

## School excursions and learning about cultural heritage by schoolchildren of the public primary school of Djavi in the commune of Adjarra

CODO Carolle-Nelly <sup>1,\*</sup>, AKPATCHEME Jude Boris <sup>2</sup>, AHONNON Adolphe <sup>3</sup> and GBAGUIDI G. Arnauld <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Master Lecturer of CAMES Universities, Center for Studies and Research in Education and Social Interventions for Development, Research and Expertise Laboratory for Sport, Education and Social Interventions, National Institute of Youth, Physical Education and Sport, University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin)

<sup>2</sup> Research and Expertise Laboratory for Sport, Education and Social Interventions, National Institute of Youth, Physical Education and Sport, University of Abomey-Calavi (Bénin)

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer of CAMES Universities, Social Psychology and Animation Research Unit, Research and Expertise Laboratory for Sport, Education and Social Interventions, National Institute of Youth, Physical Education and Sport, University of Abomey-Calavi (Bénin)

<sup>4</sup> Full Lecturer of CAMES Universities Center for Studies and Research in Education and Social Interventions for Development, Research and Expertise Laboratory for Sport, Education and Social Interventions, National Institute of Youth, Physical Education and Sport, University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin)

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### Abstract

School excursions serve several functions for schoolchildren. The aim of this research was to analyze the contribution of school excursions to the learning of cultural heritage by schoolchildren at the DJAVI Primary School in the commune of Adjarra, through the experience of the NGO CESAC-Tours. This research used a mixed-methods approach. The sample was constructed using the purposive selection method. Data were collected using an observation grid to observe schoolchildren during excursions, an interview guide for teachers at the DJAVI Primary School, site managers, and CESAC-Tours, and a questionnaire addressed to schoolchildren. Parsons' (1951) structural-functional model, based on the AGIL paradigm, was used to analyze the data collected from the various target groups. Following data analysis, the results revealed that school excursions contribute significantly (97%) to the learning of cultural heritage by students at the DJAVI Primary School and therefore constitute a means of ensuring widespread access to heritage.

**Keywords:** School Excursions; Learning; Cultural Heritage; Benin

### 1. Introduction

In Africa, despite the actions of international institutions such as UNESCO and UNICEF in the education subsector, the practice of school excursions remains controversial (Wayikpo, 2021). This situation is linked, on the one hand, to financial constraints and the professional level of some parents, and, on the other, to logistical difficulties, the lack of dynamic structures to support state action in the education and culture subsectors, etc. Some countries needed to create and encourage innovative initiatives regarding school excursions in rural areas. In Zimbabwe, the Fundo VR project has been used to organize virtual school trips for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Masuku, 2019).

In Benin, according to observations, the practice of extracurricular activities is low or almost nonexistent in some rural areas. Despite the existence of structural and equipment potential, these activities are not being leveraged for grassroots social actors, even in urban areas. In a publication on the La Nouvelle Tribune newspaper's website, it was mentioned

\* Corresponding author: CODO Carolle-Nelly

that: "besides the rare educational outings to museums, there is no adequate policy to bring schoolchildren to these cultural and historical sites; or at least, this policy has not yet been implemented." It is regrettable to note that these rare outings are sometimes organized with commercialism, the distortion leading to their suspension at the secondary level by Circular No. 061 of February 19, 2021. The phenomenon appears to be as relevant to both rural and urban settings, although the gap is greater in the former. However, these activities would facilitate learning, cultural exchange, and immersion in the past of civilizations.

Culture is the set of knowledge, know-how, value systems, and lifestyles specific to a society. It connects knowledge and fertilizes it according to Morin (1999). In other words, it allows existing knowledge to be combined and enriched to create new experiences and knowledge. This is what makes the individual complete by inculcating and impregnating the knowledge of the society in which he lives. For the strong reason that it refers to the "distinctive, spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional traits that characterize a society or a social group," the resulting notion of cultural heritage encompasses inherited assets whose transmission to future generations is essential; complex value systems that are likely to give rise to human memory (UNESCO, 1982). Wakvil (2017) believes that: "the multidimensionality of heritage requires shared management and its recognition as a public good is the foundation of cultural identity." Despite its valuable contributions, it is not uncommon to observe the considerable decline in cultural interest among modern generations. It is obvious that the less interest we have in culture, the less we take root and the more cultural values wither and dissolve. To this end, initiatives for accessibility to cultural heritage constitute a great asset to arouse cultural enthusiasm among individuals. Visits are considered as an appropriate tool for this culture-individual link operation. However, with the inclusion of visits, we observe an imbalance in the chances of participation in sites full of the riches of cultural heritage (visits to museums, monument sites, etc.) (Cohen, 1999).

According to Lukic (2003), accessibility to heritage for the majority is a social project that aims at the socio-cultural inclusion of populations that have long been disadvantaged and do not benefit, therefore, from the juice of discovery and appropriation of cultural values for reasons of context and lack of appropriate initiatives. School excursions, which are at first glance an educational tool, would constitute a real means and an opportunity for all schoolchildren to access inherited goods and wealth. Thus, in a century, the time spent in the classroom has reduced by 40% because of the socio-cultural interest of extracurricular activities (Sue and Rondel, 2002). In 2024, the results of the study carried out by the League of Families team proved that 87% of schoolchildren went on school excursions between 2023 and 2024 (in Europe). This shows that the practice of extracurricular activities is gaining momentum day by day in society. Their value is no longer limited to mere entertainment; they embrace transcending the mysterious theories of class and creating opportunities for contact with reality (Olivier, 2003). In this same perspective, a study conducted by UNOSEL (National Union of Educational, Linguistic, and Training Organizations in France) showed that 75% of French students consider school trips to be an unforgettable and enriching experience (Gauthier, 2024).

To change trends and balance the flow of heritage participation in rural areas, the CESAC-Tours association is active and acts as a guarantor in the commune of Adjara, specifically at the DJAVI school complex. In accordance with the administrative requirements related to the organization of a school trip, this organization takes several schoolchildren from both rural and urban areas to visit tourist sites, thus engaging in the implementation of cultural and educational policies. It is a tourism company whose ambition is to help learners discover their country and if possible, others by offering a day out crowned with joy. In order to consider a globalization of these activities in all schools in rural areas in particular, and throughout Benin in general, we then ask ourselves the following questions:

What is the contribution of school excursions to the learning of cultural heritage by schoolchildren in the Djavi complex?

How might school excursions be a means of broad participation in cultural heritage? Objectives and hypotheses were developed for this purpose. The objective of the research is to analyze the contribution of school excursions to the learning of cultural heritage among schoolchildren at the Djavi EPP. Specifically, this research aims first to determine the educational and recreational benefits of school excursions for schoolchildren at the Djavi EPP, then to present the contribution of school excursions to the acquisition of knowledge about cultural heritage among schoolchildren at the Djavi EPP, and finally to address the challenges and prospects of this activity. Hypotheses are put forward as tentative answers to the research question: School excursions ensure experiential learning and provide a recreational environment for schoolchildren at the Djavi EPP; School excursions facilitate socialization and knowledge of cultural heritage among schoolchildren at the Djavi EPP; The practice of school excursions is confronted with socioeconomic constraints.

## 2. Methodology

This section provides information on the methodological approach, which includes the nature of the research, the study population, the sampling, the data collection and processing techniques, and the analytical model used as a compass for analyzing these data. Nature of the Research, Study Population, Sampling, Data Collection and Processing Techniques

The research is mixed in nature, combining qualitative data collection tools (interview guide, observation grid) and quantitative data (questionnaire). The study population consists of students from the Djavi EPP, teachers and principals from the Djavi EPP, managers of the CESAC-Tours association, and managers of tourist sites. The sample was constructed using a non-probability, reasoned-selection method. According to information gathered in the field, the Djavi EPP has eight hundred and eighteen (818) schoolchildren and eighteen (18) teachers. The leaders of the association organizing the outings are twelve (12). Those of the tourist sites visited during the school excursion are eight (08). The total number of the parent population is eight hundred and five-nine (859). For scientific and temporal reasons, the determination of the sample is made according to criteria specific to each target. Indeed, for schoolchildren, it is necessary to agree to take part in the survey, to have participated in the school outing organized in 2025 and to be at least in CE1 class. Eighty-six (86) schoolchildren met these criteria and are all taken for the survey. As for teachers, they must have agreed to take part in the survey, and they must be teachers of the respective classes that were on the excursion. They must have accompanied the schoolchildren on the 2025 outing (with the exception of the principals who already have general views on the practice of these outings) in order to provide us with precise information on the research subject. The survey is carried out with five (05) teachers who have met the defined criteria. At the level of the leaders of the CESAC-Tours association, the defined criteria are as follows: being recognized as responsible in the CESAC-Tours association, having participated in the school excursion with the Djavi schoolchildren in 2025 (except the coordinator who already has resources in this area because they have been in the organization of the outings) and having agreed to participate in the survey. Three (03) leaders met these criteria to be among the subjects who can take part in the survey. Ultimately, having agreed to participate in the survey, having guided the visiting schoolchildren and having specific information for the analysis of the research object are the defined inclusion criteria that the target of site managers must meet before taking part in this survey. On this basis, two (02) managers who have met these criteria and can inform on the subject according to the specific realities that make up their daily lives. Of the different numbers obtained, the sample size in the context of this research is ninety-six (96). The targets selected allowed us to constitute the level of survey summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1** Summary table of the sample

N°	Targets	Staff	Collection techniques used	Sampling technique
1	Schoolchildren	86	Questionnaire survey	Reasoned choice
2	Teachers and Headmasters	05	Interview	
3	CESAC-Tours Association Managers	03	Interview	
4	Site Managers	02	Interview	
Total: 96				

Source: Field data, 2025

As part of the research, the observation technique used allowed us to analyze the attitudes of the schoolchildren as well as the discourse presented to them during the visits. The interview was then an opportunity to interview teachers, principals, and various officials. A cell phone was of great importance in recording the interviews for transcription. Aside from the role of documentation, the questionnaire survey technique allowed us to ask the schoolchildren a series of questions. Regarding the processing of the collected data, the audio notes recorded during the interviews were transcribed and analyzed along with the observation results. The quantitative data were processed using KoboCollect and Excel software.

**Analytical Model** The analysis of the contribution of school excursions to the learning of cultural heritage by schoolchildren in the Djavi complex can be facilitated by using Talcott Parsons' (1951) structural-functional model. This model is a combination of two theories that consider society as a social system. Structuralism, which stipulates that each social system is made up of elements that disrupt its balance and proper functioning, and functionalism, which, on the other hand, conceives that the social system finds its balance and manages to maintain it through the functions it performs. Indeed, in his work "The Social System," Parsons (1951) agreed that the social system has subsystems within

it that ensure four main functions for its existence and balance. These functions, encoded by the AGIL (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latent Pattern Maintenance) paradigm, are respectively adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency. These elements are essential for the proper functioning of the system (Rusydiyah and Rohman, 2020).

Parsons' interpretation of adaptation refers to the active mechanisms that enable the establishment of relationships between the action system and its external environment. That said, the system in general must adapt to the environment and its external changes, from which it must draw the elements necessary for its functioning and balance. This function requires the system to have resources that enable it to meet the needs of the environment, cope with sociocultural challenges, and honor its commitments to this environment, which conditions its germination. As such, the system's activities must enable it to exploit the environment, modify it, and control it (Djossa, 2018). Within the framework of this research, the organized excursions (system) must adapt to the educational objective and promote access to culture (environment).

Achieving objectives is the second essential axis of any system. To this end, it must proceed by defining clear and precise objectives and mobilizing the necessary resources to achieve these objectives of collective and individual interest in a methodical manner. This function reminds us that the system must also define its priorities and set limits that must not be crossed, at the risk of disrupting the environment of individuals and losing all meaning as a system of action. In this research, school trips are organized with the aim of discovering new things and acquiring knowledge outside the four walls of the school. The destination must be well-known and sufficiently willing to provide elements of cultural, historical, geoFigureical, and touristic expertise, according to Djossa (2018).

Furthermore, the relationships between the system's elements must be effectively regulated. Parsons posits that integration is an axis that helps reduce deviations and control attacks on the system's functions. At this level, the system ensures the "coordination of actions and the maintenance of balance" (Mesure and Savidan, 2006). This function refers to the social ability of the system to maintain social links between the components of the system, to instill social values (solidarity, respect for sociocultural norms) as a way of preventing non-conformist situations. Organized school excursions are likely to spare schoolchildren from antisocial behavior by reintegrating them into society, by cultivating moral and socially useful plants in their gardens while making them culturally re-equipped individuals.

Ultimately, the action system must be able to supply the action units with an inexhaustible supply of essential substances. This dimension of the system is referred to as latency and, according to Parsons, signifies the level of motivation of the system's agents in general. Thanks to this motivational source, the system's elements must be able to benefit from a certain energy in order to work towards achieving the system's goals. The main action at this level is to maintain and improve motivation as well as the cultural models that create and support this motivation (Rusydiyah and Rohman, 2020). The activities carried out during school excursions must sufficiently interest schoolchildren and be highly relevant to the subjects.

With the modeling, we first note that school excursions adapt to traditional learning by making cultural heritage accessible to schoolchildren. This system then has a clear and precise vision: to enable schoolchildren to discover and learn new knowledge. As such, the outings would promote the integration into the sociocultural environment of schoolchildren (system actors). The final mission assigned to the system is to work towards the motivation of the actors. In this sense, school excursions contain within them a cultural and playful character.

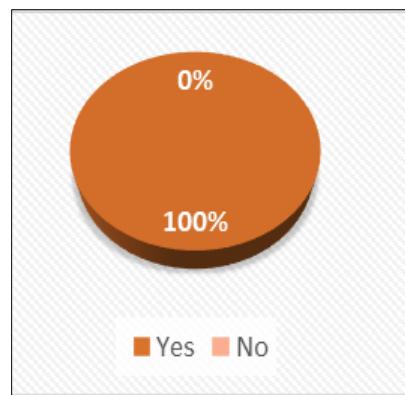
This paradigm, derived from the symbiosis between structuralism and functionalism, constitutes the framework for analyzing the data we will collect. It brings together the different dimensions within which the contribution of school excursions to learning about cultural heritage can be identified.

### 3. Results

This section is devoted to presenting the various results from the fieldwork and their interpretation. It will first focus on the educational and recreational benefits of school excursions for students at the Djavi EPP. It will then examine aspects related to socialization and learning about cultural heritage, before finally presenting the challenges and perspectives related to the practice of school excursions.

#### 3.1. Educational benefits

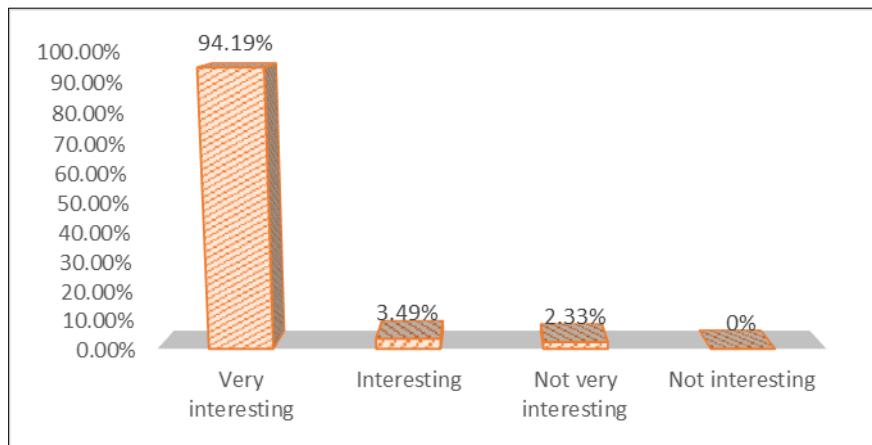
The following Figure shows the educational benefits of field trips for students at the Djavi EPP



**Figure 1** Educational interest of school excursions among schoolchildren of EPP Djavi

The results in Figure 1 reveal that 100% of the students who participated in the field trip confirmed that it helped them better understand what they were taught in the classroom. The next point concerns the recreational aspect of field trips.

Degree of appreciation for recreational activities practiced by EPP Djavi students during field trips. The Figure below highlights the degree of appreciation for recreational activities among EPP Djavi students:



**Figure 2** Level of appreciation for the recreational activities practiced by schoolchildren during school excursions at the DJAVI Primary School

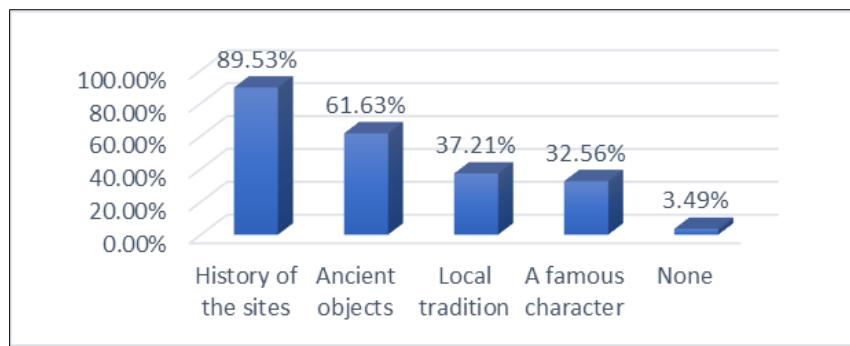
School excursions are educational and recreational activities. The results in Figure 2 show that 94.19% of schoolchildren found the recreational activities practiced during the excursions very interesting. 3.49% found them interesting, compared to 2.33% who thought they were somewhat interesting. None of these students found the activities uninteresting, according to the same results.

### 3.2. Socialization and learning about cultural heritage

This section presents another very interesting aspect of school excursions. This aspect is related to the role of these excursions in the socialization process of schoolchildren as well as in their learning about cultural heritage.

### 3.3. Focus on Learning About Cultural Heritage Among Schoolchildren at the DJAVI Primary School

Figure 3 provides information on learning about cultural heritage among schoolchildren at the DJAVI Primary School:

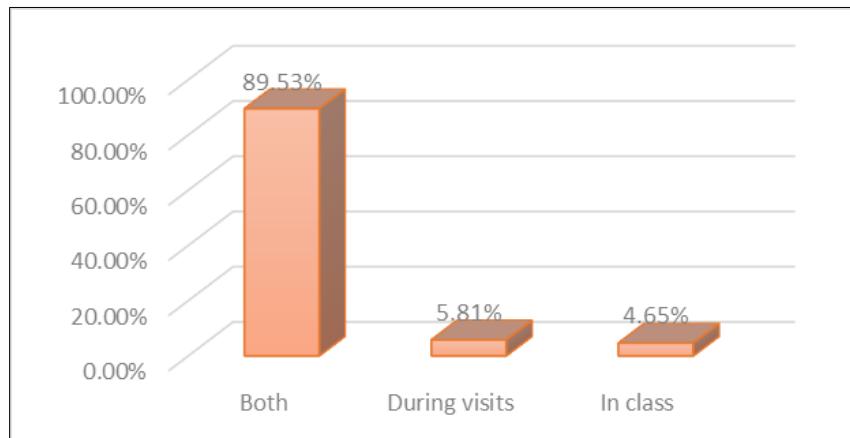


**Figure 3** Overview of cultural heritage learning by Djavi EPP students

School excursions offer students multiple opportunities to learn about cultural heritage. The results in the Figure above show that all, except for 3.49 percent, participating students learned about the history of sites, ancient artifacts, the foundations of local traditions, and the background of a famous person.

### 3.4. Preference for cultural heritage learning among Djavi EPP students

Figure 4 presents the preference for cultural heritage learning among Djavi EPP students:

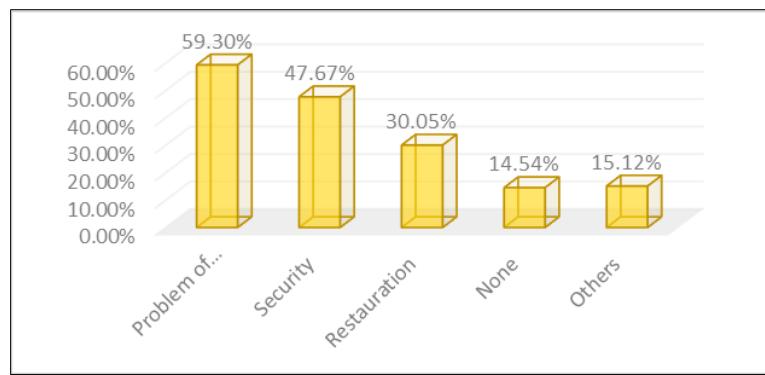


**Figure 4** Preference for cultural heritage learning environments among DJAVI EPP students

The potential of school trips determines students' choice of cultural heritage learning context. Indeed, the results in Figure 4 show that 89.53% of students who participated in excursions to DJAVI EPP preferred to learn about cultural heritage both in the classroom and during organized visits. 5.81% chose only organized visits for this learning experience, compared to 4.65% who preferred just classroom learning. Despite these benefits, challenges remain regarding the practice of school trips.

### 3.5. Challenges associated with this activity

Figure 5 below highlights the challenges faced by Djavi EPP students regarding school excursions:

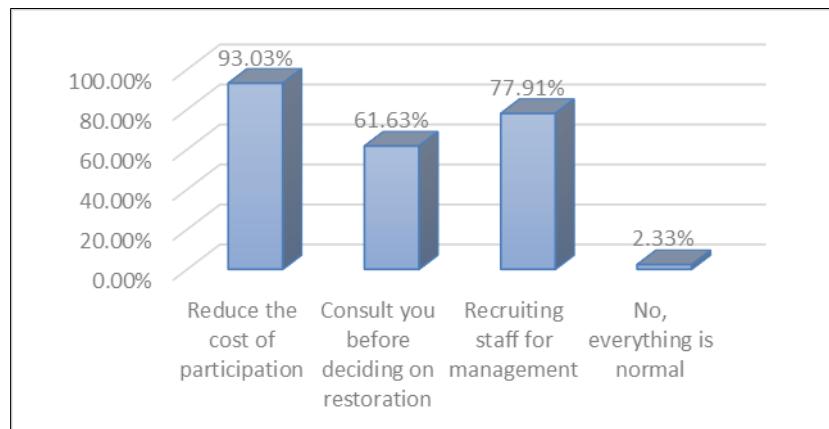


**Figure 5** Problems related to school trips at the DJAVI Primary School

Although school trips are considered highly important, their implementation is generally fraught with difficulties. The survey results reveal that 59.03% of students at the DJAVI Primary School encounter financial problems to pay participation fees, 47.67% security-related problems, and 36.05% food-related problems. At the same time, these results show that 17.44% of students do not encounter any problems, compared to 15.12% who experience other difficulties not mentioned in the completed questionnaire. After raising these difficulties, the respondents were asked to make some suggestions, which are presented in the following section.

## 2.6 Perspectives for overcoming challenges related to school trips

The Figure presents the solutions proposed by students at the Djavi primary school for effective participation in school trips



**Figure 6** Outlook for addressing these challenges related to school excursions

According to the results of this Figure, 93.02% of schoolchildren suggested reducing the cost of participating in excursions, with 77.91% suggesting hiring staff. Next, 61.63% suggested consulting them before deciding on catering, while 2.33% of these schoolchildren believe everything is normal.

## 4. Discussion

The survey results showed that 100% of the students who went on excursions were able to consolidate their learning through such participation. These results clearly demonstrate the crucial role field trips play in deepening knowledge acquired in class. To this end, one of the respondents stated that: "Before the excursions (...), there is learning that we do in the classroom, and perhaps all we do is through images, documents that we use to teach them. Now, to see these things physically, we need educational excursions" (Principal 5 A.B, May 2025). These comments support the words of Tonnelli and Lentillon-Kaestner (2019), who state that given "all the benefits they bring, it is important to fight to ensure that these excursions remain a reality for tomorrow's students." It is therefore clear that the excursions fulfill an undeniable educational function. They are springs for learning because, "... it supports the pedagogical act" according to the words of another interviewee (Director 4, F. A, May 2025). According to these words, we can note that the practices

of school trips are therefore an integral part of the learning process of the schoolchildren of the EPP Djavi since they make learning dynamic and strengthen the assimilation capacities of the schoolchildren. They participate in the reconstruction of knowledge and the advancement in scientific discourse (Cohen, 2011). They are indispensable resources in teaching. A teacher interviewed confirms this conception with these words: "... in teaching (the skills-based approach), there is observation (the child will observe), the child reports, the child will manipulate and the child himself will establish the summary... it is a driving force" (Teacher 3 H. J, May 2025). This reveals the acquisition of knowledge through tangible experience among schoolchildren.

Regarding the recreational interest of school excursions, 94.19% of schoolchildren found the fun activities practiced during these school trips very interesting. One respondent stated in this sense that, "when we take the fun activities..., the children are so interested" (Teacher 3 H. J, May 2025). This interest is due to the fact that excursions constitute an escape, an enclosure from the school routine, a moment of distraction and ventilation (Veuthey and Maulini, 2013). By observing children in the field during the practice of recreational activities such as games, entertainment, dancing to both traditional and modern rhythms, we see that they invest themselves body and soul and show great enthusiasm. This stipulates that excursions create an atmosphere of relaxation and joy for schoolchildren. One principal surveyed focused particularly on the developmental function manifested by these activities, stating that "it reinforces physical and mental realities" (Principal 4, F. A). Thus, the playful experience better engages students and promotes the process of appropriation. The pleasure of discovery itself carries with it playful achievements that are not without positive effects on the learning of cultural heritage

(Chollon, 1997). These various results support the first specific objective of the research. It should be noted from these findings that school trips are not simple pastimes but rather aim to achieve the educational objective and create a playful environment for the students of the Djavi EPP, an ideal condition for better acquisition. As such, they create a tangible learning experience, offering an opportunity to experience firsthand what these students are learning within the classroom, in connection with elements of cultural heritage. This highlights the adaptive dimension of school trips (Parsons, 1951). This system reveals a playful character and benefits the teacher who will be able to deepen his classical explanations, and the schoolchild who will be immersed in it and establish the link of meaning. Consequently, the hypothesis that school excursions ensure learning through experience and provide a recreational atmosphere for the schoolchildren of the EPP Djavi is verified.

Furthermore, school trips are times for exchanging projects, ideas and experimenting with group life according to Djossa (2018). It is also in this sense that one of the interviewees declares: "... the pupils and schoolchildren of a school (...) come to get to know each other, to discover new faces... There already, they build a relationship" (Director 4, F. A, May 2025). In addition to the simple fact that the schoolchildren interact with each other during the excursions, they also become familiar with other living environments. It is a chance for them to learn to conform to the values and realities of society. By observing the children during the outing, we notice that it was the first time for some to enter living environments other than their own. One of the teachers surveyed certifies that "first of all, it allows the child to know his country (...). The child who went to Hêtin Sota will also see that there is a fall. He will see that there are extraordinary things in his own country. But if the child does not go out, will he understand? (Teacher 3 H. J, May 2025). We therefore note that school trips allow the child (schoolchildren) to socialize with their environment, their country in general. In other words, these trips develop peer relationship management, cooperation, citizenship education, and the notion of habitus (Bourdieu, 2000; Maulini, 2013). The dimensions observed support the finding that children develop a certain capacity for active listening and a sense of observation thanks to the trip. We consider trips as an encounter during which we are invited to use all our senses in order to appropriate social and cultural codes (Billottet, 2018).

It is noted that, apart from a percentage of 3.49, all participating schoolchildren learned the history of sites, ancient objects, the foundations of local tradition, and the background of a famous person. It is therefore understandable that school trips allow schoolchildren to discover and learn about several realities of cultural heritage (tangible and intangible). Djossa confirmed in 2018 that thanks to these trips, schoolchildren "will be more interested in the cultural objects they can see, the stories we can tell them." These learning methods facilitate the cultural integration of schoolchildren as well as respect for ancestral values. They realize the importance of preserving and transmitting heritage. Likewise, they better understand cultural diversity and develop, based on the results of the observation, a sense of belonging and identity.

The survey results show that the majority of schoolchildren place undeniable importance on combining heritage learning contexts (classical and practical). This combination allows schoolchildren to delve deeply into the heritage lessons covered in class and compare these aspects. Observing DJAVI schoolchildren on field trips reveals that they readily answered questions posed to them in the field related to the situations discussed in class. These interactions

constitute an extension of what they learned about heritage. They contribute to developing interest and awareness of cultural heritage among schoolchildren, a psychosocial and cultural development (Ailincai and Bernard, 2010).

Given that learning about cultural heritage cannot be a purely theoretical reality, the aspects identified in class related to it deserve to be explored in a tangible way. This is facilitated through field trips. A tourist guide interviewed stated the following: "...we are not able to learn everything about the cultural heritage of an environment or in general of a country during our schooling. And it is the outings, the school excursions that now allow us to...better understand what we were taught" (Tourist site manager 1 V.K, May 2025). At the same time, school trips are also considered activities that bring cultural heritage to life. These are practices that bring people closer to their rich heritage by allowing them to discover civilizations and what makes up their identity. A CESAC-Tours manager certifies that: "in reality, if there are no outings, if there are no visits, the cultural heritage sites will remain there without follow-up, without importance. Children need to travel to be able to bring these places to life; children need to know these places and know that yes, there is such and such a thing" (CESAC Manager 7 K.G, May 2025). Taking these comments into account, we can conclude that participation in heritage is necessary to ensure its survival and this is achieved through school trips. By practicing these activities to understand cultural diversity, visitors gain knowledge of the cultural, historical and artistic foundations of their country. A study carried out in 2012 by Prioul shows that school trips consist of making learning sensitive by promoting direct contact with the natural or cultural environment.

The respondents expressed their views on the policy of generalizing school excursions to balance opportunities for access to cultural heritage. Already, the Com d'habitude report published in 2023 emphasizes that school trips are an effective way to promote equal opportunities and access to culture for all regardless of the socio-economic or geographical status of the learners. To this end, one of the teachers interviewed begins with an illustration to demonstrate the merits of this policy. He states, giving the example of the Hommè Museum, in these terms: "there are people who are in Porto-Novo but who have never tried to visit the museum... even adults... they pass by but have never tried to find out what is happening there. But it is thanks to the trips that they discovered that there are things..." (Teacher 3 H. J, May 2025).

According to these remarks, it is confirmed that the gap is very evident in cities and therefore becomes glaring in rural areas. The intervention of school excursions constitutes the instigator of schoolchildren in terms of awakening interest in cultural heritage. As a result, they engage in its discovery, its learning and ultimately, its transmission to future generations as approved by the study of Bediga in 2018. This awareness strengthens the chain of transmission (Edah, 2019). Furthermore, museum activities in schools which consisted of holding cultural exhibitions in schools can be revived otherwise by the generalization of excursions. One of the tourist guides interviewed states that he "supports this policy which is to go to the students or to send the students to museums for these activities which are not necessarily visits but to help them to immerse themselves" in the cultural heritage massively. (Tourist Site Manager 1 V.K, May 2025). After analyzing the results, it should be noted that school excursions contribute to the general public's access to and participation in cultural heritage. They provide exceptional opportunities for interaction and integration, learning, and discovery, which contribute to the instilling of sociocultural values by schoolchildren, according to Parsons' AGIL paradigm (1951). These are moments of social and cultural interconnections that are expressed in terms of the development of transversal skills such as respect for others and heritage. Consequently, the hypothesis that school excursions facilitate socialization and knowledge of cultural heritage among schoolchildren at the Djavi EPP is confirmed.

Beyond all these contributions, the practice of school excursions at EPP Djavi I still faces challenges related to the participation fees for the outings, raised by 59.30% of schoolchildren compared to 47.67% and 36.05% who raised issues related to security and catering respectively. These same results show that 17.54% of schoolchildren do not encounter any problems; which firstly demonstrates the effort of the association organizing the school excursions for a good implementation of its project. However, let us remember that despite all the measures put in place by the said organizing association, the schoolchildren of EPP Djavi struggle much more to participate in these excursions, particularly because of the participation fees. This is justified by the low involvement of some parents despite awareness-raising. The impact on the number of participants was noted by an interviewee in these terms: "I came here in 2019. The experience over the first three years worked. We have a high level of student participation in these outings. But since last year, we have seen a total decline in the number of participants. And what was even more striking this year (...). I could say that this is due to the economic crisis that is raging (...) it is the parents who subscribe, so if they do not have the means, we cannot blame them for that. (Teacher 2 H.E, May 2025). We note by observing them that some schoolchildren pay these fees on the day of the outing. This can have, directly or indirectly, an impact on catering and other aspects if the organizers do not demonstrate adaptability. As for the safety of the schoolchildren, we noticed that the number of staff is partly low and affects the channeling of schoolchildren at certain levels. The cost of participation, on the other hand, does not allow the organizers to offer two meals to these schoolchildren during the

outing. This is confirmed by a teacher's comments: "The organizers do everything (...). When we take a day and it's only one meal, ... it's still not enough... but what can we do? That's how much they got..." (Teacher 3 H. J, May 2025).

Furthermore, the leaders of the association organizing the excursions did not fail to note, for their part, the difficulties related to administrative procedures, logistics, and the lack of funding. One of the leaders stated that "...the first difficulty is mobilizing transportation... Since we don't have subsidies, (...) it's the parents who have to mobilize..." (CESAC Manager 7 K.G, May 2025). It is clear that transportation and financial issues are common challenges related to organizing school trips.

These identified problems are the most common in the practice of cultural heritage learning activities outside of the classroom.

Several solutions have been proposed to adapt, drawing inspiration from the Parsonian paradigm (1951), to the realities of facilitating learning and participation in heritage. It is noted that reducing the cost of participation, recruiting staff to strengthen security, and consulting schoolchildren on catering are the solutions proposed by the Djavi EPP students to participate in school excursions and better learn about cultural heritage. These aspects related to the children's safety and catering are also highlighted by one of the site managers interviewed, who suggests that care must be taken "with their transportation, (...) their food, and everything" (Tourist Site Manager 1 V.K, May 2025). However, after observing the schoolchildren in the field, they need a culture of tranquility and a little wisdom to facilitate the task for the organizing structure.

Looking at the solutions proposed by the EPP Djavi teachers and the CESAC-Tours managers, we realize that they all addressed aspects related to state subsidies and the creation of partnerships. They nevertheless emphasized the importance of defining a new strategy to motivate and mobilize schoolchildren and parents to trigger strong participation in school trips. In this perspective, one of the teachers will affirm the following: "I will ask the State in place, if already from our ministry with the decentralized structures, we could already (...) take charge of the CM1, CM2 students and say each year, there is an outing that is organized... the State subsidizes and the learners will give their participation... this will allow the cost to be lower and parents can easily support the learners in this direction." (Teacher 2 H.E, May 2025). These comments were reinforced by a CESAC-Tours manager in these terms of complaint: "If one day the State can subsidize us, it will go straight to the benefit of the children and ourselves" (CESAC Manager 9 K.A, May 2025). All this explains the importance of State financial support and the establishment of partnerships in reducing the risks associated with the organization of school excursions. These aspects will promote the integration of all stakeholders in the system (Parsons, 1951) for the optimization of the expected profit. Actions must go hand in hand with the various policies to revitalize the tourism and culture sectors, whose massive accessibility by nationals remains an undeniable condition for the development of cultural heritage.

It should be noted that the various proposed measures address the socioeconomic challenges associated with school excursions. Based on the results obtained, the research hypothesis that school excursions face socioeconomic constraints is verified.

In line with Parsons' structural-functional model, these results provide an understanding of how school excursions contribute to learning about cultural heritage. First, these school trips fulfill an adaptive function by exposing students to concrete realities of cultural heritage, which strengthens their ability to understand and interact with their immediate sociocultural environment. Second, they allow learners to pursue educational goals by enriching their knowledge through experience and consolidating academic achievements through practical illustrations. Furthermore, the group dynamics observed during excursions strengthen social cohesion and interaction between students, teachers, and the host community. These shared moments facilitate communication, cooperation, and mutual respect. Thirdly, these outings play a fundamental role in socio-cultural integration, allowing children to discover and appropriate the cultural riches of their region, as suggested by the positive reactions they have to local material heritage and legends. Thus, the educational, recreational, social and cultural effects observed are not dissociated, but are part of an interdependent functional whole, as defined by Parsons' theory. School excursions then appear as an educational practice which, while meeting the pedagogical need, participate in the implementation of a system for exploring and learning about cultural heritage.

## 5. Conclusion

Supported by the idea of globalizing school excursions in rural areas in particular and throughout Benin in general, the research was conducted on the topic entitled "School excursions and learning about cultural heritage by schoolchildren at the Djavi Primary School in the commune of Adjara (Benin)." The overall objective is to analyze the contribution of

school excursions to the learning about cultural heritage by schoolchildren at the DJAVI Primary School in the commune of Adjarra. A mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative research was adopted. Semi-structured interviews, observation, and questionnaire surveys were used to collect data from 96 different subjects selected using the purposive selection technique. Data processing was carried out by transcribing verbatim transcripts for in-depth analysis with observed data, as well as using Kobocollect and Excel software for the quantitative data collected. The analysis was conducted following Parsons' structural-functional model (1951). After analyzing the results obtained, the research hypotheses were validated. Indeed, school excursions ensure experiential learning and provide a recreational atmosphere for the schoolchildren of the EPP Djavi. In addition, they facilitate socialization and knowledge of cultural heritage among these schoolchildren. This practice is ultimately confronted with socio-economic constraints. Research has shown that school excursions are much more than a simple trip. They are exceptional means to deepen traditional knowledge about cultural heritage and, by extension, the solution for a large participation in cultural heritage. Thus, outings reduce socio-economic and cultural barriers related to learning, the discovery of heritage features by offering an equal opportunity to absorb cultural elements to all (urban and rural). They therefore imply socio-cultural integration. That being said, socio-cultural actors and state authorities must work to generalize school excursion practices for efficient and effective transmission.

This study has the merit of having placed school excursions as a tool for learning about the cultural riches of the country and are likely to create an immersive learning environment without any discrimination of geographical or socio-economic context. Aware that it has not touched on all the contours related to learning about cultural heritage, this research leaves room for sociological investigations such as museum activities towards non-schooled populations.

## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

All authors acknowledge that there is no conflict of interest. They all agree with what is written in this article. In accordance with the requirements of transparency and scientific integrity, we, the authors of this study, declare that we have no conflict of interest, whether financial, commercial or otherwise, that could influence the results or interpretations of our research on initiation rites in Benin, thus guaranteeing the independence and objectivity of our work and ensuring the credibility of our conclusions.

### *Statement of informed consent*

We obtained consent from all participants in this study.

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