

# Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Field-Based Study Approach in equipping Learners with History and Government Skills in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

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**Abstract**— History and Government education plays a key role in the development of society, as what happened in the past is critical to understanding the present and planning for the future. Despite its importance, secondary school students' performance in History and Government in Kericho county has consistently been low. The low performance implies that the students do not possess the requisite knowledge and skills in the subject. Perceptions of effectiveness of teaching approaches have been cited as one of the factors which affect skills acquisition. This paper examined teachers' and learners' perceptions of the Field-Based Study Approach (FBSA) effectiveness in equipping learners with History and Government skills. The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. A descriptive survey research design was used. The sampling units were public secondary schools in the County. By the time of the study, there were 210 public secondary schools in the County. A sample of 163 teachers and 433 form four students, selected using purposive, stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques, participated in the study. Teachers' Perceptions (TPQ) and Learners' Perceptions questionnaires (LPQ) were used to collect data. The face and content validity of the two instruments were validated by educational experts in the department of curriculum, instruction and education management. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments. TPQ and LPQ yielded a reliability coefficient of .956 and .785, respectively. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe and summarise data. The Chi-Square test for independence was used to determine the relationship between teachers' and learners' perceptions and the results accepted or rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that the perceptions of teachers' and learners' on the effectiveness of FBSA in equipping learners with History and Government were positive; however, they were not significantly related. The study's finding may provide History and Government teachers with an insight into the effectiveness of FBSA. This may enhance teaching and students acquisition of skills and academic achievement in the subject.

**Index Terms**— Effectiveness, Field-Based Study Approach, Influence, Perception, Skills.

## I. INTRODUCTION

History education plays a key role in the development of

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society, as what happened in the past is critical to understanding the present and planning for the future [1]. History, therefore, draws on significant events of the past to inform the present and safeguard the future. It is not concerned with studying the past in isolation from the present but relates intricately the success, achievement and failures of antecedent generations to contemporary life [2]. Topics in History teach that every society has morals based on religion, cultural beliefs and government laws. History is thus a discipline that promotes social justice, morality, social obligation, and responsibility while providing for the individual's full development of talents and personality [3].

History education is an integral part of the Secondary School Curriculum in Kenya. The subject has a History and Government component and is referred to as History and Government. The History component equips learners with knowledge of the past and present and promotes national unity and citizenship [4]. The knowledge element enables learners to recognise the relationship between the events of yesterday and today and gives them a view of the world of tomorrow. History also creates a sense of identity among individuals and groups of people [5]. This is achieved by teaching learners about their origin and how their communities and nations came into being. The subject's Government content is for educating learners on principles and concepts essential to individual and societal development [6]. These include; governance, democracy, conflict resolution, equality, justice, human rights, nationalism and patriotism. History and Government is also used as a medium for conveying the Government's policies and intentions because it is the only subject that teaches about governance and the past, which can be used to explain today's and tomorrow's events [7].

History and Government is one of the key subjects in the Kenya secondary school curriculum as it is a prerequisite to joining professions such as law, teaching, anthropology and political science [8]. Despite the importance of History and Government, students' performance in the subject nationally has consistently been low. The mean scores in History and Government in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) for the years 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 were 89.44, 107.66, 103.42, 85.63 and 81.67 out of 200 [10], [11], [12]. Students' performances in the subject in

## Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Field-Based Study Approach in equipping Learners with History and Government Skills in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

most of the counties have also been low. Kericho is among the counties that recorded low performance in the subject. The KCSE mean grades attained by students in the County for the years 2013 to 2017 ranged between 4.73 and 5.38 [13]. The KCSE results show consistent underperformance in the subject, given that the highest grade is 12. The low grades indicate that students did not possess the requisite knowledge and skills in History and Government.

Transferable skills and learners' employability upon graduation are increasingly being used as a measure of students' mastery of a subject [14]. Reference [15] and [16] contend that ability to collect, critically analyse, organise information and communicate findings are key to mastery of a subject. Similarly, [17] noted that developing skills such as identification, measurement, observation, recording, analysis, and interpretation enabled learners to acquire other skills and create and acquire additional knowledge. This implies that enhancing learners' skills is another way of improving their achievement in History and Government.

Learners' acquisition of knowledge and skills has been related to many factors. Reference [18] observed that motivation and attitudes alter every aspect of a person's life, including education, as they affect the ability and willingness to learn. Reference [19] noted that the teacher, family, student and school related factors affect the achievement of learning outcomes. Physical facilities and instructional materials have also been associated with knowledge, skills and achievement [20], [21]. References [22] argue that no matter how well trained a teacher, he/she may not be an effective instructor if the school lacks instructional materials. It has been established that facilities enabled a teacher to introduce new and complex concepts [23]. Facilities motivate students to learn, thus increasing their participation and concentration. It has also been established that teaching approaches significantly influence knowledge and skills acquisition [24].

The teaching approaches used during instruction significantly affect learners' knowledge and skills [25]. Reference [26] contends that the use of appropriate approaches leads to effective and learning, which improve students' acquisition of knowledge and skills. Similarly, the findings in [2] reveal that effective teaching connotes bringing the subject to life and making it appealing to the intellectual and emotional faculties of students. Effective teaching goes beyond oral presentation or narration of events but embraces a complex mix of mastery of subject content, the art of teaching and learning activities. This creates an environment in which students gain mastery of concepts and improve their skills of "doing things". Some of the commonly used teaching methods are; lecture, demonstration, storytelling, question and answer, and discussions [27], [7], [28]. The Field-Based Study is also among the approaches used in teaching.

Field-based study (FBSA) involves visiting places outside the classroom where materials of instructions are observed and studied by learners in their functional setting [29]. In History and government instruction, Field-based studies

usually involve field- trips, attending exhibitions, use of libraries, visits to historical sites, cultural institutions and urban centres or interaction with historical experts [30]. Field-based studies aim to enrich, fertilise, and complement content areas of the curriculum through first-hand information, observation, and direct experience outside the classroom [31]. Reference [32] contend that students build a better understanding of concepts when they interact with nature. This is supported by the findings in [6], which showed that teaching History was more effective when students were provided with opportunities to visit historical and cultural sites. Reference [33] noted that the use of movies by teachers help students develop analytical or interpretive skills. Reference [16] observed that visits to museums helped in the formation and development of History learners' imagination and creativity, their observations, measurement and data collection skills. The foregoing observations confirm that FBSA is effective in equipping learners with skills. It has also been observed that teachers' and students' perceptions of teaching approaches influence achievement of learning outcomes [35], [36].

Understanding self and perceptions of learners are important as they assist teachers in meeting the needs of students [34]. Reference [37] defines perception as the process of recognising, organising and interpreting sensory information. Perception is a personal manifestation of how one views the world, which is coloured by many socio-cultural elements [38]. It is a unique way of understanding phenomena by forming mental models, information processing and interpreting sensory information based on experience.

Reference [39] contend that perception plays a key role in the teaching-learning processes as it assists in interpreting the world around us and forming mental representations of the environment. Perceptions affect learning because the learning strategy adopted by a student in a given situation is determined by a complex interaction between his/her pre-existing beliefs about knowledge and learning and the general disposition towards a particular teaching approach [40]. Reference [41] noted that student's perceptions are among the factors that influence learning since these views assist teachers in creating an environment that is conducive to learning through the adoption of effective teaching strategies.

This paper investigated secondary school teachers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the field-based study approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills in Kericho County, Kenya. The study was deemed necessary because students had consistently shown a lack of requisite History and Government knowledge and skills, as demonstrated by their underperformance in KCSE. The underperformance could be due to teachers and learners perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching approaches. The other motivation behind this study was that there is hardly any literature on the effectiveness of the field-based study approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills in Kericho County from teachers and students perspectives. Filling this gap was among the aims of the

paper.

## II. OBJECTIVE

To find out the teachers' and learners' perceptions on the effectiveness of the Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners' with History and Government skills.

## III. HYPOTHESIS

There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' and learners' perceptions on the effectiveness of the Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills.

## IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### A. Study Design

The study utilised the descriptive survey research design. The design involves gathering data from a population or a sample and describing the 'who', 'when', 'where' and 'how' of a situation, problem, phenomenon, service, opinions, habits or attitudes as they are [42]. It does not involve manipulation of variables. The design was selected because the purpose of the study was to establish teachers' and learners' perceptions on the effectiveness of FBSA in equipping learners with History and Government skills. The study involved collecting data at one point in time using a sample without any manipulation of variables.

### B. Study Area

**Table 1: Accessible Population of the Study**

Sub County	Secondary Schools	Teachers	Learners
Buret	55	68	2075
Belgut	42	64	1607
Kericho	39	51	2104
Kipkelion	34	44	837
Londiani	39	47	952
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>7575</b>

Source: Kericho County, Education Office (2018)

i.

### D. Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Slovin's formula for determining samples of a finite population was used to compute the sample sizes of the teachers and students. The formula is;

$$N = N / (1 + Ne^2) \quad [45].$$

Where:

n is sample size

N is population size

e is a margin of error tolerance

1 is a constant value error margin = 5%

Given that the accessible population of the teachers and students were 274 and 7575, their sample sizes were 163 and 380, respectively. The sample size of the learners was increase from 380 to 433 because intact classes were used as it is unethical and against the Ministry of Education regulations to reconstitute classes for research purposes

This study was conducted in Kericho County in Kenya. The County is located in the Rift Valley region and has 5 Sub-counties, namely, Buret, Kericho, Kipkelion, Londiani, and Belgut. The county inhabitants mainly grow maize and tea and keep dairy animals that produce milk for domestic consumption and sale [43]. The County had 210 public and 24 private secondary schools [13]. The County was chosen because students had consistently shown a lack of requisite History and Government knowledge and skills, as demonstrated by their underperformance in KCSE. The underperformance could be due to perceptions of the teachings approaches utilised to teach the subject.

### C. Population of the Study

The study targeted a population of 274 History and Government teachers and 7,575 learners in the 210 public secondary schools in Kericho County [13]. The accessible population comprised 274 teachers and 7575 form four learners of History and Government [44]. The teachers were chosen because they are the implementers of the History and Government Curriculum. The fourth form students were selected because they had covered most of the secondary school History and Government syllabus and had most likely been exposed to the field-based study approach. The distribution of the accessible population by sub-county is presented in Table 1.

(Wango, 2009). Purposive sampling was used to select 81 public secondary schools with trained teachers with at least three years of teaching experience. Stratified sampling was used to organise schools by sub-county, thus ensuring teachers and learners from all of them participated in the study. Proportionate sampling techniques was utilised to determine the number of teachers and learners from each sub-county. The method was employed to ensure that sub-counties with a large population of teachers and learners were allocated a large portion of the calculated sample size. Simple random sampling procedures were used at the sub-county level to select the teachers who were involved in the study. The students who participated in the study were from intact classes. Simple random sampling procedures were used to select intact classes in schools with more than one form four stream. Table 2 gives a summary of the samples by sub-county.

**Table 2: Distribution of the Sample sizes by Sub County**

**Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Field-Based Study Approach in equipping Learners with History and Government Skills in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya**

Sub-County	Secondary Schools	Teachers	Learners
Buret	21	41	104
Belgut	18	38	81
Kericho	15	30	105
Kipkelion	13	26	42
Londiani	14	28	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>380</b>

Source: Kericho County, Education Office (2018)

ii.

**E. Instrumentation**

Data was collected using Teachers’ (TPQ) and Learners’ (LPQ) perception questionnaires. TPQ had sections for gathering bio-data and data on perceptions of the effectiveness of the field-based study approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills. LPQ also had a section for eliciting bio-data and another one for generating data on perceptions of the effectiveness of the field-based study approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills. The two instruments were constructed using both close and open-ended items. Perceptions in TPQ and LPQ were measured using a set of 10 close-ended items. The items were constructed using a five (5) category Likert type scale based on the extent to which the respondents agreed (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) with statements.

The face and content validity of TPQ and LPQ were verified by study supervisors and educational experts in the curriculum, instruction, and educational management department before the commencement of data collection. The two instruments were also pilot-tested for reliability. A sample of 20 teachers and an intact class of 30 students was used to pilot-test the instruments. The samples used during piloting were drawn from schools within Kericho County that did not participate in the study but had similar characteristics to those that participated. The reliabilities of TPQ and LPQ were estimated using the Cronbach Alpha formula.

$$\text{Cronbach Alpha } \alpha = \frac{K.c}{[v + (K - 1)c]} \quad [46]$$

Where K is the number of items in the test tool  
 c is mean inter-item covariance among the items  
 v is overall mean variance

The reliability coefficient of TPQ and LPQ were 0.956 and 0.785, respectively. The instruments were deemed reliable given that the reliability coefficients were above the 0.7 threshold recommended in [47]. Based on the comments from the study supervisors and educational experts and the reliability results, the items in the TPQ and LPQ were revised accordingly and then appropriately administered to the selected sample.

**F. Data Analysis**

**Table 3: Teachers Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Field-Based Study Approach in Equipping Learners with History and Government Skills (n =144)**

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	139	96.5
Negative	5	3.5

Source: Field Data, 2018

The data collected from the teachers and students were checked for errors, cleaned and coded. Two data files were prepared using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), and the coded data keyed into them. The teachers’ and learners’ perceptions on the effectiveness of the field-based study approach in equipping learners with History and Government knowledge skills were determined through tallying. The perception of a respondent was considered positive when he/she agreed with the majority of the items used to measure the construct. The perception was categorised as neutral when a respondent was undecided on the majority of the items and negative when he/she disagreed with the majority of the items. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarise the perceptions of the teachers and learners. The relationship between teachers’ and learners’ perceptions on the effectiveness of the field-based study approach in equipping learners History and Government skills was determined using the Chi-Square test for independence. The test was conducted at the .05 level of confidence. The Chi-Square was chosen because the test’s purpose was to determine the relationship between teachers’ and learners’ perceptions, measured at a nominal scale. Reference [48] recommends using the Chi-Square when exploring the relationship between two variables measured at nominal or ordinal scale.

**V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This paper examined teachers’ and learners’ perceptions on the effectiveness of a Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills.

**A. Teachers’ perceptions on the effectiveness of a Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills**

The teachers’ responses to the items that were used to measure their perceptions were tallied, categorised as positive, neutral and negative, and summarised using frequencies and percentages. Table 3 gives a summary of their perceptions.



Table 3 indicates that a majority (96.5%) of the teachers had a positive perception on the effectiveness of the Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skill, while a minority (3.5%) held a contrary view. These results confirm that teachers had a positive perception of the effectiveness of the Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills. These results corroborate those in [15], [16], [49], [50] that field-based learning leads to the development of measurement, observation, recording, analysis and interpretation skills. These studies attributed the teachers' positive perceptions to their ability to assist students in achieving the expected learning outcomes using the field-based approach. The results also concur with those in [51], which established that teachers perceived that field

activities were effective in enhancing learners' skills through experiments, observation and analysis. Reference [52] contend that achievement of desired outcomes motivates both the teacher and learner hence the positive perceptions.

**B. Learners' perceptions on the effectiveness of a Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills**

Data on learner's perceptions on the effectiveness of the Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills was gathered using a set of 10 close-ended Likert-type items. The responses to the items were tallied, categorised as positive, neutral and negative, and summarised using frequencies and percentages (Table 4).

**Table 4: Learners' Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Field-Based Study Approach in Equipping Learners with History and Government Skills (n = 394)**

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	368	93.4
Neutral	14	3.6
Negative	12	3.0

**Source: Field Data, 2018**

Table 4 reveals that 93.4% of the learners perceived that the Field-Based Study Approach was effective in equipping learners with History and Government skills. The rest of the learners had neutral (3.6%) and negative (3.0%) perceptions. It means that from the learners' perspective, the Field-Based Study Approach was effective in equipping learners with History and Government skills. The results are in harmony with those in [33] and [53], which revealed that field-based activities help students develop analytical, interpretive, communication and problem-solving skills. These results also support those in [54], which showed that learners had positive perceptions of field-based activities. Reference [54] found that students were of the view that field-based activities were effective in imparting skills since they promoted peer learning and connected learning to students' interests. Results

in [17] and [15] attributed the positivity perceptions of the field-based study approach to learners' enjoyment of out-of-class activities and enhanced acquisition of data collection, analytical, interpretive and problem-solving skills.

**C. Relationship between teachers' and learners' perceptions on the effectiveness of Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills**

The relationship between teachers' and learners' perceptions on the effectiveness of the Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills was established using the Chi-Square test for independence (Table 5).

**Table 5: Chi-Square Test for Independence Results**

Scale	Value	Df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	5.287	2	.071
N	538		

**Source: Field Data, 2018**

The results in Table 5 show that the relationship between the teachers' and learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2(2, N = 538) = 5.287, p > .05$ . This means that the teacher perceptions do not affect those of learners. These findings concur with those in [2], which revealed that sometimes teachers and learners' perceptions are not related due to differences between instructors' philosophy of teaching and students expectations. The results in [2] show that teachers consciously or unconsciously go to the classroom with their philosophy of teaching and learning. Teachers expect students to view history as a discipline that requires particular analytical skills, while some students view history simply as a series of facts and dates. Students also attend class with certain expectations about the roles of

teachers and students in the teaching and learning process. This difference between what teachers and students expectations in the classroom could explain why the perceptions of the two groups were not related.

The insignificant relationship observed between the teachers and learners perceptions contradict those of a study [55] that found out that teachers' and learners' views on effective teaching were significantly related. This study established that students' perceptions were influenced by those of teachers who constantly engaged and motivated them. A significant relationship also emerged in a correlational analysis between teachers' and learners' perspectives as in [56]. This study noted that teachers with positive perceptions develop and maintain a good rapport with learners. This loving and caring behaviour made learning History and Government enjoyable, and as a result, learners viewed the

# Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Field-Based Study Approach in equipping Learners with History and Government Skills in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

subject positively.

## D. Conclusions

The study results showed that the perceptions of the majority of the teachers and learners on the effectiveness of the Field-Based Study Approach in equipping learners with History and Government skills were positive. The results also showed that the relationship between teachers' and learners' perceptions was not statistically significant. This means that from the teachers' and learners' perspective, the Field-Based Study Approach is effective in equipping learners with History and Government skills. The approach could thus be used to enhance learners' acquisition of History and Government skills and performance in the subject.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends frequent use of the field-based study approach in the teaching and learning of History and Government for teachers and learners to enjoy the benefits associated with it. It also recommends that teachers and learners with neutral and negative perceptions be sensitised so that they are aware of the benefits associated with FBSA. Promoting positive perceptions and use of FBSA could go a long way in enhancing the teaching-learning process and improving the acquisition of History and Government skills and achievement in the subject.

Use

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