

**THE EFFECT OF INQUIRY BASED LEARNING ON SOCIAL STUDIES
AND LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN AYIVU DIVISION, ARUA CITY**

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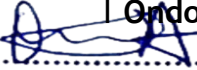
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

April, 2025



Declaration


.....
I Ondoru Agnes, hereby declare that this research work is my original work which has never been submitted to any university or academic institution for award of any kind.

28/04/2025
.....
Sign

Date

Approval

This is to certify that the research report titled “the effect of inquiry-based learning on social studies and learners’ performance in selected primary schools in Ayivu Division, Arua City” has been done under my supervision as the University Supervisor for examination.

The Supervisor

Name: Mr. Yangu Godfrey Alibe

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Date 28/04/2025

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents, Mr. Areku Fred and Mrs Ojoru Milka. Also, to my dear husband Mr. Abima Joakim; my children: Letasi Jovia, Asite Joshua and Abima J Faith and my friends Sakaru Rose and Mokili Robinson whose tireless efforts and love enabled me to go through my Education.

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Special thanks go to the Primary Seven pupils and Social Studies teachers from the selected primary schools where data was collected and also the Head teachers that volunteered to provide data, which helped in completion of this study.

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List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

5E	Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluation
IBL	Inquiry -Based Learning
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PLE	Primary Leaving Examination
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
SST	Social Studies
UPE	Universal Primary School
URN	Uganda Radio Network

Abstract

The study was conducted to document the effect of inquiry-based learning on social studies and learners' performance in selected primary schools in Ayivu Division, Arua City. The study was conducted by using descriptive survey design integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected by using questionnaires administered to 45 randomly selected P.7 pupils. Additionally, interview was conducted with 3 social studies teachers and 2 head teachers purposively selected to supplement data collected using questionnaires. Collected data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel programme. It was found out that inquiry - based learning had moderate impact on social studies teaching and learning as a result most of the primary teachers continued to teach SST traditionally. Further, although 80% of the pupils' believed SST was simple, but there was varied perception over the setting of SST examination questions which revealed different performance in the subject. The challenges of inquiry - based social studies teaching and learning included; lack of resources; difficulty working in groups; lack of independent and organizational skills, limited prior knowledge and lack of experience; takes more effort and lack of generic skills. The study recommended periodical seminars, workshops and refresher courses with a view to strengthen and re-orient the teachers in inquiry - based social studies method; government and examination board conduct a nationwide social studies evaluation exercise to identify the loopholes needed to ensure the effectiveness of the subject and schools continue to have resource development activities for teaching social studies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the background to the study, statement of the problem; general study objective and specific objectives; research questions, scope of study, conceptual framework and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

The National Curriculum Development Centre has, since the mid- seventies, been developing curriculum for four core subjects of English Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (often refer to as SST) for the whole primary education cycle. In Uganda, before a pupil sits national examinations - Primary Leaving Examinations, they must have studied four compulsory subjects - Mathematics, English, Social Studies and Science. SST in Uganda covers subjects such as geography, history and culture; religious studies and society or current affairs.

Despite the importance of Social Studies as a subject, and being at the core of the primary education curriculum in Uganda, the performance in Social Studies subject has remained persistently poor for years. Statistics show that the pass rate declined from 93.1% of students in 2020 to 88.6% students in 2022 in Primary Leaving Examination in Social Studies (URN, 2023). The consequence was that cramming made students perform poorly in SST in 2022 Primary Leaving Examination, PLE. In another study, Dibaba (2023) indicated that SST was poorly done in Arua District in 2022 Primary Leaving Examination.

Academic performance among primary school students, particularly in subjects like Social Studies, is a matter of concern, especially in public schools. Various factors contribute to this issue, with teaching method being one of the most significant. Studies have shown that teaching methods adopted by teachers contributes to poor performance of pupils in social studies (Harrison, 2024, URN, 2023). Currently, traditional methods (teacher-centered) dominate social studies instruction, where the teacher acts as the primary source of knowledge, conveying the knowledge to the students who are passive learners. URN (2023) posited that social studies students are inundated with pedagogy which is more on cramming method; yet the examination has changed to applying critical thinking and practical learning on what students have learned. The traditional teaching methods such as cramming (or reciting) and rote, contribute to decline in pupils' Social Studies performance in primary leaving examination.

One of the most important changes in the 21st century in education and learning process is the shift from traditional teaching (teacher centered) methods to student centered learning methods to improve learning outcomes. Utami and Sundari (2019) argued that though, there are many innovative learning models to improve student performance and activity; one such is inquiry - based learning, IBL approach. Aghazadeh (2020) argues that IBL approach engages students by making real-world connections through exploration and developing new knowledge through questioning. In other words, as students-centered approach, IBL makes the students construct culture of deep and transferable learning and strengthen their engagement as active

learners rather than being passive learners; while teachers facilitate the learning process. The approach was introduced and effectively implemented in teaching social studies. In study done by Chinelo and Cynthia (2023) revealed that social studies students taught using inquiry - based learning method had better academic performance than those taught using traditional lecture method. In another study, Hagglund (2022) posited that History/Social Studies student performed slightly better when taught using inquiry model.

At the end of seven years of schooling in primary education, pupils sit for Primary Leaving Examination, PLE administered by Uganda National Examination Board, UNEB. Presently, the Board assess four subjects: English language, Mathematics, Integrated Science; and Social Studies including Religious Education at primary seven level. In the assessment of Primary Leaving Examination (PLE), learners are assigned scores ranging from Distinction One (best) to F9 (worst) in each of the four subjects. Further, achieving the highest grade, the students need to score aggregate 4 (best) to aggregate 36 (worst) according to URN (2024). The grading system ranged from 4 - 12 aggregates receive first division, 13 - 23 aggregates for second division, 24 - 29 aggregates for third division, 30 - 34 aggregates for fourth division and 35 - 36 aggregates indicate failure. Students who scored aggregate 34 hope to be selected by high learning institutions such as secondary school or vocational institution.

Even though efforts by the Uganda government in improving primary leaving academic performance including social studies, the performance is still declining. The 2020 social studies primary leaving examination results indicated 93.1% students passed as compared to 88.6% students in 2022 in the same subject (URN, 2023). This was

decline in social studies PLE result. Dibaba (2023) claimed that pupils in Arua District performed poorly in 2022 Social Studies Primary Leaving Examination. For instance, a school-based Primary Leaving Examinations for three years (2019 - 2022) results showed decline in pass rate for SST in Muni and Ragem primary schools as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: School based PLE Social Studies results for 2019 - 2022

Muni Primary School: School Code: 000429	Grade	2019		2020		2022	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	Distinctions (1 - 2)	2	1.8	3	2.7	6	3.5
	Credit (3 - 6)	96	84.2	87	78.4	126	72.8
	Pass (Pass, failure, ungraded)	16	14.0	21	18.9	41	23.7
	Total	114	100.0	111	100.0	173	100.0
Ragem Primary School: School Code: 000422	Distinctions (1 - 2)	2	1.1	0	-	0	-
	Credit (3 - 6)	149	80.5	69	72.6	64	66.7
	Pass (Pass, failure, ungraded)	34	18.4	26	27.4	32	33.3
	Total	185	100.0	95	100.0	96	100.0

Source: Agnes Ondoru (2025)

Additionally, decline in the school-based Social Studies Primary Leaving Examinations pass rate in Ayivu Division Primary schools may be attributed to several reasons. One could be learners' inability to comprehend social studies questions, and secondly, practical approach to the subject may lead to poor performance. Despite widespread decline in social studies performance in Ayivu Division Primary schools, the extent to which social studies teaching method contribute to the poor performance of the subject remains poorly documented and understood.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Social Studies Primary leaving examinations performance for several years has been upsetting. Learners who sat for UNEB barely perform well in the subject. URN (2023) attributed poor performance in Social Studies to teaching methods used by the teachers. Examination setting format and pupils' inability to comprehend SST questions contributed to poor performance of the subject. In Ayivu Division of Arua City, there is scarce literature on how inquiry-based learning approach influence teaching of Social Studies and subsequently learners' performance. This study therefore sought to assess the effect of inquiry - based learning on Social Studies and learner' performance in selected primary schools in Ayivu Division, Arua City, Uganda, which has continually been posted poor performances.

1.3 Study Objectives

The study objectives consisted of general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the effect of Inquiry-Based Learning, (IBL) on social studies performance in selected public primary schools in Ayivu Division.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- 1) To assess the impact of inquiry-based learning methods on learners in Social Studies.

- 2) To evaluate the performance of learners exposed to inquiry-based learning.
- 3) To identify the constraints to inquiry-based learning.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) What is the impact of inquiry-based learning method on learners in Social Studies?
- 2) What is the performance of learners exposed to inquiry-based learning?
- 3) What are the constraints to inquiry-based learning?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study was conducted in Ayivu Division, Arua city. The study content focused on effect of inquiry-based learning, IBL on Social Studies performance in selected public primary schools in the division. Time scope of 4 months was considered for the study. However, time framework between 2020 and 2022 were year's where schools were stable and thus pupils did not experience any external forces such as Covid-19 pandemic in which pupils did not sit their primary leaving examination. These years (2020 - 2022) were considered suitable for investigation.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study will be useful to various stakeholders as follows:

1. Ministry of Education and Sport MoES, agencies and development partners.

This study will contribute to the betterment of education as its conclusions can help turn around the poor performance in Social Studies in the various primary schools.

Additionally, the findings serve as an example to other content areas and should be reviewed by educational leaders including MoES, government agencies and development partners - Donors and NGOs looking to increased student engagement and performance in their educational setting.

2. Class teachers

Class teachers would use the findings to identify gaps in their teaching methods to improve learners' performance in their subjects. Upon identification of the teaching methods or learning gaps, teachers would adapt inquiry-based approach to improve student engagement and knowledge retention and deeper understanding of the learners so that they master the subject/topic.

3. Learners

The study would help learners become self-directed, lifelong learners as they pose thoughtful questions, make sense of information, and develop deeper new levels of understandings.

4. Academicians and Researchers

The study would provide additional literature for academicians and researchers in university library for those intending to carry out research on the topic or similar subject matter. Again, the findings from the study would serve as the basis for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section covered the review of the related knowledge on teaching methods used for teaching social studies, inquiry-based learning and social studies; challenges to inquiry-based learning in social studies, summary of empirical literature, and research gap in that order.

2.1 Inquiry based learning methods on learners in Social Studies

Social Studies is one of the core subjects taught in Ugandan primary schools. The teaching and learning methods in Social Studies engages pupils actively with its content - around appropriate knowledge, values and skills. Bowen (2023) argue that engaging novice students in social studies classroom should be done with expectation that they have limited prior experience with the subject content. Despite drawbacks on learners' expectations and teaching and learning methods; inquiry- based learning approach engagement stimulates active participation of students in learning process and content.

Method of teaching social studies has evolved significantly, representing changes in social content and calling for more engagement in 21st century. Gimba et al., (2019) argue that similar to “many other academic disciplines, social studies as a school subject adopts many methods to transmit knowledge to the learner”. Some of these methods are either teacher-centered, student-centered or Teacher-student interactive centered (Sivakumar, 2018, Gimba et al., 2019). With changes in SST

content and methodology, transfer of knowledge require learning strategy that align with active engagement of students in learning process of the SST content. Unlike where students are often encouraged to recite facts as a means to demonstrate academic understanding of the subject. Micheal (2023) advocated for a mixed approach to teaching that integrate lecturing and inquiry-based methods, depending on the learning context of the subject, and that is helpful to students learning process. Studies have documented inquiry-based learning as an innovative approach in teaching SST (Hagglund, 2022; Aghzadeh, 2020).

Although, traditional learning method dominates social studies teaching; Hagglund (2022) highlighted that students preferred the learning environment and instructional strategies embedded within inquiry-based learning. Inquiry-based learning is a student-centred approach that encourages students to explore, investigate and ask questions to conceptualize their own understanding of a subject (Perkins, 2025). Inquiry-based learning can be used for engaging students in the social studies classroom to help students develop a deeper understanding of social studies topics and promote critical thinking skills (Beshears, 2012). Inquiry based learning is redefining teaching in the 21st century by providing opportunities students with skills that were not always taken seriously in the traditional method of teaching (Learning by Inquiry, 2025). With a shift towards inquiry-based learning, Assem et al., (2023) argued that students taught using the inquiry-based method of teaching and learning had performed better than those taught with the traditional approach.

In inquiry-based social studies, pupils learn through investigation; similar to the kinds of investigation that happen in experiment-based science classes, by asking questions, gathering evidence, and drawing conclusions; and sharing their findings with others (inquired, 2025). While in social studies learning, students explore historical events, probe different cultures, or examine current events, rather than just memorizing facts (Hagglund, 2022).

Oteles (2020) highlights the effect of using 5E learning model in social studies on academic achievement of students and the opinions of students regarding the model. The study finding indicated that 5E learning model positively affected the student academic achievement in social studies and also the students had positive opinions regarding the model. Further, the 5E model is an inquiry-based learning grounded on cognitive psychology, constructivist - learning theory that can be used for teaching social studies since social studies lesson is predominantly cognitive aspect (Oteles, 2020). Fostering on inquiry based learning method; 5E learning promotes active collaborative learning, engaging and encouraging students to build knowledge and construct meaning through the learning process (Corujo, 2023).

2.2 Performance of learners exposed to inquiry-based learning

Ampumuza (2021) observed that inquiry-based learning help the teacher provide learners' attain their academic achievements and other attributes such as motivation, attitude; participation and skills. Learning models (5E model) can influence educational outcomes like test scores and students' academic performance. For instance, students taught using the inquiry-based method performed better than

those taught with the traditional approach (Assem et al, 2023). It can be argued that 5E model serve as a powerful vehicle for inquiry based social studies lesson planning and performance.

Hagglund (2022) observed that inquiry - based learning can both increase student engagement and performance, aspects critically lacking in many History/Social Studies. This implies that learners exposed to inquiry-based learning (IBL) is found have positive effects on pupils' academic performances in Social Studies. A study done by Oteles (2020) revealed that 5E model grounded in inquiry-based learning positively influences social studies performance. In another study, Uzokife and Ihekwebe (2023) observed that inquiry-based learning influenced the performance of both high and low student achievers in social studies without forfeiting state curriculum standards.

2.3 Challenges of IBL implementation

In Ugandan primary education level, Social Studies covers wide range of issues and topics. But challenge of accessing inquiry-based learning instructional materials for both educators and learners happens in making social studies relevant to students' lives in SST classroom (Furgione, 2023). In another study done by Saba et al., (2019) revealed that there were no significant differences in learners' performance in SST between learners taught with inquiry method and those taught with conventional method.

Similarly, Siegel-Stechler and Burnham (2023) observed that most teachers learned social studies through traditional centered models as such many of them have limited

knowledge and experience with inquiry-based learning models. They further observed that inquiry-based learning requires more time and preparation in order to be implemented in a classroom. These are challenges to inquiry-based learning.

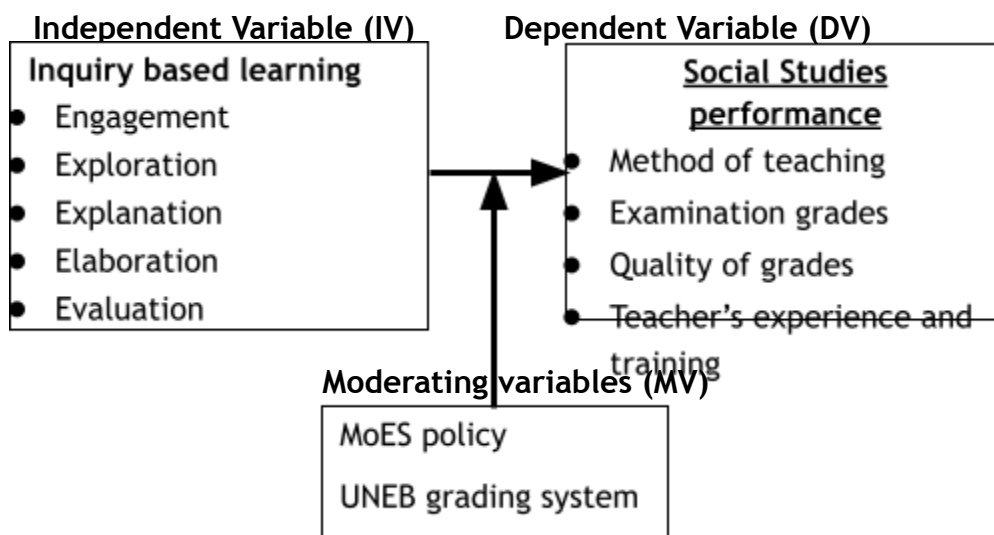
2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is relationship between the study variables; independent variable (inquiry-based learning, IBL) and the dependent variable (social studies performance) represented in the diagrammatic form.

The independent variable inquiry-based learning may have influence on pupils' social studies performance through engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration and evaluation learning processes. However, social studies performance of the pupils (dependent variable) maybe impeded by method of teaching, SST examination grading, quantity of grades and teacher's experience and training. Interaction between independent and dependent variables is influenced by intervening variables such as; Ministry of Education and Sports policy and Uganda National Examination grading system.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

According to (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013), a conceptual frame work involves forming ideas about relationships between variables in the study and showing their interrelationships diagrammatically. Below is therefore the conceptual framework showing the relationship between the different variables namely, inquiry based learning as the independent variable (IV) and social studies performance as the dependent variable (DV) with moderating variable (MV) as reflected below.



Source: Agnes Ondoru (2025)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter described the methodology used to carry out the study which include the research design, study population, sample size, sampling methods, data collection methods and instruments, pretesting of instruments, procedure for data collection, validity and reliability, data management and analysis, and ethical considerations for the study.

3.1 Research design

The research adopted a descriptive survey research design to understand how people act in real-life situations. The design helped the researcher to observe and describe the population or phenomenon as it naturally occurs without manipulating the variables. Additionally, the design combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data which allowed for the description of particular phenomenon under study.

3.2 Study Population

The study population comprised of Primary seven pupils, Social Studies teachers, and head teachers from 8 public primary schools in Oluko ward, Ayivu Division. Three (3) schools were sampled with target population of 450 upper primary pupils, 3 head teachers, and 6 Social Studies teachers, making total target population of 459.

The researcher interviewed knowledgeable persons - that included Social Studies teachers and the Head teachers in the three (3) selected public primary schools.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

The study employed proportionate random sampling method to select different subpopulations. The sample method gave each subpopulations equal opportunity to be included in the study.

3.4 Sample size determination

Sample size of 3 public primary schools were selected for the study. From the sampled public primary schools, 2 head teachers and 3 Social Studies teachers were purposively selected. Random sample of 45 pupils were selected from the three public primary schools.

Table 2: Target population and sample size for the study

Population Type	Target Population	Percent	Sample size	Sample Technique
Primary Seven pupils	450	10	45	Random
SST Teachers	6	50	3	Purposive
Head teacher	3		2	Purposive
Total	459		50	

Source: Agnes Ondoru (2025)

3.5 Data collection instruments

Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule. Semi-structured questionnaires were preferred because of their ability to ensure confidentiality of

responses from respondents. The questionnaire will be administered to upper primary pupils. The questionnaire sought information on impact of inquiry-based learning methods on learners, performance of learners exposed to IBL and the constraints incurred in inquiry-based learning. Interview schedule was used to collect data from head teachers and Social Studies teachers because they have expertise in IBL. The interview was based on impact of inquiry based learning methods on learners, performance of learners exposed to IBL and the constraints incurred in inquiry based learning.

3.6 Data quality control

Reliability and **validity** are concepts used to evaluate the quality of research. They indicate how well a method, technique or test measure something. According to Middleton (2024), reliability is about the consistency of a measure, and validity is about the accuracy of a measure. In other words, they reveal “how well a method, technique or test measures something” (Middleton, 2024).

Pilot study was conducted in two primary schools in Pajulu Ward, Ayivu Division to determine the validity and reliability of study instruments. The selected primary schools had similar characteristics with the primary schools in Oluko Ward, which took part in the study. During the pilot study, 10 students and 2 Social Studies teachers and 1 head teacher were interviewed with different questionnaires for each group. Time taken by a respondent on questionnaires were noted, compared and assessed.

To minimize response biasness, the research assistant was trained to understand and interpret the study objectives for consistency and timely data collection. Additionally, the respondents were also informed of the confidentiality of their responses. Furthermore; respondents were clarified of uncertainty in the study. The researcher sought advice from the supervisor on the ability of the instrument to collect the required information for the study and the advice helped in making adjustments; and items that were found relevant to the study were retained.

Reliability of the instrument was determined using pre-tested questionnaire in the pilot study. Data collected from 10 student questionnaires, 2 teacher questionnaires and 1 head teacher questionnaire were administered and analyzed to obtain Cronbach Alpha coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Scientists, SPSS. If the values for all the factors were over 0.7; this proved that the data was suitable and consistent to provide reliable results for the study. Thereafter, the questionnaire was adjusted for the study, if alpha value is less than 0.7.

3.7 Data analysis and presentation

The collected data was checked for missing information, cleaned up for inconsistencies and missing values, and then coded and entered into the SPSS software for analysis. Descriptive analysis was performed in form of frequency table, pie and bar chart, graphs, mean, standard deviation to present the findings of the study to ease interpretation and understanding of the study objectives. While, qualitative data was summarized into most emerging themes, categories and patterns

related to IBL and pupils' social studies performance to answer to the research questions and objectives. These qualitative findings were integrated with the quantitative findings in discussions. Relevant literature was also used to place the results in context by comparing the findings with the literature review of the study (Azzam, 2019).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

After the approval of the research by the Supervisor from Department of Education, Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus; I presented introductory letter to the City Town Clerk who offered me permission to collect data. I only proceeded after the explanation of the study objectives to respondents and only when they understood and verbal consented to voluntary participation in the study. Most importantly, the name or contact of respondents were not to be used in the study. Privacy and confidentiality was ensured throughout the study, whereby all information collected was safely kept.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter describes the presentation, analysis and discussion of findings based on the objectives of the study; impact of inquiry-based learning methods on learners in Social Studies; performance of learners exposed to inquiry-based learning and constraints that influenced inquiry-based learning.

4.1 Inquiry based learning method on learners in Social Studies

This section describes number of subjects learnt in the class, best subject liked, number of times in a week SST taught; place SST is learnt, how SST is learnt, places visited for an excursion and other person who taught SST.

The findings showed that all subjects which include, English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science and others are taught as indicated by 82.2% of the learner respondents, while 17.8% generalized the subjects taught as four subjects taught in the class.

Table 3: Inquiry based learning approach with learners in social studies

Description	Variable	Frequency (n=45)	Percent (100%)
Number of subjects learnt	Four	8	17.8
	All subjects	37	82.2
Best subject liked	SST	6	13.3
	English	9	20.0
	Mathematics	12	26.7
	Science	18	40.0
SST taught in a week			
	Every day	45	100
Place of learning SST	Always in class	4	8.9
	In class and outside class	11	24.4
	In so many places	30	66.7
Materials used for SST			
	Blackboard only	5	11.1
	Maps	2	4.4
	Charts	3	6.7
	All the above	35	77.8
Excursion places			
	Markets	7	15.6
	Show grounds	4	8.9
	Rivers/lakes	13	28.9
	Mountains	21	46.7
Another SST teacher			
	None	9	20
	Resourceful person	36	80

Source: Agnes Ondoru (2025)

The pupils were asked which subject they like best when using inquiry-based learning approach; the result revealed that 40% of the pupils liked science, 26.7% liked mathematics; 20.0% liked English and only 13.3% like social studies. This implies that

social studies was least liked by the students across the sampled primary school most probably as a result of the teaching method used. The finding collaborates with Siegel - Stechler and Burnham (2023) that most teachers learnt social studies through traditional centered models as such many of them have limited knowledge and experience with inquiry - based learning models.

All the pupil respondents indicated the SST is taught every day in a week. This means that each day SST is taught. The findings correspond to National Curriculum Development Centre, NCDC, Uganda (2012) recommendation that P.7 SST lessons take 5 periods per week.

Social Studies teaching resources have improved overtime. The finding revealed that SST can be learning in so many places, as reported by 66.7% of the pupil respondents, 24.2% reported that in class and out class SST can be learned and only 8.9% indicated always in class. This suggests that social studies teachers need to apply multidisciplinary approach in teaching and learning of SST including a wide array of student - centered learning activities to reach, motivate and engage learners to build on their knowledge, skills and aspirations. Failure to apply the multidisciplinary approach correctly by social studies teachers may result in ineffective learning outcomes in the subject. The result of this study corresponds to NCDC (2012) that learners can learn SST from environment, which is a foremost source of teaching and learning aids. Further, environment provide things like plants, animals, physical features, houses, factories, household property, social service centers such as schools, health centers, hospitals and police stations.

The findings show that majority (77.8%) of the pupil respondents indicated all the above which included; blackboard, maps, charts and textbooks can use for learning SST, while others said blackboard (11.1%), charts (6.7%) and maps (4.4%). According to NCDC (2012), instructional materials such as reference books, textbooks, wall maps, charts, globes, flash cards, models, radios, televisions, and other audio/visual aids may be used to support the teaching and learning of SST. Under inquiry-based learning activities, the instructional materials support and focus on theme, topic or concept. Therefore, the study findings collaborate with NCDC (2012).

The finding reveals that 46.7% of the respondents had excursion to mountains, 28.9% had excursion to rivers and lakes; 15.6% markets and 8.9% show grounds. Mensah et al., (2023) suggest that the natural resources—mountains, valleys, seas, lakes, and lagoons- provide learners and teachers with information that informs teaching and learning. The finding agrees with Holmes (2023) that field trips (or educational tours/excursions) to natural resources, outside the classroom provide learners' a first-hand experience of the topic being discussed leading to meaningful learning understanding of the subject content area.

A part their own SST teacher in the school, 80% of the respondents said resourceful person like policeman, local council official, medical personnel and others had been used to teach them SST, while 20% said none apart from their teacher had been teaching them. The findings suggest that policeman, local council official, medical

personnel and others are resourceful persons or community resources that can be used to obtain information about Social Studies. Current study finding collaborates with Mensah et al., (2023) that community resources encapsulate people (like parents, chiefs and other community leaders), places, or things that assist teachers during teaching and are present throughout the community.

All the social studies teachers interviewed had experience between 7 - 9 years in the sampled primary schools and they use various methods to teach social studies. This was supported by all the three sampled head teachers who mentioned that Social Studies was taught as integrated subject as in other subjects; as social studies teachers use both traditional and new methods such as inquiry-based learning approach. Social studies teachers said they preferred these methods for teaching SST because they are the easiest methods for the pupils to grasp the subject. Inquiry-based learning is essential to the social studies classroom. Additionally, inquiry-based learning makes learners arrive at a deep understanding of content while building valuable and transferable skills needed to perform successful in the subject.

However, lack of text books led to learners having less interest in the subject, as noted by the teachers. On other hand, head teachers also agreed with the teachers about lack of text books. The teachers said that the schools have sufficient instructional materials for SST and such as wall maps, globes, pictures, charts, reference books; atlases; and newspapers. Real objects and tours or excursions form part of the instructional materials. Head teachers explained that they use part of

parents' contribution to buy instructional materials from book shops. The findings correspond with Oppong Frimpong, (2021).

4.2 Performance of learners exposed to inquiry-based learning

This section presents the pupils views about what their teachers said concerning social studies; subject they disliked and setting of examination in social studies.

Table 4: Performance of learners exposed to inquiry-based learning

Description	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Teachers tell about SST			
	Very simple	36	80.0
	Very hard	5	11.1
	Very wide	4	8.9
Disliked subject	SST	15	33.3
	Science	5	11.1
	Mathematics	25	55.6
	English	0	0.0
Examination Questions			
	Are always very hard	5	11.1
	Come from what you have learnt only	15	33.3
	Are always very simple	14	31.2
	Are always from day-to-day life experience	11	24.4

Source: Agnes Ondoru (2025)

The result showed that majority (80.0%) perceived social studies to be very simple as told by their teachers, while 11.1% perceived social studies to be very hard and 8.9% perceived it to be very wide subject. The finding implies that teachers provide scaffolding and guidance support to the learners which help them grasp and understand SST concepts making the subject appear simple to the learners. More so,

teachers may use various methods for instruction such as group discussion, exhibition, inquiry, discovery, problem solving and others that suitable for the students, as indicated by NCDC (2012). In addition, it can be attributed that learner who have regular class attendance have very good marks making the subject look simple to them, unlike those with lower mark whose attendance may likely be irregular. Alzhanova-Ericsson, et al., (2015) observed that by attending class regularly, students can participate in teaching and learning, understand the teaching content, improve their academic capabilities, and acquire the tacit knowledge that comes from interacting with their teachers and peers. In another study, Listmann (2024) revealed that regular class attendance which makes it easier to understand Social Studies teaching content. The findings collaborate with studies of Alzhanova-Ericsson, et al., (2015) and Listmann (2024).

More than half (55.6%) disliked mathematics, followed by social studies by 33.3% of the pupil respondents and science was disliked by 11.1% of the pupil respondents. None had dislike for English as subject. The finding corresponds with Opeede (2017) who indicated pupils in selected primary schools in Malera Sub-County, Bukedea district disliked SST due to several reason including; SST is wide subject, teachers use unfriendly teaching methods, personality of the teachers, use of untrained teachers and trained teachers who pretend to teach for fear of losing the job.

Pupil respondents had varied perception towards the setting of Social Studies examinations. The finding that 33.3% said social studies questions come from their

previous lessons taught only; 31.2% said social studies questions were always very simple; 24.4% indicated that the social studies questions were on daily real life experience, and 11.1% said social studies questions were always very hard. The finding collaborates with Hagglund (2022) that students preferred the learning environment and instructional strategies embedded within inquiry learning; and students performed slightly better and show more mastery of content when working within an inquiry model.

Interview with key informants mentioned that although, social studies was good and very simple subject, but lack of qualified personnel or teachers adversely affect the subject, as noted by the teachers. The social studies teachers think that methods of teaching, both teachers and pupils' attitude may affect good pupils' performance in the subject. Regarding examination setting of social studies in Primary Leaving Examinations, teachers said that the setting is good, as observed by the teachers. On the other hand, head teachers said social studies third most subject performed in PLE for the last three years. The finding is consistent with Oteles (2020) who indicated that 5E learning model positively affected the academic performance of the social studies students.

4.3 Challenges faced in inquiry based Social Studies learning

The study explored challenges pupils respondents experienced during inquiry based Social Studies learning. The findings were presented in the table 5.

Lack of resources (23.3%), difficulty working in groups (22.0%), and lack of independent and organizational skills (18.9%) were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd challenges faced by pupils during inquiry based social studies learning in the study area. While others included; limited prior knowledge and lack of experience (15.7%), takes more effort (10.7%) and lack of generic skills (9.4%) were ranked 4th, 5th and 6th by the pupil respondents. The finding indicates that lack of resources, difficulty working in groups, lack of independent and organizational skills, limited prior knowledge and lack of experience were major challenges pupils face during inquiry based social studies learning in study area.

Table 5: Challenges faced in inquiry based Social Studies learning

Variable	Responses	Percent
Lack of resources	37	23.3
Difficulty working in groups	35	22.0
Lack of independent and organizational skills	30	18.9
Limited prior knowledge and lack of experience	25	15.7
Takes more effort	17	10.7
Lack of generic skills	15	9.4
Total	159	100.0

Source: Agnes Ondoru (2025)

The finding pinpointed that 23.3% of the pupils' responses revealed lack of resources such as instructional materials, kits, and equipment as challenge for inquiry - based social studies learning. Pesqueira, (2020) observed that a majority of students retain information and learn much more effectively through instructional approaches that put them in control. Shifting to student-centered approaches to instruction, such as

Inquiry-Based and Project-Based Learning are considered to be effective and engaging methods of instruction aimed at increasing student learning. However, lack of inadequate instructional materials or resources inhibit inquiry based social studies learning in the classroom (Pesqueira, 2020). Similarly, Furgione (2024) revealed that lack of instructional materials including textbooks for inquiry based social studies learning are common pitfall for the students and teachers to engage meaningful in social studies learning. The finding corresponds with the works of Pesqueira, (2020) and Furgione (2024).

Difficulty working in groups was noted as a constraint to inquiry - based learning by 22.0% of the pupils' responses. This may be attributed due to poor communication, personal issues; unequal contribution in the group activity; lacking focus and missing deadlines for activity assigned. Shahid (2024) observed that motivating students to work effectively in groups can be particularly challenging, especially when managing diverse expectations, participation, and conflicts. As a result, frustration may emerge to disengage active students as well as the teacher thus working in groups difficult. Current finding concur with Shahid (2024).

Building up independent and organizational skills is a challenge for inquiry-based learning as revealed by 18.9% responses of the pupil respondents in the study finding. This relates to how students can work alone or in small groups in a classroom setting as they develop independent work and organizational skills during inquiry-based approach. The learning model promotes critical thinking, creativity, and active

engagement and also encourages learners to explore, question, and construct their own understanding, making it an effective method for enhancing educational as well as personal experiences. Sam (2024) observed that some students struggle with formulating research questions, accessing resources, or synthesizing information independently. Madly learning (2023) attributed that students lacking independent and organizational skills may struggle with inquiry-based learning. Teachers as facilitators of the IBL need to constantly encourage and reinforce independent work skills among the learners so that own the learning process and teach them time management skills. In addition, the learners to be given tools such as agendas, topics and questions and to do lists so that they develop organizational skills. This will make the learners organized and help them make decisions when completing their IBL activities. The finding is congruent with Madly Learning (2023).

It was observed that 15.7% of the pupils' responses indicated limited prior knowledge and lack of experience as constraints to inquiry - based learning among the pupils.

According to Wang (2022), traditional teaching methods were more common because teachers wanted students to learn fixed knowledge and get good examination scores.

The result is further supported by Siegel-Stechler and Burnham (2023), who observed that most teachers learned social studies through traditional centered models as such many of them have limited knowledge and experience with inquiry-based learning models.

The finding revealed that 10.7% of the pupil respondents takes more effort to learn using inquiry based learning process. The finding suggests that each student is different one another and each student has a preference in learning styles or methods. Choudhary (2024) observed that each learning style depicts how a learner best receives information, interprets it, organizes it, and stores it. The finding corresponds with Madly Learning (2023) that some students struggle with taking an active responsibility in their learning.

Current study result indicated 9.4% responses of the pupil respondents revealed essential skills as constraints to inquiry -based social studies learning. As a dynamic student - centered educational approach; inquiry based learning focus on encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving skills through active learner participation in the subject learning environment. Engaging, inquiry-based learning strategies can be the key to achieving that balance for social studies instruction. These skills provide the students the opportunities to delve into problem-solving and think critically about how different events and people have influenced one another over time.

Interview with key informants showed that teachers incur challenges when implementing inquiry based learning in a classroom. They mentioned that time constraints and training, unfamiliarity with IBL method, the more time taken for preparation IBL lessons; students working hard to change their mindset, student use of ineffective resources, and student failure to discover what they are trying to find or comprehend why as challenges of IBL approach.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the objectives and findings of the study.

5.1 Summary of the study finding

Table 5 indicated 82.2% of the learners were taught all subjects including; English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science and 40% like science when taught using IBL and social studies least liked (13.3%). Social Studies is taught every day in week as revealed by all the pupils interviewed and 66% indicated that SST can be learnt in so many places. Result showed that in learning social studies, 77.8% of the pupils indicated that they used blackboard, maps, charts and textbooks and 46.7% had excursion to mountains and others visited rivers and lakes, markets and showgrounds. In addition, 80% of the pupils mentioned that resourceful person was used also for teaching Social Studies.

In Table 6, the result indicated 80% of the pupil respondents were told by their teachers that social studies to be very simple, while 55.6% dislike mathematics, 33.3% disliked social studies and only 11.1% disliked science. The finding revealed varied perceptions over the setting of examinations in social studies; 33.3% said social

studies questions come from previous lessons taught only; 31.2% said social studies questions are always very simple; 24.4% indicated that the social studies questions were on daily real life experience, and 11.1% said social studies questions are always very hard.

The finding that 33.3% said social studies questions come from their previous lessons taught only; 31.2% said social studies questions were always very simple; 24.4% indicated that the social studies questions were on daily real life experience, and 11.1% said social studies questions were always very hard.

Lack of resources (23.3%); difficulty working in groups (22.0%); lack of independent and organizational skills (18.9%) and limited prior knowledge and lack of experience (15.7%) were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th challenges faced in teaching and learning social studies using inquiry-based learning method in the study area by the pupil respondents (Table 7). While others included; takes more effort (10.9%) and lack of generic skills (9.4%) ranked 5th and 6th by the pupil respondents. Head teachers and teachers and identified time constraints and training, unfamiliarity with IBL, more time and preparation of IBL lessons, students working hard to end up with the wrong answer, student use of ineffective; inefficient ways to find information, student failure to discover what they are trying to find; lack of teaching aids and resources materials; lack of enough money to conduct IBL activities and tour; difficulty in student assessment and large size class management were challenges they mentioned.

5.2 Conclusion

Many social studies teachers have continued to teach social studies traditionally, making social studies least liked by the pupils despite every day teaching of the subject in a week with the use of instructional materials and excursion and resourceful person; thus, creating low impact of the subject. It can be concluded that students can remember a greater percentage of what was taught when techniques used by teachers are in their interest and can improve their performance in the subject.

Though, pupils were told that Social Studies is very simple, but some had reasonable attitude and belief towards the subject with varied view over the setting of social studies examination questions such as; social studies questions come from what you have learnt only or social studies questions are always very simple; or social studies questions are always from day-to-day life experience, and social studies questions are always very hard. It can be concluded that faulty or errors and weakness in social studies teaching methods may have a great multiplier effect that will distort the image of SST discipline and performance in national examination.

The study identified challenges to inquiry based Social Studies learning as: lack of resources; difficulty working in groups; lack of independent and organizational skills, limited prior knowledge and lack of experience; takes more effort and lack of generic

skills. It can be concluded that the entire society should provide an enabling environment to ensure improved social studies education endeavor, like any other subject.

5.3 Recommendation

In view of the study findings and also reckoning with the need for a firm foundation on which social studies discipline can be built, it is felt that the following suggestions might be of use in the direction of improving the inquiry - based social studies learning in primary schools in generally in Ayivu Division, Arua City.

- a) The city inspectorate should organize periodical seminars, workshops and refresher courses with a view to strengthen and re-orient the teachers in inquiry - based teaching in social studies to enable social studies teachers become competent in their field of specialty.
- b) It is also recommended that the government through Ministry of Education and Sports, (MoES) and Uganda National Examination Board (UNEBC) to conduct a nationwide programme evaluation exercise on Social Studies to identify the loopholes needed to ensure the effectiveness of teaching the subject.
- c) The study recommended that head teachers, teachers and pupils should continue to have resource development activities in the school with the support from parents' contribution and UPE grant.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire to be filed in by P.7 selected pupils

My name is Ondoru, Agnes, a student pursuing Bachelor of Education at Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus conducting research on the topic “*the effect of inquiry-based learning and learners’ performance in four selected primary school in Ayivu Division, Arua City*”.

Your view as a respondent is considered as part and parcel of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to complete the following questionnaires. Any of your contributions will be treated with utmost confidentiality and only for the purpose of the study. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Please tick the right answers and write eligible.

Section A: Background information on the respondents

1. Gender

a) Boys

b) Girls

2. Age of the pupil respondents (in years)

a) 11 - 13

c) 17++

b) 14 - 16

3. How many subjects do you_ learn in class?

- a) One
- b) Two
- c) Four six
- d) All subjects

Section B: Impact of inquiry-based learning methods on learners in Social Studies

4. Which subject do you like best?

- a) SST
- b) English
- c) Mathematics
- d) Science

5. How many times a week do you learn SST?

- a) Once
- b) Two to three times
- c) Four
- d) Every day

6. Where do you learn social studies from?

- a) Always in class
- b) Only at school
- c) In class and outside class
- d) At home
- e) In so many places

7 What do you use when learning social studies?

- a) Blackboard only
- b) Maps
- c) Charts
- d) Text books e) All the above

8. Which places have you ever visited for an excursion?

- a) Market
- b) Factors
- c) Show grounds
- d) Rivers/lakes
- e) Mountains

9. A part from your teacher who else has ever taught you Social Studies this year (2024)?

- a) None
- b) Resourceful person like policeman, LC official, medical personnel.

Section C: Performance of learners exposed to inquiry-based learning

10. What do your teachers tell you about social studies as a subject?

- a) Very simple
- b) Vague
- c) Very hard
- d) Very wide

11. Which subject is disliked by the biggest percentage in your class?

- a) Social studies so
- b) Science
- c) Mathematics
- d) English

12. What do you have to say about the setting of examinations in social studies?

- a) Questions are always very hard.
- b) Questions come from what you have learnt only.
- c) Questions are always very simple.
- d) Questions are always from day-to-day life experience.
- e) Thank you for your contribution

Section D: Performance of learners exposed to inquiry-based learning

13. What challenges do you face with inquiry based Social Studies learning? (Mention at least one or two challenges?)

.....

Thank you for your contribution

Appendix II: Questionnaire to be filled in by P.7 social studies teachers

My name is Ondoru, Agnes, a student pursuing Bachelor of Education at Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus conducting research on the topic “*the effect of inquiry-based learning and learners’ performance in four selected primary school in Ayivu Division, Arua City*”.

Your view as a respondent is considered as part and parcel of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to complete the following questionnaires. Any of your contributions will be treated with utmost confidentiality and only for the purpose of the study. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Please tick the appropriate alternatives

1. For how long have you been teaching Social Studies?

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| a) 1-2 years | d) 7-9 years |
| b) 3-4 years | e) Over 10years |
| c) 5-6 years | |

2. Which methods do you use in teaching Social Studies?

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| a) Discussion | b) Representation |
|---------------|-------------------|

- c) Exhibitions
- d) Construction
- e) Inquiry
- f) Integrated
- g) Dramatization
- h) Print method
- i) Problem
- j) Projection methods/ AV projection
- k) Lecture /tradition

3. Why do you use those methods in question 2 above?

- a) They are the easiest methods
- b) I don't have any idea about other methods
- c) Time table does not favour other methods
- d) Other methods are tiresome

4. What problems do you face in teaching Social Studies?

- a) Lack of text books
- b) Lack of instructional
- c) No training
- d) Children do not have interest in this subject
- e) Any other

5. Does the school have instructional materials for Social Studies?

- a) Yes
- b) No

6. If yes how would you rate them?

- a) Quantitatively
- b) Sufficient
- c) Insufficient

7. What is your attitude towards Social Studies as a subject?

- a) Very simple and good
- b) Hard and complicated
- c) Wide and vague
- d) Like any other subject

8. How does lack of qualified personnel affect the teaching of Social Studies?

- a) Favorably
- b) Adversely
- c) No effect

9. As social studies teacher, what do you think contributes mostly to good pupils' performance in Social Studies?

- a) Methods of teaching
- b) Teachers' attitudes
- c) Pupils' attitudes
- d) Examination system
- e) None of these

10. What comment do you give about the examination setting in Social Studies in Primary Leaving Examination?

- a) Good
- b) Bad
- c) It depends on individuals
- d) Not easy to explain Thank you for your contribution

11. What challenges do you face with inquiry based Social Studies learning?

Thank you for your contribution

Appendix III: Questionnaire for Head teachers

My name is Ondoru, Agnes, a student pursuing Bachelor of Education at Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus conducting research on the topic “*the effect of inquiry-based learning and learners’ performance in four selected primary school in Ayivu Division, Arua City*”.

Your view as a respondent is considered as part and parcel of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to complete the following questionnaires. Any of your contributions will be treated with utmost confidentiality and only for the purpose of the study. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

Please tick the appropriate alternatives

1. The methods of teaching Social Studies in your school is:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. As separate subjects | 3. It depends on the teachers wish |
| 2. As integrated subjects and in others as integrated subject | |

2. Which approaches do your teachers use in teaching Social Studies?

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| a) Traditional | c) Both traditional and Inquiry based method |
| b) Inquiry based method | |

3. What problems do you face as a teacher in teaching Social Studies?

- a) Lack of instructional materials
- b) Lack of text books
- c) Teachers lack interest
- d) Teachers lack appropriate methods
- e) All the above

4. Indicate all the instructional materials you have in your school or use in Social Studies

- a) Wall maps
- b) Ground maps
- c) Globes
- d) Pictures
- e) Charts
- f) Models
- g) Reference books
- h) Farms
- i) Markets
- j) Resourceful persons
- k) Atlases
- l) Radio
- m) Tours/excursion
- Television /films
- n) Newspapers
- o) Real objects

5. Where and how do you get them?

- a) Supplied by City Education Officer, CEO
- b) CEO gives money to the head teachers to buy them
- c) Buy them from book shops from money contributed by parents
- d) Teachers make them or improvise
- e) All the above

6. How many teachers do you have teaching SST?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4

7. How often do your social studies teachers attend refresher courses?

- a) Once in a while
- b) Termly
- c) Often
- d) Often

d) Not at all

8. Is it always easy for you to find and recruit teachers qualified to teach Social Studies?

a) Yes

b) No

9. Other than classroom teaching where else do your pupils learn else do your pupils learn Social Studies from?

a) Farms

d) Real features

b) Markets

e) Tour/Excursion

c) Visitors

10. How do you rate social studies performance in PLE for the last; three years as compared to Mathematics, English and Science?

a) First

c) Third

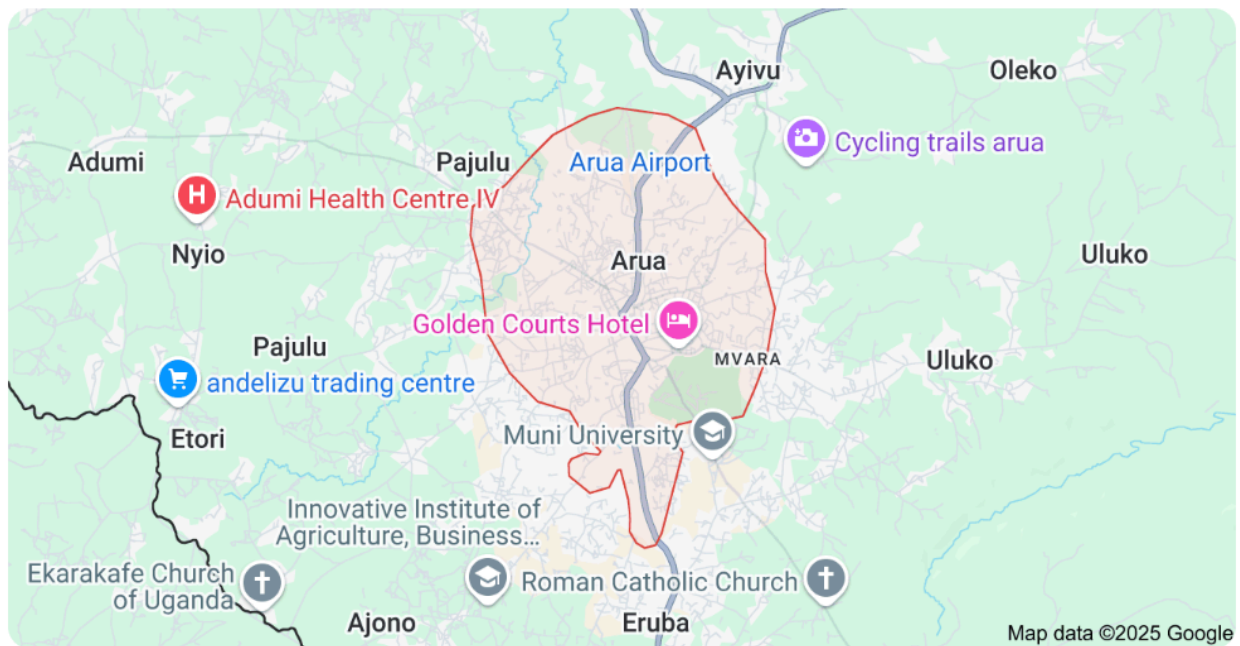
b) Second

d) Fourth

11. What challenges do you face with inquiry based Social Studies learning?

Thank you for your contribution

Appendix iv: Map of Ayivu Division, Arua City.



Appendix V: Introductory letter for collecting data



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

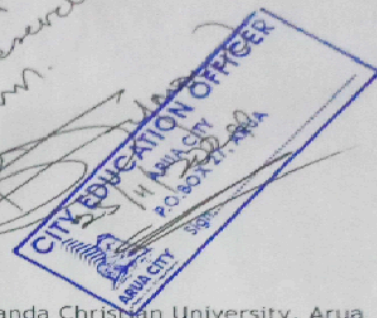
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ARUA CAMPUS

Department of Education

To:

The principal City Education Officer,
Arua City,
P.O. Box 356 Arua City.

Kindly allow her to undertake research in your school.



Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Introduction Letter for Data Collection.

I am writing to introduce Ondoru Agnes, a student at Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus, pursuing a Bachelor of Education with the registration number J22/ASC/BED/046. She is undertaking a research study entitled "The effect of inquiry based learning on social studies learner performance in four primary schools in Ayivu Division" as part of her academic requirements.

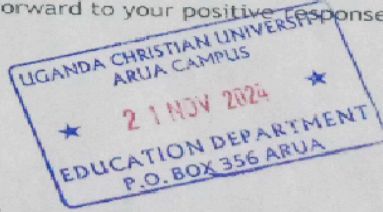
The study will involve data collection through questionnaires, and interviews, which will be conducted with the highest regard for the school's policies and the privacy of all participants. All data collected will be used solely for academic purposes and will be handled with strict confidentiality.

We kindly request your support and cooperation in allowing her conduct research at your institution. Your assistance in facilitating interactions with your Community, staff and Locals for this data collection process will be immensely valuable.

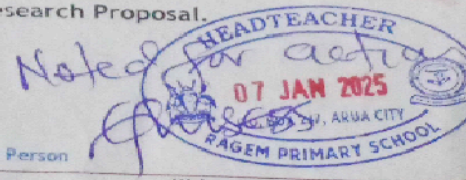
We appreciate your understanding and look forward to your positive response. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,

John Asiku
Ass. AG. Head of Department,
Uganda Christian University, Arua Campus,



Jasiku@ucu.ac.ug, +256783006087; Attachments: Research Proposal.



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