization (Ozioko, 2015). The lack of interest and subpar performance of students in Social Studies, particularly in the realm of moral principles, have been linked to ineffective teaching methods. The implementation of the Guided Discovery Instructional Approach has the capacity to notably improve students' engagement and understanding in the subject of Social Studies.

Interest is a persisting tendency to pay attention and enjoy some activity or content. It is a critical variable in learning as it affects motivation, attention, and retention (Salihu, 2015). Insufficient enthusiasm might impede education, resulting in subpar performance in school and even dropping out. Therefore, the Guided Discovery Instructional Approach aims to increase students' interest, which is essential for academic success.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

A quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group was employed in the study to assess how junior secondary school two students' interest in social studies was impacted by the guided exploration instructional technique. The research covered the local government areas of Umuahia North, Umuahia South, Ikwuano, and Umunneochi and was conducted inside the Umuahia Education Zone in Abia State. Six thousand one hundred and sixty (6,160). JSS II students made up the study population and 308 students were chosen at random from four junior secondary schools using a multi-stage sampling technique. The Social Studies Interest Scale (SOSIS), a four-point rating scale with thirty items, was used as the data collection tool. It measured the students' degree of interest by serving as both an initial and a final assessment. Three experts validated this instrument, and Cronbach's alpha was used to get the reliability coefficient, which came out to be 0.87. The research process included developing experimental modules, training research assistants, and carrying out the intervention for six weeks. While the control group was exposed to expository education, the experimental cohort got guided discovery training. Post-intervention assessments were conducted when the intervention was finished.

The implementation of ANCOVA to address initial group variations, designating a single educator for both groups within each school, reducing memory effects by spacing assessments one week apart, and using class instructors to keep students unaware that they were part of an experiment were all strategies to control extraneous factors. The standard deviations and mean were used to answer research questions, while ANCOVA was used to test hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean Interest Scores and Standard Deviation of students taught social studies using guided discovery instructional approach and those taught using expository method

Group	N	Pre SOSIS		Post SOSIS		Mean Gain
		\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ	
Control	156	2.43	1.122	3.08	1.125	0.65
Experimental	152	2.45	1.124	3.68	1.128	1.23
Total	308					

Table 1 presents the average interest scores and standard variances of students who were instructed in social studies using the guided discovery method in contrast to those who were taught through the expository technique. In the initial assessment, the control group, which comprised 156 students, displayed an average interest score of 2.43 (Pre SOSIS) with a standard deviation of 1.122. Following instruction with the expository method, the subsequent interest score (Post SOSIS) rose to 3.08 with a standard deviation of 1.125, resulting in a mean increase of 0.65. Conversely, the experimental group, consisting of 152 students and receiving instruction through the guided discovery method, exhibited an initial interest score of 2.45 (Pre SOSIS) with a standard deviation of 1.124. The post-instruction interest score for this group escalated to 3.68 with a standard deviation of 1.128, yielding a greater mean increase of 1.23.



The analysis of the data suggested that both instructional methods contributed to an augmentation in students' interest in social studies. Nonetheless, the guided discovery method demonstrated a notably superior mean gain (1.23) compared to the expository approach (0.65), implying its effectiveness in enhancing students' interest. Consequently, the guided discovery approach emerges as a more potent strategy for heightening student interest in social studies when juxtaposed with the traditional expository teaching method.

Table 2: Mean Interest and Standard Deviation Scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using Guided Discovery Instructional Approach and those taught using Expository Method

Gender	N	Pre SOSIS		Post SOSIS		Mean Gain
		\bar{x}	σ	\bar{x}	σ	
Male	109	2.37	0.25	2.82	0.25	0.45
Female	199	2.22	0.24	2.86	0.22	0.64
Total	308					

Table 2 presents the mean interest scores and standard deviation values of male and female students taught social studies using the guided discovery instructional approach and those taught using the expository method. For the male students, who numbered 109, the pre-test mean interest score (Pre SOSIS) was 2.37 with a standard deviation of 0.25. After being taught using the respective instructional methods, the post-test mean interest score (Post SOSIS) increased to 2.82 with a standard deviation of 0.25, resulting in a mean gain of 0.45. In comparison, the female students, who numbered 199, had a pre-test mean interest score (Pre SOSIS) of 2.22 with a standard deviation of 0.24. Following the instructional period, the post-test mean interest score for female students rose to 2.86 with a standard deviation of 0.22, resulting in a higher mean gain of 0.64. Overall, the total sample size was 308 students. The findings revealed that irrespective of the pedagogical approach employed, both male and female students demonstrated a rise in their engagement with social studies.

It is noteworthy that while female students initially displayed a marginally lower average score in the pre-test, they also manifested a more pronounced surge in interest following the post-test in contrast to their male counterparts. Nonetheless, female students commenced their academic journey with a marginally lower average score in the initial assessment, yet demonstrated a more substantial enhancement in their level of engagement following the final evaluation in comparison to their male counterparts. Nonetheless, female students commenced their academic journey with a marginally lower average score in the initial assessment, yet demonstrated a more substantial enhancement in their level of engagement following the final evaluation in comparison to their male counterparts. Both male and female students participating in the study showed increased interest in social studies following instructional periods using either guided discovery or expository methods. Female students, however, exhibited a notably greater average increase in interest (0.64) in contrast to their male peers (0.45), indicating that the directed exploration method might have a stronger impact on the engagement of female students.



H01: There was no significant difference in the mean interest scores of students taught Social Studies with the guided-discovery instructional approach and those taught with the expository method.

Table 3: Summary of One-way ANCOVA on the Mean Interest Ratings Scores of students taught Social Studies with the Guided Discovery Instructional Approach and those taught with the Expository Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	.046 ^a	1	.046	.036	.850
Intercept	2015.462	1	2015.462	1557.788	.000
TEACHING_METHOD	.046	1	.046	.036	.850
Error	395.902	306	1.294		
Total	2412.000	308			
Corrected Total	395.948	307			

a. R Squared = .000 (Adjusted R Squared = -.003)

Table 3 shows that $F(1,306) = 0.036$ and $\text{sig} = 0.85$. Since the significant value for teaching method $p = 0.85 > 0.05$, the test statistic is considered not significant. The null hypothesis (H01) of no significant difference in the mean interest ratings of students that were taught Social Studies with the guided-discovery instructional approach and those taught with expository method is not rejected. This means that the difference in mean interest rating scores of students taught using guided-discovery instructional approach and those taught with expository method was not statistically significant.

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of male and female students taught Social Studies with the guide-discovery instructional approach and those taught with the expository method.

Table 4: Summary of One-way ANCOVA on the Mean Interest Scores of male and female students taught Social Studies with the Guide-Discovery Instructional Approach and those taught with the Expository Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	.374 ^a	1	.374	.289	.591
Intercept	1859.283	1	1859.283	1438.264	.000
GENDER	.374	1	.374	.289	.591
Error	395.574	306	1.293		
Total	2412.000	308			
Corrected Total	395.948	307			

a. R Squared = .001 (Adjusted R Squared = -.002)



The results in Table 4 indicate that $F(1,306) = 0.633$ and $p = 0.43$. Since $p > 0.05$, the study therefore finds the test statistic not significant. The null hypothesis, which states there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies with the guided-discovery instructional approach and those taught with the expository method, is not rejected. The findings suggest that the discrepancy in average academic performance among students in the test group did not reach statistical significance. However, compared to their male counterparts, female participants showed a more significant increase in engagement after the exam and began the study with a slightly lower pre-assessment score.

DISCUSSION

Interest of Junior Secondary School Students in Social Studies

The results reveal that there was gain in interest by the students taught Social Studies with the guided discovery instructional approach. This was because the students recorded higher interest scores in their post-test than their pretest. Further analysis showed that there is a significant difference between the mean interest scores of students taught Social Studies using the guided discovery instructional approach and those taught using the expository method. The findings were in line with Ozioko (2015), which found that this method had a significant effect on students' interest in Foods and Nutrition, as the group taught with the guided discovery method showed high interest.

Similarly, the hypothesis in Table 3 showed that the significant value for the teaching method was greater than 0.05. The null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean interest ratings of students taught Social Studies with the guided-discovery instructional approach and those taught with the expository method was rejected. This indicated that the difference in mean interest rating scores of students taught using the guided-discovery instructional approach and those taught with the expository method was statistically significant. The finding was in line with the study by Agu and Samuel (2018), which revealed that there was a significant difference in the interest of students taught using reversed jigsaw, team-assisted instruction, guided discovery instructional strategies, and the conventional (lecture) method.

Interest of Female and Male Junior Secondary Students in Social Studies

The results in Table 2 show that the female students taught Social Studies using the guided discovery instructional approach recorded higher post-test achievement scores than their male counterparts. Further analysis revealed that there is a significant difference between the mean interest scores of students taught Social Studies using the guided discovery instructional approach and those taught using the expository method. This study is in agreement with the study by Ajayi et al. (2017) that female students in the experimental group revealed a higher interest in Social Studies compared to their male counterparts.

Comparison of the male and female students in Table 4 shows that the test statistic is considered to be significant. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean interest scores of male and female students taught Social Studies with the guided-discovery instructional approach and those taught with the expository method is rejected. This means that the difference in mean interest rating scores between male and female students taught Social Studies with the guided-discovery instructional approach and those taught with the expository



method was statistically significant. Thus, gender was a significant factor regarding students' interest in Social Studies when taught using the guided-discovery instructional approach and the expository method. The finding was also in line with the study by Agu and Samuel (2018), which revealed that there was a significant difference in the interest of students taught using reversed jigsaw, team-assisted instruction, guided discovery instructional strategies, and the conventional (lecture) method.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The study emphasizes how important it is for social studies teachers to use guided discovery techniques to evaluate and address students' past interests in order to promote conceptual understanding and raise student engagement. These insights can be used by policymakers to give active learning strategies top priority in Nigerian social studies curricula, improving students' capacity to generate knowledge and understand intricate social concepts. In order to close educational gaps, enhance learning outcomes, and spark students' interest in social studies, all of which are essential for their overall growth and potential contributions to society, the government should promote efficient teaching strategies like guided exploration.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that guided discovery instructional approach was more effective in enhancing students interest in Social Studies in Junior Secondary School Two students in Umuahia Education Zone in Abia State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To increase students' general interest in Social Studies, teachers should incorporate the guided discovery instructional style into the teaching and learning of numerous topics. Teachers should also enthusiastically include both male and female students in their lessons so as to avert gender stereotypes and give equivalent learning opportunities for male and female students.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

At first, educators who worked as research assistants were hesitant to adopt the guided discovery teaching methodology. But after the briefing and more explanations, they started to get enthusiastic about it. Once more, because both the experimental and control groups were in the school, it is possible that they noticed the difference in treatment.

The researcher suggests the assessment of teachers' level of knowledge and use of guided discovery instructional approach in another education zone. Furthermore, a study on the perception of teachers and students towards the implementation of guided discovery instructional approach and expository method can be carried out.



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