

Fieldtrip as a Tool for Achieving Equitable, Quality and Inclusive Education in Nigeria: A Case of Some Secondary Schools in Yola, Adamawa State.

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Abstract

As the nation scrambles for solution to the decline in quality and access to education, field trip has been presented as an alternative to improving quality, inclusive and equitable education system. The specific objective of the study is to present the relevance of field trip in education and the current state of the strategy in some selected secondary schools in Yola, Adamawa state. The researchers made use of descriptive research design and simple random sampling technique as well as simple descriptive statistics to collect data and analyse result to arrive at its findings. A total of 300 respondents from six (6) secondary schools were randomly selected to respond to questionnaire. Findings from the study revealed low participation, lack of laid down guidelines or policy from related authorities as well as several challenges hampering the adoption of the strategy among schools. Several locations of educational values suitable for field trips within the study area have also been identified. The researchers recommend the full adoption of the strategy for all institutions of learning, development of relevant guide and policy frame works as well as the need for increased emphasis in the use of the strategy while producing teachers in our teachers' training institutions.

Keywords: Field trip, equitable, quality, inclusive, education

Introduction

In response to the continuous and dwindling quality of education in Nigeria, all major stakeholders in the education sector are worried because *'the panic button has been pressed'* by many educational success indicators. Stakeholders are concerned about the future of the nation with the calibre of people being produced by the education system today, this has led to many efforts to improve access, inclusiveness and the quality of education given to our future leaders. In addition to all efforts made to improving the quality of education delivered, stakeholders can also adopt the use of field trips as a strategy to improving the inclusiveness, quality and equity of education for the Nigerian child.

The works of Woods (1937) is one of the early works on the idea of field trips around the world. According to him, field

trips are situations when students leave school ground for another environment in pursuit of educational goals under the guidance of a teacher. As an anonymous educational adage says, learning does not end only in the four corners of the classroom. Field trip as an approach to teaching and learning involves exposing learners to real life experience of the phenomena under study to improve understanding. Menazel (2015) in another hand, sees school field trips as part of the teaching aids utilized to reinforce both student abilities and student teacher interaction within a related atmosphere away from the classroom. It is an old approach to quality education that can be traced to long history around Europe. Woods (1937) citing several examples to explain the origin of the approach, narrated that field trip in the United Kingdom began in 1898 when a geography teacher understand that his students have never

seen a glacier and so could not understand glacial landform. It is difficult to find schools in modern times adopting purely the field trip approach to education, but Woods (1937) citing 'wandering Kindergarten' as a typical example where field trip was the key approach narrated success in the goal of education at the time which is to unite new generation, improve patriotism and know the history and culture of the nation children from various regions separated by wars. Lessons from the story point to the fact that as old as field trip is, it can still be a relevant approach to achieving the goal of education in Nigeria.

To improve the understanding of the environment, some equipment, phenomena, history, procedure and the relative value of some cultures, there is need for first hand contact with such things. Several subjects from both arts and sciences inclination have adopted the field trip approach in many level of education, this include Geography, Biology, Social Studies, History, languages, Physics, Engineering, Chemistry, Technology and religious studies (Menazel, 2015. Shakil, Faiz and Hafeez, 2011. BBC 2011. Essays, UK, 2013)

Statement of the Problem

Developed countries have shown evidence of strong participation in field trip activities, as shown by numerous research works on the subject matter, the availability of policies at school, regional and national level supporting or guiding the practice of field trip activities and pictorial evidence from school websites showing periodic attendance (Green, Kisida & Bowen, 2014; QA Research, 2008; Volusia County Schools, 2012; and Edgerton High school for Girls 2014). In order to attain the dream of being listed among developed nations of the world, it is pertinent to adopt strategies used by those that have advanced to get to where they are. Limited information about the

state of field trip activities in Nigeria exist in accessible public domain. This paper seeks to explicitly proffer field trip as an additional means for achieving an equitable and quality inclusive education to all citizens. It attempts to give the relevance of field trip in achieving equitable and inclusive education in the country through a thorough description of the situation of field trip activities in Nigeria using some selected secondary schools in Yola, the Adamawa State capital.

Objectives of the Study

This research is aimed at presenting field trip as one of the solutions to declining quality and exclusiveness in Nigerian educational system as well as providing a comprehensive description of the nature of educational trips in the country. The study has the following specific objectives;

1. Determine the rate at which secondary schools in the state organize, sponsor and engage in educational trips.
2. Determine challenges faced in organizing, conveying and managing educational trips by secondary schools in the state.
3. Determine the existence of a guideline or policy document by schools and government in the state that relates to educational trips.
4. Determine places of educational interest around state that will be convenient for educational trips to be held.

Research Questions

This study is guided and set to provide answers to the following set of specific questions;

1. What is the rate at which secondary schools in Yola undertake field trips?

2. What are the challenges facing the undertaking of field trips among secondary schools in Yola?
3. What is the status of policies or guidelines among schools?
4. Where are the potential locations of educational interest for undertaking field trips around Adamawa State?

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. The population of the study are the teachers and students of ever increasing secondary schools (public and private) in Yola Town in addition to the 31 found in Jimeta metropolis both forming the state capital called Yola (Aliyu, Shahidah and Aliyu, 2013), Adamawa State. Six (6) secondary schools were selected using simple random sampling technique. They consist of three private and three public secondary schools that have both junior and senior secondary school levels.

Analysis, Result and Discussion

The study respondents were grouped into two, teacher – based and student – based. The choice of the two kinds of respondents was to get a description of the situation as

The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire. Two different sets of questionnaires were administered and returned; one for students and the other for teachers. The responded and returned questionnaires were a total of 96 (of 100) for teachers and 176 (of 200) for students. The questionnaires contained two sections; ‘section A’ of the questionnaire seeks to describe the demographic details of the respondents while ‘section B’ strives to enquire their perception on the state of field trip activities in their respective schools. The instrument was administered during school hours. This was done randomly amongst students while teacher respondents were selected based on subjects taught in the class, priority were given to science, social science and art subject teachers, others in mathematics and the languages were given less considerations.

The data from the study were analysed using simple descriptive statistical tools such as averages, percentages, and frequency tables.

it relates to field trip activities from the leaner and the teacher point of view. The demographic details of the respondents for the study are presented on the table 1 as follows.

Table 1: The demographic data of respondents

S/No	Parameter	Sub – parameter	Frequen cy	Percentage (%)
1.	Teachers’ Age	Approx. 18 – 30 years	68	70.8
		31 – 40 years	24	25.0
		41 – 60 years	4	4.2
2.	Teachers’	NCE	64	66.7
		Diploma	8	8.3

	Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	24	25.0
		Masters	0	0.0
3.	Students' Category	JSS	76	43.2
		SS	100	56.8

Source: field survey 2016

From Table 1, it is clear that most of the school teachers are within the youthful age group, hence full of vigour and most likely to embark on multiple trips. It could be also be deduced that the teacher – respondents have the minimum national requirement for teaching in Nigerian secondary schools as stated by Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004. The demography of the students suggests that there are more senior secondary school students than juniors. This implies that majority of the student – respondents are most likely teenagers, thus a better understanding of the concept of study.

The Rate of Participation and Undertaking of Fieldtrips among Secondary Schools in Yola

In order to have an idea on the level of participation of secondary schools in field trip activities, the researchers' attempts to determine the specific number of times that schools in the study area undertook educational trips in the last session (2015/2016). It was found that even though majority of the schools in the study area did not undertake any trip in the last session as indicated by 57 (59.4%) of none participation in trips for the session, an appreciable number of schools undertook educational trips in the last session, this is revealed by the affirmation of 24 (25%) of the respondents. The table 2 displays these responses.

Table 2: Times schools in Yola undertake educational trip in last session

No. of times	Frequency	Percentage
1 time	12	12.5%
2 times	24	25.0%
3 or more	3	3.1%
None	57	59.4%
Total	96	100

Source: field survey 2016

In attempting to understand student participation on the other hand, the

researchers probed whether students had idea of 'field trip/excursion'. Majority of

the sampled students knew about excursion or field trip as shown by 90.9% of them with only about 9% claiming to have no knowledge of the educational activity. It was also revealed, that majority (over 61%) of the students used in the study have never participated in an excursion or field trip in their respective schools, and only 34% have participated in a school tour in their respective schools.

As indicated by Volusia County schools manual for field trip procedure (reviewed 2012), trips may last a number of durations ranging from few hours, days, weeks or even months depending on the purpose for the trip or financial capabilities of schools or parents. Though majority of schools that were used in this study did not participate in trips last session, majority of the ones that were able to undertake trips indicated that trips in the study area lasted for few hours of the day of the trip, it may last for 1 – 12hrs or a little more as the case may be. This was revealed by 14 (58.3%) of the teacher-respondents that indicated participation in field trips in the last session.

The duration of student outside the classroom on field trip activities is dependent on the purpose and specific objectives the program intends to achieve as well the distance of the location of interest from the school among other factors. The Association of Science Education of the United Kingdom (UK) in 2011 says ‘increasing the number of school field trips helps to improve learners understanding and knowledge (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2011).

On enquiring the teacher respondents’ perception on the most appropriate number of times that school tours should be held per term for their secondary school students, it was observed from table 3 that, majority (41.7%) of the respondents perceived it is most appropriate to take students on educational tour at least twice per term; others (37.5%) perceived at least once per term as most appropriate. The rest (20.8%) are spread between three to more times per term.

Table 3: Perception of teachers on the most appropriate times per term for school trips

Times per term	Frequency	Percentages
1 times	36	37.5%
2 times	40	41.7%
3 times	8	8.3%
More than 3 times	12	12.5%
Total	96	100

Source: field survey 2016

Fieldtrips as a strategy appeals to most kind of learners, making it inclusive and equitable. Thus, Tutwiler, Lin & Chang 2012, asserts that Education within the classroom is insufficient education unless

it is reinforced with school trips. They belief trips provide students with both scientific and practical experience as well as developing student cognition and skills. They also noted that field trip helps in

realistic applications of the study material a student is studying thereby offering them an opportunity to discover the actual world. Comparing the relationship between field trip and the kind of knowledge received within the classroom, (Everson, 1973) states that ‘theory could easily become dull, arid and deterministic; with field trip theory can become interesting, rewarding and probabilistic’. The role of field trip in helping to achieve quality equitable and inclusive education has further been highlighted by Ramos (2010) and Jay, Brian, and Daniel (2013) to contain among others the following;

- a. Field trips are interactive in its approach to learning, it makes learning lively and entertaining thereby increasing learner interest and passion to learning. It spurs learners drive to seek to acquire more about the phenomena observed in the field.
- b. Field trips improve analytical and creative abilities of learners. It enables learners to develop their own inferences/conclusions from real life observations thereby helping to correct erroneous understanding of the phenomena observed. It helps to enhance critical thinking skills as improve independence in decision making.
- c. Field trips give learners the opportunity to explore the learning environment outside the classroom. It helps learners to gain retentive factual information about things around them.

- d. Field trips create and encourage healthy interaction among learners. It helps to improve the level of cooperation in learners as well as to inculcate the skill of collaboration in making empirical inquiries.
- e. Learners’ participation in field trips can help to promote health and fitness as well as provide a positive use of leisure. It helps to prepare the learner for other skills acquisition by ensuring improved mental stability.

Findings from the study to buttress on the aforementioned points as to the relevance field trip as an alternative to achieving and improving an inclusive and equitable education in Nigeria shows it has been unanimously agreed by all 96 teacher – respondents from this study that it is important to organize and undertake field trip in our learning institutions. It has also been shown by 96% of teachers in the study area that field trip help students to understand school taught lessons better, they thereby indicated that field trips help in academic excellence. It has also been unanimously revealed by the 176 student respondents for this study that field trips are academically beneficial. Majority of the student respondents disagree that educational trips are for fun only as over 88% indicated. Only 11% think that educational trips are for fun only. Table 4 shows the indication of student respondent to some of the questions asked in the questionnaire respectively.

Table 4: Student perception on field trip value

Questions	Response			
	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%

1. Do you think excursion is for fun only ?	20	11.4%	156	88.6
2. Do you think excursions helps academically?	176	100.0%	0	0.0

Source: field survey 2016

Challenges Associated with Field Trip Activities

As highlighted, fieldtrips are promising but are also in the decline in the USA, the UK and likewise among other nations, this may be due to the introduction of class visual fieldtrips as brought about by technology (Tutwiler, Lin & Chang 2012, BBC 2011. Green, Kisida & Bowen, 2014). In addition, in a review of the value of field trips in education, Behrendt and Franklin (2014) concluded that 'Field trips have become less common due to limited funding and limited available time due to each school systems' focus on standardized testing'. They suggested that non-traditional field trips are still quite possible with campus field trips as cost-free alternatives while retaining the benefits of traditional field trips. They further opined that, students might explore around the school grounds as they focus on a specific topic or concept in the particular

subject of interest. Even though Ritchie and Coughlan (2004) have enumerated some challenges faced in undertaking educational trips, these include; cost of undertaking the entire trip process, staff shortage and unwillingness, socioeconomic conflicts and natural disasters, shortage of accommodations, logistical problems, medical problems, distances to trip destination and limited attraction. QA Research (2008) on the other added the following as challenges faced in undertaking educational trips. According to them, school administration policies and prohibitions, incomplete risk assessment, time and transportations are other problems facing educational trips. This paper explored the nature of problems faced in undertaking educational trips in the study area. Table 5 give the findings of the study in relation to the nature of challenges faced by school in undertaking filed trips.

Table 5: Nature of problems faced in undertaking school trips in Yola

S/No.	Nature of problem	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Parental support	14	20.6%
2.	Managerial and logistics	34	50.0%
3.	Feeding	3	4.4%
4.	Student behaviour	8	11.8%
5.	Fear of disaster	9	13.2%
	Total	*68	100

Source: field survey 2016 * -total number that faced challenges

It was gathered from the study that majority of the respondents had problems during educational trips, over 68 (70.8%) attest to this fact while only 28 (29.2%) revealed they don't experience any challenge in undertaking a school tour.

From table 5, it was revealed that most (about 50%) of the problems faced in undertaking school trips in the study area are managerial and logistical in nature, these problem range from unskilled and shortage of staff knowledgeable in trip organizing procedure and supervision, shortage of transport, inadequate finance and a host of others.

Next in the hierarchy of the nature of problems faced in undertaking educational trips in the study area as presented on table 5 is lack of parental support as indicated by over 20% of the respondents. This may be due to lack of orientation to parents on the intellectual and moral value of educational trips on their wards/children. Students' indiscipline and fear of disaster (natural and man-made) also proved a problem encountered in school tours as shown by over 11.8% and 13.2% respectively.

In the developed world, field trips are well organised, coordinated and prioritised, there is high level of awareness and

participation in school tours/ trips, this is made possible because school managements, districts and provincial authorities develop and have a laid down policy documents guiding the undertaking of school trips under their jurisdiction.

The Existence of Guiding Policy on Fieldtrips among Schools in Yola

In order to find out about the state of the situation in regards to policy availability and awareness for field trip activities among teachers in the study area, majority of teachers from the selected schools in the study area reveal that they do not have a laid down guideline or policy for educational trip. Over 58% of the teacher respondents supports that they don't have laid down policy or guideline in their schools, only above 41% reveal that they have a laid policy or guideline for educational trips in their respective schools. It was further shown that that majority 64 (66.7%) of teachers in the study area do not have an idea on any existing government policy concerning educational trips. Only few 32 (33.3%) agreed to have knowledge on an existing government policy regarding school field trips. Table 6 and table 7 gives more lights on the understanding of teachers on field trip policies and guidelines.

Table 6: Schools with laid down guideline or policy for educational trips

Response	Frequency	Percentages
YES	40	41.7%
NO	56	58.3%
Total	96	100

Source: field survey 2016

Table 7: Teachers' awareness on government policy regarding school trips

Response	Frequency	Percentage
YES	32	33.3%
NO	64	66.7%

Total	96	100
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Source: field survey 2016

The researchers based on the responses of the responding teachers realised that the responsibility for organizing educational trips in secondary schools of the study area is shouldered on the subject teachers as indicated by about 51 (53%) of the respondents. Other respondents reveal that the school principal is the organizer of educational trips in their respective schools as shown by 37 (38.6%) of the respondents

Potential Sites/Venues for Fieldtrips in Adamawa State

In the USA for instance where fieldtrips are considered of great relevance to education, advertorials such as the '*Ontario Field Trip Guide: 2016-17 Field Trip Planner for Teachers*' exist to highlight and connect respective fieldtrip venues to schools and teachers alike. The researchers asked the teacher respondents for this study to suggest places suitable to take students for an academic trip in Adamawa State; their variant ideas are therefore summarized as follows.

1. Industrial site – Adama Beverages Ltd Yola, Savannah sugar company Numan, Nima Foam ltd Yola, Kiri hydro electricity plant Shelleng, among others
2. Agricultural farm – Sabore farms Yola, Gundiri farm Yola,
3. Media houses – Gotel communications, Adamawa TV, Abti-printing press, Adamawa publishing company (scope newspaper) Yola.
4. Educational institutions – American University of Nigeria, ModibboAdama University of Technology, Museum, National library Yola etc.
5. Civic sites and public – prisons, legislative houses, government house, airport, zoo

Recommendations

This study, its entire contents, and related ideas recommends the following;

1. There should be sensitization to parent and practicing teachers on the values of field trip method for science and social science-based school subject teaching such as geography, history, biology, chemistry, physics etc.
2. Schools should intensify the undertaking of field trip in their schools to teach learners in order to derive as maximum as possible the benefits the method has to offer.
3. Emphasis should be put in teacher-training programs and institutes on the training of teachers in the use of field trip teaching methods and its accompanying importance on learners development and overall national unity and general development.
4. Field trip teaching methods for all related school subjects in secondary school should be seen as a matter of necessity and not an option for overall child development.
5. Government and all related authorities should develop, publish and distribute policies and guidelines that encourage the use of field trips as a teaching method in secondary schools in the state.
6. The current security situation in the country could surge against engagement in field trip, all hands should therefore be on deck to

promote peace so as to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education.

Conclusion

Field trips are shown to be promising alternatives to improving equity and access to sound and quality education for all. Evidence from the two sets of respondents (teachers and students) in this study indicate consistent results in regards to undertaking field trips in the last session, as much of the data reveals that field trip activities are actually low among schools. Much need to be explored about the state of field trip activities in our schools and how to get the best out of the strategy to improve quality and access to education for all learners. The importance and relevance of educational trip to students, teachers and the school cannot be overemphasised as it also create an avenue for promoting civic education and appreciation of history, morality, patriotism and cultural diversity amongst others.

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