

**INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' VARIABLES FOR THE UTILIZATION OF
FIELDTRIPS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTION IN
COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTHERN GHANA**

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the influence of teachers' variables for the utilization of fieldtrips for Environmental and Social Studies instruction among Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana. Three research questions were formulated to achieve the research objective. As such, the study used a descriptive research design, administered questionnaires and solicited opinions through interviews. Twenty (20) Environmental and Social Studies tutors were sampled from the seven (7) Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana. The result of the findings indicated that tutors in the study area do use fieldtrips in the teaching of Environmental and Social Studies. However, there are a number of challenges militating against their frequent use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process such as the large nature of the classes they handle, insufficient time for the organization of fieldtrip, financial constraint, and lack of support from college administration for fieldtrips, limited available transportation, and the risk associated with fieldtrips. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that tutors should be orientated on the use of fieldtrips through attendance at seminars, workshops and conferences and that government through Teacher Education Division of Ghana Education Service should support Environmental and Social Studies tutors in Colleges of Education financially for improved efficiency on their use of fieldtrips to promote effective teaching and learning. Lecture time table should be flexible to allow tutors to organize fieldtrips in their respective Colleges to bring about effective teaching and learning.*

KEYWORDS: Fieldtrip. Environmental and Social Studies. Teaching of Environmental and Social Studies. Learning of Environmental and Social Studies. Utilization of Fieldtrips. Selection of Fieldtrips Locations. Teaching Strategies.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Social studies is an integrated subject that is geared towards equipping an individual with basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed in guiding him/her in solving personal and societal problems (Quartey, 1984). It aims at producing a responsible citizen who is well informed, concerned, participatory, reflective, productive and willing to contribute to national development (Ayaaba, 2007). Martorella (1985:10) shared the same opinion when he stated the purpose of social studies succinctly is "to develop reflective, competent and concerned citizen". As such, the main task of the Social Studies teacher is to ensure that students understand and make meaning out of whatever they learn in class. However, this depends on the experience, training, as well as the teacher's perception of what Social Studies is or ought to be. Significantly, Social Studies curriculum models have been associated with four widely

used models in many countries including Ghana. This includes Citizenship Education, Reflective Inquiry, Social Science Structure of Education and Unified Integrated as identified by DuBey & Barth (1980), Gross, Messick, Chapin and Sutherland (1981) and Okunloye (1988). Teachers' perception of Social Studies model is therefore important in Social Studies instruction since the mental image of teachers becomes the frame of reference as to why, how and what Social Studies is taught in the school system.

Many teaching techniques have been adopted and utilized in teaching and learning of Environmental and Social Studies since the introduction of the subject in the Ghanaian Colleges of Education in 1998. Among them include role plays, fieldtrips, lectures, dramatizations, seminars, think-pair-and share, simulations, discussions, brainstorming and the like. It is becoming increasingly clear that a technique of making Environmental and Social Studies teaching and learning very effective and real is through the use of student-centered techniques of teaching which includes fieldtrip or out-of-door activities (Oppong, 2007). That is teaching and learning experiences that are planned and implemented outside the classroom. Parker (2001: 289) shared similar sentiments when he opined that "it is in the local community that the teacher sows the seeds of a life-time study of human society". By this, students gain the opportunity to observe at first-hand the various social processes that function around them. These may include problems of group living, government in operation, the production and distribution of goods and services and to the rich cultural heritage of the people who live in the community. It is for this reason that Aggarwal (2001:242) contended that the school community provides "concrete, seeable and tangible resources which are extremely dynamic, interesting and meaningful for teaching and learning of Social Studies". Fieldtrip again enable the Environmental and Social Studies class to study at first hand, many things that cannot be brought in to the classroom due to their size and convenience. Teachers and learners alike see things in their natural habitat, natural state and natural reaction or behaviour. This probably explains why (Dewey, 1967) asserted that a gram of experience is of greater value than a kilogram of theory. However, not all fieldtrips result in these benefits, as a fieldtrip can easily turn into nothing more than a day off from school if it is not well planned. Therefore when selecting a location for fieldtrip, Environmental and Social Studies teachers should always consider the time available, the cost of transportation and the lesson objectives (Ayaaba and Odumah, 2007).

Some teachers are not able to utilize fieldtrips to promote effective teaching and learning due to a number of factors. Negative attitudes of teachers towards the use of fieldtrips to promote effective teaching and learning are revealed by the research related to a number of interrelated factors which includes:

1. Difficulties with transportation (including cost) (Falk & Balling, 1979; Muse, 1982; Orion, 1993; Price & Hein, 1991).
2. Teachers' skills (the disparity between theory and practice and perceived teacher inertia)(Beasley, Butler & Satterthwait, 1993; Falk & Balling, 1979; Orion, 1993; Tamir & Zoor, 1977).
3. Time considerations (preparation, fitting into the school timetable)(Beasley et al., 1993; Muse et al., 1982; Orion, 1993; Price & Hein, 1991).

4. Lack of support from school administrations for field trips (Beasley, Butler & Satterthwait, 1993; Falk & Balling, 1979; Orion, 1993; Tamir & Zoor, 1977) cited in Zhang and Anderson (2003:online).
5. Curriculum inflexibility (Falk & Balling, 1979; Orion, 1993; Price & Hein, 1991).
6. Poor student behaviour and attitudes (Beasley et al., 1993; Muse et al., 1982; Orion, 1993; Price & Hein, 1991).

Environmental and Social Studies is an elective subject in all Colleges of Education in Ghana. Presently, it is belief that after trainees studied this course, they would be able to teach effectively Environmental Studies at the Primary school level and Social Studies at the Junior High School level on completion of their courses (Environmental and Social Studies Syllabus for Colleges of Education, 2004). However, a critical observation at Tamale College of Education, where the researcher did his internship on 2008/2009 academic year and Bagabaga College of Education, Tamale where he presently teach Environmental and Social Studies revealed that teachers of Environmental and Social Studies limits the teaching and learning of the subject only to the four walls of the classrooms. It is in view of this that this research is carried out to investigate the influence of teachers' variables for the utilization of fieldtrips for Environmental and Social Studies instruction among Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

Social Studies is a subject that aims at inculcating into learners knowledge, skills, desirable attitudes and values needed in solving personal as well as societal problems. This view is shared by Ayaaba and Odumah (2007:3) when they indicated that "Social Studies is the study aimed at inculcating desirable skills, attitudes, values and relevant knowledge among learners to enable them to participate effectively in the civic life of their communities".

This can be achieved by exposing learners to a practical interaction with the environment so as to observe, process, record and construct knowledge base on their own experience. Tamakloe (2008:4) upheld this view when he opined that during fieldwork in Social Studies lessons, a learner does not only acquire cognitive and psychomotor skills but also the affective skills as well. The acquisition of the affective skills is needed to foster the attitudinal change among learners which takes a long time to develop and must not be left to chance, and it must not be seen as an activity which occurs out of serendipity. On the account of this, there is the need on the part of Social Studies teachers to plan and use fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process bearing in mind the essence of continuity and sequence to foster reiteration and widening of scope as well as catering for the depth of affective elements to acquired (Tyler (1949) cited in Tamakloe (2008:46). Khan and Weiss (1973) posited in agreement that school related attitudes must be altered in a positive direction, and indicated that whatever else may transpire in the school, the teacher has the most central role to play in the development of student affective responses. But this depends on the Teachers' perception of what Social Studies is or ought to be.

The relevance of instructional materials in most Colleges of Education in Ghana has made it imperative for teachers' to use the local community as a source of resources outside the classroom. These resources can ensure students' involvement in learning events and in building their understanding of the environment, the nature of the world, and also increase their ability

in observing and interpreting their environment. When students use fieldtrips, they develop skills of working in groups, forming questions, collecting data and observing the environment, which are inherent skills in Environmental and Social Studies. Thus, through the use of fieldtrips the experience of the students can be diversified and school lessons can be connected with daily life and real problem (National Academy of Science, 1996). By using fieldtrips, students are given the golden opportunities of seeing, in practical terms, what they have heard, read, or imagined, and are also able to collect data, observe, record, and extract necessary information from the environment (Ayaaba and Odumah, 2007). Fieldtrips provide students with an enduring view of physical, social, and political environment of the learners. Again, fieldtrips open up opportunities for students to be acquainted with real situations, problems, and potentials, and thus bring about critical thinking and inquiry mind thereby making Social Studies lesson to move from mere teacher-centered verbal instruction to student-centered activity (Yusuf, 2007).

More significantly, fieldtrips when used effectively by either experienced or less experienced Environmental and Social Studies teacher assist learners to retain, recall and apply the knowledge gain when the need arises. This view is shared by Evans, (1985) when he carried out a research on the usefulness of fieldtrips in teaching and learning and concluded that classes that used the planned fieldtrip technique learned more, retained more and did better on tests than did classes not participating in fieldtrips. Many researchers have also documented the cognitive and affective benefits of field trips, including increased motivation for learning (Kern & Carpenter, 1984), a more positive attitude toward science and environmental concepts (Bitgood, 1989), the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Mackenzie & White, 1981), stimulate interest for natural resource-related careers and result in an improved attitude toward the site visited (Knapp, 2000 & Tamakloe, 2008).

However, negative attitudes of teachers towards the use of fieldtrips to promote effective teaching and learning have been revealed by a number of researches as indicated earlier. The researcher is yet to come across studies on the influence of teachers' variables for the utilization of fieldtrips for Environmental and Social Studies instruction among Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana. It is against this background that the researcher is challenged and well-motivated to conduct this study to investigate the influence of teachers' variables for the utilization of fieldtrips for Environmental and Social Studies instruction among Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine influence of teachers' variables for the utilization of fieldtrips for Environmental and Social Studies instruction among Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the extent (if any) of tutors' use (if any) of fieldtrips in teaching and learning by Environmental and Social Studies tutors in Colleges of Education in the northern regions of Ghana?

2. What locations are mostly visited by Environmental and Social Studies tutors and students for teaching purposes?
3. Is there any difference between experienced and less experienced Environmental and Social Studies tutors' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Fieldtrip

Fieldtrips have been expressed in various forms such as educational trips, out-of-door activities, study trips, excursions, or educational visits. Baja (1983:62) cited in Odumah and Ayaaba (2007) defined fieldtrip as "first hand experiences which arise from direct learning situations." According to Hug and Wilson (1965:1) Out-of-door activities is the term used to describe the effective use of the natural environment both to teach those parts of the curriculum that can be taught outdoors and to visualize other parts through firsthand experience."

The Encyclopedia of Education (1977:37) defined out-of-door activities as "a series of educational experiences designed to help the student to identify and solve real-life problems, to acquire skills and appreciation with which to enjoy a life time of creative living and to attain an understanding of human and natural resources". This definition suggests that out-of-door activities facilitate the understanding of human as well as natural resources.

Nacino-Brown, Oke and Brown (1985:41) explained that "out-of-door activities involve planned organized visits to points of interest outside the classroom, such as factories, universities, agricultural projects, museums, lakes or mountains." Balogun, et al, (1984) cited by Ayaaba and Odumah (2007:76) asserted that "out-of-door activities involve a teacher taking pupils out of the classroom to the scene where what he wants pupils to learn about can be observed closely." This implies that during field trips, learners' attention should be focused on what they are expected to learn. Krepel and Duvall (1981:7) shared similar opinion when they viewed fieldtrip as "a trip arranged by the school and undertaken for educational purposes, in which the students go to places where the materials of instruction may be observed and studied directly in their functional setting: for example, a trip to a factory, a city waterworks, a library, a museum etc."

From the above discourse, it can be concluded that anytime a reference is made to fieldtrip, then one is referring to any teaching and learning activity that takes place outside the classroom or laboratory. In other words, they are planned visits to sites beyond the classroom for the purpose of illustrating economic, geographical, cultural, historical or educational concepts and principles. Social studies teachers can for instance take learners to places of:

Economic interest: Examples includes market places, super markets, and offices of the main government revenue collecting agencies, (CEPS, IRS and VAT) among others.

Geographical interest: Examples includes, Mountain Afadzato, Gambaga scarp, Wli falls, Boti falls, Kintampo falls, Tumu hills, Keta lagoon, Lake Bosumtwi, Abofour forest reserve among others.

Cultural importance: Examples are the ancient mosque at Laribanga, Ga Mantse palace, Gambaga Witches camp, Tongo Shrine, Akonnedi Shrine and so on.

Historical importance: Examples includes Cape Coast castle, Osu castle, Elimina castle, Bono-Manso, AssinManso, Salaga Slave market and so on.

According to Kern and Carpenter (1984) the cognitive and affective benefits of fieldtrips, including increased motivation for learning, a more positive attitude toward science and environmental concepts (Bitgood, 1989), and the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Mackenzie and White, 1981).

Classification of Fieldtrips

Fieldtrip can be categorized in terms of location, duration and phenomenon. It can take place within the school, in the community in which the school is located and it can also be outside the local community (distant places). Tamakloe et al., (2005) identified two main types of fieldtrip as “the structured and the unstructured”. By implication, the structured fieldtrip is where a teacher together with the learners plan where, how, why, and when to visit a particular site for learning purposes. The unstructured fieldtrip is the reverse of the first one. Opong (2007:181) shared the same view and identified the unstructured and the structured fieldtrips. In the unstructured, the teacher prompts the students to indicate any phenomenon which is of interest to them, and they would like to study. By consensus, the students end up choosing one phenomenon which the fieldtrip will be based on. In the other type of fieldtrip which is structured, the students are aware of what definite task they have to perform in the field. They thus go out to observe and look for pre-planned issues or problems.

Seefeldt (2001) cited by Ayaaba (2007:36-38) also identified five types of fieldtrips which can be embarked upon by Social Studies teachers and their students, be it structured or unstructured. They are:

1. Walking trips: These are trips planned by teachers and their learners to places of interest within the school compound or the neighborhood.
2. Spilt-group trips: These are trips organized by groups to specific places where they can observe and satisfy their learning potentials. In other words, such trips involve only a small group of the class.
3. Repeated trips: These are repeated visits to places of interest for new learning. They are very suitable for younger children.
4. Specific purpose trips: These kinds of trips are often organized to achieve specific purpose(s). For instance, a visit to parliament to observe parliamentary proceedings.
5. Woo trips: These are end of year picnics or visits to zoos that involves the parents of the learners. These trips are relatively unimportant for children’s learning. However, their value lies in involving parents and in providing the excitement of doing something new and different within the school.

Opong (2007:181) additionally opined that “fieldtrip can also be classified in terms of location (local or distant), duration (half an hour to weeks) and phenomenon (economic, geographic, cultural, historic and so on).

The Northwest Catholic District School Board (2011) classified fieldtrip according to the following bench marks. Namely; fieldtrips that are organized:

1. Within the boundaries of the school's attendance area.
2. Beyond the boundaries of the school's attendance area but within the boundaries of the District School Board.
3. Beyond the boundaries of the District School Board.
4. Involving overnight accommodation.

According to Hairston (2012: online), two types of field trips exist, thus, those for educational purposes and those just for fun. Examples of educational trips include museums, exhibits and plays still fun, but with the purpose to educate students. Examples of fieldtrips that really have nothing to do with education, but make nice breaks from the everyday routine, include skating, swimming and play day at the park. Educational fieldtrips should inspire excitement, but typically expound upon some topic or lesson objective.

THE NATURE AND OBJECTIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM

According to the Teaching Syllabus for Environmental and Social Studies for Colleges of Education (2004), "For this course, two subjects; namely Environmental Studies and Social Sciences have been put together and called Environmental and Social Studies. Basically, the subject borrows ideas, concepts, facts and generalizations from the social sciences and the humanities to explain social issues and to address societal problems." The course examines the concept Environmental and Social Studies, the environment and its components which buttressed with basic mapping skills. It also examines the various economic roles individuals play to prop up society and the roles of the financial institutions in supporting the various activities. Additionally, the purpose and content of this course is closely related to citizenship education which is cherished in many Ghanaian societies. It emphasizes holistic approach to relevant issues such as gender, attitudes, values, beliefs, problem solving skills and the role of community institutions in the development of Ghanaian society. According to the Teaching Syllabus for Environmental and Social Studies for Colleges of Education (2004), the course has been designed to:

1. Create an awareness of the components of the environment.
2. Equip students with basic mapping skills.
3. Help students to develop the ability to make rational decisions.
4. Provide opportunities for students to participate in projects and activities.
5. Encourage student with the knowledge and skills required to handle the subject effectively at the basic school level.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES-RELATED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Community resources according to DuBey and Barth (1980:73) “refer to all the people, places and materials teacher use to assist learning activities. In fact many activities are developed around selected resources. Examples of this are when you take students to the market on a fieldtrip, when you use tape recordings of the head of state’s speeches to discuss national unity”. They categorized community resources into four. Namely: Human resources, Audio-visual aids, reading materials and community resources. Tamakloe, et al., (2005) shared similar views when they defined instructional resource as “any resource which the teacher uses to enhance learning, understanding or the acquisition of concepts, principles and skills by students”. Banks (1990) cited by Ayaaba (2007:2) grouped instructional resources as: “Reading materials; visual, audio and audio-visual materials; Role playing, creative dramatics and simulation; and the community as a learning resource”. This implies that community resources can be viewed as the various group of materials found in the school community or outside it which greatly promote teaching and learning of Environmental and Social Studies. They are many and varied as they basically enhance the teaching and learning of Environmental and Social Studies. There are several ways of utilizing community resources in Environmental and Social Studies teaching and learning. Among them are:

1. Taking learners to the resources through fieldtrips or educational visits.
2. Bringing the resources to the students by inviting resource persons to the school to help in teaching of some themes and using local materials in the teaching and learning of Environmental and Social Studies.
3. The use of various audio and audio visual materials to promote effective teaching and learning. For instance, capturing the event(s), things, people and institutions and processes on still pictures, video documentary, and audio documentary among others.
4. The use computers for instance internet for teaching and learning.

Yusuf (2007) shared similar ideas when she came out with the following as ways teachers can use Community resources to enhance teaching and learning of Social Studies:

1. Use of invited guest in class.
2. Use of resources outside the classroom but within the school compound
3. Organizing a workshop, discussion or debate as social studies topic.
4. Visit to historical sites or museum.
5. Visit to city streets to examine things or observe events.
6. Visit to natural features; rivers, streams, rock areas, land reforms.
7. Observational visits to industrial concerns, artisan workplace.
8. Educational visits to market and other business concern.
9. Visit to resources persons in their places of abode, work or duties.

10. Educational visits to religious places.
11. Involvement of other teachers from within and outside the school in your class activities.
12. Educational observation of legal process, visit to prison, school in your class activities.
13. Visit to educational or learning resources center.
14. Visit to community library.
15. Use of instructional materials (artifacts, items, realia, etc.) collected from the environment.

From the above, Environmental and Social Studies tutors in Colleges of Education in Northern Ghana can use the community resources to enhance teaching and learning through visits with their students to places of:

Economic interest: Examples includes Tamale, Wa and Bolgatanga markets, Tamale super market, and offices of the main government revenue collecting agencies such as (CEPS, IRS and VAT) at Walewale, Tamale, Yendi, Damongo, Bolgatanga, Navrongo, Bawku, Tumu, and Wa.

Geographical interest: Examples includes Tumu hills, Gambaga scarp, Kintampo waterfalls, Mole National park at Damongo, Paga crocodile pond at Paga among others.

Cultural importance: Examples are the ancient mosque at Laribanga, Naa Gbewaa grave at Pusiga, Gbewaa palace at Yendi, Nayiri palace at Nalerigu, Gambaga Witches camp at Gambaga, Tongo Shrine at Tongo, Wanaa palace at Waand so on.

Historical importance: Examples includes Salaga Slave market at Salaga, Naajeringa wall at Nalerigu and so on.

Educational or learning importance: Examples include Tamale regional library, Walewale District Library, Bolgatanga regional Library, Wa regional Library, University for Development Studies Campuses at Wa, Navrongo and Tamale among others.

Legal significance: Examples include the regional High courts at Tamale, Wa and Bolgatanga, Navrongo prisons, Gambaga prisons, Tamale prisons, Bawku prisons, Wa prisons, Salaga prisons among others.

Industrial concerns: Example include Diamond cement factory at Buipe, Volta Star Tomato factory at Pawlugu, Cotton ginnery at Tumu among others.

Quantitative studies on the attitudes of teachers towards fieldtrips were undertaken by Falk and Balling (1979) and Muse, et al., (1982). The researchers found that in the opinion of teachers, the positive benefits derived from field trips were:

1. Hands-on real world experiences
2. Quality of education, positive attitudes to science and motivation towards the subject

3. Improvement of the socialization between students, which would impinge on the classroom, and development of rapport between teachers and students
4. Enable teachers to utilize other learning strategies such as cooperative learning.

Furthermore, fieldtrips stimulate interest for natural resource-related careers and result in an improved attitude toward the site visited (Knapp, 2000). However, not all fieldtrips result in these benefits as some fieldtrips can easily turn into nothing more than a day off from school if not well planned.

SELECTION OF FIELDTRIPS LOCATIONS AND UTILIZATION PROCESS

Scholars have documented the cognitive and affective benefits of field trips, including increased motivation for learning (Kern and Carpenter, 1984), a more positive attitude toward science and environmental concepts (Bitgood, 1989), and the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Mackenzie and White, 1981). However, not all field trips result in these benefits. A fieldtrip can easily turn into nothing than waste of instructional time if not planned well.

Too often, field trips are usually isolated from the rest of the school curriculum. Research, however, has shown that there is less transfer of learning and less meaning when the fieldtrip is not related to classroom teaching (Ferry, 1995). The fieldtrip should be integrated into the broader instructional program and be used only when it is the most effective and efficient procedure for fulfilling the learning objectives. When working within the formal education setting, make sure fieldtrips are relevant to the school's curriculum and that they support state education standards and current reform efforts.

Orion (1993) offers a three-part model that can be used to integrate fieldtrips into the curriculum. Each part is a structured, independent learning unit, yet each links naturally to the next part of the model. The first part, the preparatory unit, prepares students for the fieldtrip with targeted learning activities-usually incorporating some "hands-on" tasks. Learners might work with materials and equipment that will be used in the field and gain the basic concepts and skills necessary for the completion of field activities.

The fieldtrip is the second and central part of the model. It serves as a concrete bridge toward more abstract learning levels. Making the fieldtrip the central part of the instructional program, rather than using it as a summary or enrichment activity, provides the concretization learners need to move on to higher levels of cognitive learning when they return from the field.

The third part of Orion's model, the summary unit, includes more complex and abstract concepts, aiming toward helping learners to use their fieldtrip learning and to transfer it to new situations. This component is usually conducted in the classroom.

While it may appear simple and intuitive at first glance, in fact this model advocates a significant departure from the typical stand-alone fieldtrip. By including pre- and post-trip elements, the teacher becomes involved in the instruction of the fieldtrip concepts, and students are more likely to make connections to other topics in the curriculum.

The relative novelty or familiarity of the fieldtrip setting affects learning. Settings that are too novel cause fear and nervousness; settings that are too familiar cause boredom, fatigue, and diversionary activities (Falk & Balling, 1980). Students learn best in a moderately novel

fieldtrip setting. It's best to familiarize them first by showing slides or a video of the fieldtrip site and locating the fieldtrip area and route on a map. Educators can also provide students with an itinerary of activities and details regarding the type of work they will be expected to do at each learning station, possible weather conditions, safety hazards and precautions, location of restrooms, and lunch or snacks.

The main instructional strategy of the fieldtrip should be hands-on experience, focusing on activities that cannot be conducted in the classroom or laboratory (Orion, 1993). Rather than passively absorbing information through guided tours or participating in simulations, students should be actively constructing knowledge through their interactions with the environment. This strategy relies on a process-oriented rather than a content-oriented approach, incorporating activities such as observing, identifying, measuring, and comparing. Environmental and Social Studies teachers should build in opportunities for structured exploration, such as scavenger hunts or sensory awareness activities. Further, the actual site of the fieldtrip should be conducive to learning. Terrain that is too difficult, learning stations that are separated by great distances, extreme weather conditions, and constant pestering by mosquitoes make learning difficult.

Some students, especially those from urban backgrounds, may arrive at the park or natural area with negative preconceptions and fears that interfere with the effectiveness of the fieldtrip program (Bixler et al, 1994). These students need repeated positive exposures to natural settings to lower the novelty of these settings and help them unlearn misconceptions. Direct experiences can be planned to counter perceived threats, such as encountering dirt and germs, getting lost, and being attacked by venomous snakes or ravenous wolves (Bixler et al, 1994). When possible, fieldtrips should be provided to young children as young as preschool and kindergarten to prevent them from developing these fears in the first place. With enough exposure and support, these students may be able to introduce their families to positive encounters with nature. However, with the rising cost of bus transportation for fieldtrips, it can be difficult for teachers to make multiple trips to natural settings. It may be wise to help teachers develop natural areas on their school sites. Also called "outdoor classrooms" and "land labs," these nearby locations can give teachers a place to conduct a variety of environmental activities.

Fieldtrip utilization process from the researcher's opinion refers to the appropriate way or ways of using fieldtrips to bring about effective teaching and learning. DuBey and Barth (1980:73-74) shared similar opinions when they opined that fieldtrips are quite popular with teachers, but they are frequently badly conducted. They need good planning if they are to fit into your lessons and if the pupils are to gain something worthwhile from them. They continued that in planning an educational visit you might ask yourself these questions (checklist):

1. Will this fieldtrip be consistent with the objectives of the unit or the lesson?
2. Do you have permission from the principal and the parents of the children?
3. Have you checked with the authorities at the place you intend to visit?
4. Have you arranged for transport, if necessary?
5. Have you arranged a time that is convenient for every one?
6. Have you personally made the trip and visited the place yourself so that you know what to anticipate? Will there be someone to conduct the tour and answer questions?

7. Have you prepare the students through prior research, reading and discussion?
8. Have the students prepared questions to ask? Have they been told what to observe? Have they prepared an interview or questionnaire if necessary?
9. Have the students been given a specific assignment so that they know what they must learn from the visit?
10. Have you plan follow-up activities? Will the children be able to use the information gained from the visit?

If the answers to the above questions are positive, then the teacher is in a better position to utilize the fieldtrip to bring about effective teaching and learning. But if the answers to the questions are negative, then the teacher will be in a better position to realize that fieldtrips usage under such circumstances would not bring about the effective teaching and learning.

INFLUENCE OF TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS ON THE UTILIZATION OF FIELDTRIPS

A teaching strategy refers simply to an approach, method or a combination of carefully designed classroom interactions that could be followed meticulously to teach a topic, concept or an idea. This brings us to the issue of having numerous teaching strategies or methods, such as lectures, fieldtrips, role plays, dramatization, think-pair and share, discussion, brainstorming, debates among others. Several factors affect the kind of technique that a teacher selects to teach a particular topic at any point in time. Kwarteng (1999) identified those factors as philosophical, physical and psychological factors.

The area of teacher professional development and the preparation of resources, particularly where teachers and resource people worked cooperatively, have been mentioned in the literature by Price and Hein (1991) and Chase (1989). Teachers' recollections of their own school fieldtrips tended to be more extensive with younger teachers, with few of the older teachers indicating any fieldtrips while attending school. This is not a memory problem but reflects the increasing popularity of fieldtrips in schools from about the mid- to late-sixties.

For many teachers, their first field trips were at university or teachers college and this depended on the discipline being studied, with biological and geological sciences tending to have more fieldtrips than any of the other sciences. For many teachers the main factor which affected their willingness to take fieldtrips appeared to be their successful experiences, primarily as teachers but also as students, and learning the value of using other venues for their teaching.

The literature from museums by Wolins et al, (1992) showed that good experiences encouraged people to continue using those facilities. There seems to be a parallel argument that teachers who have experienced good field trips as part of their teaching will continue to organize and take them; this situation was also apparent to Price and Hein (1991). On the other hand, some museum visitor research indicates that poor fieldtrips to these venues had the effect of creating museum non-users (Hood, 1992); most teachers would be unaware of these long-term consequences.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the combined paradigm or the mixed research design. Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry (Creswell, 2006). As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process (Creswell, 2006). As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. Patton (1990) stated that when investigating human behaviour and attitudes, it is fruitful to use a variety of data collection methods. In justifying the case for the use of the mixed approach, Nau (1995) opined that using different sources and methods in the research process, helps the researcher to build on the strengths of each type of the data collection and minimize the weakness of any single approach and therefore maximize the strength of the qualitative and quantitative method use together. This is not to suggest that a mixed methodology was the only suitable approach for this topic, rather it is considered to be desirable approach because it was the most suitable approach that can be used to achieve the objectives of this research.

Descriptive survey was also used in an attempt to describe some aspects of a population or an existing phenomenon by selecting unbiased sample of individuals to complete questionnaire and take part in interview. According to Boyle (2004:18) “surveys are good for asking people about their perceptions, opinions and ideas though they are less reliable for finding out how people actually behave”. A descriptive survey also offers a researcher accurate description of what the teachers, the target population for this study about fieldtrips and also describes their utilization in teaching Environmental and Social Studies. Mixed methods research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2006). This has been the historical argument for mixed methods research for the last 25 years (Jick, 1979).

Creswell (2006) argued that quantitative research is weak in understanding the context or setting in which people talk, as the voices of participants are not directly heard in quantitative research. Also, quantitative researchers are in the background, and their own personal biases and interpretations are seldom discussed, as such, qualitative research makes up for these weaknesses. On the other hand, qualitative research is seen as deficient because of the personal interpretations made by the researcher, the ensuing bias created, and the difficulty in generalizing findings to a large group because of the limited number of participants studied. Quantitative research, it is argued, does not have these weaknesses. Clearly, the combination of both approaches can offset the weaknesses of either approach used alone.

It is against this background that the researcher adopted the descriptive survey for the study because it will allow for the use of questionnaire and interview schedule for the study to seek information from tutors of Environmental and Social Studies in the seven (7) Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population for the study was all tutors of Environmental and Social Studies in all the thirty-eight (38) Colleges of Education in Ghana. The target population for this study is constituted by all tutors of Environmental and Social Studies in the seven (7) Colleges of Education in the

Northern regions of Ghana. In all, twenty-eight (28) tutors were the target population for the study, comprising four (4) tutors from each of the seven (7) Colleges of Education.

On sampling and sample size, purposive sampling procedure was employed to select the number of colleges involved in the study, based on convenience and to reduce cost. The Colleges of Education in the three Northern regions are sparsely sited and conducting this research in all of these colleges would have caused a drain on the finances of the researcher. However, the census sampling technique was used to select the respondents because of their relatively small size.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Background Data of Respondents

This section presents and discusses the background information of the respondents. Such information includes name of college, gender, subject specialization, qualification and experience. Table 4.1 presents a summary of the distribution of teachers by their background information. From Table 4.1, it can be observed that seven colleges of education were used for the study with Tamale and Gbewaa Colleges of Education having 4 (20%) each out of the twenty respondents. Bagabaga and EP Colleges of Education had 3 (15%) each while the rest of the Colleges had 2 (10%) each. This indicates that, the respondents used for the study covered a wide range of Colleges of Education from the Northern sector.

In terms of gender, out of the 20 respondents, 18 (90%) were males while 2 (10%) were females. This means that most tutors teaching environmental and social studies in the colleges of education are males.

Table 4.1: Personal Data of respondents

Variables	Sub-scale	Number (N)	Percent (%)
Name of college	Tamale College	4	20
	Tumu College	2	10
	St. Johns Bosco	2	10
	Bagabaga College	3	15
	NJA College	2	10
	Gbewaa College	4	20
	EP College	3	15
Gender	Male	18	90
	Female	2	10
Subject specialization	Social Studies	12	60
	Economics	1	5
	Geography	4	20
	None	3	15
Qualification	BA/BSc	2	10
	B.Ed	10	50

	M.A/M.Sc	2	10
	M.Ed	3	15
	M.Phil	3	15
Experience (in years)			
	1 – 3	7	35
	4 – 5	2	10
	6 – 8	1	5
	9 – 12	4	20
	12 years and above	6	30

Source: *Field Survey, 2012*

With reference to subject specialization, it can be observed that 12 (60%) are tutors who have specialized in social studies, 4 (20%) in Geography, 1 (5%) in Economics with 3 (15%) indicating that they have no specialization. This indicates that most of the respondents used for the study are specialist in Social Studies.

The academic qualification of the respondents was also an aspect that was looked at, 10 (50%) have first degree in the Arts, Science and Education, 3 (15%) each have an M. Ed and M. Phil. This is an indication that most tutors teaching Environmental and Social Studies in the Colleges of Education do not have the required educational qualification since they are supposed to have second degrees to teach at that level. Teaching experience is one thing that cannot be left out in looking at the background of respondents, 7 (35%) have taught for 1 – 3 years, 6 (30%) have taught for over 12 years while 4 (20%) have 9 – 12 years teaching experience.

Use of Fieldtrips in Teaching

What is the extent (if any) of teachers' use (if any) of fieldtrips in teaching and learning by Environmental and Social Studies tutors in Colleges of Education in the northern regions of Ghana? Fieldtrips as a method of teaching cannot be left out in the teaching and learning of Environmental and Social Studies. Environmental and Social Studies as a subject should not be treated in abstract hence the quest of the researcher to bring to the fore the use of fieldtrips in teaching and learning of environmental and social studies. Table 4.2 presents a summary of the response.

Table 4.2: Use of Fieldtrips in Teaching

Sub-scale	Number (N)	Percent (%)
Yes	19	95
No	1	5
Total	20	100

Source: *Field Survey, 2012*

From Table 4.2, it can be observed that majority, 19 (95%) of the respondents indicated that they use fieldtrip in teaching, while 1 (5%) stated that he does not. One head of department by name Mr. Shani asserted through the interview that "in my College, my department organizes fieldtrips at least once in a semester for Environmental and Social Studies students". This means that most tutors in the various colleges of education use fieldtrips when teaching Environmental and Social Studies. This buttress Ferry (1995) view that fieldtrip should be integrated into the broader instructional program and be used only when it is the most effective and efficient procedure for fulfilling the learning objectives. As a result, when working within

the formal education setting, fieldtrips becomes relevant to the school's curriculum as they support state education standards and current reform efforts.

Table 4.3 brings to light the number of times fieldtrips have been used in the teaching and learning of Environmental and Social Studies.

Table 4.3: Number of times fieldtrips have been used by Tutors

Sub-scale	Number (N)	Percent (%)
Once	12	60
Twice	6	30
Others	1	5
None	1	5
Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

From Table 4.3, it can be observed that 12 (60%) out of the 20 respondents indicated that they use fieldtrips once, 6 (30%) said twice while 1 (5%) each mentioned others and none respectively. From the findings it can be deduced that even though most of the tutors use fieldtrips, the frequency of usage or the rate at which they use this method of teaching is not as consistent as it supposed to be since majority (60%) have stated that they use it once in a while.

LOCATION OF FIELDTRIPS

What locations are mostly visited by Environmental and Social Studies tutors and students for teaching purposes?

Fieldtrips are variously called Educational trips, out-of-door activities, study trips, excursions, or educational visits. According to Hug and Wilson (1965:1) cited in Ayaaba (2007) Out-of-door activities is the term used to describe the effective use of the natural environment both to teach those parts of the curriculum that can be taught outdoors and to visualize other parts through firsthand experience. The focus of the second research question was to identify the locations that are mostly visited during such fieldtrips. Table 4.4 presents a summary of the response.

Table 4.4: Locations mostly visited by Environmental and Social Studies tutors and students

No.	Locations	A N (%)	S N (%)	NU N (%)
1	Visit to locations of resource persons	4 (20)	10 (50)	6 (30)
2	Visit to historical sites or museums	4 (20)	7 (35)	9 (45)
3	Visit to city streets to observe events	1 (5)	9 (45)	10 (50)
4	Visit to natural features such as rivers, streams. Rocky areas and waterfalls	9 (45)	6 (30)	5 (25)
5	Educational visits to market or other business concern	2 (10)	9 (45)	9 (45)
6	Visits to industrial concerns	1 (5)	6 (30)	13 (65)
7	Educational visits to religious places	2 (10)	7 (35)	11 (55)

8	Educational visits to legal process in courts	2 (10)	5 (25)	13 (65)
9	Educational visits to prisons	2 (10)	18 (90)	-
10	Visit to educational or learning resources	1 (5)	14 (70)	5 (25)
11	Visit to community library	2 (10)	14 (70)	5 (25)
12	Educational visit to agricultural sites	-	9 (45)	11 (55)

Source: *Field Survey, 2012*

Key: *Always (A), Sometimes (S) and Not Sure (NS)*

From Table 4.4, it can be observed that 4 (20%) indicated that they always visit locations of resource persons, 10 (50%) stated that they sometimes do while 6 (30%) were of the view that they are not sure. Visit to historical sites or museums recorded 4 (20%) as always visiting, 7 (35%) stated sometimes while 9 (45%) mentioned that they are not sure. This means that even though social studies have the historical aspects in it, tutors in the training colleges (45%) are not sure of visits to historical sites and museums. It can also be observed that 2 (10%) said they visit the prisons always while 18 (90%) said they do so sometimes. From the analysis, the researcher intended to find out the locations which are mostly visited by calculating the means and standard deviations of the various responses. Table 4.5 presents the summary of the responses.

From Table 4.5, it can be observed that educational visits to prisons ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.23$) recorded the highest mean value, this is followed by Observational visits to industrial concerns or artisan workplace ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.60$) and Educational observation of legal process in courts ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 0.69$). However, the least mean ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 0.83$) was associated with visit to natural features such as rivers, streams, rocky areas and waterfalls.

A further analysis was carried to find the overall view of the respondents on the locations that are mostly visited by Environmental and Social Studies teachers and students, a mean of means ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.63$) indicated that the respondents generally always visits these locations, a mean of standard deviation of 0.63 gives an indication of the closeness of the various responses to each other, in other words, the respondents response are clustered around the mean of 2.39 (Always).

Table 4.5: Means and Standard Deviations of locations mostly visited by Environmental and Social Studies tutors and students

No.	Locations	M	SD
1	Visit to locations of resource persons	2.10	.77
2	Visit to historical sites or museums	2.32	.75
3	Visit to city streets to examine things or observe events	2.45	.60
4	Visit to natural features such as rivers, streams. Rocky areas and waterfalls	1.80	0.83
5	Educational visits to market or other business concern	2.35	.67
6	Visits to industrial concerns or artisan workplace	2.60	.60
7	Educational visits to religious places	2.45	.69
8	Educational observation of legal process in courts	2.58	.69
9	Educational visits to prisons	2.94	.23
10	Visit to educational or learning resources	2.20	.52
11	Visit to community library	2.30	.66
12	Visit to farms and other agricultural sites	2.55	.51

Source: *Field Survey, 2012*

Mean ranges: Always (A) - (2.01 – 3.00)

Sometimes (S) - (1.01 – 2.00)

Not Sure (NS) - (0.00 – 1.00)

Mean of Means = 2.39

Mean of Standard Deviation = 0.63

Mr. Sulley who head Social Studies Department in one of the Colleges of Education stated during interview that “places I always visit with my students are; markets, highlands, and industrial areas”.

One could therefore deduce that these visits considering the choice of the same location, the constancy of the visits and the emphasis on educational visits that the Colleges of Education utilized more often the structured form of fieldtrips. The main instructional strategy of the fieldtrips used by the Colleges of Education is hands-on experience, focusing on activities that cannot be conducted in the classroom or laboratory enhances their integration in the curriculum which supports Orion’s (1993) view. Orion posited that rather than passively absorbing information through guided tours or participating in simulations, students should be actively constructing knowledge through their interactions with the environment. This strategy relies on a process-oriented rather than a content-oriented approach, incorporating activities such as observing, identifying, measuring, and comparing. Environmental and Social Studies teachers should therefore build in opportunities for structured exploration, such as scavenger hunts or sensory awareness activities. Furthermore, the actual site of the fieldtrip should be conducive to learning.

QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE OF TUTORS AND FIELDTRIPS UTILIZATION

Other sub-questions under the research question three (3) are:

Is there any difference between qualified and unqualified Environmental and Social Studies teachers’ use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process?

An attempt was made to find out the difference between qualified and unqualified Environmental and Social Studies teachers’ use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process. This was the focus of research question 3.

Table 4.6: An independent t-test for the difference between qualified and unqualified Environmental and Social Studies teachers’ use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process

Qualification	M	SD	T	df	Sig.
Qualified	12.526	4.501	1.075	19	0.035*
Unqualified	10.063	4.129			

Source: Field Survey, 2012

* Significance level .05

A test for differences using the independent sample t-test was used to determine if there is any statistical significance between the qualified and unqualified Environmental and Social Studies teachers' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process. The descriptive statistics obtained, as shown in Table 4.6, indicate that qualified Environmental and Social Studies teachers obtained a higher mean score ($M = 12.526$) than unqualified Environmental and Social Studies teachers ($M = 10.063$). The Levene's Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in the use of fieldtrips is significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups – qualified and unqualified teachers were equal ($F = 3.490$, sig. > 0.05), hence a test for equal variances was used.

From Table 4.6, the mean of qualified teachers ($M = 12.526$, $SD = 4.501$) is not statistically significantly higher ($t = 1.075$, $df = 19$, two – tailed probability < 0.05) than the mean of unqualified teachers. This implies that there is a significant difference between qualified and unqualified Environmental and Social Studies teachers' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process.

Is there any difference between experienced and less experienced Environmental and Social Studies teachers' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process?

The idea that experience counts in the teaching profession was what motivated the researcher to find out if there is a significant difference between experienced and less experienced Environmental and Social Studies teachers' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process.

Table 4.7: An independent t-test for the difference between experienced and less experienced Environmental and Social Studies teachers' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process

Levels of experience	M	SD	T	Df	Sig.
Experienced	8.9158	2.647	2.305	19	0.023**
Less Experienced	8.7000	1.562			

** Significance level .05

Source: *Field Survey, 2012.*

A test for differences using the independent sample t-test was used to determine if there is any statistical significance between experienced and less experienced Environmental and Social Studies teachers' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process. The descriptive statistics obtained, as shown in Table 4.7, indicate that experienced Environmental and Social Studies teachers on the average are perceived to have use fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process ($M = 8.9158$) than less experienced Environmental and Social Studies teachers ($M = 8.7000$). The Levene's Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in the use fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process is significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups – experienced and less experience were equal ($F = 1.848$, sig. > 0.05), hence a test for equal variances was used.

From Table 4.7, the mean of experienced teachers ($M = 8.9158$, $SD = 1.64751$) is not statistically significantly higher ($t = 2.305$, $df = 19$, two – tailed probability < 0.05) than the mean of female education students. This implies that there is a significant difference between

experienced and less experienced Environmental and Social Studies teachers' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Fieldtrips are utilized by the Environmental and Social Studies teachers in the seven colleges of education in the northern regions of Ghana; however the frequency of use can be improved.
2. Prisons, observational visits to industrial concerns or artisan workplace and Educational observation of legal process in courts are locations mostly visited by the colleges of education, with the least visited place being natural features such as rivers, streams, rocky areas and waterfalls.
3. This research further revealed that there is a significant difference between qualified and unqualified Environmental and Social Studies teachers' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process. This contradicts Yusuf (2007) whose study concluded that there is no significant difference in the use of community resources by qualified and unqualified Social Studies teachers.
4. Also there is a significant difference between experienced and less experienced Environmental and Social Studies tutors' use of fieldtrips in the teaching and learning process. This contradicts Yusuf (2007) whose study concluded that there is no significance difference in the use of community resources by the experienced or less experienced Social Studies teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Tutors in the Colleges of Education should be encouraged to use fieldtrips as instructional resources to enhance the teaching and learning of Environmental and Social Studies. Teaching time tables should be planned by the Colleges authorities such that they make room for the organization of fieldtrips. This would promote effective teaching and learning.
2. The Colleges of Education should formulate policies on the utilization of fieldtrips in the teaching of environmental social studies, so that the decision to utilize fieldtrips is not left to the personal discretion of any single individual or individuals. Governing councils of the various Colleges of Education should set aside some funds to support the organization of fieldtrips to enhance effective teaching and learning.
3. The large class sizes that is characteristic of Environmental and Social Studies classes should be reduced to enable teachers utilize fieldtrip as an instructional resource to promote effective teaching and learning. Colleges of Education should also put in place measures to ensure that other tutors assist Environmental and Social Studies tutors who organize fieldtrips involving large class sizes to enable such educational activities become effective.

4. Government of Ghana through Ghana Education Trust Fund should periodically provide resources both monetary and logistics timely and adequately to tutors in Colleges of Education for proper planning and execution of fieldtrips that will be beneficial to the teaching and learning process.
5. Teachers should plan fieldtrips to fit into their lessons for the students to benefit fully from such trips. Principals of Colleges of Education should plan their time tables such that there is enough time for the organization of fieldtrips to enhance effective teaching and learning.
6. Educational activities, skills and learning outcome should be communicated to the students before embarking on any fieldtrips.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study examined the influence of teachers' variables for the utilization of fieldtrips for Environmental and Social Studies instruction among Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana. Specifically the research investigated the extent of use (if any) of fieldtrips in teaching and learning by Environmental and Social Studies teachers in Colleges of Education in the Northern regions of Ghana, identify the locations mostly visited by Environmental and Social Studies teachers for teaching purposes, examine the factors associated with the level of use of fieldtrips by Environmental and Social teachers in Colleges of Education in the northern regions of Ghana.

The researcher therefore suggest that future researchers on a similar issue should broaden the scope of the study to cover all the thirty-eight (38) colleges of education in Ghana so that the findings from such a study could be generalized.

Also, the scope of such similar study in future should be open to cover all subjects in the colleges of education in Ghana instead of limiting the study to only Environmental and Social Studies.

Finally, future investigations into similar issue should include the student teachers since they are the direct beneficiaries of fieldtrips utilization in the teaching and learning process.

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