

HOW DO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS CHOOSE THEIR FIELD COURSE AND HOW SATISFIED ARE THEY WITH THEIR FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE?

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(Received: January 2020; in revised form: February 2020)

ABSTRACT

The same way that motivation is responsible for guiding and stimulating people in general and students, in particular, to accomplish their goals and projects, satisfaction ensures the pleasure derived from these activities whether they are needs, wishes or expectations determined by themselves or by living in today's society. The purpose of this paper was two-fold: firstly, to determine why students from Faculty of Geography prefer stationary fieldwork over itinerant field trip when it comes to choosing one that fulfills their commitments towards the Bachelor's degree program as part of their professional development that they are aiming at through higher education; and, secondly, to study students' satisfaction level towards the main components of a fieldwork in terms of both learning and social environment. In order to achieve an accurate understanding of the real motivation for this type of field trips and satisfaction with the pedagogical design, not only that students were asked to fill in a questionnaire focused on rating correspondent aspects of their overall experience on a scale of 1-5, but they were also invited to participate at a focus group discussion (FGD) within which additional information emerged. Thus, data collection and analysis methods and procedures involved quantitative methods that were reinforced by qualitative ones supporting all the answers to the questions from the questionnaire with specific examples that were obtained during the FGD, enabling a set of results and conclusions according to which the idea of spending some quality time in valuable interactions with others – either with friends and peers, both in professional and social contexts, or with unknown people (locals, tourists, specialists) willing to interact as well – turned out to be the main force and factor to ensuring successful experiences in the opinion of most participants to the fieldwork.

Keywords: motivation, satisfaction, stationary fieldwork, Geography, university students

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest geographers of all time, Carl Sauer, once noted that the best way for students to learn geography is through fieldwork (Sauer, 1956). In fact, Kasimov, Chalov & Panin (2013) argue that "geographical thinking" cannot be achieved solely by feeding our students with theoretical knowledge, thus, teaching them in the field should be mandatory.

Fieldwork could take place anywhere, even on campus (Benson, 2010; Hudak, 2003) or in virtual reality (Stokes et al., 2012); however, for best results, fieldwork should take place at a location that is far enough from the university and from the students' places of residence so that students need to travel and reside there, within an environment that is unfamiliar to them, for a certain period of time (Hovorka & Wolf, 2009). For this reason, international fieldtrips were found to be highly effective learning environments (Havadi & Ilovan, 2013b; Simm & Markvell, 2015; Fuller et al., 2006). In the same vein, regenerated urban spaces are places where students learn to realize case studies and identify sustainable development solutions (Ilovan et al., 2019c, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d).

Field courses can be conceptualized as a form of problem-based action learning (Marciszewska, 2016) and are a good vehicle for integrating theoretical and practical concepts (Hovorka & Wolf, 2009). As such, they provide an excellent opportunity for students to gain first-hand experience outside the classroom setting (Lonergan & Andeson, 1988). Moreover, it has been proven that learning is enhanced when students are involved in project planning, data collection and analysis (Cotton & Cotton, 2009). During field trips, students learn to use electronic devices and online apps to do research on landforms and vegetation (Rus et al., 2019), to collect visual data/photographs about the human impact on landforms and vegetation (Rus et al., 2020), and about urban development (Magdaş et al., 2018; Dulamă et al., 2020), etc. In addition, field research is highly important for developing students' competence to analyse landscapes (Ilovan et al., 2019a). Likewise, observing and analyzing geomorphological processes in the field contribute to forming students' correct representations (Dulamă & Ilovan, 2009).

There is a vast literature on the potential benefits students may gain when attending fieldtrips. In summary, these include (Boyle et al., 2007; De Witt & Storckdieck, 2008; Havadi & Ilovan, 2013a; Higgit, 1996; Knapp, 2000; Dulamă, Ilovan & Magdaş, 2017; Dulamă et al., 2016; Ilovan et al., 2018, 2019b):

- cognitive gains – as students acquire geographical knowledge during the process;
- improved competence with research methods and instruments;
- development of vocational and transferable skills;
- social benefits as increased social interactions with their peers and instructors;

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- affective outcomes – mainly as increased motivation or improved attitudes toward the discipline.

However, in order to maximize these benefits, instructors need to plan and organize their field trips very thoroughly and carefully. They need to pay close attention to the following three issues/questions when organizing a field course:

1. What motivates students to attend a field course and/or what are the main factors that students take into account when choosing which field course to attend?
2. What are the main factors that determine satisfaction of students with their fieldwork experience?, and
3. Whether or not there are differences in motivation and satisfaction scores between various groups based on socio-demographic factors.

These, in fact, are also the research questions that we tried to answer in this study.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Types of fieldwork and motivation for attending a certain type of fieldwork

According to Gold et al. (1991), there are several types of fieldwork for geography students. The simplest ones are the short field trips. These involve limited travel and time. Some field trips may extend over longer time periods yet, still, with limited student activity. For this reason, these field trips are often likened to "Cook's Tour". The third type of fieldwork is the residential course characterized by extended travel and time. Fourth on this scale are the study tours which are characterized by extended activity and could take place in multiple locations. And, finally, the project work could be of two types: learner-practitioner and participant observation.

Another interesting classification of fieldwork was done by Kent, Gilbertson & Hunt (1997). They distinguished between:

1. Observational fieldwork where students are only observing and listening to their instructor or a guide. Most field trips are of this type; and
2. Participatory fieldwork where students are more engaged.

Each type of fieldwork has both advantages and disadvantages and the worth and drawbacks of each type of fieldwork are much debated in the literature (Kasimov, Chalov & Panin, 2013). The main criticism of observational fieldwork is that, many times, these are organized as little more than "Cook's tours" where students remain largely passive and have limited involvement (Chang & Ooi, 2008). Participatory, residential fieldwork, on the other hand, is perceived as being more engaging. However, Kent, Gilbertson & Hunt (1997) disagree with this polarization and argue that there is rather a continuum between instructor-led and

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autonomous work and each type of fieldwork can be placed somewhere in between these two extremes.

A more complex classification of fieldwork was developed by Livingstone, Matthews & Castley (1998; cited in Maskall & Stokes, 2008) and was based on the following factors: status on the course, pattern of delivery, skills training, delivery, assessment, management and resources.

Fieldwork can also be classified into residential and non-residential (see Tilling, 2004, among others). Residential fieldwork is often favoured because of the "novelty factor that helps with experiential learning" (Cotton & Cotton, 2009) and because it offers more opportunities for socialization (Fuller et al., 2006; Jenkins, 1994). However, lately, due to increasing numbers of students – including non-traditional students (Bowl, 2001) – and higher costs of fieldwork (Kent, Gilbertson & Hunt, 1997), non-residential fieldwork has increased in popularity (Hovorka & Wolf, 2009; Jenkins, 1994).

As for what motivates students to attend fieldwork or why they choose one type of fieldwork over others, the literature is still in its infancy (Goh, 2011). According to Boyle et al. (2007), when fieldwork is not a mandatory part of their curriculum, students decide to take a field course in order to spend time with their fellow students and get to know them better (81%), to know the staff (71%), to learn to cope with the physical challenges (65%) and to achieve the economic demands of the work (58%). The results of this study suggest that learning and acquiring more knowledge are not necessarily the most important factors that influence students' choice for a fieldwork. Indeed, as students pay more than ever for field courses, they want "value for their money" which includes not only potential learning outcomes but also "social benefits" (Fuller et al., 2006; Kent, Gilbertson & Hunt, 1997).

Based on research from the late 1980s, Markovics (1990) concluded that students prefer problem-based fieldwork to "Cook's tour" type of field trip. However, Fuller (2006) argued that the type of fieldwork does not substantially influence students' view of the value of the fieldwork. Rather Arcodia, Cavlek & Abreu-Novais (2014) suggested that students choose a field course based mainly on three factors: age, level of education and previous fieldwork experiences, that often are designed according to participants' interest, travel purpose, and existing tourist attractions in a geographical region (Răcăşan & Vana, 2015).

Inexperienced students tend to prefer more structured types of field course such as organized lectures from local speakers, while more experienced students are more willing to engage in self-directed, exploratory activities (Sanders & Armstrong, 2008). Thus, as Sanders & Armstrong (2008) advise, instructors should start with "Cook's tour" type of field trips in the first year of study and slowly graduate to more autonomous field research in the following semesters.

Satisfaction with the fieldwork experience

According to the literature we accessed for this study, students are generally satisfied with their residential fieldwork experience. Particularly students of geography and other earth and environmental sciences have recognized the academic value of these field courses (Boyle et al., 2007). For example, a study that employed a questionnaire survey to investigate the perceptions of geology students, has shown that students reported a greater satisfaction level with their knowledge of geology and their research skills after returning from fieldwork (Waldron, Locock & Pujadas-Botey, 2016).

Similarly, Pawson and Teather (2002) have assessed students' satisfaction with an expedition-style cultural geography fieldwork. They found that students gained a greater understanding of the geographical processes and phenomena; however, trying to associate the things they learned during fieldwork with the theoretical concepts learned in class posed a challenge to many of them.

Wong and Wong (2008) organized several short (two-day long) field trips to southern China (Guangzhou, Macau and Pearl River Delta) which were attended by over 300 hospitality and tourism students. The purpose was to give students an opportunity to understand how hotels market themselves. At the end of the field trip, the researchers used a questionnaire to measure students' satisfaction level during the field trip. The results show that students were overall satisfied with their experience.

In another study, Wong and Wong (2009) used a questionnaire to measure students' satisfaction with their learning experience during a fieldtrip. The study revealed that the main factors that determined an overall satisfaction with the field trip were students' expectations, their relationships with classmates and the learning-oriented activities employed during the field trip. On the other hand, tour-guided activities and entertainment were not shown to have a positive impact on the overall satisfaction of students.

Other studies have also shown that fieldwork could contribute to the development of social capital through group dynamics, the breaking down of barriers between staff and students and through bringing students closer together (Boyle et al., 2007). This outcome often becomes evident when consulting the field course evaluations filled out by the participating students (Boyle et al., 2007).

While, overall, satisfaction seems to be high, students may still be less satisfied with certain aspects of fieldwork. Satisfaction was found to be influenced by numerous factors, including the environment and the context in which the fieldwork takes place, the personality and the qualification of the instructor as well as the different values and attitudes each student brings to the fieldwork (Bonello, 2001). For example, Chiang et al. (2012) found that, while most students reported high levels of satisfaction with their fieldwork experience, they expressed lower levels of satisfaction with the location where their fieldwork took place. Another factor that may

influence students' satisfaction is the cost of the fieldwork or field trip. When costs are high, students perceive their fieldwork experience through a "value for money" perspective (Kent, Gilbertson & Hunt, 1997). This means that the more expensive a fieldwork is for students the higher their expectations are and the more critical their evaluations of the experience will be.

Satisfaction differences based on certain socio-demographic characteristics

The study by Wong and Wong (2009) has shown that, with the increasing number of students, the group of geography students has become more diversified and more heterogeneous. The literature has exposed situations in which certain segments of the student population are no longer able to participate in fieldwork due to not being physically fit or to not having the time or money. Or, if they do participate, they may not experience "the field positively" (Hovorka & Wolf, 2009, p. 90). Already, at some universities, field courses have been cancelled while at others, the residential fieldwork has been replaced by non-residential, thematic field activities (Hovorka & Wolf, 2009). Thus, it becomes crucial to investigate to what degree students' socio-economic characteristics (based on gender, age, socio-economic and family status, etc.) may influence their satisfaction with the fieldwork experience (Nairn, Higgitt & Vanneste, 2000).

The results of a 100 first-year students survey who took a compulsory fieldwork course show that most students believe that fieldwork (particularly in physical geography) demands high levels of fitness (Maguire, 1997). It is, then, to be expected that female students would be, in general, more concerned with this issue than male students. However, other studies found no statistically significant differences in the way male and female students evaluated their fieldwork experiences (Boyle et al., 2007; Dunphy & Spellman, 2009).

Age was found as another factor that influenced students' responses in a way that was statistically significant. For example, a study by Boyle et al. (2007) found that, in general, more mature students tended to be more positive about the contribution of fieldwork to knowledge and about the usefulness of field trips than younger students. Similarly, the study by Dunphy and Spellman (2009) showed a difference in evaluating the second- and third-year students compared with the latter group perceiving fieldwork as more valuable than the former.

There may also be other demographic and social characteristics that influence students' satisfaction with their fieldwork experience, such as place of residence and previous experience (Boyle et al., 2007); however, more evidence is needed to support this claim.

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Geography fieldwork tradition in Romania

In some countries, field courses are mandatory for students in order to graduate with a degree in geography; in other countries they are not. In the latter case, students with good academic standing are preferred even though there is no evidence to suggest that students who are performing poorly in classroom settings could not do well in the field (Hefferan, Heywood, Ritter, 2002).

Geography students at Babeş-Bolyai University [BBU] are required to take three field courses during the first three semesters of their undergraduate studies (one each semester). Recognizing that students have different needs and desires, the institution offers students three types of field courses which they can choose from:

1. Itinerant residential field trip;
2. Stationary residential fieldwork;
3. Local, non-residential fieldwork.

METHODOLOGY

Research methods

In order to answer the research questions mentioned above, we designed a plan that we considered to be most appropriate to match our aims. Firstly, we selected Arcalia, located in Bistriţa-Năsăud County, as the venue for the second field course (during the second semester) for the students of Faculty of Geography, based on multiple criteria:

- high potential of accessibility, both by train and by car, and short-distance travel;
- possibility to run a stationary residential fieldwork due to the available facilities and tourist attractions easy to get to;
- the proclaimed specialisation of the complex in organizing summer courses, scientific seminars, practical trainings, educational activities;
- accommodation advantages consisting of bedrooms that can host 70 persons in bunk beds or 40 persons in single beds;
- optional catering possibilities inside the caffetteria of Arcalia Complex;
- low costs given the status of the complex which works under the aegis of Babeş-Bolyai University.

Secondly, we enabled a series of quantitative and qualitative methods such as observation and analysis which enforced the survey (questionnaire) that was administered at the end of the summer stationary residential fieldwork in 2019. The questionnaire focused on rating, on a 1 to 5-point Likert scale, corresponding to aspects of the students' overall experience, who participated in the fieldwork. The results emerged after all their

answers were processed and interpreted using both Excel and SPSS as statistical analysis software. In order to gain a more accurate assessment, a focus group discussion (FGD) was also conducted, allowing us to comprehend their motivation and satisfaction beyond the numbers. Thus, examples are attached to statistical values, providing an alternative and a much wider perspective on the research topic.

Finally, a Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine whether there were differences in motivation and in satisfaction scores between male and female students and between students with higher grades and students with lower grades.

Participants

All primary data collected by questionnaire and focus group discussion was gathered from 18 students at the Faculty of Geography, Tourism Geography Specialization, in their 1st year of Bachelor's degree program; both male (55.6%) and female students (44.4%), who had also participated to a itinerant residential field trip before the stationary researched one. Besides gender, another variable that was considered referred to the grades obtained by students at the Preliminary Examination (entrance) in order to see if there are any significant differences in motivation and satisfaction scores between the examined groups (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' profile

Socio-demographic attribute	Number (total=18)	% of total	% Valid
Gender			
Male	10	55.6	
Female	8	44.4	
Grades			
5.00-7.50	5	27.8	29.4
7.51-10.00	12	66.7	70.6
Missing	1	5.6	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to understand what motivated students mostly when they signed in for the stationary fieldwork, five items were listed as shown in Table 2. By analysing the scores that were assigned it was determined that the *desire to spend time in social relationships with peers and friends* was one of the main reasons (median: 4.00) why students made the decision to elect the last remaining option out of the three available types of study trips (38.9% of the participants rated it 5 out of 5). During the focus group, some of

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them confessed that they came with their friends from high school whom they happened to become peers once again, while others just wanted to "hang out with interesting people" whom they had the chance to connect throughout their first year of Bachelor studies.

According to the results, the desire of interacting was as strong as the financial argument because it was the cheapest solution for a field course (55.6% of the participants rated it 4 and 5 out of 5). This aspect was repeatedly indicated in the FGD session when numerous students referred to the low costs as the key point of the researched field trip ("it wasn't so expensive given the fact that we could travel by train and we didn't pay for accommodation"). Another surprising aspect concerning students' motivation was the compulsory character of the fieldwork ("I had to obtain the credits and complete the requirements for subject"), that although was expected to matter most, had less impact on their motivation for participation compared to the opportunity of spending time in social relationships (Table 2).

Table 2. Reasons that made students decide to join the stationary fieldwork

Quantitative items (questionnaire)	1	2	3	4	5	Median	IQR	Qualitative data (FGD)
a. <i>compulsory</i> fieldwork according to curriculum	2 11.1%	2 11.1%	6 33.3%	3 16.7%	5 27.8%	3.00	3	"to obtain the credits"
b. social relationships with peers and friends	2 11.1%	2 11.1%	3 16.7%	4 22.2%	7 38.9%	4.00	3	"I knew who else was going"
c. tight budget	3 16.7%	1 5.6%	4 22.2	5 27.8%	5 27.8%	4.00	3	"it wasn't expensive"
d. less tiring and less energy consuming	5 27.8%	1 5.6%	8 44.4%	3 16.7%	1 5.6%	3.00	2	"no need to travel by coach that much"
e. other aspects (period)	6 33.3%	1 5.6%	1 5.6%	4 22.2%	6 33.3%	4.00	4	"it did not overlap with my schedule"

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral/undecided; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree

IQR = Inter-Quartile Range

It is worth mentioning that, for both items – the tight budget and the one related to the fact that to join the fieldwork was not an optional thing – almost one third of the participants rated 5 points, thus showing the complexity of the decision-making process influenced by objective and subjective factors as well. Within this context, some students pointed out that it was the only solution to attend both the fieldwork and an annual music festival (Electric Castle) that they had been waiting for so long, while the other two field trips took place during the 5-day event, having partially overlapping time periods. Others just mentioned that it was the most convenient solution that did not interfere with their scheduled plans and,

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moreover, it provided the opportunity to visit places that they hadn't seen before (Table 2).

Further research provided evidence of the effectiveness of fieldwork which seemed to meet the participants' expectations, particularly (but not only) in terms of *social interactions* that occurred in semi-formal and non-formal learning environments ("I had the chance to know my peers better, especially those who don't attend classes regularly"). Since this was the primary motivation for attending the stationary fieldwork, as scores revealed, the fact that the *relationships with peers* had been awarded the maximum rating of 5 by 88.9% of the students, demonstrated a high satisfaction level considering this perspective (Table 3). They took into account the time they had spent together which either helped them connect better and make new friends ("I've learned that it is best not to judge by appearances because we are all unique in our own different ways") or, on the contrary, reshaped their attitude towards some peers ("it made me discover dislikes I wasn't aware of..." – as one student declared) or towards this social aspect of life but in a positive manner ("after this experience I'll be more open minded and I'll talk more to new people..."). Undoubtedly, sharing your life for several days with people you do not know how compatible you are with, is "testing your limits in terms of cohabitation and collaboration" as some students stated, but it is definitely a life lesson that teaches you empathy and compassion ("I learned to be less selfish and more attentive to their needs"), as well as tolerance and patience as others admitted.

Formal interaction that arose between students during teamwork situations recorded the second-highest score (72.2% of the participants rated it 5 out of 5) indicating a high proclivity towards group tasks. It was the case of a project that the students had to prepare together by selecting and organising information correctly in order to present it properly in front of the audience made of their peers and professors. In the end, a series of feedbacks was offered supportively or neutrally, that was meant to help each team to become aware of the strengths and limitations of their presentations.

Regarding the teaching and learning methods that were employed for the purpose of acquiring knowledge and skills through experience and practice, it emerged that the *theoretical knowledge gained directly* from people (locals, tourists, specialists) they had been listening to during field interviews (mainly about traditional architectural styles, costumes, about Saxons, Transylvanian history and culture, etc.), questionnaires (about tourist's perception, attitudes and opinions about a local spa resort) and during visits (to the nearby villages, to the most important tourist attractions located in the city, to a forest park and to a local spa resort) was also highly appreciated (median: 4.50) by students who showed interest in it ("we've got the chance to deepen our knowledge of a part of the country different from where we live – especially during our field interviews and visits to museums"). Some of the participants highlighted the importance of the fieldwork for their professional development admitting that if they had been in the area as tourists, on their own, they would probably not have

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visited the museums or if they had entered some of them, they would not have received the same amount of information from the tour guides. Or even worse, they would have missed it all because guides are usually motivated by groups when they share information with the visitors. Thus, not only the quality of information was sincerely appreciated ("we have found out completely different information that one cannot find on the internet"), but also the style of some guides whose experience, passion and proficiency managed to inspire most of the students (Table 3).

Despite the fact that, *theoretical knowledge indirectly obtained* from investigation study, using teaching classical methods, was least satisfying for the participants as reflected by statistics (median: 4.00), some students understood the validity and utility of the documentary film that they assisted and also of the primarily theoretical investigation that supported the project they had to prepare and present. They considered it a great chance to gather information about the county within which the fieldwork took place, while someone else suggested that "the project and the presentation could have been prepared at home".

As far as the opportunities of working on a *new and improved research methodology and developing practical skills* in order to support future academic and career progression were concerned, the scores illustrated positive behaviour and feedback. Amongst the most frequently mentioned competencies that the students brought up in discussion during the focus group were the ones related to the field interview ("it was quite interesting to perform an interview and to inventorize houses according to specific criteria") and the questionnaire methods ("I learned how to design a questionnaire"; "I found out which are the concepts behind a questionnaire") that they seemed to find it more appealing to create than to administer to tourists. In the latter case some students were initially reluctant to the idea of talking to strangers but as soon as they figured out how to approach people in order to convince them to answer their questions they turned it into an advantage ('we improved our attitude and interpersonal communication skills'). Within this context, participants to the fieldwork remarked that all this experience helped them gain self-confidence and self-esteem, increase the degree of politeness and adapt their language in dealing with others, in order to reach their goals ("I learned that once you're sending out positive energy you can earn the trust of others and thus convince them to answer all your questions").

Last but not least important, some students perceived improvements within the process of creating and presenting a project by means of Power Point Presentation as a direct result of the recommendations made during and after the projects session ("I learned how to make a PPT with an aesthetic enjoyable design that gets the attention of those who watch it").

By running the Mann-Whitney U test based on gender and grades it came out that, independent of these two variables, both male and female students share the same opinion about the reasons that made them decide to join the stationary fieldwork and about their overall satisfaction about the whole experience, that was rated 4.28 points out of 5. Not even their level of knowledge and determination shown by their grades managed to change

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the results discussed above, leading to the conclusion that, statistically speaking, there were no significant differences in motivation and satisfaction score between the examined groups ($P>0.05$).

Table 3. Students' satisfaction with their overall experience in terms of professional and social environment/activities/skills

Quantitative items (questionnaire)	1	2	3	4	5	Median	IQR	Qualitative data (FGD)
a. new and improved research methodology	0 0%	2 11.1%	2 11.1%	5 27.8%	9 50%	4.50	1	"we discovered new things and deepened what we already knew"
b. developed practical skills	0 0%	0 0%	2 11.1%	9 50%	7 38.9%	4.00	1	"I learned to communicate more effectively (professionally speaking)"
c. directly acquired theoretical knowledge	0 0%	0 0%	3 16.7%	6 33.3%	9 50%	4.50	1	"the museum tour guide gave a lot of information that is not available on the Internet"
d. indirectly gained theoretical knowledge	1 5.6%	2 11.1%	5 27.8%	7 38.9%	3 16.7%	4.00	1	"I accumulated important piece of information thanks to the county project"
e. overall interactions with faculty members (academic staff)	0 0%	1 5.6%	2 11.1%	4 22.2%	11 61.1%	5.00	1	"I liked the teachers' attitude towards us"
f. professional interaction with peers	1 5.6%	0 0%	2 11.1%	2 11.1%	13 72.2%	5.00	1	"we had to co-operate and this brought us closer" "interaction inside the teams made us more sociable and communicative"
g. social interaction with peers	0 0%	0 0%	1 5.6%	1 5.6%	16 88.9%	5.00	0	"I got to relate to people I did not think I could ever get along with" "we really had fun every evening"

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral/undecided; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree

IQR = Inter-Quartile Range

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the previous results, the most important factors to consider when organizing a field course are those types of activities that besides being just learning-focused could also maximize the quality of the social relationships with peers, preferably and if possible, at an affordable price. Regardless of

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gender and level of knowledge, the undergraduate students seem to value most in fieldwork experiences, the advantages of human interactions, whether social or professional ones, which result in improved skills and competencies, often reflected in personal qualities as well.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to all the students who participated in the stationary residential fieldwork and agreed to be interviewed for this study.

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