

# Secondary School Experiences: Methods Used in Teaching History and Government

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**Abstract:** - Methods of teaching can be explained as a way of causing a learner to acquire knowledge or a skill as well as imparting of necessary incidental information to achieve certain desired goals. The teacher in this case has to plan instructional activities that will ensure learning has to take place. The purpose of the study was to identify methods used by teachers in the teaching of History and Government at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County, Kenya. The study was modeled by Systems theory developed by the Biologist, Ludwig von Bertalanffy. The study was carried out in selected secondary schools in Webuye Division, Bungoma County. Questionnaires were used as tools for collecting data which was analyzed quantitatively. The study found that, teachers in Webuye Division, Bungoma County regularly used methods like, lecture, discussion and question and answer while field trip was less often used. The study recommends that Learner-centered methods of teaching History and government like field trips, role play, dramatization, and project should be encouraged in secondary Education.

**Key Terms:** Secondary, Experiences Methods, Teaching History, Government

## I. INTRODUCTION

History and Government is an important discipline in the secondary school curriculum because it plays a key role in the development of society. Knowledge of the past is critical to the understanding of the present and to planning for the future. Therefore, the right methods should be used in teaching and learning of the subject (Langat, 2014). Mburu, (1999) views instructional methods as models of delivery system or teaching and learning strategies employed in an educational process with a view of facilitating the attainment of the set goals or objective. Mburu (ibid) contends that instructional methods are important variables in effective teaching. Teachers use a variety of teaching approaches and techniques in their daily practice. There is need for use of methods which are student centered and involve more learner participation. As Langat (2014) above observes, an appropriate method should be used in History and Government instruction every time.

Teaching methods provide frameworks for orderly organization and presentation of instructional activities. A proper understanding of these methods and some of the factors related to their selection is a pre-requisite for good teaching. Teachers' methodology is a sufficient actor in facilitating the implementation of the intended aims and expressed objectives. Learning methods however represent

two main approaches in teaching; Learner-centered and teacher centered approaches (Farrant, 1980). Learner centered approach also referred to as heuristic approach appeals most to the learners since apart from motivating the learners and teaching them how to learn, it also has the added advantage of helping them to remember easily what they have learnt. This method also caters for individualized learning. Bishop (1966) observes that individuals learn in different ways at different rates and for different purposes. Learner centered methods of teaching therefore help teachers identify individual abilities and weaknesses and deal with each appropriately. The above studies reveal that learner- centered methods are key to effective teaching as they address individual differences making each learner assisted accordingly.

After investigating the status of Social studies in Kenyan primary schools in Kisii, Shiundu (1980) observed that the classroom was dominated by lecture, Question and answer, reading textbooks and taking notes. This shows that there is no use of learner – centered methods especially field trip, making it necessary for this study whose findings and recommendations would help in teachers choosing and appropriately using learner- centered methods in their teaching. Omari and Poipoi (2013) observed that most secondary school teachers of History and Government were professionally trained graduates. However, the teachers claimed that they did not find enough time to teach History and Government using learner centered teaching methods such as field trip due to large content which needs to be covered. It was established that most widely used method was lecture. The study recommended that innovative methods such as field trips that are likely to improve students' achievement in school should be promoted by the school administration.

Chenge (1995) observes that, allowing children to be involved in practical activities, giving assignments and less teacher talk, is considered as evidence of modern teaching methods. There is no one right method of teaching, but there are some criteria that pertain to each that can help a teacher make the best decision possible. Wachanga (2000) observes that, the teaching of History and Government as one of the oldest classroom learning subjects which is still highly dominated by the teacher. This arises from the believe that since students could not learn on their own the events of distant past, they have to be taught by narration even when the topic demands to be taught through inquiry method. This study aimed at correcting this believe by ensuring proper use field trip so as to attain application of a variety of methods of teaching during

History and Government instruction as emphasized by the systems approach to teaching to make the subject interesting and appealing to the learners.

Kimwarye (2010) in a study on the use of small group method in the teaching and learning of History and Government in Eldoret Municipality found that there was over reliance on teacher centered approaches which encourage passive learning. In addition the study revealed that there was overreliance on rote memorization with no effort at understanding the meaning since teachers emphasize content of learning. The study therefore recommended the use of learner –centered methods like field trip which encourages learners to inquire for information on their own. As the above foregoing studies show, most scholars centered on general teaching methods and use of field trip without specifically investigating the factors that influence the teacher’s choice and use of field trip in the teaching and learning of History and Government. However all the above scholars agree on the fact that there is need for use of a variety of methods of teaching and preferably those that are learner- centered. This study sought to investigate some of the factors that influence the teacher’s choice and use of field trips as a method of teaching History and Government where it was observed that teachers of History and Government rarely used field trips in the teaching the subject. This study also attempted to make suggestions intended to enhance use of field trip in the teaching of History and Government at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County.

### *1.1 Statement of the Problem*

Scholars have advocated for the use of field trip in the teaching and learning of History and Government. They have observed that, Field trip has great potential to positively affect students’ learning (Farmer, Knapp & Benton, 2007) and students’ attitudes towards their education (Hannon & Randolph, 1999). Field trips provide real world settings in which students are challenged to apply knowledge learned in the classroom. Many students enjoy the less formal setting in which the learning takes place (Braund & Reiss, 2006). As a result, these students may become more excited about their school subjects (Michie, 1998). Though field trips themselves tend to be short-term outings, the effects of these trips on students understanding of the concepts continue for many months to years after the field trip (Farmer, Knapp & Benton, 2007). This study stemmed from observation that teachers of History and Government rarely used field trip in History and Government instruction. The study sought to investigate factors that influence teacher’s use of field trip as a method of teaching History and Government and attempt to identify some ways through which use of field trip could be enhanced at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County.

### *1.2 Objective of the Study*

To identify methods used by teachers in the teaching of History and Government at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County.

### *1.3 Research Question*

Which methods are used by teachers in the teaching of History and Government at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County?

### *1.4 Scope of the Study*

The study was conducted in Webuye Division, Bungoma County. The target population was form three and four students of History and Government, teachers of History and Government and the schools principals of the selected secondary schools. The study sought to establish factors that influenced teacher’s choice of field trip as a method of teaching and learning History and Government in secondary schools and attempted to suggest ways of enhancing it. It covered methods of teaching, instructional resources, teachers’ attitudes, students’ attitudes and the school managements’ support. A descriptive research design was used in collecting and analyzing data. Output in terms of percentages and frequency tables was used in order to enable the reader to easily interpret and understand the study findings

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study took the form of descriptive research design. Descriptive research design attempts to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population in respect to one or more variables. Descriptive research determines and reports the way things are currently (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, Orodho, 2005). Descriptive method is used because it can tell what actually exists and helps to record, analyze and interpret the current status of the variables. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The researcher used this design in order to gather data on the factors that influenced the teacher’s choice and use of field trips as a method of teaching History and Government at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County, and attempt come up with suggestions on enhancing its use. The study attempted to describe and explain conditions of the present by using questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedule. This type of design was appropriate for gathering information, summarizing, presenting and interpreting it for purposes of clarification on the factors that influenced teacher’s choice and use of field trip in teaching and learning History and Government at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County and making suggestions aimed at enhancing its use

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study embarked on identifies methods used by teachers in the teaching of History and Government at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County. When the teachers and the school principals in the sample population were asked on the methods used for teaching History and Government in their schools, the response was as shown in the table 1.

Table 1: Methods used in the Teaching of History and Government

Response	Lecture method		Field Trip method		Discussion method		Question answer		Role play method	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
yes	18	75	5	21	14	58	17	71	7	29
No	6	25	19	79	10	42	7	29	17	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The results from the analysis in table 1 above showed that the commonly used methods in teaching History and Government were lecture method at 75%, discussion 58% and question and answer at 71%. Field trips and role play are the least used methods of teaching at 21% and 29% respectively. This

indicates that field trip method of teaching and learning History and Government was least used.

3.1 Frequency of Students going for Field trips

When the students were asked if they had ever gone for a field trip, they gave the response as shown in table 2

Table 21: Frequency of Students going for Field trips

Response	Frequency	Per cent
Rarely	215	72.4
Often	67	22.6
Very often	15	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100</b>

From the results in table 2, 72.4 % of the respondents confirmed that they rarely went for field trip. This indicated that schools used field trip less often in the teaching of History and Government.

3.2 Reason for Non-frequency of Field trips

When students were asked reasons for not frequently going for field trips the response was as shown in table 3

Table 3: Reason for Non-frequency of Field trips

Response	LACK OF FINANCE		LACK OF TRANSPORTATION		LACK OF COOPERATION FROM TEACHERS/ STUDENTS		LACK OF TIME.		LACK OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES.	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
YES	198	66.7	180	60.6	107	36	34	11.4	52	37
NO	99	33.3	117	39.4	190	64	263	88.6	89	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100.</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100.</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100.</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100.</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>100.</b>

From the results in table 3, lack of finances and transport contribute 66.7 % and 60.6% respectively in not going for field trips. Other reasons given were lack of instructional resources 37%, lack of co-operation from teachers and students 36%, and lack of time 11.4%. This indicates that field trip method of teaching History and Government is less often used due to lack of finance, transport and lack of instructional resources as the most dominant factors. Lack of co-operation from the teachers and students and lack of time have little influences at 36% and 11.4% respectively.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study targeted to find out methods of teaching, identify factors which influenced the teacher’s choice of field trip as a method of teaching History and Government and try to

suggest ways through which the use of field trip could be enhanced. When the teachers and the school principals in the sample population were asked on the methods used for teaching History and Government in their schools, the response indicated that; lecture method was the most preferred (75%), followed by question and answer (71%), discussion method followed at 58%. Role play and field trip were least used at 29% and 21% respectively. This clearly indicated that field trip as a method of teaching History and Government is not popular with teachers as 73.3% said that they have never used it. Therefore, it is less often chosen as a method teaching and learning by the History and Government teachers at secondary school in Webuye Division, Bungoma County due to less funding, lack of transport, and less instructional resources needed during field trip.

## V. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that teachers of History and Government should be taken for seminars, workshops and in-service training on the methods of teaching especially learner-centered ones and other issues pertaining the teaching and learning of the subject. Other Learner-centered methods of teaching History and government like field trips, role play, dramatization, and project which were not regularly used should be encouraged.

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