
**SOCIAL STUDIES AS A PANACEA FOR 21ST CENTURY
ACADEMIC LIBRARY SERVICES IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Examining academic library services for the advancement and enhancement of Social Studies education in Nigeria is the key argument of this research. Experience has shown that Social Studies professors and students have not adequately utilised academic libraries' use of technology to deliver services. The value of academic libraries in the study of a subject cannot be emphasised enough. For all academic fields, including Social Studies, the digital library offers a wide selection of possibilities for cultivating reading habits and learning useful lifelong skills. The notion and importance of Social Studies, academic library resources, Social Studies education, and the benefits of academic libraries for academic research are all examined in this study.

Keywords: Social, Studies, Panacea, Academic, Libraries, Services.

Introduction

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in academic library services has increased significantly during the past 10 years. It's important to remember that academic library services frequently have a stronger link with technology and have experienced a new revolution as a result of how quickly technology is developing. It is clear that Social Studies education stands to gain a better, quicker, and more people-oriented social understanding and civic competency in the quickly evolving knowledge economy of the twenty-first century. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of Social Studies education in promoting societal tolerance, cultural diversity, political stability, and economic development.

Since the knowledge triangle, which blends information, research, and innovations in Social Studies, represents the main duties of the library, it is crucial to keep in mind that academic libraries and libraries in general play crucial roles in accomplishing Social Study objectives. Academic libraries are viewed as a trustworthy growth tool by Social Studies educators, yet neither students nor educators have completely realised their potential. Academic libraries serve as important information hubs where teachers encourage their pupils to read regularly and acquire useful lifelong skills. Academic libraries are substantial collections of information and knowledge from all disciplines of study that serve to transmit and maintain information for users as well as to assist academic research by university faculty members and students (Mmaphuti, Ignitia & Tlou, 2023). Students need the information, skills, behaviour, and human values that Social Studies programmes give in order to be productive citizens who are conscious of their social rights and duties (Cal & Demirkaya, 2020). Remember that Social Studies exposes both instructors and students to real-world situations. Social Studies teach pupils how to relate with individuals from many groups and cultures in today's globally linked world. The library accomplishes the same thing by connecting people to the world of information. According to Afzal et al. (2018), other services provided by librarians to support research in universities

include access to useful information resources, reference and information literacy services, and managing institutional research outputs through institutional repositories. This paper therefore explored Social Studies as a panacea for 21st century academic library services in Nigeria.

Concept and Relevance of Social Studies

According to Anyanwu and Abanum (2023) “Social Studies” is the study of how individuals interact with their social and physical contexts. Studying how people interact with their physical, social, political, economic, psychological, and cultural contexts is what they consider as a way of life. Social Studies are an interdisciplinary branch of study that concentrates on how individuals interact with their environments, according to Edinyang and Effiom (2017). It aims to make individuals more conscious of the symbiotic linkages between themselves and their environment and to provide them the reflective thinking and contemplative skills they need to deal with both their individual and global concerns. In order to analyse man, Social Studies, an integrated science, brings together relevant data from several domains. The National Council for the Study of Social Studies, as cited by Onuoha, Mbama & Edeh. (2021), defined it as the interdisciplinary and integrated study of the Social Science and humanities disciplines with the aim of fostering civic competency. These areas encompass such academic specialisations as philosophy, anthropology, archaeology, geography, law, political science, history, economics, psychology, religion, library and information science, and others. Esu and Enu (2010) contend that the interdisciplinary aspect of Social Studies aids in the development of students’ knowledge and capacity for critical thought.

Civic awareness, or knowledge of human societies, and civic competency are the two main objectives of Social Studies education. Alazzi underlined in Onuoha, Mbama & Edeh (2021) that the purpose of Social Studies is to aid children in becoming capable decision-makers who will advance the needs of the people in a varied and democratic society in a free globe. Aatka (2023) lists the following 15 advantages of Social Studies: Critical thinking abilities

are developed through Social Studies.

The advantages of Social Studies include cultivating empathy, enhancing global understanding, and increasing knowledge of global issues. Social Studies education encourages making smarter decisions. Social Studies help students become more capable of taking charge and addressing problems. In addition to teaching responsibility, adaptability to change, background knowledge, and cultural awareness, Social Studies also builds quantitative skills and improves academic success. Additionally enjoyable are Social Studies.

The UN acknowledged that education is the main tenet of any community in 2022. Everyone should be able to obtain a higher degree, regardless of gender. Therefore, a Social Studies education is more than simply a need for the law; it also acts as a ticket for human growth, which increases choices and liberties. Social Studies education aims to instill in young people not just information but also desired communal principles like objectivity, honesty, and integrity, as well as abilities and good attitudes. A Social Studies education also helps people's minds get sharper, their ideas are encouraged, and their attitude towards others is supported. The potential of Social Studies as a tool for greatness in Nigeria has been effectively sculpted by research and field conversations. Information and communication technology (ICT) has caused a paradigm change in the character and content of Social Studies education. Social Studies is not the only field seeing the deluge of knowledge being pushed by modern practise. In Nigeria, academic libraries are now setting the bar for ICT use in their services, providing universities a competitive edge and putting them in a position to become the centres for Social Studies study and research in colleges and other higher education institutions.

Synergy between Academic Library Services and Social Studies

The way that Social Studies are taught in Nigeria can alter significantly if students can get timely, accurate information when they need it. Libraries extensively rely on ICT and web-based applications to improve cooperation, reduce time-consuming

duplication of tasks, speed up operations, provide access to information resources, and deliver the finest information services [Ralman & Saroyan, 2021]. In our modern day of accelerating globalisation, the digital library offers Social Studies education students a wide variety of opportunities since it offers a voice that is widely desired and presents itself as an intriguing invention worth examining [Dien, 2017]. Teachers and students of Social Studies may now use the internet from the comfort of their homes and dorm rooms. Utilising technologies like email, fax, laptops, and video conferencing allows students to learn Social Studies while overcoming time and geographical constraints. The growth of the internet has substantially improved public awareness of the significance of global communication and information accessibility. People, groups, Social Studies teachers, and students all have greater access to information than ever before. Among the popular web 2.0 tools used today are a system designed specifically for managing libraries, specialised databases, electronic mail, web-based retrieval, online search engines, digital spaces, dedicated websites, social media pages, mobile applications, and video conferencing (Hussain and Nazim, 2015). Academic libraries are increasingly using e-readers, tablets, and other tech that patrons may check out or use in addition to PCs. They also provide free internet and WiFi. In actuality, university libraries give patrons access to materials that make it difficult to teach Social Studies. In view of the aforementioned, the modern academic library service exhibits the current trend described below:

From librarian to information professional: Ari (2017) has recorded the transition from traditional schooling to online education, from interlibrary collaboration to networks or consortiums for resource sharing, and more.

Social Studies is a robust and dynamic subject that is highly adaptable to new technologies and patterns in academic library services. Some of the developing technologies used in Social Studies education include the internet and web-based resources, hypermedia, data instruments, digital video, and story-collaborative teaching (Auyanwu & Abanum, 2023). Additionally, Social Studies

education will continue to change as a result of regional as well as global current events and technology advancements.

Benefits of Academic Libraries for Social Studies Research

Due to the transdisciplinary nature of Social Studies education, which necessitates that undergraduate Social Studies students at the numerous Nigerian institutions need appropriate material from all subjects, the traditional library and digital library are particularly significant resources (Onuoha *et al.*, 2021). using contemporary technology to offer library services, updating academic library services to reflect contemporary reality, or developing services to meet the information demands of Social Studies professors and students. Social Studies education must transition to a digital environment with the use of search engines, data mining, online databases, etc. to fulfil the need for information. The internet should be highlighted as a resource for people who require information generation and delivery.

Some specific roles of academic libraries in the field of Social Studies education include providing research information materials required for Social Studies education, providing research information resources in accordance with the needs of Social Studies educators and students, and providing information resources for recreation and personal development of Social Studies educators and students at various levels of education.

By offering study accommodations in a variety of formats, the following goals are achieved: cooperation with other libraries at the proper levels to improve information services to enhance Social Studies education; provision of specialised information services to Social Studies and the appropriate segment of the larger community; and provision of access to technologies that will improve the organisation and dissemination of information to support it. The main argument of this article is that academic libraries may use both conventional and digital libraries to carry out these specialised tasks in the teaching of Social Studies. The authors argue that the digital library should be used effectively in light of contemporary

global issues and the importance of information technology in Social Studies. To make the classroom more engaging, clear, and comprehensive for all students, Social Studies teachers are encouraged—no, required—to use the internet and other associated technologies offered by the libraries. An experienced Social Studies teacher can get the most out of the library by setting up study sessions there, for example, where students may participate in helping to gather certain resources and help build the materials that will be stored at the library for use (Edinyan & Effion, 2017). Because information and globalisation are essential to modern civilization, the academic library is a strong pillar that must be leveraged to promote sustained Social Studies growth. ICTs and the internet are mentioned as horizontal facilitators for development in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which also vows to attain universal literacy and acknowledges the significance of information access. It aspires to provide everyone in the least developed nations access to the internet by the year 2020 through increasing access to information and communications technology. In order to provide disconnected people access to the fast growing digital economy, which will offer huge prospects for growth and transformation and change the face of Africa’s social and economic environment, the African Union’s Agenda 2063 calls for connecting the unconnected. It is significant to emphasize that this agenda has not achieved its objectives. The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) emphasised the importance of having a society where “everyone can create, access, use, and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities, and people to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life.”

Conclusion

According to the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), a society in which “everyone can create, access, use, and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities, and people to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, is essential.

Suggestions

In the current globalized society, Social Studies education has many opportunities thanks to the digital library. It goes without saying that better policies and processes will result from accessibility to 21st-century library services, helping Nigerian Social Studies achieve its objectives. Because globalization and information are essential to modern civilization, the academic library is one of the key pillars that must be utilized to actualize a sustainable Social Studies development. Nigerian academic libraries are currently leading the way in the use of ICTs in their operations, providing a competitive advantage to all educational establishments and putting them in a position to become the centers of Social Studies education and research in colleges and other higher education facilities.

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