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FIELD-BASED EXCURSION (FBE) IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF GEOGRAPHY IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONDO STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The age long tradition of Field-Based Excursion (FBE) is being eroded as effective learning strategy in secondary schools. This study considers investigating FBE and the teaching and learning of geography in some selected secondary schools in Akoko Southwest, Ondo State, Nigeria with a view to examining; the practice of FBE in the selected secondary schools, students' perceptions to FBE practice in secondary school, FBE and perceived relationship with geography subject, and FBE and learning impacts on secondary school students. The sample population consists of students of secondary school offering Geography as a subject in Akoko Southwest Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting twelve (12) secondary schools, while ten (10) students each were randomly selected from sampled schools. This sample gave a total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents in this study. Learning and Excursion Questionnaire (LEQ) was built using four points Likert scale with Mean Weight Values (MWV) and Grand Mean Value (GMV) for perception analysis. The decision states, accept the perception if the MWV is greater than the MWV; and reject, if otherwise. Results show that; responses denote excursion is no longer part of school curriculum, group excursion could be a preferred mode of FBE for optimum productivity, all aspects of geography require FBE for better understanding" was ranked 1st on MWV=3.55, which signifies high level of relationship, It is worthy of note that significant impacts of FBE has far enriching impacts on students' learning habits. The study concludes that efforts are needed to reintroduce FBE for quality educational delivery. It therefore recommends that there should be a reintroduction of FBE into secondary school curriculum so it can be made compulsory for students. Government and stakeholder at different levels should ensure adequate sponsor of FBE to bridge the cap for less privileged students. Teachers should introduce field-based approach to teaching methods.

KEYWORDS

Secondary School
Field Based Excursion
Teaching
Curriculum
Geography

1. Introduction

Geography is one of the major subjects in senior secondary school education. The relevance of Geography in secondary schools in the pursuit of tertiary education cannot be over emphasized because of its understanding of the environment. Geography teaches man how to interact with his physical environment, and helps students to appreciate their environment better in relation to the usefulness of the abundant resources in their environment. Yeng (2009) describes geography as a subject that enables students to explore and understand the relationship between human beings and the earth through the study of space, place and environment. It is also a discipline that fosters

learning across a wide range of natural science and social sciences and integrate them coherently under spatial and environmental paradigm (Rogers & Viles, 2003).

Geography makes useful contributions to the understanding and solution of numerous rapidly changing spatial and environmental issues in global, natural and local contexts like the shrinking of ice cover in the Arctic Ocean, rural-urban migration, and climate change among others.

Like every other subject, Geography has employed Field-Based Excursion (FBE) as a tool to intimately connect students and teachers to objects of focus within the context of divers environmental phenomenon. As noted by various researchers that include (Casinader, 2016; Fuller, Edmondson, France, Higgitt, & Ratinen, 2006; Hope, 2009; Marsh & Hart, 2011; Matthews & Cranby, 2014; Taylor, Boon, & Kriewaldt, 2012), the FBE has traditionally been a significant component of geography education and is often described as a defining feature of the discipline for effective mode of learning. FBE helps in acquiring first hand data from geographically eminent places such as any place with the rivers, valley, mountains, historical monuments, falls, ridges, sea, ocean, through observation, measurements, and sample collection.

Meanwhile, the teaching and learning of geography, is better taught in practical sense because of its central theme that has to do with environment-based knowledge. Amosa (2013) submitted that students taught using community resources performed better than students taught using the conventional method. In another study, Yusuf (2006) studied the effect of field trip on Senior Secondary Schools students' performance in social studies in Ilorin metropolis. His findings revealed that students taught using FBE performed better than their counterparts taught using the conventional method.

Despite the impressiveness of FBE in geography study, it is however observed that there are reduced passion for participation from both students and teachers. To this, Fuller et.al (2006) argue that there is a need for rigorous research into better way of exploring FBE for better results.

In the present study area, not much is researched on FBE considering limited empirically documented works as relates to geography study. Thus, it is required that research be focused on assessing the Field-Based Excursion (FBE) in the teaching and learning of geography in some selected secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria with a view to providing an improved measure of participation by teachers and students. In a more broader perspective, the study has examined the status of FBE, the practice of FBE, and the impacts FBE has on teaching and learning of geography in secondary schools of the study area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fieldwork theory in Geography

The classroom instruction theory versus closed interaction on field was advanced by Cohen, Raudenbush and Ball (2002). This theory presents instruction and learning as a system of interactions. In these interactions, learners interact with fellow learners, learners interact with their teachers, the teacher interacts with content, and learners interact with content. According to Kurdziolek (2011), this model therefore helps in conceptualizing learning resources not just as physical things, but as including systems composed of objects, relationships, actors, and environments. Cohen et. al. (2002) conceptualization of the Classroom Instruction theory is presented in Figure 1.

According to Cohen et.al. (2002), educational resources include teachers' formal qualifications, books, libraries, and buildings among others and can be used as valid measures of educational quality. They point out that access to education itself does not cause learning. They say that research reports have shown that teachers and schools having similar resources are able to do different things with the resources, leading to different results in learning. They attribute this to different uses of learning resources.

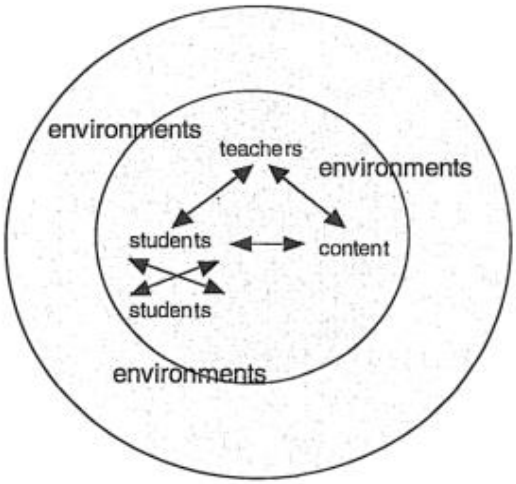

Fig. 1. Instruction as Interaction Model

According to Cohen et al. (2002) researchers have discerned what makes instruction work. Results of the studies have shown that resources that helped students learn were deployed by the more effective teachers. In this scheme of things, teaching is presented as activities aimed at enabling students use materials, tasks, and other resources well. Resources are significant in that, their access, use and teacher preparation create educational quality (Cohen et al. 2002). These proponents of the theory foresee instruction as consisting of teachers and students interacting among themselves and around the content in environments. To them, interaction refers to the connected work between teachers' and students' which may extend for days, weeks, and months.

According to Lampert (2001), as tasks develop instruction evolves, in turn leading to other tasks, and as students take part in the learning process, their understanding waxes and wanes. In the designing of lessons, setting learning tasks, interpretation of students' work and in managing time and activity, learning resources are important. To accomplish their tasks, teachers and learners must therefore operate in several domains, including use of knowledge, coordination of instruction, mobilization of incentives for performance, and management of learning environments (Cohen et al. 2002).

Coordination in instruction also determines the use of resources. Teachers' and students' work on content is one dimension of coordination concerns. Cohen et al. (2002) are of the view that because instruction consists of complex interactions among teachers, learners, and the content, then there are many opportunities for uncoordinated. They say that the coordination of instruction is dependent on the making of connections of teachers' and learners' ideas, over time, and with elements in the environment. This coordination depends on the knowledge teachers have on content, how it should be presented, learners' understanding, agents in the environment, as well as having a will to make connections that are fruitful. Coordination also depends on applying social resources that build trust and support the collection and analysis of evidence. An equally important instruction domain involves managing elements of the earning environment. When teachers and students deal with problems of coordination, resource use, and incentives, they do so in and within learning environments (Cohen et al., 2002).

Cohen et al. (2002) in their analysis have offered a view of causality in the important role that learning resources contribute in learning. They point out that the crucial research question cannot be "Do resources matter"? They say that this is because no valid effort can be made in learning or teaching that can be conceived in the absence of resources. Further, they say that adequate evidence exists that resources are causally related to learning. Instead they say that the crucial question must be: "What resources matter, how, and under what circumstances?" they point out that one key circumstance is the desired result.

On her part, Kurdziolek (2011) has pointed out that the Classroom Instruction Theory is useful for understanding how learning is achieved through successful student-resource interactions. The author adds that the theory is also useful in understanding the impacts of learning resources on important factors such as student academic outcomes. The current study therefore sought to assess the effects of excursion in the teaching of Geography in some selected secondary schools in Akoko Southwest, Ondo State, Nigeria.

2. Method

This study employed descriptive research design.The target population consists of students of secondary school in Akoko Southwest Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The accessible population consists of both male and female students in the selected schools and those offering Geography as a subject. Multistage sampling technique was adopted in sampling procedure. Purposive sampling technique was used to select twelve (12) secondary schools from the study areas, where students are currently offering Geography as a subject. Simple random sampling was equally employed to select ten (10) students from each of the sampled schools. This gave a total of one hundred and twenty (120) respodents in this study. Learning and Excursion Questionnaire (LEQ) was developed to serve as an instrument for data collection. The LEQ was built using four points likert scale ranging from "Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD)". The study has four research questions that focused on; what is the current status of FBE? How is FBE being practiced? and how does FBE influence the teaching and learning of geography in secondary schools of the study area. In answering the questions, the decisions on students responses were based on Mean Values (X) and the Grand Mean values calculated. The decision states, accept the perception if the Mean Value is greater than the Mean Grand Value; while decision is rejected if Grand Mean Value is higher than the Mean Value calculated.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Practice of FBE in the Selected Secondary Schools

Responses to research question one were analyzed and presented in Table 1. This research question was addressed by the questionnaire administered among the sampled students. The existing status of FBE were indicated as perceived with 9 items of responses. In the analyses, 4 items were rejected and 5 were accepted based on the overall decision of the likert scale. It was well spelt out on Items 1, 3, 7 and 8 where responses denote excursion is no longer a part of school curriculum, which could be simply mean that excursion is non-existing in school. These rejected items were on calculated Mean values 1.4, 2.1, 1.6 and 1.4 respectively, which are lower than the Grand Mean value at 2.20.

However, items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 9 were accepted based on their mean values that were above the calculated Grand Mean Value at 2.20. The items indicated that excursion is optional in schools (2.2), excursion is self sponsored (2.5), excursion is not a part of school programme (2.5), Excursion is based on self interest (2.3), excursion is rarely considered significant as part of learning process (2.8). These results are the indication of an existing status of FBE in schools. Hence, efforts are needed to reintroduce FBE for quality educational delivery. To this, Scott et.,al. (2006) submitted that rigorous research into better way of exploring fieldwork for better results is an essential part of educational practices.

Table 1. The practice of FBE among Geography students in Secondary Schools

S/N	Item		SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
1	Participation in excursion is compulsory	Freq	85	25	2	8	1.4	Rejected
		%	70.8	20.8	1.7	6.7		
2	Excursion is self sponsored	Freq	38	19	22	41	2.5	Accepted
		%	31.7	15.8	18.3	34.2		
3	Excursion is in the school curriculum	Freq	55	57	7	1	1.6	Rejected
		%	45.8	47.5	5.8	0.8		
4	Excursion is not a part of school programme	Freq	6	19	41	54	3.1	Accepted

		%	5	15.8	34.2	45		
5	Excursion is optional in school	Freq	36	42	21	21	2.2	Accepted
		%	30	35	17.5	17.5		
6	Excursion is based on self interest	Freq	45	21	22	32	2.3	Accepted
		%	37.5	17.5	18.3	26.7		
7	Excursion is currently captured in school program	Freq	32	45	39	4	2.1	Rejected
		%	26.7	37.5	32.5	3.3		
8	Students are being motivated towards participation in excursion	Freq	74	38	4	4	1.4	Rejected
		%	61.7	31.7	3.3	3.3		
9	Excursion is rarely considered significant as part of learning process	Freq	22	20	28	50	2.8	Accepted
		%	18.3	16.7	23.3	41.7		

GM = 2.2

3.2. Students Perceptions to FBE Practice in Secondary School

Responses to research question two were analyzed and presented in Table 2. These responses indicate perceptions of students on FBE. Items 1,4 and 6 were rejected by the likert scale based on the calculated Grand Mean Value (GMV) of 1.55. However, items 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8 were accepted because the GMV is lower than the Mean Values (MV) of items.

Table 2. Responses on students perception on FBE

S/N	Items		SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
1.	Excursion is for fun fare with little or no academic importance	Freq	81	30	8	1	1.4	Rejected
		%	67.5	25	6.7	0.8		
2.	The cost of excursion is huge and need to be sponsored	Freq	37	70	11	2	1.8	Accepted
		%	30.8	58.3	9.2	1.7		
3.	Insecurity is a major problem to excursion	Freq	33	72	13	2	1.9	Accepted
		%	27.5	60	10.8	1.7		
4.	Excursion is only relevant to Geography and may not be part of general school curriculum	Freq	66	44	11	2	1.6	Rejected
		%	55	36.7	9.2	1.7		
5.	Learning practicals is an illusion without excursion	Freq	38	62	18	2	1.8	Accepted
		%	31.7	51.7	15	1.7		
6.	Excursion is not relevant to students' creativeness	Freq	82	32	6	0	1.4	Rejected
		%	68.3	26.7	5	0		
7.	Excursion could help in exposure to new ideas	Freq	57	33	22	8	1.8	Accepted
		%	47.5	27.5	18.3	6.7		
8.	Excursion is better practiced when collectively carried out in group	Freq	35	38	43	4	2.1	Accepted
		%	29.2	31.7	35.8	3.3		

GM=1.7

The items accepted revealed the significance of each response on FBE. For instance, item 2 helps to understand the huge additional cost of excursion on an individual student. It was further stressed that excursion should be sponsored rather than charging the costs on students. The item 3 expresses insecurity as a major constrain to effective excursions. Insecurity and kidnapping often times incapacitate free tour from town to villages or visa vis.

Additional response on item 5 indicates excursion as crucial part of learning practicals. This is to establish that closeness to an object helps to better learn from it. On item 7, it was agreed that excursion equally enhances knowledge acquisition through exposure to new ideas. In another opinion, it was noted on Item 8 that excursion is better carried out in group movement. This is to establish that group excursion could be a preferred mode of FBE for optimum productivity. It is obvious from the fore-goings that students could benefit more if properly guided on the execution of FBE in secondary schools. The current findings are in agreement with the submission of

Instructional Strategies Online (2013), that a study trip taken outside the classroom to obtain direct experience from the natural setting and to improve student's interest in learning for collecting data, materials or objects classroom as well as to observe objects or phenomena is a crucial part effective learning in schools.

3.3. FBE and Perceived Relationship with Geography Subject

Relationship between FBE and geography subject was observed in the selected secondary schools and perceptions of the respondents were recorded and presented in Table 3. The responses were analyzed using ranking method to depict the order of relationship based on 1st to 5th order with Mean Weight Value (MWV) calculated. Item 5 "all aspects of geography require FBE for better understanding" was ranked 1st on MWV=3.55, which signifies high level of relationship. That is, FBE forms an essential component of effective understanding of geography subject, and require for quality learning in secondary schools. Items 2 and 4 were ranked 2nd (MWV=3.50) and 3rd (MWV=3.48) depicting, "field-based illustrationsdoes not only needed in geography" and "only some parts of geography require FBE" respectively. The respondents perceptions explain the fact that geography is not only a subject that requires inclusion of FBE in secondary schools.

Table 3. Ranking of perceived relationship between FBE and geography subject

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Likert Scale 4	3	2	1	X	Rank
1.	Field-based teaching depicts reality and can be accessed without FBE	61	22	2	35	244	66	4	35	2.90	4th
2.	Field-based illustrations does not only needed in geography	70	44	2	4	280	132	4	4	3.50	2nd
3.	Class based teaching alone in geography is sufficient without FBE	27	47	13	33	108	141	26	33	2.57	5th
4.	Only some parts of geography require FBE	72	35	12	1	288	105	24	1	3.48	3rd
5.	All aspects of geography require FBE for better understanding	71	44	5	0	284	132	10	0	3.55	1st

GMV=3.2

It was further observed that some parts of geography that are not practical oriented may not require FBE. The 4th (MWV=2.90) and 5th (MWV=2.57) ranks fell on Items 1 and 3. That is, field-based teaching depicts reality and can be accessed without FBE, and class based teaching alone in geography is sufficient without FBE. From these findings, it is pertinent to note that teaching through FBE could aid apt understanding with practical examples. In one of the similar studies, Smith (2001) noted that bringing students into field may serve as a bridge between the popular and the academic.

3.4. FBE and Learning Impacts on Secondary School Students

Table 4 presents 3 items that indicates perceived learning impact of FBE on Geography students in secondary schools. All the items considered were accepted to denote positive impacts. The decision states, accept the perception if the Mean Weight Value (MWV) is greater than the Grand Mean Value (GMV); while decision is rejected if GMV is higher than the MWV calculated. Hence, statements that include "students are well informed based on exposure through FBE" (MWV=3.4), "students build confidence in learning through FBE" (MWV=3.5), and "Students have better grade in FBE examination questions" (MWV= 3.4) were accepted. It is worthy of note that significant impacts of FBE has far enriching impacts on students' learning habits. To this, Muganga and Ssenkusu (2019) noted that as students build their confidence in learning through practicals on field, the fieldwork changes from being teacher-centred to student-centred of which students are more autonomous, completing much more self exploration of the region to determine how it is being used and to develop their own perceptions of space.

Table 4. Perceived impacts of field-based excursion on students

S/N	Items		SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
1.	Students are well informed based on exposure through FBE	Freq	67	41	2	10		Accepted
		%	55.8	34.2	1.7	8.3	3.4	
2.	There is confident in learning through FBE	Freq	63	49	8	0		Accepted
		%	52.5	40.8	6.7	0	3.5	
3.	Students have better grade in FBE examination questions	Freq	62	48	10	0		Accepted
		%	51.7	40	8.3	0	3.4	

GMV= 3.4

4. Conclusion

This study has shown that Field-Based Excursion (FBE) plays a significant role in teaching and learning geography subject in secondary schools. Findings of the study further revealed that efforts are needed to reintroduce FBE for quality educational delivery along with quality class room teaching to enhance students' level of understanding in Geography. This is because teaching through FBE has a far enriching impacts on students because of its study with practical examples. Despite the importance of FBE, the study however observes a decline in its practices in the selected secondary schools. In the light of this conclusion, it was recommended that; there should be a reintroduction of FBE into secondary school curriculum so it can be made compulsory for students. Government and stakeholder at different levels should ensure adequate sponsor of FBE to bridge the cap for less privileged students. Finally, teachers should introduce field-based approach to teaching methods.

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