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HISTORY TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USE OF EXCURSION METHOD TO TEACH HISTORY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN METROPLIS

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Abstract

This study focused on the attitude of History teachers towards the use of the excursion method in teaching History in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. The study adopt descriptive method of research. Purposive sampling technique was used to select all the History teachers in Ilorin metropolis secondary schools. Four research questions and one hypothesis were generated. The research questions one and four were answered with the mean rating, while research question two which has corresponding hypothesis was tested with the t-test and the research question three was answered with the percentage. Majority of the History teachers had positive attitude towards the use of excursion method because the weighted mean score obtained was 47.16 which is above the benchmark weighted mean score of 42.5. However, they are of the opinion that the greatest constraint to the use of excursion method is that there is no maximum support from the school management. The research work recommended that the History teachers should not shy away from the student-centre approaching teaching which focuses on the students so as to further increase critical thinking in the students. Also there should be training workshops to orientate History teachers on the proper use of the excursion method. It also recommended that the school management should give support to the History teachers for the effective use of excursion method.

Background to the Study

Across the nation's educational system, there are problems pertaining to the teaching methods to be used in teaching different subjects particularly History. Teaching History is quite different from teaching other subjects. The

History classroom is very different from Science and Mathematics classroom because a whole lot of interpretation, thinking and demonstration are involved and that is why it takes a well grounded teacher in History to teach the subject. The term History has become an ubiquitous word interpreted differently by various scholars. For instance, the traditional conception of History epitomized by Historians like Herodotus, the father of History, his great successors Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus and the greatest of the Roman Historians viewed History as any written narrative of events (Osokoya, 1996). This definition is however lacking and is unacceptable in terms of contemporary realities. The conception of History as a mere narration of events is now 'old fashioned' because history has metamorphosed from a description of events into critical and analytical interpretation of events (Osokoya, 1996). As a result of this, History as taught in secondary schools should not be merely didactic in nature, rather it should be taught with an array of different methods such as excursion, storytelling, discussion, inquiry and project methods

Teaching as an activity is very complex and that is why various conferences, seminars and the likes are carried out so as to ensure that teaching is done at its best. In recent times, so many new ideas and techniques have sprung up on how to teach History. These methods replaced the old methods where the teacher comes to class and because he is so knowledgeable, he is more of an orator rather than a teacher and so this gives the students little or no opportunity to contribute to the subject matter thereby making them passive learners and gaining nothing at the end of the lesson. The process of teaching should help to facilitate student's learning through proper classroom management by the teacher, the interrelationships among student interests, the content for learning and the materials he or she plans to use in teaching and learning of the content materials. Teaching may involve giving instruction to somebody on knowledge, skills, and attitudes with the intention that such a person will be able to understand the information or do something, or even act in a particular way that is in accordance with the instruction. Over the years, there are various guidelines that have been set down by scholars to ensure that successful teaching and learning takes place. This requires that the teacher must plan and well prepared so that when it gets to the implementation phase he or she will not be lost and will be able to combine different methods of teaching to achieve a good feedback from his or her pupils at the evaluation phase.

In order for students to appreciate the practical application of History, teachers would have to re-focus their curricula away from direct instruction that de-emphasizes vital skills of teaching (Benjamin, 2004). The lack of versatility on the part of the History teachers is leading to the gradual decline in the popularity of History among other school subjects. The History teacher should always be careful to choose a teaching method that is capable of arousing the interest of the students'. The most suitable method for students in secondary schools is any method that is student-centered which is capable of widening their knowledge on the subject matter. That is why field trips, excursions to the museums and archives cannot be overemphasized when it comes to teaching History. Learning is effective and meaningful when the learner is effectively engaged in the process and understanding the ideas or skills that he is learning (Afe, 1996).

One major problem of the History teachers is that of securing the active participation of his/her students. Closely related to this is the problem of finding suitable method which will make the subject a part of the students' knowledge. History as a subject in Nigeria particularly has experienced a major decline in the students' attendance. This decline is owed to factors such as lack of enthusiasm on the part of the teacher, inability of the teacher to use appropriate and suitable methods of teaching. In other words, to arouse the interest of the students, the History teacher must use the appropriate method and the most relevant aids during each lesson. Recent scholars show that many teachers who use multiple methods do so in order to promote memorization and identification (Hicks, Doolittle, & Lee, 2004). This illustrates the necessity of combining critical literacy pedagogy with multiple methods of teaching History like the practical aspects. The role play by History teacher in overcoming the problem of teaching the subject lies majorly on organizing excursions to places of historic importance. Fadeyiye (2004) defined excursion as an educational trip, visit or journey to places of interest which are capable of promoting the level of understanding of the pupils, students or people taking part in the excursion. Excursion could be made to places like the shrines, palaces of kings or notable chiefs, museums and in the case of Kwara State places like 'ESIE' where the stone figures are kept. Excursions in History will give both the teacher and his students the opportunity to see in practical terms, those things they have read in books or listened to as a result of their discussion in class. It will also help to clear doubts in the minds of students and make History real to them. Excursions or field trips also help to stimulate the interest of the students in learning History (Onwuka, 2007).

In light of the foregoing, this study sought to investigate the attitude of History teachers in the Ilorin metropolis towards the use of excursion method to teach History at the senior secondary school level.

Research Questions

In order to give proper direction to the study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What is the attitude of History teachers towards the use of excursion method?
2. Is there any significant difference in the attitude of History teachers towards the use of excursion method in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis based on gender?
3. How often do the teachers take their students on excursion?
4. What are the constraints to the use of excursion method?

Research Hypothesis

In this study, one research hypothesis was formulated and tested.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the attitude of history teachers towards the use of excursion method in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

Methodology

The descriptive research method was adopted in this study because it describes what exists and may also help to uncover new facts as well. A descriptive research method in the view of Daramola (2006), is the systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a given population or area of interest factually. The population of this study consisted of all History teachers in Ilorin metropolis secondary schools. In all, a total number of fifty (50) History teachers were in secondary schools in Ilorin. Therefore all the fifty (50) teachers were purposively selected for the study

The instrument used in this study was a researcher designed questionnaire. It was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The questionnaire, tagged "Questionnaire on the Teachers Attitudes towards the use of Excursion Method", consisted of two sections; section A dealt with the personal information/bio-data of the respondents such as, the name of school and sex while the section B consisted of items with a response format using the Likert scale method.

Result**Demographic Description of Respondents**

The result presented below showed the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	26	52.0
Male	24	48.0
Total	50	100

Table 1 shows that out of the 50 teachers that participated in the study, 26(52%) were females, while 24 (48%) were males. This shows that there are more female teachers than male teachers that participated in the study.

Presentation of Research Questions and Hypothesis

Four research questions and one hypothesis were generated. The research questions one and four we answered with mean rating, while research question two which has corresponding hypothesis was tested with the t-test and the research question three was answered with the percentage. The result of the analysis is presented below.

Research Question 1:

What is the attitude of History teachers towards the use of excursion method?

Table 2: Summated Mean towards the Use of Excursion Method

Attitude	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude of History Teachers	50	47.16	4.14

Table 2 indicates that 50 respondents participated in this study. Responses to items that sought information on the attitude of History teachers towards the use of excursion method revealed that majority of the respondents have positive attitude towards the use excursion method because the benchmark weighted mean score stood at 42.5 and their weighted mean score is 47.16 which is above the benchmark weighted mean score.

Research Question 3: *How often do the teachers take their students on excursion?*

Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents on How Often they take their Students on Excursion

How Often do the Teachers Take Students Out	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	40	80
Rarely	10	20
Not at all	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Table 3 shows that out of the 50 teachers that participated in the study, 40 (80%) always take their students on excursion for teaching some topics in History in secondary schools in Ilorin, while 10 teachers representing 20% rarely take their students on excursion.

Research Question 4: *What are the constraints to the use of excursion method?*

Table 4: Ranking Order of Constraints to the Use of Excursion method

Item No	Constraints to the Use of the Excursion Method	Frequency
1.	There is no maximum support towards the use of excursion method from the school management	50
2.	Planning trips for excursion is very hectic	43
3.	There are no seminars and conferences for History teachers on the use of excursion method	26

Table 4 indicated that the greatest constraints to the use of excursion method was that "there is no maximum support towards the use of excursion method from the school management which has a mean score of 3.44 (1st), while "planning trips for excursion is very hectic" with a mean score of 2.00 was 2nd. There are no seminars and conferences for History teachers on the use of excursion method which has a mean score of 1.32 was (3rd). The mean score of 1.32 was below the bench mark of 2.50. Therefore, the 3rd item was not a constraint.

Hypotheses Testing

One research hypothesis was formulated in the course of this study, and was tested using the t-test at 0.05 alpha level.

H₀₁: *There is no significant difference in the attitude of History teachers towards the use of excursion method in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.*

Table 5: The t-test Analysis of Attitude of History Teachers towards the Use of Excursion Based on Gender

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	df	Cal.t-Value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	26	32.85	4.47	48	1.23	0.23	Accepted
Female	24	31.42	3.71				

P<0.05

Results on table 5 shows t-value = 1.23 with p-value = 0.23 > 0.05 alpha level. Since 0.23 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis is thus accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the attitude of History teachers towards the use of excursion method in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the History teacher's attitude towards the use of excursion method in teaching relevant History topics in Ilorin metropolis. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents' have positive attitudes towards the use of the method and History teachers are aware of the guideline for use of the method in teaching History in secondary school. This finding is supported by Taiwo (2000) who found out that teachers in humanities and science have positive attitude towards the use of excursion method of teaching.

The findings also revealed that History teachers often take their students on excursion in secondary school. In contrary to the findings of this study, Popoola, (1998) found out that teacher do not often take their students to resource centers or on field trip/excursion. Also, Yusuf (2007) reported that majority of teachers made little or no use of community resources in enhancing their teaching of social studies.

Furthermore, findings revealed that the greatest constraint to the use of excursion method was that there was no maximum support towards the use of the method from the school management. This finding supports that of Yusuf, (2007) who found out that the major constraint face by the teacher in using community resource in teaching was lack of support from the school management.

Lastly, findings revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitude of History teachers towards the use of excursion method in Ilorin metropolis secondary school based on gender. This findings was supported by Baylor and Ritchie (2002) who reported there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards the use of educational resource centers in teaching History. However Brace and Roberts (1996) disagrees when they both found out that male and female teacher are different in using instructional material for teaching and learning.

Conclusion

In this study it was revealed that History teachers have positive attitude towards the use of excursion method and they are aware of the guidelines on he use of the method in teaching History in secondary schools. Findings also revealed that History teachers often take their students on excursion in secondary schools. However, the limitations discovered in the use of the method are quite numerous. The greatest constraint to the use of the excursion method was the lack of maximum support towards the use of excursion method from the school management. History is not just a study of events and dates, it provides analytical insights into social formation and anthropological development, inventions and innovations that share humanity. These can only be achieved if the subject is taught and handle properly using appropriate methods of teaching that would facilitate effective teaching and learning of History.

Recommendations

These recommendations are made in order to address the findings of this study:

- a. History teachers should try as much as possible to be using excursion method in teaching History contents where it is appropriate as this will improve the quality of instruction given in school and also ensure the use of standard student-centered approach to teaching History

- b. School authority should encourage teachers to use excursion method by given financial support, appropriate scheduling of standard time table and organization of regular staff development programme to promote teachers efficiency.
- c. Teacher training institution (Colleges, Polytechnic, National Teachers Institute, and Nigerian Universities) should give training teachers appropriate skill in the use of excursion method so as to cater for inadequacies observed in the area of lack of pedagogical skills in using excursion method.

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