

Importance of Out- of- Door Activities: The Perspectives of Social Studies Teachers in Selected Senior High Schools in Northern Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The study investigated Social Studies teachers' use of out of door activities in Social Studies subject two selected senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana. Qualitative case study research design was used for the study. The population for the study comprised of all Social Studies teachers in the northern region of Ghana. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select six trained graduate social studies teachers out of the eight sampled teachers for one-on-one interview. The findings from this study revealed that most social studies teachers consider out-of-door activities as important in their teaching because of its educational value, despite the challenges they encountered. It was also revealed that social studies teachers perceived out-of-door activities to be difficult to organize which affect their use of the technique in teaching. This study recommended that in order to promote the use of out-of-door activities in the teaching and learning of social studies, the government through the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) and Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) should make funds available for senior high schools to organize out-of-door activities, specifically, in the teaching and learning of social studies to enhance students' understanding of the subject. Again, the government through the Ministry of Education and G.E.S, should advise heads of institutions to support and encourage teachers, especially, social studies teachers to embark on out-of-door activities within and outside their school community to boost students' understanding of the concept that is mostly abstract in nature.

Keywords: social studies, societal problems, out-of-door activity, positive attitudes, values, skills

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1. Introduction

Social studies is one of the core subjects that is widely taught at the various levels of education in Ghana, starting from the primary school level, through the Junior High School (JHS), Senior High Schools (SHS) to Colleges of Education and Universities. According to Cobbold (2013) "social studies as a subject was first introduced to the Ghanaian curriculum in the early 1940s". The subject is specifically designed to promote citizenship education that aims at producing a reflective, competence and concerned citizen (Siaw-Marfo, 2011). In the view of Parker (2010), social studies prepares students to fit into the society by equipping them with the requisite knowledge about their tradition, culture, norms, values, ways of life, as well as the social problems associated with their various communities. Social studies is viewed by many authorities and researchers as a multi-disciplinary subject that take its sources from geography, psychology, economics, civic education, history, anthropology, religion, archaeology, economics, philosophy, political science, law, sociology as well as appropriate content from the field of humanities and the natural sciences (Mensah et al., 2014).

It is an undeniable fact that, even though other subjects play significant roles in developing informed and responsible citizenship, it is only social studies that has citizenship development as its priority goal. In the words of Ayaaba (2011), social studies is distinguished from other subjects by its problem-solving nature, which concerns itself with personal and societal problems of human survival. By this, teachers must teach the subject so that learners can gain the relevant knowledge, positive attitudes, values and skills to enable them solve their personal and societal problems. The subject must also be taught instill in learners attitudinal change. These, as observed by Ayaaba (2011) can better be achieved if teaching and learning are contextualized or linked to the environments.

Integrated social studies demands teaching approaches which do not recognize boundaries of discipline, such that learners are able to acquire the needed skills, positive attitudes and values that will help them solve individual and societal problems (Çengelci, 2013). Therefore, it is not enough for the social studies teacher to see the subject (social studies) as an assortment of knowledge without considering how such knowledge and concepts can be imparted to the students. For this reason, some authors recognize out-of-door activities as the cornerstone of the social studies curriculum that should be utilised in the social studies classroom.

The importance of out-of-door activities in the teaching and learning of social studies cannot be

overemphasized. Many studies have revealed significant relationships between the use of out-of-door activities and the teaching and learning of social studies across various levels of the academic ladder (from basic school level to the tertiary level) (Bekoe et al., 2017). Out-of-door activities are similar to other potent teaching methodology or techniques that propels students to gain relevant knowledge, positive attitudes, values and skills needed to solve personal and societal problems, which are some of the over-arching goals of social studies curriculum. The significance of out-of-door activities is that it helps strengthen classroom lessons and gives students the opportunity to visualize and experience unique firsthand information of a subject. It offers learners the opportunities to partake in new environments, as well as develop their curiosities of a given subject. Also, out-of-door activities are valuable in broadening the learners' understanding of the world, and encouraging their development of social and personal problem solving skills.

Initiatives are underway in many countries such as the United States, South Korea, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom (Korean Internet & Security Agency-KISA), online activities in Germany, trainings are held, rehabilitation camps are held (OECD, 2018). Parents, researchers and especially teachers have important tasks to do to ensure that children are not affected by the risks of the digital world. It has been recognized by researchers that while the time spent outdoors in order for children to live a healthy life varies, it is a need or even a necessity for children (Edwards, 2019; Ginny, 2019; Kirkpatrick, 2019; Loria, 2018). Also; the results of this study showed that connecting with outdoor by doing-living in outdoor learning environments improves children's ability to focus, improves their self-confidence, reduces stress, contributes to coping with depression, improves mental health and general health (well-being) (Maller, 2009).

The strangest and worst part of today's schools is that they aim to prepare students for social life in a space completely free from reality to the conditions of social life (Tokcan, 2015). The fact that students are passive in the classroom is contrary to both their nature and their needs. Schools are places that give children not just information, but places that give them the ability to think to find their way in real life. The greatest danger to the school is that it is transformed into an artificial environment independent of the conditions and problems of the environment and the place being lived. Instead of having the student memorize the information in the school, the student should be confronted with real life. The way to do this is to take the teaching out of the classroom and meet with the real life. For this reason, Dewey is seen as the most important educator with an emphasis on the importance of outdoor education (Tokcan, 2015)

Notwithstanding, out-of-door activities in many SHSs in Ghana, particularly in the Northern Region, may not be properly planned and executed in a way that would enhance students' learning. This could, among other things, be due to the perceptions such teachers hold about out-of-door activities. Out-of-door activities may too often be regarded as having no educational value or as programs that ill-prepared students for standardized tests (Finchum, 2013). Similar concerns are that teachers may not spend sufficient time or efforts in finding methods and mediums to connect out-of-door activity given the laid down standards, procedures and bureaucracy involved.

Social Studies is a problem-solving subject and if students at the Senior High School (SHS) level are to study and understand certain contemporary issues and explore better solutions to them, it is important to engage such students in educational visits to get firsthand information (Bekoe et al., 2017). This indicates that the use of out-of-door activities can lead to the realization of the goals of social studies. Therefore, if SHS social studies teachers tend to neglect such activities in their social studies teaching, it stands to reason that, the objectives of the subject are not likely to be realized, which apparently will affect students' ability to independently solve their own and societal problems in future. Additionally, researching the literature for information about secondary school, social studies teachers' use of out-of-door activities has revealed that few of these literatures dealt with practical recommendations on teachers' use of out-of-door activities, especially at the SHS level. Although many of such literature referred to out-of-door activities as viable alternatives to classroom learning. Similarly, little of such study can be said to have been conducted in Ghana. This study thus investigated Senior High Schools social studies teachers use of out-of-door activities in social studies in the Northern Region of Ghana. The purpose of this study was to investigate Social Studies teachers' use of out of door activities in Social Studies subject in the northern region of Ghana. The specific objectives that guided the study were:

1. Examine the importance of out of door learning from the perspectives of Social Studies teachers within the northern region of Ghana
2. Identify the types of out of door activities used by social studies teachers in their instruction?
3. Examine the challenges faced by teachers when embarking on out-of-door activities

2. Literature review

2.1 Meaning and Importance of out-of-door activities

A variety of terms have been used to describe learning experiences that are planned and undertaken outside the classroom. Out of door activities refer to integration of theoretical knowledge with practice in nature and outdoor environments (Elliott & Davis, 2008). Learning does not always occur in a classroom environment; it may be

achieved in such places as museums, zoos, botanical gardens, aqua parks, playgrounds, forests and rivers (Türkmen, 2010). The idea that education should be given in nature dates back to Aristotle and Plato. Years later, philosophers and scientists (including Rousseau, Locke, Schelling, Froebel, Basedow and Pestalozzi) have emphasised that children should frequently be given an opportunity to be in nature. Research shows that “direct, ongoing experiences of nature in relatively familiar settings remains a vital source for children’s physical, emotional, and intellectual development” (Kellert, 2005). Proximity and daily exposure to natural settings increase children’s ability to focus and enhances cognitive abilities (Wells, 2000)

Outdoor spaces help children to develop skills related to the scientific research process like making inferences, measuring and observing. In addition, objects encountered there for the first time trigger learning new words. Stone and Faulkner (2014) found that spending time outdoors increased physical activity, reduced immobility and prevented excessive weight gain. Therefore, it is necessary that children be in contact with nature i.e. animals, plants and soil, and that outdoor places be integrated into education (Yayla, Ceylan & Ülker, 2014).

According to Finchum (2013), the experience gained by teachers during out-of-door activities can, to some extent, have an effect on the students’ attitudes and beliefs, irrespective of the trip’s destination. He maintains that, merely touring a business district can provide the students with deep insight, and fair knowledge regarding the level of poverty, homelessness, and mental illnesses of such districts. A more profound degree of empathy can occasionally be realized when the students experience circumstances that are genuine, not recycled data shared either through textbooks, or guest-speakers. Such outcomes can be attributed to the objectives of good social studies teachers (Clark, 2000). In the words of Pope (2009), a well-organized and well-planned out-of-door activity can be educational, yet still be fun. Pope maintains that, educational trips and out-of-door activities create life-long memories and rekindle the desires for learning.

Furthermore, in the words of Ayaaba (2006), out-of-door activities extend learners’ knowledge of their environment providing them with firsthand experiences that would not be possible to implement within a classroom. Out-of-door activities permit a social studies student to study at firsthand, a number of things that cannot be brought into their classrooms because of size or inconveniences (Ayaaba and Odumah, 2013).

Aggarwal (2003) on his part, describes out-of-door activities as supportive tools for teachers to provide further and better explanation, clarity and interpretations to the concepts learned in the classroom, as well as to coordinate and correlate classroom lessons to the real-world situations; to make learning more concrete, effective, interesting, inspirational, and meaningful. Accordingly, it can be assertively deduced that out-of-door activities aids in finalizing the triangular process of learning (motivations, clarifications and stimulations). Again, Aggarwal (2008) points out that out-of-door activities target at enriching, stimulating and supplementing content areas of the curriculum via firsthand observations and direct experience outside the classrooms.

No matter what subject or content is processed, activities must be carried out either by going to the real environment or the class must be transformed into an environment to enable these activities to take place. Since it is very difficult to design and put the classroom environment in such a way as to represent real life, real life must be seen outside the classroom and faced with life. Therefore, constructivist education is an approach based on outdoor learning (Tokcan, 2015). Today, urban life, digital world, technological tools and social media have placed students under house and school confinement. Fourth grade primary school in San Diego. “I like playing at home more because all the electrical appliances are there” his testimony proves this case (Louv, 2018). Families, and especially educators, have a great role to play in overcoming these addictions. What educators must undertake is to increase the quality and function of school gardens, which are a learning-teaching environment, to enable students to spend at least part of their time outdoors the classroom, albeit for a short time during school hours. In this context, the social studies course offers unique learning environments, materials and many opportunities for outdoor education and training activities. Due to the appropriateness of the basic philosophy and structure of the social studies course content, it is important to adopt it in social studies courses in order to achieve the effective goal of outdoor education. Outdoor learning environments can help students communicate with their peers, understand others, work together democratically and towards common goals, develop community awareness and understand their own place in the world. Accordingly, “understanding the real world is possible with the realization of learning in 99% of human existence. But people have trapped the work of learning inside a small box called a classroom for a century.” The statement points out that education should not remain in the classroom (Hodge, 2004). In this respect, outdoor learning environments and learning in these environments are important for many courses and social studies courses. When the field is examined, the studies are concentrated in the field of science (Saraç, 2017). In the dimension of social studies education, outdoor teaching method and outdoor educational activities have often been the subject

2.2 Types of out-of-door activity

Scholars in this field have classified out -of-door activities into various forms and types. Tamakloe, Atta and Amedahe (2005) grouped out-of-door activities into two major types, namely unstructured and structured out-of-door activities. With the unstructured out-of-door activities, the teachers instruct their students to identify or

specify the various phenomenon of their interests, of which they would like to study. By consensus, the students end up choosing one phenomenon. The teacher then asks them to choose any material and equipment which they think will facilitate the study they intend to undertake. The students are then accompanied by the teacher to the place and each child embarks upon what he intends doing at the place. Tamakloe et al. (2005) believe that the experiences gained by students in these methods are “numerous and of high educational standard”, contrary to critics who think the method is time-wasting and lacks purpose. In both the structured and unstructured types of out-of-door activity, Tamakloe et al. (2005) came out with stages. They are prerequisites, fieldwork activities and post-fieldwork activities. The only difference is that whereas there is a comprehensive account on pre-fieldwork activities in the structured out-of-door activity, there is practically none in the unstructured out-of-door activity.

Behrendt and Franklin (2014) on their part came out with the formal and informal as types of out-of-door activities, that collectively arouses the student interests, knowledge, and motivation towards the topics or subjects understudy. According to them, formal out-of-door activities include governmental institutions and agencies, museums, historical centers, exhibition halls and businesses. Behrendt and Franklin (2014) viewed that these institutions offer exceptional formal experiential learning activities and programs that connect the students to appreciate the concepts learned in the classroom to the real-world situation. Behrendt and Franklin (2014) further positioned that out-of-door activities offer “an opportunity to motivate and connect students to understand classroom concepts and increase students’ knowledge foundation, as well as promote further learning and higher-level thinking strategies”. Behrendt and Franklin (2014) mentioned that students’ involvement in the learning experience forms the basic foundation of out-of-door activities. Educators and teachers find these activities comfortable on the grounds that students are bound to a choreographed agenda or plan. Nevertheless, there are minimal chances for students or learners to personally have an interaction and connection to the experience (Rennie, 2007).

Conversely, informal out-of-door activities are less structured and offer learners the laxity to control or make choices relating to the activities. Informal education is considered as one of the genuine cognitive learning models. Students feel ease learning in the informal environment. Informal environment is much focused on individualized activities that are less competitive or assessed based on grades. It involved voluntary and unforced interactions. Together, these characteristics create an inherent motivation to the students (Rennie, 2007) and encourage them to dissect their connections to the local and national communities, in addition to how they interact with or relate to the local and global ecosystems.

Conclusively, it can be observed from the foregoing discussions that out-of-door, irrespective of the type (formal or informal) is a vital teaching and learning tool or concept that helps sustain the interest of students towards classroom lessons. While there are two major types of out-of-door activities, however when you carefully analyze them, it will be realized that they are all talking about the same thing. The interesting aspect is that, in all the types identified, effective learning takes place which is the core objective of out-of-door activities.

2.3 Challenges of out-of-door activities

It is stated that outdoor education has become systematic in the modern sense in the world (Yazıcı ve Çobanoğlu, 2017). It is stated that there is orientation towards outdoor education both in the world and in our country (Bakioğlu, 2017; Cirit Gül, Tağrikulu and Çobanoğlu, 2018) and it continues to develop as a field of study in this direction. However, a lot have been established regarding the challenges of deteriorating opportunities for out-of-door activities (Sözer and Oral, 2016). Available literature submits the widespread challenges and opportunities that characterize out-of-door activities over recent years.

A significant challenge that hinders out-of-door activities is likelihood of children becoming ill outdoors, and the negative reactions of parents. Over the decades, the involvements of students in accidents have attracted the attention of many researchers, authors, parents, policymakers, school authorities as well as many stakeholders within and outside the educational sector, which seems to overshadow the educational benefits of out-of-door activities (Alat, Akgümüş and Cavalı (2012)). Alat et al., 2012 performed a study to determine opinions, attitudes and practices of preschool teachers about outdoor education. They collected data from 25 preschool teachers working at schools of the Turkish Ministry of Education, and found that although the teachers had a positive attitude towards outdoor education, they did not spend enough time on outdoor activities due to poor physical conditions, insufficient security precautions at school campuses, crowded classrooms, their worries about likelihood of children becoming ill outdoors, and the negative reactions of parents.

Most teachers do not have the expertise to organize successful out-of-door activities which by extension goes to defeat the purposes of the trip. This was confirmed by Ayaaba (2006) when he intimates that “poorly planned trips are worse than none at all, for they lack purpose, may jeopardize the safety of the children, may cause poor public relation between the school and the community, and can break down learning which the teacher should have been trying to achieve in the classroom”.

Out-of-door activities “are usually costly to be undertaken more especially when the phenomenon for the

study is far away from the school". Evaluating the above challenges, it can be established that, planning a successful out-of-door activity is not a child's play since there are a lot of challenges that come with it. It is therefore important that as a teacher teaching social studies, you must endeavor to bring your expertise and experience to bear in order to organize a successful trip that will motivate and connect students to appreciate and understand classroom concepts better than indoor lessons. It is also important to motivate yourself as a teacher and not allow the challenges of out-of-door activities to put you off from using it in teaching (Harveston, 2019).

3 Methodology

Considering the research problem, the purpose and the research questions formulated the researchers adopted a qualitative approach using the case study design. Case study researches aim at exploring specific phenomena, comprehensive in a contemporary context (Crowe et al, Rashid et al., 2019). As such, case study researchers do not usually focus on the cases to a larger population. As applicable in most qualitative study designs, sample sizes in case studies are typically small (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Vasileiou et al., 2018). Available evidence on qualitative case studies reveals that researchers who conduct case studies may decide to either recruit a single unit of analysis or multiple units of analyses; this defines the sample size (Crowe et al., 2011; Rashid et al., 2019; Schoch, 2016). The study was conducted in two selected senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana. Tamale Metropolis was chosen among the 14 districts of the Northern region because it is the district with 14 senior high schools, the highest number of senior high schools in the Northern region of Ghana

The Population of the study included all Senior High Schools' social studies teachers in the Northern Region. All social studies teachers in both public and private Senior High Schools in the Tamale Metropolis constituted the accessible population. In all, there were 14 districts in the Northern Region of the Republic of Ghana. Tamale Metropolis was purposefully selected due to the large number of Senior High Schools it houses. As at the time of conducting the research, there were 14 Senior High Schools. Two Senior High Schools were conveniently selected for the study out of the 14 because we had the permit to conduct the study in those schools. Even though as at the time of the study there were eight social studies teachers in the two schools studied, six of them were sampled for the study because they had given their consent to be studied. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select six trained graduate social studies teachers out of the eight sampled teachers for one-on-one interview. This technique was employed in order to allow the researcher select teachers who are trained graduates in social studies to serve as respondents for the study. It was important to select trained graduate social studies teachers for the interview because it was assumed that they have acquired the professional training in the subject and they have the capacity and competence in their field which can provide more reliable data about the focus of the research.

Instrument used for data collection was the interview. The qualitative data collected through interview were analysed using the interpretive method based on the themes arrived at in the data collection. The researcher related the themes to the research questions and interpreted on a number of issues raised by the respondents. These were based on questions on the interviews.

We obtained permission from the Northern Regional Director for Education. Participants consent was sought before we scheduled the interview with them. Each was made aware that they could stop with the interview at any point of the interview. Again, study participant were made aware of their anonymity through the use of codes in their identity. Also draft findings of the study was given to them to go through to be sure their views were not misinterpreted.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the outcome of the research having gathered the interview responses. The major findings set out are interpreted, discussed and inferences made from them in view of findings from related literature. The results underpinning this study were analyzed and developed into categories, themes and patterns pertinent to the study objectives as derived from the participants' interview transcripts. Individual participants are represented by codes and descriptions of data from their interviews has been internalized using the simple coding shown in table 1. This is done in order to protect their anonymity and confidentiality. The interview questions, focused on teachers' perception on the use of out-of-door activities in their instruction and the challenges faced by teachers when embarking on out-of-door activities.

Table 1: Codes representing participants

Interviewee	Code
Teacher 1 (SHS 'A')	SAT1
Teacher 2 (SHS 'A')	SAT2
Teacher 3 (SHS 'A')	SAT3
Teacher 1 (SHS 'B')	SBT1
Teacher 2 (SHS 'B')	SBT2
Teacher 3 (SHS 'B')	SBT3

4.1 Participants' views on the importance of out of door activities in teaching Social Studies

In the opinion of one teacher, a well-organized and well-planned out-of-door activity can be educational, yet still be fun (SAT1). This corroborates the views of Pope (2009) that, educational trips and out-of-door activities create life-long memories and rekindle the desires for learning.

Another participant (SAT2) indicated that, *I usually embark on out-of-door activities with my students when the need be*. In this teacher's opinion, students are taken to out of door learning when it is necessary. *When I use out-of-door activities in teaching Social Studies, students usually get firsthand experience which facilitate learning*. This opinion is consistent with Ayaaba (2006), that out-of-door activities extend learners' knowledge of their environment providing them with firsthand experiences that would not be possible to implement within a classroom. He further indicated that, *the level of students' participation in my out-of-door activities is always high*. This implies that when the teacher sends the students for out-of-door activities relating to any topic, the students participate actively.

According to SAT1 and SAT3 one importance of the use of out-of-door activities is that it helps me to make learning more concrete, interesting, and meaningful. This finding is in line with Aggarwal (2003) who describes out-of-door activities as supportive tools for teachers to provide further and better explanation, clarity and interpretations to the concepts leaned in the classroom, as well as to coordinate and correlate classroom lessons to the real-world situations; to make learning more concrete, effective, interesting, inspirational, and meaningful. On the same issue, a teacher was of the view *that students get the social studies concepts better whenever I embark on an out-of-door activity* (SBT3). This implies that out of door activities enhances students understanding of issues under discussion.

In the opinion of SBT1 *one importance with the use of out-of-door activities is that it makes the students have meaningful connection to the curriculum, and they have real-life applications of what they have been learning in class*. This finding supports Kisiel (2006) who believes that, out-of-door activities promote meaningful connection to the curriculum, as what students encounter during the outdoor activities are real-life applications of what they have been learning in class.

According to one teacher, *the trips I embark on are always linked to my instructional goals* (SBT2). He further stated that, *I used post field work to highlight students experience in Social Studies classroom*. In his view, *out of door activities motivate learners to interact with and exchange ideas with persons in the real world environment*. This is in line with reports by Rennie, (2007) who stated that out of door activities create an inherent motivation to the students and encourage them to dissect their connections to the local and national communities.

According to SBT3, *out of door activities is a vital teaching and learning tool or concept that helps sustain the interest of students towards classroom lessons*.

4.2 Types of out of door activities used by social studies teachers

The participants shared their views on the types of out-of-door activities used in their social studies instructions. Talking about the types of out-of-door activities used, SAT3 mentioned that, *I give my students the opportunity to decide the phenomenon of their interests, a phenomenon they would like to study and by consensus, the students end up choosing one phenomenon*.

This, according to Tamakloe, Atta and Amedahe (2005), belongs to the unstructured out-of-door activities in which the teacher asks learners to choose any phenomenon which they think will facilitate the study they intend to undertake. The students are then accompanied by the teacher to the place and each child embarks upon what he intends doing at the place.

Another teacher stated that, *I send my students to museums, historical centers and sometimes to businesses or governmental institutions where they have the opportunity to interact with workers there in such institutions* (SBT1).

This opinion is in line with the views of Behrendt and Franklin (2014) who reported that, out -of -door activities is a formal type in which institutions offer exceptional formal experiential learning activities and programs that connect the students to appreciate the concepts leaned in the classroom to the real-world situation. Tamakloe et al. (2005) believe that the experiences gained by students in these methods are "numerous and of

high educational standard”, contrary to critics who think the method is time-wasting and lacks purpose. Thus, educators and teachers find these activities comfortable on the grounds that students are bound to a choreographed agenda or plan.

According to one teacher (SBT2), *the type of out-of-door activities chosen depends on the topic being treated in the classroom. However, irrespective of the type (formal or informal) chosen, I make sure it is relevant and serves as a learning tool or concept that helps sustain the interest of students towards classroom lessons.*

In the opinion of another teacher, *in all the types of out-of-door activities chosen, effective learning takes place which is the core objective of out-of-door activities (SAT2). I make sure I chose the type that in line with the lessons being taught in the classroom.*

4.3 Challenges faced by Social Studies teachers in embarking on out-of-door activities

From all the six study participants, one of the challenges for out-of-door activities is the fears and concerns about the health and safety of the students during these tours or out-of-door activities. This finding confirms Alat et al. (2012) who opines that over the decades, the involvements of students in accidents have attained the attention of many researchers, authors, parents, policymakers, school authorities as well as many stakeholders within and outside the educational sector, which seems to overshadow the educational benefits of out-of door activities.

Another challenge mentioned by one of the participants (SAT1) was that, *Out-of-door activities are usually costly to undertake especially when the phenomenon for the study is far away from the school. I have transportation problem, and sometimes, students are not willing to pay. This makes it difficult for me to take students for out-of-door activities.* This implies that transportation is a hindrance to the organization of out-of-door activities since most school do not have reliable means of transport and sometimes parents are not willing to pay for the transportation. Thus, a major challenge is the cost element.

In the opinion of this participant (SAT1), *when I take my students out for learning, it affects other teachers' subject for that day. There is no time for them to honour the lessons of other teachers' lessons and this sometimes results in conflict of interest if not well planned.* This means that the organization of out of door activities can leads to distraction of the daily time table for instruction.

According to the teacher (SAT2), *inadequate confidence and expertise knowledge on the parts of teachers, coupled with no support from the school administrators for the organization of the out- of-door activities makes it difficult for the organization of such trips.* He further stated that, *personally, lack of training is a major limitation to using out-of-door activities.* Similar findings were made by Ayaaba (2006) who stated that “poorly planned trips are worse than none at all, for they lack purpose, may jeopardize the safety of the children, may course poor public relation between the school and the community, and can break down learning which the teacher should have been trying to achieve in the classroom”.

According to SBT2 and SAT3, *Poor student behavior and attitudes is a challenge to embarking on out-of-door activities.* This implies that indiscipline behavior of some student may bring about problems during out-of-door activities. They were also of the view that poor teacher training and experience is a challenge to out-of-door activities.

5. Conclusion

From the study it can be concluded that Social Studies teachers regard out of door activities as important and so usually embark on them with their students when the need be. It can also be concluded that most social studies teachers consider out-of-door activities in their teaching because of its educational value, despite the challenges they admitted to encountering. It was further revealed that the use of out-of-door activities make students learning more concrete, interesting, and meaningful. It also can also be concluded that social studies teachers do perceive out-of-door activities to be difficult to organize which affect their use of the technique in teaching.

6. Recommendations

This study recommended that, in order to promote the use of out-of-door activities in the teaching and learning of social studies, the government through the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) and Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) should make funds available for senior high schools to organize out-of-door activities, specifically, in the teaching and learning of social studies to enhance students' understanding. Again, the government through the Ministry of Education and G.E.S, should advise heads of institutions to support and encourage teachers, especially, social studies teachers to embark on out-of-door activities within and outside their school community to boost students' understanding of the concept that is mostly abstract in nature.

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