

# Implications of Field Trip Pedagogy on Undergraduates Students' Problem Solving Skills in Social Studies

Shuaibu Kennedy<sup>1</sup>; Ajah Sumaila<sup>2</sup>; Alao Micheal Oluwashola<sup>3</sup>; Uteino Ayuba<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Department of Social Sciences Education,  
Faculty of Education, Prince Abubakar Audu, University,  
Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This work addressed the implication of Fieldtrip on problem-solving models on undergraduates' performance in Social Studies problem-solving skills. The quasi-experimental design of pre-test, post-test, non-randomized control group was adopted for the study. The population and sample was 291 undergraduates students of Social Studies. Two research questions and hypotheses were used for the study. Social Studies Problem-solving Performance Test (SSPAT) was the instrument used to collect data for the study. The SSPAT was validated and a reliability index of 0.83 was obtained using the test-retest technique and Kuder-Rickardson formula 20 (KR20). The collected data was analyzed using the mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions while the t-test was used in answering the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that Fieldtrip problem-solving models is capable of enhancing students' problem-solving skills significantly without gender bias. This study recommended that teachers of Social Studies should use Field trip as a complimentary method to foster understanding of abstract environmental concepts taught in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Pedagogy; Field Trip; Performance; Social Studies, Problem-Solving, Skills

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## I. INTRODUCTION

As schools and experts advocate for continual improvement in the teaching and learning standards and greater educational outcome for learners, series of reforms were introduced to make teaching and learning worthwhile and appreciable. Ebere & Okuro, 2024, posits that there are so many devices for effective teaching and an effective technique can ensure effective learning. Professional teaching and learning activities within schools have drawn the attention of many education researchers, during the past decades (Johnson 2011; Ahmad & Munawar 2013). Shuaibu (2014), posits that Students learning outcomes and performance have been on the decline and schools can no longer produce people with the necessary abilities and capacity to challenge prevalent educational, cultural, social and economic problems. It is in realization of this that "the products of any education system should be reasonably empowered, through problem solving skills through efficient and functional education".

Such education enjoys pride in Social Studies Education which deals with man's interactions with his environment. Folorunso and Adegboye (2024) define Social Studies as a field of study that equips learners with skills and attitudes necessary for responsible and competent citizenship. This bears witness to the ideas of, Lawal and Oyeleye (2003, shuaibu, 2014) who describe Social Studies as a discipline which attempts to modify the learner's behavior in the direction of acceptable values and attitudes through a process of studying the relationships of human beings with their environment. This can go a long way to be achieved with field-trip approach. Traditionally, the teacher utilizes the classroom as a direct approach to teaching and learning of Social Studies. Each student has a unique learning style, and the traditional one-size-fits-all teaching approaches may not cater to diverse learning preferences. Some students might thrive in interactive and hands-on learning environments, while others may prefer visual or auditory learning methods in achieving Social Studies objectives.

Problem-solving approaches in Social Studies education encourage students to actively participate in the learning process through engaging activities, simulations, and real-life scenarios, students can apply their knowledge to practical situations (Chang et al 2024). This process promotes higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are essential for understanding complex Social Studies concepts and developing a deeper understanding of historical events, societal issues and technological development. This can be effectively inculcated into the students through field-trip strategies (a novel instructional approach to teaching and learning). The product or output is to improve learning outcomes. Problem-solving is an active learning approach that encourages students to think critically, analyze information, and develop innovative solutions to real-world issues (Verawati et al 2024). This experience can foster students' analytical skills, decision-making abilities, and collaborative competencies. It is believed that problem-solving strategies can empower students to become active participants in their learning experiences, leading to improved performance. According to Falasi, (2024) traditional teaching methods often rely on lectures, rote memorization, and textbook-based learning, which may fail to captivate students' interest and curiosity.

Field trip pedagogy as an important learning tool in Social Studies Education is based on the idea that the context for learning is made in the context where the object for learning takes place. Social Studies education thus embodies the practice of learning. Field strategies, such as field trips, are highly effective in Social Studies education because they provide experiential and engaging learning opportunities. As Olayinka, Lega, and Aliyu (2025) note, “field strategies in Social Studies Education are effective in learning since they provide active, experiential, and engaging learning experiences”. These approaches connect classroom content to real-world contexts, enhancing students' interest, engagement, and understanding of social concepts. Empirical studies also show that learners exposed to field-based instructional methods achieve higher academic performance and develop stronger critical thinking and observational skills compared to those taught with traditional methods (Onyekpe & Ogbemudiare, 2025; Oloyede, 2025). By fostering practical application of knowledge, field strategies contribute significantly to effective Social Studies teaching and learning.

This strategies is not just presentations of settings and pointing to interesting spots in a landscape, it involve acoustic, semantic, group dynamic, aesthetic, political, symbolic, emotional, verbal and gesture aspects. This approach does not rid the teacher of his values and roles as expert and custodian of knowledge. It advocates for the modification of his roles as guardian, director and facilitator of the learning process. The distinguishing differences between the current study and that of others were in the design, area and scope, methodology, sample and sampling technique and statistical analysis procedure

among others. Most previous studies are theoretical in nature, dwelling extensively on the importance of field trip in the teaching and learning of Social Studies Education. This gap therefore justifies the need to study the implication of field trip approach in the teaching of Social Studies Education.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Field Study is an outdoor learning exercise undertaken by teachers and students to give the students the opportunity to acquire knowledge through observation and practical experiences. Field strategies are instructional approaches in Social Studies education that extend learning beyond the classroom into real-world environments such as communities, historical sites, museums, and civic institutions. These strategies, including field trips and excursions, are deliberately planned to provide learners with direct, experiential engagement with social, cultural, historical, and environmental phenomena related to the curriculum. By situating learning in authentic contexts, field strategies help learners transform abstract concepts into meaningful experiences, thereby enhancing understanding, engagement, and knowledge retention (Abdullah, Sharif, & Qolamani, 2024).

Empirical evidence demonstrates that field strategies significantly enhances students' academic performance and learning outcomes in Social Studies. Onyekpe and Ogbemudiare (2025) found that students exposed to field trip instructional strategies are found to performed better than those taught using traditional lecture-based methods. The effectiveness of field strategies is attributed to active participation, increased motivation, and opportunities for observation, inquiry, and reflection. Consequently, field strategies promote critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the practical application of knowledge, aligning with the core objectives of Social Studies education and supporting the development of informed and socially responsible citizens. This will enable them acquire problem solving skills capable of solving social problems.

This instructional method and cognitive skill enables learners to engage actively with complex and open-ended challenges by identifying problems, analyzing information, generating alternative solutions, and selecting optimal actions. As a pedagogical method, problem solving emphasizes active learning rather than passive reception, requiring students to interpret situations, deploy reasoning strategies, and reflect on outcomes to achieve meaningful understanding (Van Merriënboer & Kirschner, 2021; Dilek & Koçak, 2023). The process integrates both cognitive operations — such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation — and metacognitive regulation, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's problem-solving processes (Mayer, 2020).

In educational theory, problem solving is conceptualized as both a skill domain and a teaching approach that supports critical thinking and real-world application. It encompass the

ability to define issues and state problems clearly, interpret relevant data, identify logical connections, and apply systematic strategies to arrive at solutions. Dilek and Koçak (2023) describe problem solving as a dynamic process in which learners move beyond memorization of facts to engage with tasks that require creative thinking, decision making, and reflective judgment. Similarly, Van Merriënboer and Kirschner (2021) argue that problem solving involves integrating domain knowledge with reasoning strategies that facilitate adaptive expertise in varied contexts.

Nigerian empirical studies further highlight the instructional effectiveness of problem-solving approaches. For example, Yakubu, Yaki, and Joel (2024) found that interactive learning strategies significantly improved problem-solving skills among Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) students, indicating that structured collaborative activities enhance analytical reasoning and application of knowledge.

Gender is a considerable variable in this study. It is considered as a social construction of behaviors towards male and female in different ways. Studies on gender norms in Nigeria suggest that male–female behaviour differences are not biologically determined but are constructed and reinforced through cultural norms, socialization processes, and institutional power structures, which often exaggerate male dominance and female deference (Obi, 2025). Various studies have documented differences in skill acquisition and performance between male and female, and numerous others have offered theoretical explanation. Literature on gender difference in academic performance and skill acquisition is extensive. There is however, research evidence suggesting that improved instructional techniques can influence academic performance outcomes across genders, demonstrating that strategic pedagogical approaches have the potential to reduce gender disparities in learning and skill acquisition (Emudianughe, Ogheneakoke, & Dania, 2025). The present study therefore investigated the place of field trip in Social Studies in terms of bridging gender gap to enhancing problem solving skills irrespective of sex.

#### ➤ *Statement of the Problem*

The basic ideas of Social Studies is the understanding of the world and the ability to solve the problems of the society through the acquisition of relevant body of knowledge, skills and competencies needed for the development of individuals and the society. The Social Studies curriculum recommended so many teaching approaches for teachers in Social Studies instructions, this issue may stem from traditional teaching methods that do not adequately address the diverse learning needs of students. This has prompted a closer examination of novel or innovative learning strategies. However, field trip instructional techniques is the focus of this study. This strategy can be used as a potential area for problem solving skills. Field trip strategies have been found to be very effective in enhancing students' performance in Geography and Biology among

others; hence this study investigated its implications for undergraduate Social Studies students.

#### ➤ *Objectives of the Study*

- To find out the mean score difference of students that were taught problem solving skills using the field trip strategy and those taught the Traditional teaching methods.
- To find out if there is gender differences in the level of performance between male and female students that participated in the field trip.

#### ➤ *Research Questions*

- What is the mean performance scores of students taught in the experimental group and those taught in the control group?
- What is the mean performance scores of male and female undergraduate students of the experimental groups?

#### ➤ *Null Hypotheses*

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is a no significant difference between the means performance scores of the students in experimental group and those in the control group.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean performance of male and female students undergraduate students in the experimental group.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study used pre-test, post-test control group design. Diagrammatically represented as follows:

Group Protest Independent Variable (Treatment Posttest)

(R) E 01 X

02

(R) C 01 -

02

R = Random assignment of subject into group

E = Experimental group

C = Control group

01 = pre-test

X = Treatment (Field trip)

02 = post-test

Quasi-experimental design was used for this study. This enabled the researcher to use intact classes for 200 level students in Social Studies for the research without disrupting the normal academic classes for the selected schools. This also involved pretests and post test for both the experimental and control groups. The population of the study comprised of 291 Social Studies students Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba and Federal University, Lokoja. The sample of 291 students was purposely selected from both PAAU and FUL in the study areas. The instrument used for collection of data is field trip Social Studies problem-solving skills performance Test (FTSSPT) designed by the researchers. The instrument is a 40-item test on problems in environmental concepts which

was validated by two senior lecturers of Social Studies education in the universities and one from Educational Psychology whose reliability coefficient is 0.83 using Kuder-Richardson formula 20(K-R20) The experimental group where taught Social Studies concepts using Field trip problem solving models, while the control group were taught Social Studies

concepts using the Traditional method. Both courses lasted for six weeks. Pretest was administered before the treatment and post-test after the treatment. The collected data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics at 0.05 level of Significance.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Research question one: What is the mean performance of students taught Social Studies concepts using field trip problem-solving models and those taught with Traditional methods?

Table 1: Post. Test means performance of the two groups

Group	N	Pre-test		Post-test		mean
		M	SD	M	SD	
Field trip	164	14.73	3.09	27.29	4.12	12.87
Traditional	127	15.01	3.11	20.81	3.89	5.80

Table 1 show that the mean performance scores of the students taught social studies concepts using problem solving models is 14.72 and 27.29 and standard deviation 3.09 and 4.12 for the pretest and posttest respectively, and mean score is 12.57, while students taught with the Traditional method had a mean performance score of 15.01 and 20.81and standard deviation 3.11 and 3.89 for pretest and posttest respectively with a mean score 5.80. This implies that students taught Social Studies concepts using problem solving models achieved better than their counterparts that were taught with the Traditional method.

Table 2: Comparison of the Male and Female Students that Participated in the Field Trip

Variable gender	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean
		M	SD	M	SD	
Male	98	13.32	2.93	28.16	4.01	14.85
Female	66	14.96	3.21	26.94	4.11	11.98

In table 2, the mean performance scores of male students taught Social Studies concepts using problem solving models is 13.31 and 28.16 and standard deviation 2.91 and 4.01 for the pretest and posttest respectively, and mean score is 14.85, while the mean performance scores of female students taught Social Studies concepts using problem solving models is 14.96 and 26.94 and standard deviation 3.21 and 4.11 for the pretest and posttest respectively, and mean score is 11.98. This implies that male Students achieved slightly higher than the females taught Social Studies concepts using problem solving models.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students in the Experimental and Control Group

Variable Method of Teaching	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Field trip	164	14.72	3,09	27.29	4.12	12.57
Traditional	127	15.01	3.11	20.81	3.89	5.80

In table 3, the mean performance scores of the students taught Social Studies concepts using Fieldtrip is 14.72 and 27.29 and standard deviation 3.09 and 4.12 for the pretest and posttest respectively, and mean score is 12.57, while students taught with the Traditional method had a mean performance score of 15.01 and 20.81and standard deviation 3.11 and 3.89 for pretest and posttest respectively with a mean score 5.80. This implies that students taught social studies concepts using Fieldtrip achieved better than their counterparts that were taught with the Traditional method. Research question two: Does differences exist in the performance of male and female students when taught Social Studies concepts using Fieldtrip problem solving model?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Students in the Experimental Group

Variable Gender	N	Pre-test		Post-test		mean
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Male	98	13.31	2.91	28.16	4.01	14.85
Female	66	14.96	3.21	26.94	4.11	11.98

In table 4, the mean performance scores of male students taught Social Studies concepts using Fieldtrip is 13.31 and 28.16 and standard deviation 2.91 and 4.01 for the pretest and posttest respectively, and mean score is 14.85, while the mean performance scores of female students taught Social Studies concepts using Fieldtrip is 14.96 and 26.94 and standard deviation 3.21 and 4.11 for the pretest and posttest respectively, and mean score is 11.98. This implies that male students achieved slightly higher than the females taught Social Studies concepts using Fieldtrip.

**HO1:** There is no significant difference in the performance of students taught Social Studies concepts using Fieldtrip problem-solving models and those taught with Traditional methods.

Table 5: Summary of T-Test of the Academic Performance Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	p-value	Decision
Experimental	164	27.29	4.12					
				289	12.15	1.94	0.04	Sig
Control	127	20.81	3.98					

\*sig at  $p < 0.05$

From Table 4, the calculated p value of 0.04 is less than 0.05 significant level at the degree of freedom of 289. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected. Hence there is a significant difference in the performance of students taught Social Studies concepts using Fieldtrip problem solving model and their counterpart in the Traditional method in favor of Fieldtrip problem solving model.

**HO2:** There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students when taught Social Studies concepts using Fieldtrip problem solving model.

Table 5: Summary of T-Test of the Academic Performance Mean Scores of Male and Female in the Experimental Group

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	p-value	Decision
Male	98	28.16	4.12					
				162	7.18	1.96	1.12	Not Sig
Control	66	26.94	3.98					

\*sig at  $p < 0.05$

From Table 5, the calculated p value of 1.12 is greater than 0.05 significant levels at the degree of freedom of 162. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected. Hence there is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students taught social studies concepts using Fieldtrip problem solving models.

## V. DISCUSSION

Table 2 and 4 indicated that students that were exposed to Social Studies concepts through Field trip problem solving models achieved significantly better than the students taught with Traditional methods. Consequently, the Field trip problem solving models allows for more students' participation in the learning processes which enhanced their problem-solving skills of concepts in Social Studies. This corroborates the findings of Onyekpe and Ogbemudiare (2025) whom discovered that Field

trip problem solving models enhances students' problem-solving skills significantly in Social studies' concepts irrespective of sex. The results of this study is also in consonance to the findings of Salihu, et al.(2020), the study revealed that male and female students benefited equally when taught Social Studies concepts using Field trip problem solving models. Learning in field strategies is closely aligned with what Kolb (2014) describes as assimilation within experiential learning theory. Assimilation occurs when learners integrate new experiences into existing cognitive frameworks, allowing prior knowledge (precognitions) to interact with formal theoretical understanding. In field-based learning contexts, students combine direct experiences from real-life environments with abstract concepts learned in the classroom, thereby constructing deeper and more meaningful understanding of Social Studies concepts (Kolb, 2014). Such experiential contexts have been shown to enhance learners'

intrinsic motivation and interest in school subjects, particularly when students can connect curriculum topics to meaningful, observable phenomena outside the classroom (Fasso, 2021; Meadow et al., 2020).

Research also indicates that the positive impact of field trips on students' problem solving skills, attitudes, and long-term retention can persist well beyond the outing, contributing to sustained interest and deeper conceptual understanding over time (Falk & Dierking, 2018; Reese et al., 2020). Furthermore, field trips provide abundant opportunities for direct observation, inquiry, and reflection — all of which are well-established contributors to cognitive growth, conceptual development, and higher-order thinking skills (Mocerino et al., 2021; Patrick et al., 2022). By enabling students to see, question, and interact with real phenomena, field-based learning fosters meaningful knowledge construction that enhances learners' mental development and skills acquisition.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The result obtained shows that field trip strategies significantly have impacts on the teaching of Social Studies Education. This strategy enhance students' motivation and problem solving skills than those taught using Traditional methods thus, exposing students to field trip enhances their perception of concepts positively. Therefore, the blending of classroom instructions with field trip problem solving models enhances cognitive performance and should be encouraged at all levels.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Field trip should be used as a complimentary method to foster understanding of abstract environmental concepts taught in the classroom.
- Curriculum designers and developers should incorporate field trips in the design of school curriculum,

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