
Demystifying Projects Writing, Supervision and Assessment for a Functional Social Studies Teachers in Nigeria

Daramola.C.O ; Fasiku M.A.

¹Department of social studies, College of Education Ikere Ekiti

²Department of social studies College of Education Ikere Ekiti

E-mail: dayoasoju@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper observes critically how to remove the mystery of projects writing, supervision and assessment so as to enhance a functional Social Studies Education in Nigeria. Issues discussed are, definition of research, concept of social studies research, characteristics and purpose of Social Studies research, steps in choosing a good Social Studies research topic, ideal relationship between social studies supervisee and supervisor, major consideration before embarking on a research, organization of social studies research project and the research proposal, what assessors look for in assessing project work and common mistakes usually made by a research student. The paper concludes by given recommendation that if project writing, supervision and assessment is demystified a functional social studies teacher will be ensured in Nigeria.

Key note; *Project, Supervision, Social Studies.*

INTRODUCTION

The idea to remove the mystery or phobia of project writing, supervision and assessment was borne out of the fact that project writing among final year students in tertiary institutions of learning has become an opposing opinion on educational objectives among school authorities, supervisors and project students. While the student see project writing as a threat and fearful experience, project supervisors see it as a big burden that do takes much of time, and on the part of the school authorities, it is considered as one of the necessary conditions for obtaining certificates by students. More to this, while students want to avoid project writing because they consider it difficult, expensive, time wasting, and unnecessary, project supervisors on their own part also consider project students as incompetent, evasive if possible, and unnecessary burden to bear, and the school authorities believe that despite all these problems, the students must be graduated at all cost without adequate knowledge of how to write a good project despite being considered as

one of the condition which tertiary institution students must meet before graduation by regulating bodies like NCCE and NUC.

Equally, attempt has been made to explain the concept of research, purpose of social studies research, ideal relationship between social studies project students and supervisor, major considerations before embarking on a research report, organization of Social Studies research report and what assessors look for, when assessing a project work. No doubt, project writing is a form of educational research otherwise known as final year project, which may take the form of long essay or a full scale enquiry in which some data are collected and analyzed. (Ajobiewe, 2000).

Therefore this paper attempts to remove the mysteries of project writing, supervision and assessment on the part of social studies students in tertiary institution in Nigeria.

What is research?

Osaze (1995:8) defined research as “a basically scientific inquiry, a careful and pains taking inquiry into phenomena which is carried out to discuss new information about nature, establish social, psychological, business, physical or material entities e.t.c. and the various states of nature that appeal to the sense, verify and expand existing knowledge and enunciate possible theory that could be used to

explain present realities and predict the future”.

Research is fundamentally a problem solving activity which addresses a problem or test hypothesis. It involves an ordered investigation whose objectives is to discover new fact or to extend already discover facts so as to advance knowledge. Talking for instance, a student that involves in investigation on how to proffer a formidable solution to an existing social problem will have the opportunity to discover facts about the problem and equally be opportune to widen his/her knowledge.

Concept of social studies research

In attempt to describe or define social studies research, it needed to understand social studies as the study of man and his environment, the study of man and his relationship with his social, economic, cultural, political (e.t.c.) environment with the attendant problems. The totality of experience a student goes through having been exposed to such a course based on man’s interminable problems in chosen environment with a full knowledge of the variable factors that are normally responsible in man’s web of interaction with his environment.

Social studies research can be defined as a means or effort through which man obtain information (empirical or factual) that will contribute towards solving

likely problems that comes out or arose in our societies. It should be noted that the procedure of acquiring information about a problem needed to be done with a clear purpose of getting results that will bring about a formidable solution to social problems in question.

Characteristics of social studies Research

1. Research attempt to solve a problem
2. It involves gathering new data from primary or firsthand sources or using existing data for a new purpose.
3. It is based upon observable experience or empirical evidence
4. It demands accurate observation and description
5. Research generally employs carefully designed procedure and rigorous analysis
6. It emphasizes the development of generalizations, principles of theories that will help in understanding, prediction and control
7. It requires expertise familiarity with the field, competence in methodology, technical skill in collecting and analyzed the data
8. It is a deliberate and unhurried activity, which is directional but often refines the problem or question as the research progresses

9. Research is carefully recorded and reported to other persons interested in the problem

Purpose of Social Studies Research

There are a lot of benefits on Social Studies research. These benefits could be well imagined when one consider what the educational process would have being without students having the knowledge of research then it would have been somehow difficult for Social Studies students to proffer solution to some of the Social Studies as a teaching subject being achieved. Hence, the purposes thus include the following:

1. To develop a sound understanding of the process of the research in behavioral or social discipline.
2. To develop the necessary skills and the knowledge to identify and utilize the result of different types of research
3. To develop and present an implemented action research design and procedure in social studies.
4. To develop the critical skills necessary to become an informed consumer of different type of research In social studies as a discipline
5. To demonstrate a basic knowledge of a computerized data analysis techniques and procedures.

6. To distinguish knowledge from conjunction or opinion by evaluating sources of evidences over a social problem.
7. To speak and write so as to make clear distinction between how you feel and what others feel and between what you want and what others wanted.
8. To achieve self-satisfaction evidence and generally improves mankind over social problems in our environment.

Steps in choosing a good social studies research topic

1. **Basic Difficulty:** What is it that has caught your interest or raised a question in your mind.
2. **Rational and Theoretical Base:** Can the topic be fitted into a conceptual framework that gives a structural point of view? In other words, can you begin from a position of logical concepts, relationships and expectations based on current thinking in these areas?
3. **Statement of the purpose or problem:** What is it that you plan to investigate? What are the general goals of the study?
4. **Question to be answered:** When the research is finished, what are the questions to which reasonable answers can be expected?
5. **Statement of Hypotheses or objectives:** Spell out the particular research hypotheses you will test or the specific objectives at which the research is aimed. Here, you must be clear, and ensure that objectives is stated in terms of observable behavior which allow evaluation of the result.
6. **Method and procedure:** You need to state what your subjects will be, how they will be selected, the conditions under which the data will be collected, what method will be used and how the data will be analyzed and interpreted.
7. **Assumption:** What assumptions have you made about the nature of the behaviour you are investigating, about the relationship of this study to other persons and approach.
8. **Limitations:** What are the hindrances surrounding your study within which conclusion must be confined? What limitations exist in your method or approach.
9. **Delimitations:** How have you arbitrarily narrowed the scope of the study? Did you focus only on selected aspects of the problem and certain areas of interests?
10. **Definition of terms:** List and define the principal terms you will use, particularly where terms have different meanings to different people. Emphasis should be placed

on operational or behavioural definitions.

Ideal Relationship between Social Studies Project Students and Supervisor.

Every final year Social Studies student (be it) whether N.C.E. or degree is expected to work under a supervisor and in project research writing, and assessment. The student is also entitled to a reasonable access to their supervisors. While it is the prime responsibility of the project student to have and maintain regular contact with their supervisors, the supervisors should equally respond quickly and arrange a tutorial or return the submitted work of the student to him with appropriate comments within a reasonable time frame (Ajobiewe 2000).

The supervisor is first and foremost a father or mother and a guardian. He/she should be approachable, honest, hardworking and dedicated to his responsibilities. He/she must be knowledgeable in the rudiments and arts of project writing (Oranugo 2011). Furthermore, the supervisor should be in the position to assist including providing resources for work-books, journals, magazines, textbooks e.t.c. and/or direct his/her project students on where or how to get such materials.

A good project student is expected to have good hand writing, be confident, have a good communication skills, keep to appointment regularly and punctually, be honest, be hardworking, always ready to learn, be ready to accept useful criticism, consult other lecturers, be ready to re-write and re-write, be humble and respective, be patient and he/she should not copy other peoples work words for words, mistakes for mistakes.

It is the responsibility of the project student to carry out the research, review the literature, collect and analyse the data, write the report and proof reads it. It should be noted that, students are not expected to undertake a research which no lecturer is prepared to supervise. Hence, there should be mutual agreement with the supervisors on every issue beginning from the choice of the topic till the final copies are submitted.

In producing the final copies to be submitted, students should ensure that they follow their institutions specifications in terms of typing, binding, colour, size and should submit to time. It is not compulsory to type and bind your project with your supervisor even if he/she has the facilities to do so.

Major considerations in writing a research

As a scientific method of investigation, social studies research uses investigative methods which are consistent with the basic procedures and operating conceptions of environment. The procedure for carrying out a research in social studies follow a set of sequential steps.

1. Selection of the Problem: This is the most difficult step in the research process because the researcher has to identify or map out the problem. It is the location, isolation and mapping out of the problem and knowing its ramifications and magnitude. The researcher must be sure that the problem should be the one that can be solved through scientific investigation and of which answers can be drawn through collecting and analyzing data.
2. Review of Literature: The moment a problem is identified, the next step is that the researcher proceeds to review books, journals, magazines, thesis, dissertations, periodicals, internet e.t.c. that have relevance to the problem directly or indirectly.
3. Formulation of Research Question and Hypothesis: Another step is to formulate the relevant hypothesis on the basis of the research problem and what is contained in related literature. The research questions and hypothesis could be formulated

in null or directional/alternative forms which will later be subjected to empirical studies for verification which would lead to the acceptance or rejection of the stated hypothesis.

4. Describe the Methodology or Design Construction: This is a specification of operations for the testing of an hypothesis under a given set of conditions and of procedures for measuring variables.
5. Collection of Relevant Data: This is the act of collecting data from the respondents or the entire population. In collecting data, researcher needs to develop some instruments such as questionnaire or rating scale, Interview and opinionnaire.
6. Analyzing the Data collected: Data analysis is the stage whereby the data collected will be analyzed with a view to testing the stated hypothesis using appropriate statistical tools.
7. Interpretation of Result: After testing the hypothesis and answered the research questions, some result are obtained from where conclusion would be drawn and recommendations and suggestions are also made of which could either be descriptive nor inferential.
8. Writing the Research Report: It is the responsibilities of a researcher

to make his or her procedures, findings, conclusions and recommendations available to others in an intelligible form.

Organization of Social Studies Research Report

Section A: Preliminary section

- a. Title page
- b. Certificate page
- c. Dedication
- d. Acknowledgment
- e. Abstract
- f. Table of content
- g. List of table

Section B: main body of the research report

Chapter one: Introduction

- Background to the study
- Purpose of the study
- Significance of the study
- Statement of the problem
- Research question/hypothesis
- Scope of the study
- Limitation to the study
- Operation definition of terms

Chapter two: Review of the Related Literature

- Sub-topic reviewed
- Empirical review
- Theoretical framework
- Summary of the related literature

Chapter three: Research Procedure and Methodology

- Research design
- Sample and sampling procedure
- Research instrument
- Validation of instrument
- Reliability of instrument
- Result findings
- Method of data analysis

Chapter four: Result and Discussion

- Descriptive analysis
- Hypothesis testing
- Discussion

Chapter five: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

- Summary of findings
- Conclusion
- Recommendation
- Suggestion for further studies
- References
- Appendices

What assessors look for in assessing a project work

Presentation: Neatness, compliance with format of the institution, errors in typing, binding, referencing and behaviors, timely submission e.t.c.

Topic: Was your topic topical/current? Was it too long/wordy or too short? Does it contain the dependent and the

independent variables as well as the local?
Is it researchable?

Readability: Was final work readable? How many grammatical/typographic errors? Did you take pains to proof read before binding? Appropriate use of paragraph, punctuations, brackets, the use of et al, how current are the authors cited, were they all referenced e.t.c.?

Abstract: Was your too long or too short? Does it contain the necessary features? Was it written in one paragraph and italicized? The necessary features of a good abstract as stated earlier include, aims and objectives of the study, population, sample and sampling procedure, instrumentation, methods of data collection and data analysis, major findings conclusion and recommendations.

Introduction: Was your introduction catchy? Does it contain the necessary sections? How was your statement of the problem, research questions, hypothesis, purpose of the study, e.t.c. framed? Were they adequate and reflect the topic?

Review of the Related Literature: Here social studies assessors look for good paragraphing, logical presentation of fact, regular use of good tenses, good use of internet materials, good sub-topics, the use of current authors, appropriate use of punctuations, bracket, citations, quotations and good sequence e.t.c.

Methodology: Social studies assessors are interested in the use of past tense because you are reporting what you have done. Appropriate choice of research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, good description of instrument, proper conduct of psychometric properties of the instruments, appropriate data collection procedure, good instrument scoring and the use of appropriate analysis of data.

Result: Accuracy of data analyzed either manually or with the use of computer, good use of tables with numbers, titles and brief explanations after such, then each table. Did you answer all research questions or test all hypothesis stated in chapter one? Were they properly tested? Did you reject hypothesis that were supposed to be accepted.

Discussion: How did you discuss your findings? Did you get results of past researchers in your chapter 2 to support your findings or did you get them elsewhere? If you did not find result of past researchers, it may indicate inadequate review of literature. If you get them elsewhere, you must take pain to include it in your review.

Summary/conclusion: social studies research summary and conclusion like any other research are expected to be based purely on your findings. It should be stated in clear unambiguous language.

Reference: All authors cited in the body of the project report must be referenced. They must be referenced using the format approved by the institution. They must be arranged alphabetically using the surname. Textbook, chapters in textbook, journals, magazines, newspaper, thesis, and internet materials e.t.c. must be properly stated. There must be appropriate italicized and use punctuations and brackets stated adequately. American Psychological Association (APA) format is becoming universally accepted format for referencing.

Social studies project students should note that, all aspects of assessment as stated above carry some marks which all added to be 100. Hence, any attempt by any project students to overlook any of these accepts will automatically lead to forfeiture of marks assigned to such aspect.

Common mistakes usually made by Research students

1. Error in formulating a Research study:

Students usually put off selected of a problem until he has finished all or most of his courses and fails to consider methods or analysis procedures in developing his tentative research plan.

2. Error in Reviewing the Literature:

Students are always in hurry to review the literature In order to get started on the research project. This results in overlooking previous studies containing ideas that would have improved their project.

3. Error in Gathering Research Data:

They pays insufficient attention to establishing and maintaining rapport with their subject. And fails to evaluate available measures thoroughly before selecting those to be used in their research.

4. Error in use of standard measuring instruments:

Failure to check the content validity of achievement measure in the situation in which the research is to be carried out.

5. Error in use of statistical tools:

They normally fail to selects statistical tool that is appropriate or correct

For proposed analysis. And uses correction in situations where data is not appropriate in order to make the results more significant.

6. Error in Research Design and Methodology:

Student normally fails to define their research population and fails to

Plan their data collection in sufficient detail to avoid excessive treatment errors.

7. Error Descriptive Research:

Students does not formulate clear and specific objectives and does not plan their analysis until after data are collected.

8. Error in Questionnaire studies:

Students uses a questionnaire in working with problems that can be

Better studies with other research techniques. And even gives insufficient attention to the development of the questionnaire and fails to pretest it.

9. Error in interview studies:

Students does not adequately plan the interview or develop a detailed interview guide. And even asks for information that the respondent cannot be expected to have.

10. Error in observational studies:

Students does not sufficiently train his observers and thus obtain unreliable result. And fail to guide against the observer disturbing or changing the situation he is to observe.

11. Error in content Analysis:

Students usually select content that is easily available but does not represent an unbiased sample of all content related to the research objectives.

Conclusion: If social studies teachers and students can diligently follow these step discussed here and try to avert the highlighted mistakes, there is an assurance that project in social studies will wrote its sort and promote in no small measure

educational knowledge in which both the supervisor and supervise can rear their heads high.

_Reference

[1] Ajobiewe, T. (2000). A guide to project writing. Ibadan Special Education Research Group (SERG).

[2] Alloysins, E.U. (1998). Practical guide to writing research project Report in Tertiary Institutions, Enugu, John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd.

[3] Alonge, M.F. (2010). Essentials of Research methods and designs for education. Lagos, Bolabay Publication

[4] Awopetu, L.O., Fasiku, M.A. and Daramola C.O.(2013). Research Methods and Statistics in Social Sciences. Ado Green line Publishers.

[5] Ayena, O.O (2012). Demystifying project writing, supervision and assessment for Functional Teacher Education in Nigeria, a paper presented at South West Journal of teacher Education. Volume 4. July, 2012. Page 229.

[6] Bandele, S.O (2004): Essential of Research in Perspectives. Ibadan. Niyi Commercial and Printing Ventures.

[7] Daramola C.O., Oluwafoise, E.O and Ayodele, M.O. (2006). Basic issues in social studies Research Design. Akure. Excels production.

[8] Oranuyo, J. B.C. (2011). Project writing, Supervision and assessment in tertiary institution. A paper presented at a

seminar organized by federal college of Education (special). Oyo state.

[9] Ozaze, B.E (1995). Guideline for conducting research and writing projects and thesis. Benin city: com books.

[10] Tolubri, J.O.(2001): Fundamentals of Research Methodology Ilorin, Victory Publication