

CHALLENGES FACING TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

The researcher observed that government does not take History as a serious subject in secondary school curriculum because some years back it was banned and when it was re-introduced, both teachers and students had lost interest in the subject. Also, the majority of History teachers are not qualified to teach the subject and this resulted in a downward trend in the number of students offering History at the senior secondary school level because students' interest had shifted to other subjects such as Geography, Government, Social Studies and Civic Education. This study therefore examines the challenges facing the teaching and learning of History as a subject in senior secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 15 History teachers and 100 History students as sample. Questionnaire was designed to collect data while descriptive statistic of mean was used to answer the three research questions generated in this study. The findings reveal that inconsistent government policies towards History as a subject, the quality of History teachers and the teaching method used in teaching History has adversely the teaching and learning of the subject in Ilorin West Local Government Area secondary schools of Kwara State. Based on the findings, it is therefore, recommended that government should make History a compulsory subject for all secondary school students as other core subjects such as Mathematics and English Language, so that they can have adequate knowledge of Nigerian History, learn from the past mistakes of our leaders in order to correct the future.

Keywords: Challenges, History, Teaching and Learning.

Introduction

Since the British introduced Western education in Nigeria, History as a subject has featured prominently in the secondary school curriculum. The term History means different things to different philosophers of History. Fafunwa, (1974) opined that, History is to people what memory is to the individual. People with no knowledge of their past are a victim of collective amnesia, groping blindly into the future without guidepost of precedence to shape their course. This connotes that people without knowledge of the past are likely to suffer from historic myopia as their future will remain uncertain. Similarly, Jekayinfa, (2010) stated that history is the account of past events investigated, analyzed and interpreted in order to discover generalizations that are helpful in understanding the present and to a limited extent, in anticipating the future.

As a study of the past, History draws on significant events of the past to inform the present and to safeguard the future, in effect, History does not study the past in isolation from the present, but relates intricately, the successes, achievements and failures of antecedent generations to the contemporary case and sets the stage for a better living in the morrow

(Boadu, 2016). In this light, it is believed that History is a systematic account of the past events in relation to the present time in order to be able to predict the future for the purpose of shaping it for better.

Ajai, Ajibade and Aniemeka, (1999) opined that “History education is important because it inculcates in the individual the development of social awareness.” In this respect, it is through the knowledge of history that people, particularly younger ones come to understand and appreciate the background, culture, beliefs, and traditions of others. On the submission of Adeyeni (1999), the goal of History teaching in schools is to help young people develop an integrated spiritual world, via assimilation of the ethno-cultural, national and universal values that have been developed in the course of historical development, and by giving them experience in defining themselves in relation to these values. Osinsawo (1990) observed that, History is a living subject that deals with drama of human beings or the stage of the world which is still growing on, and this drama should be presented before children in a vivid manner in classroom, for this, a history teacher should be active and full life.

In Nigeria, the teaching and learning of History in schools is undergoing tremendous changings in terms of modernization, methodologies which can be understood only in the context of the subject. According to Ajayi, (2015), it is now clear that the process of History teaching and learning has become more varied and interesting, with a possibility for greater personal input. At the same time, it should be remembered that History education is based on a rich legacy. Ajayi, (2015) further stated that, History teaching and learning in Nigerian schools has a long tradition, the indisputable achievement of the History as a subject and the methodologies used in teaching it have been recognized internationally.

However, it should be noted that teaching and learning of History in schools has witnessed some changes over the years. The changes have really affected the structure of History education, the principles for selecting subject matter and the instructional materials used to teach the subject. Bining and Bining (1952) observed that problem of principle guiding the selection of teaching methods in History is another problem confronting the learning and teaching of History in our secondary schools and classified teaching method into eight categories; they are lecture, exercise, project, problem, supervised study, social recitation, laboratory and unit method. Cobbold and Oppong (2010) stated that recommended methods were not used by History teachers in teaching the subject, and even those used were not used appropriately. It was also revealed that instructional resources were not frequently used in History lessons because such resources were either not available at all or were inadequate. Also, Students were also found to possess negative perceptions about the subject as they regarded History as a compendium of facts to be memorized.

Wactyze (1991) believed that an effective History teacher does not rely on a single method of teaching. Effectiveness is multi-dimensional rather than unidimensional. He stated further that effective teaching of History involves setting conditions that make selected works more interesting. Effective instruction has a bearing on the interest of students and their motivation to learning History; and also influences them to make critical judgment on historical issues, and

understand current events in the appropriate historical context Noboa, (2013). Grant and Gradwell (2009) observed that ambitious teachers have a good depth of understanding regarding their subject matter and consciously seek ways of connecting the subject matter to students' experiences. Effective History teaching thus, involves teaching in no single pattern, taking no single shape in teaching, and assessing students in no single fashion.

Hence, History as a subject which is being taught in senior secondary schools is facing a lot of challenges in terms of scope and coverage. This study therefore examines the challenges facing teaching and learning of history in senior secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Statement of Problem

In recent past, History as a subject in secondary schools across the nation is regarded as a core subject. Equally, it is difficult to pursue professions like Law and International Relations without having credit in History. Thus, the researcher observed that inconsistency of the Government policies make History to disappear for some years in Nigerian secondary school curriculum. However, when it was re-introduced, teachers and students had lost interest in it and this resulted in downward trend in the number of students offering it in the schools where the subject is being taught. In some schools, History as a subject is relegated or totally neglected by the students due to poor/inadequate skills of some History teachers, inadequate instructional materials for teaching the subject and as such, emphasis is shifted to subjects like Geography, Government, Social Studies and Civic Education in secondary schools. This study seeks to determine the challenges facing the teaching and learning of History in the senior secondary schools of Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out:

1. *The methods used in teaching History in senior secondary schools.*
2. *The effect of government policy on History as a subject.*
3. *The quality of teachers teaching History in senior secondary schools.*

Research Questions

1. *What methods do teachers used to teach History in senior secondary schools?*
2. *What is the effect of government policy on History as a subject?*
3. *What is the quality of teachers teaching History in senior secondary schools?*

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive design. The population of this study consists of all History teachers and students in 28 public senior secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State while the target population is the teachers and students from the 5 selected senior secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select three teachers from each of the 5 selected secondary schools, which make a total number of 15 teachers, this sample size is smaller because few secondary schools in the local government are offering History as a subject. Also 20 students from each of the 5 selected

secondary schools were randomly selected which equal to 100 students. A researcher-designed questionnaire titled, “Challenges facing Teaching and Learning History Questionnaire” (CFTLHQ) was designed as the instrument to obtain necessary information from the respondents. The questionnaire is in three sections, section A contains items that were used to answer the research question one, section B contains items that were used to answer research question two while section C contains items that were used to answer research question three. In order to validate the research instrument, the draft was presented to two lecturers in the Department of Arts Education, and two experts in the field of Test and Measurement, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin for vetting. All the corrections made by the experts were effected before the final questionnaire was drafted for pilot study. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, test and re-test method was used. A pilot study was carried out on the same set of teachers and students in the schools which were not part of the main sample within an interval of two weeks. The two sets of scores obtained from the two administrations were correlated using Pearson Product-moment correlation statistic. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable.

Result

RQ 1: What methods do teachers used to teach History in secondary schools?

Table 1: Methods of Teaching used to teach History in secondary schools.

S/N	Statement	Respondent	A	D	X
1.	I use instructional materials to teach History	Teacher	4 (26.7%)	11 (73.3%)	2.53
1.	My teacher uses instructional material to teach history	Student	44 (30.8%)	99 (69.2%)	2.61
2.	I use fieldtrip method to teach history	Teacher	7 (46.7%)	8 (53.3%)	2.93
2.	My teacher uses fieldtrip method to teach history	Student	66 (46.2%)	77 (53.8%)	2.92
3.	I adopted multiple method to teach History	Teacher	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	3.20
3.	My teacher adopts multiple method to teach history	Student	87 (60.8%)	56 (39.2%)	3.21
4.	I adopt student-centered method to teach history	Teacher	11 (73.3%)	4 (26.7%)	3.46
4.	My teacher adopts student-centered method to teach history	Student	106 (74.1%)	37 (25.9%)	3.48
5.	I like history because of the method I use in teaching	Teacher	14 (93.3%)	1 (6.7%)	3.86
5.	I like history because of the method my teacher uses in teaching	Student	128 (89.5%)	15 (10.5%)	2.79
	Overall	Teacher	3.19		
	Overall	Student	3.00		

Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

Table 1 indicates that respondents (Teacher and Student) agreed with stated statement. It shows 26.7% and 30.8% of both teachers and students agreed that our teacher uses instructional materials to teach History while the remaining respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, 60% and 68.8% of both teacher and student agreed that we adopted multiple methods to teach History while 40% and 39.2% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Moreso, 93.3% and 89.5% of majority of both teacher and student were of the opinions that they liked History because of the method the teachers use in teaching the subject. The cumulative overall means score of 3.19 and 3.00 of both teacher and student respondents which were greater than the benchmark of 2.50 clearly shows that the effect of method of teaching History in secondary schools, is that students are encouraged to learn History as a subject because the method being adopted for it makes teaching and learning interesting by teacher to student.

RQ 2: What is the effect of Government policy on History subject?

Table 2: Inconsistence of Government policies on History Subject

S/N	Statement	Respondent	A	D	X
1.	I do not like to teach history because It is not compulsory	Teacher	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	2.60
1.	I do not like to offer history because It is not compulsory	Student	111 (77.6%)	32 (22.4%)	2.55
2.	I do not like to teach history because Students do not take it seriously	Teacher	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	2.50
2.	I take history to augment the number of my subjects	Student	84 (58.7%)	59 (41.3%)	2.53
3.	Teaching history as a subject is a waste of time because government does not take it seriously	Teacher	8 (53.3%)	7 (46.7%)	2.06
3.	Taking history as a subject is a waste of time because government does not take it seriously	Student	80 (55.9%)	63 (44.1%)	2.51
4.	There are not enough teachers to teach History	Teacher	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	2.50
4.	Government does not provide teachers to teach history	Student	85 (59.4%)	58 (49.6%)	2.52
5.	I do not take history seriously because of government policy	Teacher	11 (73.3%)	4 (26.7%)	2.46
5.	I do not take history seriously because Government policy on it is not stable	Student	108 (75.5%)	35 (24.4%)	2.54
	Overall	Teacher	2.42		
	Overall	Student	2.53		

Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

Table 2 indicates that respondents (Teacher and Student) agreed with stated statement. It shows 80% and 77.6% of both teacher and student agreed that they do not like to teach History because it is not compulsory while the remaining respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, 53.3% and 55.9% of both teacher and student agreed that teaching History as a subject is a waste of time because government does not take it seriously while 46.7% and 44.1% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Moreso, 73.3% and 75.5% of majority of both teacher and student were of the opinion that they do not take History seriously because of government policies. The overall mean score of 2.42 and 2.53 for both teacher and student with diverse mean score which was below and above the benchmark of 2.50 clearly shows that the effect of inconsistent government policy on History is that the quality of students that graduated are not adequately equipped with enough and the required knowledge as expected.

RQ 3: What is the quality of teachers teaching History in secondary schools?

Table 3: Quality of teachers to teach History

S/N	Statement	Respondent	A	D	X
1	I teach history because history teachers are not available	Teacher	2 (13.3%)	13 (86.7%)	2.01
2	I do not teach history because the school is not offering the subject	Teacher	9 (60%)	6 (40%)	2.51
3	The few students offering history do not encourage me	Teacher	8 (53.3%)	7 (46.7%)	2.50
4	There are not enough teachers to teach history	Teacher	8 (53.3%)	7 (46.7%)	2.50
5	History teachers are not interested in the subjects	Teacher	10 (66.7%)	5 (33.3%)	2.54
Overall		Teacher	2.41		

Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

Table 3 indicates that respondent (Teacher) agreed with stated statement. It shows 13.3% of teachers agreed that they teach History because History teachers are not available while the remaining respondents disagreed with the statement. Also, 53.3% of teachers agreed that few students offering History do not encourage them while 46.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Moreso, 66.7% of the majority of teachers were of the opinion that there are not enough teachers to teach History while the remaining respondents disagreed with the statement. The cumulative overall mean score of 2.41 of the respondent which was less than the benchmark of 2.50 clearly shows and justify that the quality of teachers to teach history as a subject is not enough.

Discussion of the findings.

The major findings from research question one is that, students are encouraged to learn History as a subject because the method adopted by teachers make teaching and learning interesting to the students. This findings corroborates that of Wactyze, (1991) who opined that

effective teachers do not rely on a single method of teaching. Effectiveness is multi-dimensional rather than one-dimensional. Wactyze, (1991) further stated that effective instruction involves setting conditions that make selected works more effective. The findings from operational research question two shows that, government policies make History to disappear for some years in Nigerian secondary school curriculum and when it was re-introduced, secondary school teachers and students have lost interest in History as a subject. The findings from research question three reveals that, History students that graduated were not adequately equipped with the required knowledge as expected and as such the quality of teachers to teach History as a subject is not enough. This findings is in line with Ghansah, (2009) that the teaching of History for that matter requires more ingenuity from teachers as these subjects demand well-prepared conscientious teachers of sound knowledge. This could possibly be as a result of the fact that most History teachers are not exposed to, or trained on the tenets of handling the subject effectively, or that teacher lack the commitment in teaching the subject as it should be taught.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn from the study. Students are encouraged to learn History as a subject because the method adopted by teachers makes its learning interesting to the students. Similarly, History students that graduated from schools are not adequately equipped with the required knowledge as expected and this causes a lot of problem to History as a subject in schools. As such, student interest have shifted to Government, Social Studies and Civic Education. Furthermore, the quality of teachers to teach History as a subject is not enough and this resulted in downward trend in the number of students offering History at the senior secondary schools level where the subject is being taught and in some schools History education is relegated or at best neglected by the students due to incompetence of some History teachers. Similarly, Government is not taking History as a subject seriously in secondary school curriculum because some years back it was banned and latter re-introduced, which makes both teachers and students to lose interest in the subject.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. Government should include History as a subject in the curriculum and make it compulsory for all students in secondary schools as other core subjects such as Mathematics and English Language.
2. Government should employ well-trained History teachers who can teach the subject and make it interesting to the students.
3. There is need for consistence in Government policies that will cater for students needs in History as a subject in Nigerian secondary schools.

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