

Effectiveness of Field Trip Learning Instructional Strategy on Achievement in Social Studies among Primary School Pupils in Delta State

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Abstract

The teaching and learning of Social Studies through field trip strategies are believed to enhance students' academic achievement. This study examined the effectiveness of the field trip instructional strategy (FTIS) on achievement in Social Studies among primary school pupils in Delta State. The research was guided by two research questions and three hypotheses. A quasi-experimental design, specifically a pre-test, post-test, control group design, was adopted. The population comprised all upper basic education level Social Studies students in public schools in Delta State. A multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 100 Social Studies students from two non-equivalent intact classrooms. The validated instrument, "Social Studies Achievement Test" (SSAT), with a reliability coefficient of 0.80, was used for data collection. The experimental group was taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy, while the control group was taught using the conventional lecture method. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that the field trip instructional strategy significantly improved students' academic achievement in Social Studies compared to the conventional lecture method. Additionally, no significant difference was observed in the academic achievement of students based on gender. It was recommended that curriculum planners should incorporate field trips into the upper basic school curriculum to provide students with firsthand experiences and enhance their understanding of concepts discussed in the classroom.

Keywords: Social Studies, field trip instructional strategy (FTIS), conventional method, achievement, gender

Introduction

In recent years, innovative teaching methods have gained prominence in educational discourse, particularly as they enhance student engagement and academic performance. The teaching of Social Studies, which aims to develop civic awareness, critical thinking, and social competence, benefits significantly from such methods. Traditional lecture-based instruction, although useful in some contexts, may not fully capture the complexities of Social Studies content, which often involves real-world applications that are best experienced outside the classroom. As a result, field trip instructional strategies have emerged as a dynamic alternative that engages students in experiential learning environments where they can directly interact with their surroundings.

Social Studies has been defined as an integrative field of study that investigates the symbiotic relationships between humans and their environments, equips individuals with the intellectual, affective, social, and work skills necessary to comprehend their world and its issues, and to rationally resolve or cope with them in order to function effectively in society (Mezieobi, Fubara & Mezieobi, 2008). Despite the obvious benefits of Social Studies, little emphasis has been given to their teaching and learning. Although it is a teaching subject in Nigerian primary and secondary schools, research on it remains limited. The subject is studied mostly through theory rather than practice (Winike, 2019). Students have difficulty understanding basic Social Studies principles. Social Studies teachers use standard expository teaching approaches such as talk-chalk or lecture. The study of Social Studies necessitates hands-on experience in which students get firsthand encounter of objects or concepts being taught in school. Physical field trips are teaching approaches that include hands-on experiences that can arouse students' curiosity, motivate them to study, maintain their enthusiasm in learning, and help them recall what they have learned (Ijebor, Cascalheira, & Lucero, 2022).

Field trips offer students the opportunity to explore societal structures, historical landmarks, government institutions, and environmental contexts. These immersive experiences provide a practical, hands-on approach that enhances students' understanding of Social Studies concepts. Research indicates that field trips promote active learning, engage students in real-life problem-solving, and lead to better knowledge retention compared to traditional classroom settings (Alazmi, & Alemtairy, 2024). By exposing students to real-world experiences, field trips foster a multi-sensory

learning environment that supports the development of critical thinking skills and helps bridge the gap between theory and practice (Hurry & Goburdhun, 2024).

Students generally experience difficulties in understanding some concepts in Social Studies. There are reports that some aspect of Social Studies school curriculum that centres on complex concepts like erosion, deforestation, cultural heritage, political institutions, environmental disasters among others may be difficult to grasp which may affect academic achievement of students. Field trips to government institutions, historical sites, and cultural heritage centers can provide students with firsthand experiences of government operations, enhancing their understanding of democratic principles. These trips also allow students to explore historical artifacts, primary sources, and significant events that shaped their society. They also help students grasp complex geographical concepts like erosion, deforestation, and land use. Field trips also support the teaching of multiculturalism and global citizenship, promoting cross-cultural understanding and tolerance. Additionally, they expose students to real-world examples of community initiatives aimed at improving public welfare, such as health campaigns, environmental clean-ups, or educational outreach programs

Studies have shown that students who participate in field trips tend to perform better on assessments, as they can apply knowledge gained during these experiences to classroom content (Lee, Stern, & Powell, 2020). In Social Studies education, field trips are particularly effective because they allow students to observe and analyze societal dynamics in real-time, making abstract concepts more tangible and relatable (Abdullah, & Qolamani, 2024). Furthermore, field trips provide opportunities for collaborative learning, where students can engage with their peers in discussions and reflections, enhancing their comprehension of the subject matter.

Gender differences in learning outcomes have been a topic of interest in educational research, particularly in relation to how male and female students respond to various instructional strategies. While traditional lecture-based teaching has shown minimal gender differences in academic performance, field-based learning strategies, such as field trips, have yielded mixed results (Ngozi, 2020). Research suggests that female students often excel in collaborative, interactive learning environments like field trips, where social interaction and cooperation are emphasized. On the other

hand, male students may benefit from the hands-on, task-oriented nature of field trips, as these experiences align with their learning preferences (Tamunosa & Julie, 2019).

However, despite these differences, field trips generally provide an inclusive learning environment that benefits both male and female students. Studies have found that experiential learning activities, such as field trips, can help reduce gender disparities in academic achievement by catering to diverse learning styles and preferences (Adejimi, Nzabaliwa & Shivoga, 2020). In Social Studies education, where critical thinking, collaboration, and real-world application are essential, field trips offer an opportunity for both genders to excel in different yet complementary ways.

One of the key advantages of field trips is their ability to enhance student engagement and motivation. Research has shown that students are more motivated to learn when they can see the relevance of their studies to real-world experiences (Ngozi, 2020). Field trips allow students to connect classroom content with practical applications, thereby increasing their interest and enthusiasm for the subject. This is particularly important in Social Studies, where students are expected to develop an understanding of societal issues and civic responsibilities. By taking students out of the traditional classroom setting and immersing them in real-world environments, field trips can foster a deeper sense of curiosity and motivation to learn (Cheng, 2022).

Moreover, field trips provide a break from the monotony of regular classroom routines, which can help prevent student disengagement and boredom. The novelty of field-based learning experiences often leads to increased student attention and participation, which in turn contributes to better academic performance (Amosa et.al, 2020). In the context of Social Studies education, where students are tasked with analyzing complex social, political, and environmental issues, field trips could offer a refreshing and stimulating alternative to conventional teaching methods.

Academic achievement is the sum total scores of students exposed to a particular task or series of tasks in order to check the level of accomplishment of the stated objectives of the tasks. Academic achievement according to Obineke and Nworgu (2024) refers to performance results that show the level of goal accomplishment of an individual in educational environments, particularly in schools, colleges and universities. Arokoyu and Chukwu (2017) maintained that achievement is a measure of output and the main changes in knowledge, skills, and attitude of individuals as a result of

experiences acquired from the school. Mensah and Mensah (2022) noted that academic achievement encompasses students' ability and performance and is associated with growth in cognitive, emotional and socio physical development.

Recent studies have provided empirical evidence supporting the positive impact of field trips on academic achievement. For example, a study by Pearce and Lee (2021) found that students who participated in field trips demonstrated higher levels of content retention and critical thinking skills compared to those who received only traditional instruction. Similarly, Turman (2024) concluded that field-based learning experiences significantly improve students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes, particularly in subjects like Social Studies, where experiential learning plays a crucial role in understanding complex societal concepts.

Additionally, research has shown that the benefits of field trips extend beyond immediate academic outcomes. A study by Dillon and Herman (2023) found that students who regularly participated in field trips exhibited increased motivation for learning, improved problem-solving abilities, and a greater sense of civic responsibility. These findings underscore the long-term value of field trips in promoting not only academic achievement but also personal and social development.

Field trip instruction is based on constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes active engagement with the environment. Field trips allow students to interact with real-world contexts, allowing them to construct meaning based on personal experiences. Constructivism also emphasizes social interaction, encouraging collaboration and problem-solving. This is particularly relevant in Social Studies education, where students analyze societal issues and engage in civic discourse.

Field trips have proven to be an effective instructional strategy for enhancing student engagement, academic performance, and overall learning outcomes in Social Studies education. By providing students with experiential learning opportunities, field trips enable them to connect theoretical concepts with real-world experiences, leading to deeper comprehension and retention of subject matter. The inclusive nature of field trips also ensures that both male and female students benefit from these experiences, regardless of their individual learning preferences. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, field trip instructional strategies will remain a valuable tool for fostering civic competence and social awareness in students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the field trip instructional strategy (FTIS) on the academic achievement of upper basic education level students in Social Studies. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Determine the difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy and those taught using the conventional lecture method.
2. Examine the difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy.
3. Assess the interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy and those taught using the conventional lecture method?
2. What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy and those taught using the conventional lecture method.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy.

3. There is no interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

Table of Specification for Social Studies: "Man and His Environment" (6 Weeks)

Content (Themes)	Knowledge 40%	Comprehension 25%	Application 15%	Analysis 10%	Synthesis 5%	Evaluation 5%	Total
1. Man and His Environment 20%	4	3	2	2	1	1	13
2. Physical Environment 12%	3	2	2	2	1	1	11
3. Natural Things and Features 24%	2	2	1	1	1	1	8
4. Man-Made Things and Features 14%	2	2	2	1	1	1	9
5. Features of Natural Disasters 20%	2	1	1	1	1	0	6
6. Environmental Challenges 10%	2	2	2	2	1	1	10
Total	15	12	10	9	6	5	50

Prepared by the researcher, 2024

Methods

This study employed a quasi-experimental, pre-test, post-test, control group design because the participants were not randomized, and intact classes were used. The population comprised all upper basic education level Social Studies students in public schools in Delta State. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 100 students, consisting of 40 males and 60 females, from two intact classes in two purposively selected schools, with these classes designated as the experimental and control groups. The instrument for data collection was the "Social Studies Achievement Test" (SSAT), a validated test containing 50 multiple-choice items developed based on the topic 'Man and His Environment' in the first term of 2023/2024 academic session. The test-retest method was

employed, and the scores from both administrations were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.80 indicating that the instrument was highly reliable for measuring academic achievement. The study was conducted for a period of six (6) weeks in three phases: in the pre-intervention phase, the SSAT was administered as a pre-test to both groups before the intervention began, with the test taken within 50 minutes under standardized classroom conditions and no feedback provided to avoid influencing the intervention phase. During the intervention phase, the experimental group was taught using the field trip instructional strategy, which involved organizing field trips to locations or places in which students engaged in observation, note-taking, and discussions under teacher guidance. The control group was taught the same topics using the conventional lecture method, with both groups receiving five weeks of instruction, each lesson lasting 40 minutes and covering lesson on Man and His Environment. In the post-intervention phase, a one-week revision session was conducted to consolidate the lessons, after which the reshuffled SSAT was administered as a post-test to both groups under identical conditions to measure their academic achievement. Data collected from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy and those taught using the conventional lecture method?

Table 1: Difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies using field trip instructional strategy (FTIS) and conventional lecture method (CLM)

Experimental Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Difference
Field trip	50	34.33	16.06	77.33	16.32	43.00
Conventional	50	24.82	12.54	64.08	12.22	39.26

The analysis presented in Table 1 indicates that at the pre-test stage, the mean scores for the field trip and conventional groups were 34.33 and 24.82, respectively, on the measured variable of students' academic achievement. After the intervention, the post-test mean scores increased to 77.33 for the field trip group and 64.08 for the conventional group. This reflects a higher mean difference of 43 for the field trip group compared to 39.26 for the conventional group. To assess the significance of this mean difference, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted, with the results displayed in Table 3.

Research Question 2: What is the difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy?

Table 2: Difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using field trip instructional strategy (FTIS)

Gender	N	Pretest Mean score	Posttest Mean score	Mean gain score	Mean difference
Male	40	35.60	78.00	46.30	2.20
Female	60	33.85	75.85	44.00	

Table 2 reveals that the mean gain score of the male students exposed to the FTIS is 46.30 which is higher than that of female students whose achievement score is 44.00. The difference in their mean gain is 2.20.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy and those taught using the conventional lecture method.

Table 3: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) test of significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies using FTIS and CLM

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared
Corrected Model	16984.806	2	5671.611	36.513	.000	.420
Intercept	67354.901	1	69354.90	417.677	.000	.695
Pretest	12583.157	1	12883.167	76.312	.000	.355
Method	1693.585	1	796.767	4.977	.007	.071
Error	25612.510	95	160.052			
Total	726546.000	98				
Corrected Total	48608.543	97				

a. R Squared = .420 (Adjusted R Squared = .486)

Table 3 shows there is a significant main effect of the treatment on students' academic performance in Social Studies, $F(1, 95) = 4.977$, $P = 0.007 < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Social Studies using field trip (FTIS) and conventional lecture method (CLM) in favour of FTIS. The effect size is high at 7.1% given the partial Eta squared of 0.71.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using the field trip instructional strategy.

Table 4: ANCOVA test of significant difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using field trip instructional strategy (FTIS).

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3477.531	2	1578.730	9.976	.000
Intercept	32828.280	1	32828.680	176.586	.000
Pretest	3162.234	1	3162.234	18.922	.000
Gender	35.291	1	35.291	.216	.586
Error	7752.206	48	169.805		
Total	275214.000	47			
Corrected Total	12014.653	45			

a. R Squared = .420 (Adjusted R Squared = .486)

Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students exposed to field trip $F(1, 48) = 0.216$, $P = 0.586 > 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected showing that there is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies using field trip instructional strategy (FTIS).

Hypothesis 3:

There is no interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on students' academic achievement in Social Studies

Table 5: ANCOVA test of interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on academic performance of students in Social Studies

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	17641.030	4	1621.753	9.688	.075	.448
Intercept	59207.451	1	58207.451	383.528	.000	.727
Pretest	11683.187	1	11683.187	76.411	.000	.328
Method	1693.634	1	796.767	4.743	.007	.065
Gender	34.298	1	34.298	.219	.623	
Method * Gender	1241.910	1	248.382	1.523	.075	.057
Error	21768.375	86	167.414			
Total	716522.000	88				
Corrected Total	41608.211	88				

a. R Squared = .448 (Adjusted R Squared = .328)

Table 5 shows that there is no main interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on academic achievement of the students in Social Studies, $F(1, 86) = 1.523$, $P = 0.075 > 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on academic achievement of students in Social Studies. This means that the significant effect on students' performance was caused by the effect of the teaching strategy during the experiment

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that field trip is effective in enhancing students' achievement in Social Studies. Field trip was more effective than conventional lecture method in enhancing the achievement of students. This could be so because the use of field trip provided the students with richer learning experience than they had when they were taught with conventional lecture method. This implies that field trip improves students' achievement better than the conventional method. The result of this study further supported that of Egwu and Okigbo (2021) who reported significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught using field studies and lecture method in favour of field studies. According to him, field study significantly improved students' achievement in biology, enhanced students' understanding of process of science and improved students' attitude towards biology. The finding of this study is in line with Rugaiyah (2022) that field trip improved the achievement of junior secondary students in English Language. Also, Salihu and Abubakar (2020) found out that field trip broadens knowledge and exposes students to modern state of the art facilities and inventions in society. He reported that field trip boosts students' practical performance in Social Studies.

The findings of this study revealed that gender was not a significant factor in students' achievement in Social Studies. The results of this study showed no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught Social Studies with field trip teaching strategy. It is paramount to say that field trip is not among the instructional strategies that is gender bias. Once the principle of its application is properly followed, both male and female students will benefit equally. This was corroborated by the findings of Egwu and Okigbo (2021) who found out there was no significant difference in students' achievement between male and female in biology. Also, Obineke and Nworgu (2024) reported that gender has no significant effect on the students' achievement in ecology. The finding was however contrary to the views of Abdul, Oyeronke and Adunni (2015) who

revealed a significant difference in the performance of male and female students using field trip in basic technology. Adejimi, Nzabairwa and Shivoga (2020) in their study revealed a significant difference in students' achievement based on gender in verbal ability

The result further revealed a non-interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on students' achievement in Social Studies. This implies that the effect of teaching strategy was consistent across gender. The findings of this study lend credence to the study of Okeke (2018) reported a non-significant interaction effect of instructional strategies and gender on students' achievement. This finding is in line with the study by Egwu and Okigbo (2021) who revealed that there was no significant interaction between field trip instructional method and gender in ecology. Therefore, this finding serves as statistical evidence that suggest that the effect of instructional methods does not depends on students' gender in Social Studies. Hence, teachers in a field trip environment should ensure an all-inclusive educational practices devoid of gender biases in order to boost students' academic achievements.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that field trips are an effective instructional strategy for enhancing students' achievement in Social Studies at the upper basic education level. Field trips provide students with richer, more engaging learning experiences than conventional lecture methods. By fostering greater interaction with learning materials, field trips allow students to take on more responsibility for their learning, thereby promoting active engagement and practical understanding. This leads to better academic achievement, particularly in Social Studies, by reducing abstraction and enabling firsthand problem-solving. The study further shows that the effect of field trips on students' achievement is consistent across genders, with no significant difference in achievement between male and female students. This supports the idea that field trips are an equitable and inclusive instructional method, making them suitable for diverse classroom settings.

Recommendations

The study recommends that schools incorporate field trips as a regular component of the Social Studies curriculum due to their positive impact on student engagement, achievement, and practical skill development, promoting deeper learning. It also suggests that teachers receive adequate training to effectively plan and implement field trips, with professional development programmes focusing on integrating these experiences with classroom instruction. Since gender was not a significant factor in students' academic achievement, it is important that teachers adopt gender-inclusive practices, ensuring field trips engage all students equally. Additionally, schools should collaborate with local environmental, cultural, and historical organizations to enhance the field trip experience by providing students with real-world learning opportunities. The effectiveness of field trips should be regularly evaluated through feedback from students and teachers to refine their planning and execution.

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