THE USE OF FIELD TRIPS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HOME ECONOMICS IN SOME SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate how field trips are employed in the teaching and learning of Home Economics in some selected Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Questionnaires were used in a descriptive survey to collect data from 160 students and 12 teachers of Home Economics selected randomly from a population of 1059 students and 32 teachers respectively in six Senior High Schools. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Services version 17. Means for all the statements were computed from the weighted averages to get the final agreement (2.5 and above) or disagreement with the statements (below 2.5). The major findings include the fact that students considered field trips as recreational exercise and not relevant as a teaching strategy in Home Economics but the teachers were very much aware of the importance. Lack of support from the school administration and parents, curriculum inflexibility, difficulty in accessing transportation (including cost), unwillingness on the part of the receiving institutions and companies to receive visitors, and inadequacy of resources and venues were found to be the most important challenges militating against the use of field trips as a teaching and learning strategy in Home Economics. The recommendations included creating awareness of the importance of field trips in the teaching and learning of Home Economics, and involving School Management, parents and students in the decision making. Again, field trips should be part of lessons, with a stress on the objectives so as to stimulate students’ interest.

Keywords: Field Trip, Home Economics, Challenges, Learning, Teaching, Pedagogy of Home Economics

1. Introduction

A field trip is a trip arranged by the school, undertaken for educational purposes, in which students go to places where the materials of instruction may be observed and studied directly in their functional setting (Krepel & Duvall, 1988). Field trips have great potential to positively affect students’ learning activities and students’ attitudes towards their education (Hannon & Randolph, 1999; Michie, 1998). The importance of field trips cannot be underestimated. Students are able to make real-world connections to classroom learning which directs their attention and engagement.

If the students are engaged, meaningful learning can start to take place. The shared experience of a field trip allows for the students to reflect together on common experience and enhance learning beyond the personal connections each student was able to make (Farmer, Knapp & Berton, 2007). In addition, the felt quality of experience is stored and processed in different areas of the brain which allows for greater overall integration of understanding in different ways (Farmer et al.).
Several investigators, including Guisasola, Morentin & Zuza (2005) had been arguing that field trip may be carefully integrated into the curriculum. All of the authors emphasized on the importance of introducing connected lessons and activities that occur before, during, and after the field trip. They insisted that students must be given individual or group tasks, so as to encourage them to explore and interact with exhibits, with each other and with other foci.

Schatz (2004) reported that the pressures of standardized tests and student assessments have also contributed to the loss of field trips. The time required to travel to and from the school may require the loss of some classes. According to Anderson, Kisiel and Stordieck (2006), there was a need for teachers and principals to document whether and in what way individual field trips satisfy curricular demands.

Home Economics is one of the programmes offered in the Senior High Schools in Ghana. The Home Economics programme promotes the well-being of individuals, families and societies through the study of the provision of basic human requirements for food, clothing and effective resource management. This makes it a very important programme since food and clothing are basic needs of man. In order to complement and enhance the teaching and learning of these subjects in our senior high schools, it is believed that well organized field trips can be very helpful. Unfortunately, the situation of field trips in the teaching and learning of Home Economics is not well known, since most literature available on field trips is limited to science and social science education.

2. Research Objective
The purpose of this study centered on the use of field trips in the teaching and learning of Home Economics in some selected Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The specific objectives were to:
1. Examine the views of respondents on the relevance of field trips in teaching and learning of Home Economics in some selected Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis;
2. Investigate the respondents’ knowledge on the strategies for using field trips as a teaching and learning method in Home Economics in the study area;
3. Identify the challenges in the organization of field trips for Home Economics students in the selected Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis; and
4. Suggest ways of making field trips a useful tool in the teaching and learning of Home Economics.

3. Statement of the Problem
Field trips are very important for students offering the Home Economics programme since the programme is a practical one. It is a programme that involves imparting students with skills for life. It is a fact that several teachers and students complain about the lack of practical lessons in the training institutions. Casual observations indicate that almost all the training institutions in Ghana lack basic tools and equipment. At Home Economics conferences, teachers complain about lack of tools, equipment and that several requests that often go to the Ministry of Education for tools and equipment for training in schools are not honoured. Teachers mostly teach the theory aspects of the lessons and as such, the teaching becomes abstract. Machines that are needed are not available and so if field trips, which would have been able to make the students see real objects and make inferences to dismiss imaginations and abstracts, are not part of the training programmes then there seem to be a problem.
Extensive research has been carried out on the role of field trips play in science and social studies education. However, few researches have been conducted on the role field trips play in Home Economics Education in Ghana, which is evident in the lack of literature available on this subject. It is for this reason that this study is being conducted as a baseline study to offer the needed suggestions for all stakeholders to address the issue of field trips in the training of Home Economics trainees in Ghana. This is because field work is needed for students to obtain hands-on experience and lack of this is definitely a problem in this country.

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW
4.1 Overview of Educational Field Trips
A field trip can also be defined as an organized trip to a place of interest outside the classroom to study real situations in order to reinforce what has been learned by students Lemchi (2001). The use of field trips in education has a rich history and in 1952, Beidleman and Duncan traced roots of field-based teaching back to Aristotle and Socrates, with much of the literature originates from museums and science centres. Sedzielarz and Robinson (2007) also argued that since cognitive learning can be an outcome of school trips and as it is an outcome valued by many teachers, parents and administrators, it is important to consider ways of maximizing these outcomes by focusing on field trip designs that make best use of the unique learning opportunities of specific field trip destination. The trip setting prior to or during the visit can mitigate this impact (Anderson & Lucas, 1997).

Home Economics has also been described as a skill-oriented, decision-making subject, that equips learners with skills and knowledge which will help them to be self-employed and at the same time, contribute effectively to the socioeconomic development of the family and society (Lemchi, 2001). Field trips can be considered as one of the avenues through which Home Economics can be taught among formal classroom teaching, practical work and demonstrations, etc.

4.2. The Role of Educational Field Trips
Orion (1993) suggested that the primary role of field trips in the learning experience is to facilitate a direct experience with concrete phenomena and materials. A successful field trip will incorporate learning from the classroom and bring a new dimension to the material covered at school. For instance, a Home Economics class studying textiles will understand the facts covered in a new way when the students visit a textile producing factory. Such students will most likely understand the topics much better and gain a new appreciation for the subject.

There are several observations, which are supported by Ramey-Gassert (1997) that classroom learning can sometimes be abstract, divorced from the real world, involve symbols and numbers and generally lack connections to lived experience. Others such as Anderson, Kisiel and Stordieck (2006), added that that teachers often separate formal and informal learning as well. It appears that even teachers who lead field trips often separate the two by failing to provide purposeful connections to the curriculum for students.

Research studies consistently show that students take positive attitudes toward a variety of field trips and also provide overwhelming evidence that, with the use of appropriate strategies, guided learning on field trips can be one of the great keys to realizing educational goals. These potential educational benefits involves the teachers’ use of strategies that
attempt to integrate the school curriculum with students’ field trip experiences (Falk & Dierking, 1997; Anderson & Lucas, 1997)

Numerous objective studies of field trips have been conducted in many areas of education. The science disciplines, especially earth science, biology, and elementary science, have been studied on many occasions. Also, field trips have been researched at all levels from the elementary school through college over the years. Much of the literature on field trips originates from museums and science centres, with less from other venues. However, field trips can be taken to a variety of places and events. Particularly for the Home Economics students, field trips can be taken to restaurants, textile producing factories, hotels, food industries, art centres, cultural celebrations and other events.

4.2. Planning a Field Trip

Finchum (2013) proposed that for a student to receive maximum benefit from a field trip, a teacher, after outlining some of the basic topics of the school year, should consider asking students for input on which site to visit. This is because, children like to feel that they are actively involved in their education, which is one good way to make that happen. In addition, students need to have some background knowledge of the site to be visited, along with an understanding of the goals to be accomplished while at the site Finchum (2013). Most importantly, Finchum reported the importance of the connection of the field trip to the curriculum. To him, in all cases of field trips, learning is optimized only when teachers actively integrate the information gained through the field trip with the curriculum. Finally, significant planning in advance is required. Proper field trip behaviour should be taught and practiced in advance as well (Woolf, 2006). Students need to know the rules for good behaviour as well as for scientific inquiry. They must also know the amount and type of clothing needed for the excursion.

Neeraja, (2011) proposed that in the organization of field trips, the pre-trip stage involves administration and instruction; securing permission from appropriate administration, organizing transportation to and from the field trip location, contacting the field trip location to verify the schedule and activities, and obtaining signed permission slips from parents/guardians of youth attending the field trip (Neeraja). Preparation for both students and teachers is very important to a successful field trip.

Classroom teachers should therefore attempt to contact the places they want to visit before the visit. Research has suggested that the advanced preparation of students and establishing a link between the field trip and the curriculum are the most influential factors in a field trip being educationally-effective (Davidson, Passmore & Anderson, 2010). Students will be best-prepared for the field trip when their teachers are informed and prepared and the learning expectations of students will be high only if teachers expect learning to occur as well Davidson et al. According to Anderson et al. (2006), however, classroom teachers report that while they believe pre-visit preparation of students is important, they may have neither the resources nor time necessary to adequately prepare students on their own.

While at the site, students should be given the opportunity to emphasize critical thinking (Finchum, 2013). Rather than having them just observing, teachers can ask students to compare and contrast various exhibits, or make predictions based on what they have observed. Research has shown that both self-guided tours and guided tours by the institution’s staff can result in student learning (Orion, 1993).
It has been reported that follow-up activities were of great importance to the success of a field trip (Farmer & Wott, 1995). DeWitt & Storksdieck (2008) also reported that students should be given the opportunity to present the observations they gathered during the visit through a class newsletter or similar medium upon returning to the classroom. Doing this after the visit takes advantage of the excitement and memories from the experience while they are still clear in the students’ minds (Orion, 1993). Classroom teachers may also allow students to ask questions pertaining to the trip, and use these questions to assess what students have learned. Students may in turn ask questions.

To Anderson et al. (2006), if classroom teachers are serious about using the field trip as a learning experience, then they must provide students with an opportunity to build upon what they have learned following the trip. Davidson et al (2010) also thought that students are unlikely to remember the content of the experience if it is not linked to future learning. According to Finchum (2013), this stage contains two components: debriefing and a culminating activity. During the debriefing session, students should be encouraged to share and discuss their experiences during the field trip.

**4.3. Importance of Field Trips**

Field trip experiences can have profound effects on students’ attitudes and beliefs, regardless of the destination. Braund and Reiss (2006) identified five potential benefits of out-of-classroom contexts (which includes field trips): (i) improved conceptual learning; (ii) authentic practical work; (iii) introduction to "big" science (that is, science using large equipment done at a big scale not replicable in a laboratory); (iv) improved attitudes; (v) social outcomes such as collaboration and personal responsibility for learning. Teachers refer to similar benefits such as the power of field trips to stimulate interest and motivation in science and develop scientific and social skills Mitchie (1998). A deeper level of empathy can sometimes be achieved when students encounter situations that are real, not second hand information shared either through a textbook, or even a guest speaker (Finchum, 2013). Knowledge gained through a well-planned and interactive field trip can be long-term.

Field trips can be valuable educational experiences that challenge and enlighten students in ways not available in a classroom. A field trip can allow students to see things that they may never have experienced and to obtain real-world knowledge not possible within the four walls of the school. A good field trip can bring dry facts or concepts to life and give the student hands-on participation opportunities especially for the Home Economics student.

Field trips can also provide fun opportunities to learn strategies for gathering information, learning to observe, and in making conclusions. In addition, having parents participate can promote parental involvement in the child’s education in the classroom as well (Taylor, Morris & Cordeau-Young (1997). Taylor et al. added that these trips can be beneficial for giving the students an enriching experience on a personal level and can also promote the concepts of social studies, language, and literacy.

The value of a field trip can be seen in its application to a broad range of skills students need to develop. For example, students can be immersed in a sensory experience when they visit a park and hear the birds and see their colours. Touching objects during a hands-on activity engages another of the senses. Students can become much better informed of their own community (Finchum, 2013). When students are able to see a connection between the knowledge they bring to school and what they are studying in the classroom, it helps them to see school as relevant to life. Field trips can be an educational, yet fun way to engage students and provide life-long memories. Even with the constraints of a short, one-time field
trip, many educators still insist on their usefulness (Bhatia, 2009).

Mitchie (1998) reported some of the positive outcomes of field trips as follows: Hands-on real world experiences, quality of education, positive attitudes to science and motivation towards the subject, improvement of the socialization between students, which would impinge on the classroom and development of rapport between teachers and students and enabling teachers to utilize other learning strategies such as cooperative learning. Heinrich and Meyer (2010) posited that, as with any type of educational program component, field trips should be designed around specific educational objectives. They added that a field trip should be designed such that participants can easily make connections between the focus of the field trip and the concepts they are learning in the rest of the educational program. Numerous research studies in science education have documented significant increases in participant factual knowledge and conceptual understanding after participation in well-planned field trips.

4.4. Challenges of field trips
Mitchie (1998) enumerated a number of factors have been reported to hinder teachers from taking their students on field trips, which include issues such as difficulties with transportation, including cost; skills and perceived inertia of the teachers, the problem of theory and practice. The authors also added time considerations in preparation, fitting into the school timetable owing to inflexible curriculum; lack of support from school administrations for field trips; poor student behaviour and attitudes as well as inadequacy of resources and venue.

5. METHODOLOGY
5.1 Research Design
The research utilized a descriptive research study to examine the role of field trips in the selected schools. According to Best and Khan (1998), descriptive researches are often used when an amount of knowledge about the subject already exists. It also helps in determining the nature of prevailing conditions, practices and attitudes; opinions that are held; processes that are going on; or trends that are developed. It is therefore, the best approach to adopt in explaining how events occur (Yin, 2003).

5.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure
Seven of the public Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis offer Home Economics as a programme of study and from the schools’ registers, the population was 1059 and the teachers were 32. The whole census of seven schools was targeted. The list of the students’ names from the registers formed the sample frame and was used to select the students, giving each student an equal probability of being picked for the study.

The table of random sampling was used to select every third name from the list of students in the register collected from each of the schools. Tamakloe and Amedahe (2005) suggested a sample size between 5.0% and 20.0% as being adequate for such a study. In view of this, a sample size of 20.0% was chosen which gave 212 students. However, 160 forms (15.1%) of the total target population were retrieved. Two teachers from each of the schools were randomly selected but 12 forms were retrieved, representing 37.5% of the entire teacher population.
5.3 Research Instruments
According to Yin (2003), the use of questionnaires is the main data gathering technique for surveys and so it was adopted as the primary data gathering. Fortunately, the respondents were literate and so could answer the questions with little guidance. The data were gathered using questionnaire which had both close- and open-ended items. The questionnaires were grouped into two forms (questionnaire for teachers and students). There were 4-point Likert scale items, which were scaled from Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) to Strongly Disagree (1). Parts of section B had open-ended items where respondents were allowed to provide responses free from any restrictions, on choices and also offer some definitions based on their own ideas. There were also statements that respondents had to rank in order of importance.

5.4 Pre-testing of Instruments
The questionnaire was pre-tested using five students each from the selected schools to help fine tune the tools to reduce the total time spent on using the tools for the data collection, thus enhancing the reliability and validity of the survey questions. None of the items had to be changed. Based on the pre-test conducted, the Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient of the instrument yielded 0.771, which indicated an accepted level provided by Cronbach (1951).

5.5 Data Collection Procedure
The questionnaires were left in the schools for the respondents after all the sections had been explained and answers given to their questions. They were given a contact number which would enable them to call in case of any difficulty. Four weeks in all, starting from the beginning of March, were used to retrieve 160 questionnaires from the students and 12 from the teachers.

5.6 Data Analysis
The research data were analyzed using the descriptive statistics and presented using tables of frequencies and percentages after editing and coding. Means for all the statements were computed from the weighted averages for the statements of the four-point Likert scale. The outcomes were compared with 2.5 to get the final agreement (2.5 and above) or disagreement with the statement (below 2.5).

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The analysis started with the background characteristics of the teachers on their ages, the highest academic qualification, the years of teaching experience. The 12 teachers who participated in this study were all females. Two of them were aged below 30 years, six were in the age range between 31 and 35 years, whilst four were aged above 40 years. This implied that they were quite active and should be able to organize field trips for their students. On the academic highest academic qualification attained by the teachers, it was revealed that eight of them (66.7%) were first degree holders while four (33.3%) had their second degrees. With this high educational background, it was expected that the teachers were quite knowledgeable on the importance of field trips as a teaching and learning method. Apart from four teachers who had between one and four years of teaching experience, the remaining eight had between 5 and 16 or more years indicating that they were all experienced teachers and were likely to have a fair idea of the role field trips play in teaching and learning.
6.1 Relevance of Field Trips in Teaching and Learning of Home Economics

Before the respondents were asked to indicate whether they had knowledge on the relevance of field trips, they were first asked to explain what a field trip was and also the number of times they had been on field trips. On the explanation of a field trip, all the 12 teachers indicated that it is an organized trip to places where the materials of instruction may be observed and studied directly in their functional or real setting, just as the definitions given by Lemchi (2001). Similar definitions were given by 56 (35%) of the students. However, the remaining 104 (65%) of the students simply explained a field trip as a sight-seeing and a social, pleasure trip.

Again all the teachers were aware that a local field trip can take place within the school or in the school environs and other field trips outside the community in which the school is situated but all the students did not agree that field trips could take place within the school or in the school environs.

6.2 Frequency of Field Trips

The students were asked to indicate the number of times they had been on field trips and 122 (76.2%) out of the 160 students reported that they had never been taken on any field trip since they were admitted in the schools three years ago. Thirty of the respondents, representing 18.8%, reported that they had gone for field trip once. The results indicate that field trips had not been given the prominence it deserves in the teaching and learning of Home Economics in the selected schools of study.

When the teachers were also asked to indicate their experiences in field trips in their schools as students, 10 of them indicated they had field trips a total of five field trips through their second cycle and training college education. The remaining two replied that they had five experiences. However, as teachers, only five of them said they had taken their students on field trips once a year for three years. Three teachers had taken their students out on field trips twice while the remaining four had taken their students out on field trips only once since they started teaching. These results indicate that the issue of field trips for Home Economics education and training had long been neglected over the years.

Although the use of field trips was found to be minimal, a question was asked to find out if the respondents were aware of the relevance of field trips the teaching and learning of Home Economics to deduce whether the respondents actually considered field trips important in the Home Economics curriculum. Table 1 depicts the views on the relevance of field trips in the teaching and learning of Home Economics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Agree No. (%)</th>
<th>Agree No. (%)</th>
<th>Disagree No. (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree No. (%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field trips enhance understanding and interest in the subject</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>28(17.5)</td>
<td>12(7.5)</td>
<td>78(48.7)</td>
<td>42(26.2)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>6(50.0)</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips have helped in the development of personal skills</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>22(13.8)</td>
<td>14(8.8)</td>
<td>82(51.2)</td>
<td>42(26.2)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>6(50.0)</td>
<td>6(50.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips provide opportunities for observing and making conclusions</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>20(12.5)</td>
<td>14(8.8)</td>
<td>82(51.2)</td>
<td>44(27.5)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>8(66.7)</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips help to understand practical work better</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>18(11.2)</td>
<td>16(10.0)</td>
<td>84(52.4)</td>
<td>42(26.2)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>10(83.3)</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips improves learners’ attitude to learning</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>24(15.0)</td>
<td>12(7.5)</td>
<td>80(50.0)</td>
<td>44(27.5)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>10(83.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips enable students to engage in team work</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>18(11.2)</td>
<td>16(10.0)</td>
<td>82(51.2)</td>
<td>44(27.5)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>10(83.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips motivate students to learn more</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>18(11.2)</td>
<td>18(11.2)</td>
<td>80(50.0)</td>
<td>44(27.5)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>10(83.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips challenge students to study hard</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>12(15.0)</td>
<td>7(8.8)</td>
<td>40(50.0)</td>
<td>2(26.2)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td>8(66.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips give hands-on participation opportunities</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>22(13.8)</td>
<td>10(6.2)</td>
<td>84(52.4)</td>
<td>44(27.5)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td>6(50.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips guide students in choosing future careers</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>20(12.5)</td>
<td>18(11.2)</td>
<td>80(50.0)</td>
<td>42(26.2)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>8(66.6)</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know any benefit of field trip</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>14(8.8)</td>
<td>8(5.0)</td>
<td>94(58.6)</td>
<td>44(27.5)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td>8(66.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Mean**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Students Teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

The overall mean of 2.1 gave an impression that the students did not consider field trips as relevant in the teaching and learning of Home Economics. The means for all the 11 statements on the relevance of field trips in the teaching and learning of Home Economics were below 2.5, indicating disagreements with each statement. The disagreement with the last statement ‘I don’t know any benefits of field trips’, was enough to indicate that almost all the...
students’ responses were based on ignorance stemming from the basic fact that field trips had not formed a significant part of the Home Economics curriculum.

Table 4 again shows that the teachers overwhelmingly accorded field trips as a relevant part of the Home Economics education with an overall mean of 3.4, which is much higher than 2.5. For all the individual statements, the teachers had means far above 2.5, which indicated agreement with all of them. This finding shows that the teachers agreed with the views put forward by Lemchi (2001) that Home Economics is a skill-oriented, decision-making subject that equips learners with skills and knowledge which would help students to be self-employed and at the same time, contribute effectively to the socioeconomic development of the family and society. The other inference is that students don’t really know the relevance of field trips because they had had no exposures to them, apart from the involvement of some of them in their clubs.

Respondents’ Knowledge on the Organization of Field Trips as a Teaching and Learning Method in Home Economics

Further probing was carried out to investigate what the respondents know about the organization of field trips as a teaching and learning method using a total of 15 statements.

The overall mean of 1.9 for the students indicates that their knowledge on the organization of field trips as a teaching and learning method in Home Economics is abysmally poor. Some of the students were not aware of the benefits of field trips, which possibly meant that they did not know what field trips are about. The only statements which the students were in agreement with were “Teacher should organize field trips for students in the class”, “Students must be allowed to contribute to discussions at the site of visit” and “Students need to be given opportunity to ask questions”. These statements had means of 3.2, 2.7 and 2.5 respectively, which are higher than 2.5. The remaining 12 statements all had means below 2.5, meaning that the students did not agree with any of them.

In the case of the teachers, the overall mean of 3.2 shows that the teachers in the sample had a good knowledge on the organization of field trips as a teaching and learning method in Home Economics. All the individual statements had means above 2.5, meaning that the teachers agreed with all the 15 statements.

It can be deduced from the results that students in the sample did not have knowledge on the use of field trips as a method of teaching and learning Home Economics. No wonder they explained it as a social outing only. The findings proved the conclusion put forward Ramey-Gassert (1997) that teachers often separate formal and informal learning. Home Economics teachers in the sample clearly separated the formal teaching from informal teaching involving field trips.

Challenges in the Organization and Use of Field Trips for Teaching and Learning of Home Economics

A question was posed that sought to find out the challenges which the respondents considered as limitations in the use and organization of field trips by the teachers mostly based on the challenges identified by Michie (1998). Table 2 has the data.
Table 2: Challenges in the Organization and Use of Field Trips for Teaching and Learning Home Economics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Agree No (%)</th>
<th>Agree No (%)</th>
<th>Disagree No (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree No (%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lack of teachers' skills to use field trips as a teaching method</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>60(37.5)</td>
<td>50(31.2)</td>
<td>30(18.8)</td>
<td>20(12.5)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td>4(33.4)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lack of support from the school administration</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>60(37.5)</td>
<td>50(31.2)</td>
<td>35(21.9)</td>
<td>15(9.4)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>8(66.6)</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lack of support from parents/Failure to give permission</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4(2.5)</td>
<td>10(6.3)</td>
<td>88(55.0)</td>
<td>58(36.3)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3(25.0)</td>
<td>8(66.7)</td>
<td>1(8.3)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Failure of parents to give students money to pay for the trip</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>24(15.0)</td>
<td>30(18.8)</td>
<td>86(53.7)</td>
<td>20(12.5)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>9(75.0)</td>
<td>1(8.3)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Curriculum inflexibility</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>50(31.2)</td>
<td>48(30.0)</td>
<td>42(26.3)</td>
<td>20(12.5)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>10(83.3)</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Difficulty in accessing transportation, including cost</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>80(50.0)</td>
<td>46(28.8)</td>
<td>24(15.0)</td>
<td>10(6.2)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Unwillingness on the part of the receiving institutions/companies to receive visitors</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>69(43.1)</td>
<td>50(31.2)</td>
<td>33(20.5)</td>
<td>8(5.0)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4(33.3)</td>
<td>5(41.7)</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>1(8.3)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The locations are too far to attend</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>10(6.3)</td>
<td>10(6.3)</td>
<td>90(56.2)</td>
<td>50(31.2)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>3(25.0)</td>
<td>7(58.3)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Poor student behaviour and attitudes</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>10(6.3)</td>
<td>80(50.0)</td>
<td>70(43.7)</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>2(16.6)</td>
<td>6(50.0)</td>
<td>2(16.7)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Time consideration/It disturbs the school timetable</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>20(12.4)</td>
<td>50(31.2)</td>
<td>60(37.5)</td>
<td>30(18.8)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>9(75.0)</td>
<td>3(25.0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Inadequacy of resources and choice of venue</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>40(25.0)</td>
<td>60(37.5)</td>
<td>40(25.0)</td>
<td>20(12.5)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>6(50.0)</td>
<td>6(50.0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>0(0)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Mean</strong></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data, 2015

Table 2 presents responses on the challenges on the use and organization of field trips in the Home Economics programme. The overall view by both students and teachers indicate that there were challenges, since the means for both sides exceeded 2.5. The statement the students agreed with was the fact that their teachers lacked skills to use field trips as a teaching method. The mean for that statement had 2.9 from the students but the teachers disagreed with it as can be seen from the mean of 2.0. Teachers' skills, the disparity between
theory and practice and perceived teacher inertia are very essential in the organization and use of field trips in teaching and learning, particularly, in skilled training programmes.

The statements which both students and teachers agreed with and were therefore considered as real challenges to the organization and use of field trips for teaching and learning of Home Economics were: (i) Lack of support from the school administration; (ii). Curriculum inflexibility, (iii). Difficulty in accessing transportation, including cost ;( iv). Unwillingness on the part of the receiving institutions and companies to receive visitors; and (v). Inadequacy of resources and choice of venue. All these statements had means above 2.5 as can be observed in Table 6. Both sides also did not agree that students’ behaviour was a challenge, as the means were 1.6 and 1.8 for students and teachers. They both felt students’ behaviour could be checked if trips were properly organized.

Other statements that teachers and students had different views were (i) Lack of support from parents through their failure to give permission (Means are students 1.8 and 3.2 from teachers,( ii). Failure of parents to give wards money to pay for the trip (Means 2.4 and 3.1) and (iii). The locations are too far to attend (Means 1.9 and 2.6). In each case the students disagreed with the statements while the teachers agreed with the statements. In some discussions with the students, they argued that their parents will definitely support them if they are made aware of the numerous advantages of field trips in the teaching and learning of Home Economics.

These findings were in line with most of the factors listed by Michie (1998) as hindrances to teachers from taking their students on field trips, which include the following: The teachers rated ‘The locations are too far to attend’ very high with a mean of 3.8 but it was not supported by the students.

**Ways Field Tips can be made a Useful Tool in the Teaching and Learning of Home Economics**

Respondents, both students and teachers, were asked to suggest ways of making field trips a useful tool in the teaching and learning of Home Economics based on the challenges they listed earlier on, by ranking 10 statements in the order which they considered as important. Each of the 172 respondents was asked to select two suggestions. The first two suggestions ranked as important by 25.6% and 23.5 %, of the respondents respectively were: i) Management and parents should be made aware of the importance of field trips in the teaching and learning of Home Economics and be involved in the decision making; ii). Field trips should be introduced as part of the lesson and a stress placed on the objectives of the field trip.

This suggestion is important in that both students and teachers thought if stakeholders are aware and take part in the decision making, they will offer all their support in terms of the needed resources, be it money or transport and also be willing to restructure the curriculum to make room for these trips, as the second suggestion implies. Meyer and Terry (2008) reported that field trips should be designed around specific educational objectives such that participants can easily make connections between the focus of the field trip and the concepts they are learning in the rest of the educational program. This is exactly what the respondents were after in the second suggestion. The trip setting prior to or during the visit can mitigate this impact (Anderson & Lucas, 1997).
7. Conclusions and Recommendation

Ten teachers indicated that they had a total of five field trips through their second cycle and training college education and remaining two replied that they had five experiences. However, as teachers, only five of them said they had taken their students on field trips once a year for three years. The results indicate that field trips had not been given the prominence it deserves in the teaching and learning of Home Economics in the selected schools of study and that the issue of field trips for Home Economics education and training had long been neglected over the years.

All the teachers were aware that there was a local field trips, which can take place within the school or in the school environs and field trips outside the community in which the school is situated but this was refused by all the 106 students. The teachers had high educational background and sufficient teaching experience and so it was not surprising that they were quite knowledgeable on the importance of field trips as a teaching and learning method in Home Economics.

The definition and the views on the relevance of field trips indicated they were had very poor knowledge of the relevance of field trips in teaching and learning of Home Economics. The students did not have much idea on how field trips can be organized to serve the purpose of teaching and learning method. On the other hand, teachers in the sample had a very good knowledge on the organization of field trips as a teaching and learning method in Home Economics.

The overall view by both students and teachers indicate that there were challenges. The statements which both students and teachers agreed with and were therefore considered as real challenges to the organization and use of field trips for teaching and learning of Home Economics were: (i) Lack of support from the school administration; (ii) Curriculum inflexibility, (iii).Difficulty in accessing transportation, including cost; (iv) Unwillingness on the part of the receiving institutions and companies to receive visitors; and (v) Inadequacy of resources and choice of venue.

The three most important suggestions were: (i). Management and Parents should be made aware of the importance of field trips in the teaching and learning of Home Economics and be involved in the decision making; (ii). Field trips should be introduced as part of the lesson and a stress placed on the objectives of the field trip and the thirdly, the trip should be discussed in class before it starts so as to stimulate students’ interest for the trip; and (iii) The teachers overwhelmingly accorded field trips as a relevant part of the Home Economics education because the majority of the teachers knew that field trips are very important in the teaching of Home Economics.

8. References


Finchum, W. M. (2013). How can teachers and students prepare for effective field trips to historic sites and museums?


