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Abstract

The study examines attitudes of University of Ilorin Undergraduate Students toward the teaching and learning of History. Specifically, the study finds out the attitudes of undergraduate students toward the teaching and learning of History based on gender, academic levels and faculties. The study was descriptive in nature. The population of the study included all History undergraduate students in the Faculties of Arts and Education. Incidental sampling technique was used to select the first 30 students that came for lectures in HIS 210, 308 and 424 in the two Faculties making a total of 180 students. Four research questions were generated, research question one was answered with summated mean rating, while the remaining research questions with corresponding hypothesis were tested with the use of the *t*-test and ANOVA statistical techniques.

Majority of History students in the University of Ilorin had positive attitude to the teaching and learning of History but they agreed that History curriculum is too wide. They also agreed that History is pretty important for general knowledge and they find the work in their History classes interesting and feel good about themselves as History learners. It was recommended that curriculum developers should take a critical look at the History curriculum with a view of making amendment to either reduce the topics for the semester. Also, workshops and seminars should be organised for undergraduate students to further sharpen their orientation to History as a course. Teachers of History should adopt the method of using instructional materials to facilitating learning during lessons, and also to adopt diversified methods of teaching and be friendly to the students in class.

Background to the Study

That History is the mother of all disciplines is an indisputable fact, at least considering that each discipline such as Medicine, Engineering, Accounting and so on have their roots in History. History as a subject is as old as man. It is a branch of knowledge that deals with the past events as relating to a particular people, country, period and so on and so forth. History is the study of the past event so as to understand the present situation and to anticipate or predict the future event. In fact, Abdulrahman (2012) believed that History is all about the past and the reconstruction of that past to make good things happen and prevent the bad. Hence, anyone or nation that fails to recognise the importance of History will fall for failing to appreciate all that past has to offer for an improved living and existence.

The rate of enrolment in History as a discipline in Nigerian Universities was high in the past but the attention it has received and is receiving in the contemporary world is a thing of worry, as many students now prefer other courses such as Economics, Medicine, Engineering, Accounting, Law, English language just to mention but a few. As a result of the lack of genuine interest in the study of History, those who are studying History are studying it for the essence of obtaining certificate. In actual fact, most of them do claim that History curriculum is too wide and demanding, while some hold the opinion that History has no career prospect.

Osokoya (1996) submitted that some History teachers do not make use of instructional materials while others claim that the method adopted in the teaching of History is not worthwhile which cannot facilitate effective learning. These erroneous views had by them have had adverse effects on the academic performance of some students to the extent that only a few of them graduate with good grades.

In the light of the above, this research was carried out to investigate the attitude of the university of Ilorin undergraduate students so as to suggest possible media through which students' interest in the study of History can be enhanced.

The Concept of Attitude

The word "attitude" because of its central position in social psychology has been plagued with so many definitions and meanings. But despite the variety in it, they all have a kind of common idea that attitude determines human behaviour. According to social psychology, an attitude is an evaluation of an attitude object, ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive. Most contemporary perspectives on attitude also permit that people can be conflicted or ambivalent towards and by simultaneously holding both positive and negative attitudes toward the same object. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) for example, define an attitude as a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour. According to Abiri (1992) an attitude strongly influences behaviour in relation to or in the presence of the object of attitude. An

attitude is a predisposition to act in a positive or negative way towards an object or moving against it, the development of attitude is strongly related to the personality of a person.

Ajzen (2001) asserted that an attitude is a learned orientation or disposition towards an object or situation which provides a tendency to respond favourably or unfavourably to objects or situation. It is a mental and neural state of readiness organized through experience, exerting, a directive or dynamic influence upon individual's response to all objects and situations within which it is related. Daniel (2002) classified attitudes into four different groups based on their functions.

- i. Attitudes are learned for example, preference for steak or lobster, milk, blondes or redheads
- ii. Attitudes remain fairly stable over time, most of our attitudes do not change drastically from day to day nor even from month to month. This does not mean or cause that attitudes cannot be changed. It simply means that for the most part, attitudes are relatively enduring.
- iii. Attitudes are always directed towards a particular object or idea, it tends to be towards or against something.
- iv. There is an emotional component to attitudes predisposition such as habit of driving in the right do not have emotion attribute.

Attitude of Students towards History

In the classroom, the students are seen as the raw materials to be processed by the teacher in order to become good products that are good citizens in the society which is the essence of education. An average student attends school and in the classroom setting, it is the teacher's definition of the situation that prevails. He defines both his roles and attitude of students. But at the same time, it is expedient to know student's attitude to History.

Nynam (1990) produced a consistent picture of students' attitudes to their teachers, subjects being taught, particularly History. He submitted that the students like a teacher who keeps good control of the class, who is fair and gives no extreme punishment, who explains, helps, give interesting lessons, cheerful, friendly, patient and understanding, has a good sense of humour and take interest in individuals. But the students dislike teacher who is too strict, punishes excessively, who does not explain and gives helps, and does not know the subject matter very well, who gives dull lessons, ridicules and ignores individual differences. Adeyinka (1981) in his book titled "A Handbook of High School History Teaching in Nigerian" has identified trained teachers as important factors in stimulating the right attitude to History by students. While describing the concern for recruiting trained teachers for schools as universal, Adeyinka (1981) observed that for a developing country like Nigeria, such a concern is intensified since the inadequacy of trained manpower is serious. In furtherance of his contribution, Adeyinka (1981)

made emphasis on teaching methods which are means by which the learners are kept interested in activities which yield dividend in learning. Osokoya (1996) pointed out that a good History teacher provides avenue for students to develop the right attitude to History. He can do this by planning series of excursions to historical sites in town, districts, states, museum, and cultural festivals and so on. History teachers according to him should also show interest in the formation of historical/cultural affairs, societies in the school as platforms for the learning of History within and outside the four walls of the classroom.

Among the teacher related problem that can students to develop negative attitude to History is poor teaching presentation. Abiri (2006) also supported this fact when he identified poor communication between the teacher and the students. This makes learning and teaching to more complex to the learner. As observed by Osokoya (1996), History lessons have found to be one of the duller in our schools today in contrast to its fascinating nature.

Teacher's approach can make the students develop positive and negative attitudes towards the subject. This perhaps explains why Brown (2006) stressed that no matter the education policy, unless the teacher is effective, it is nothing. Related to this forgoing is the poor utilization of teaching aids by teachers. Teachers of History spend a great deal of time talking; whether it is lecturing, explanation, giving instructions, asking question or directing groups or whole class discussion. No doubt, appropriate and effective use of instructional materials will make explanation clearer.

Another factor affecting the students' attitude to the teaching and learning of History is that History textbooks are not sufficient. Also, the available one are outdated or were written by foreigners using foreign illustration to drive home their points. Many potential students are dissuaded while the few ones studying History are forced to learn only what the teacher is able to put across to them without making references or adequate studies.

Finally, the congested nature of the syllabus of History is another problem confronting effective teaching and learning of History. Many students according to Jekayinfa (2009) are of the opinion that the scope of History as a discipline is too wide and enormously tasking. A reference to the National Examination Council's History Syllabus reveals that the subject is to be studied in two phases: Africa in the wider World since 1800 and History of Nigeria from the earliest times to the present. Hence, this is considered to be omnibus.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate attitudes of undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin to the teaching and learning of History. Specifically, the study examined the following:

- a. the level of undergraduates' attitudes toward the teaching and learning of History
- b. attitudes of University of Ilorin Undergraduates towards the teaching and learning of History based on gender
- c. attitudes of University of Ilorin Undergraduates towards the teaching and learning of History based on levels.
- d. attitudes of University of Ilorin undergraduates towards the teaching and learning of History based on faculties

Research Questions

In order to give direction to this work, it therefore, answered the following questions:

- a. What is the level of University of Ilorin undergraduates' attitude towards the teaching and learning of History?
- b. What is the attitude of male and female towards the teaching and learning of History?
- c. Is there any difference in the attitudes of University of Ilorin Undergraduates in the teaching and learning of History based on levels?
- d. Is there any difference in the attitudes of University of Ilorin undergraduates in the teaching and learning of history based on faculties?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of University of Ilorin students to the teaching and learning of History based on gender.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of University of Ilorin undergraduate students of History based on level.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of University of Ilorin undergraduates students to History based on faculties.

Methodology

The type of this research work was descriptive in nature and this study employed the survey research method which involved carrying out an investigation of a particular phenomenon in a study area. This method is deemed appropriate because a descriptive research type determines and report the way things are (Kothari and Garg, 2014) and that is exactly what this study had done.

The population for this study comprised all the History undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, the target population included 200-400 levels undergraduate History students in the Faculties of Arts and Education. Incidental sampling technique was used to select the first 30 students that come for lectures on HIS 202, 304, and 408 in the two Faculties making a total of 180 students. These

students were given the questionnaire to fill and they were persuaded to submit them after the lectures.

The research instrument that was used for the collection of data was the research-designed questionnaire which consists of two sections. Section A dealt with the demographic characteristics of the respondents like their gender, faculty and levels. Section B consisted of fourteen statements on students' attitude to History teaching and learning.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was administered on to 10 counselling students offering History at the University of Ilorin two times at an interval of three weeks. Pearson's "r" Correlation Statistic was used to find out the co-efficient. A coefficient of 0.65 was gotten which was adjudged to be reliable enough.

Answering of Research Questions

The Four research questions were generated, research question one was answered with summated mean rating, while the remaining research questions two to four with corresponding hypothesis were tested with the use of the t-test and ANOVA statistical technique.

Research Question 1: *What is the level of undergraduates' attitudes to the teaching and learning of History?*

Table 1: Summated Mean Rating of Undergraduates' Attitude to the Teaching and Learning of History

Social Status	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Parental	180	29.17	2.84

Table 1 indicates that 180 respondents participated in this study. Responses to items that sought information on undergraduates' attitude to the teaching and learning of History revealed that majority of the respondents have positive attitude to the teaching and learning of History, because the benchmark weighted mean score stood at 28 and their weighted mean score is 29.17 which is above the benchmark weighted mean score.

Hypothesis Testing

Each of the hypotheses was tested with the use of t-test and ANOVA statistical technique.

H₀₁: *There is no significant difference in the attitudes of university of Ilorin undergraduate students to the teaching and learning of History based on gender.*

In order to test this hypothesis, responses of the students to items in the questionnaire were collated. The output of the analysis reveals thus:

Table 2: The t-test Analysis on the Differences in the Attitude of University of Ilorin Undergraduate Students to the Teaching and Learning of History Based on Gender

Gender	No	Mean	Std	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	75	29.27	3.24	0.38	178	0.71	Accepted
Female	105	29.10	2.52				

As shown on table 2, the calculated t-value was 0.38 while its calculated significance value was 0.71 at alpha level of 0.05. On this basis, the null hypothesis one was therefore accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the attitude of university of Ilorin undergraduate students to the teaching and learning of History based on their gender. The reason was that the calculated significance value (0.71) was greater than 0.05 alpha level, ($0.71 > 0.05$). This is in favour of male students with mean score of 29.27 greater than the mean score of 29.10 of female students.

H₀₂: *There is no significant difference in the attitudes of University of Ilorin undergraduate students to teaching and learning of History based on level.*

In order to test this hypothesis, responses of the students to items in the questionnaire were collated. The output of the analysis reveals thus:

Table 3: ANOVA Summary Table of Attitude of Students to Teaching and Learning of History Based on Levels

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean of Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	42.178	2	21.09	2.671	0.072	NS
Within Groups	1397.483	177	7.89			
Total	1438.661	179				

$p > 0.05$

Results on table 3 shows F-value = 2.671 with p-value = $0.072 > 0.05$ alpha level. Since 0.072 was greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis two is thus accepted. This indicates that there was no significant difference in the attitude of students to teaching and learning of History based on their levels.

H₀₃: *There is no significant difference in the attitudes of University of Ilorin undergraduate students toward the teaching and learning of History based on faculties.*

In order to test this hypothesis, responses of the students to items in the questionnaire were collated. The output of the analysis reveals thus:

Table 7: The t-test Analysis on the Difference in the Attitudes of University of Ilorin Undergraduate Students to the Teaching and Learning of History Based on faculties

Faculty	No	Mean	Std	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Decision
Arts	90	30.02	2.89	4.20	178	0.00	Rejected
Education	90	28.32	2.51				

As shown on table 7, the calculated t-value was 4.20 while its calculated significance value was 0.00 at alpha level of 0.05. On this basis, the null hypothesis three was therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the attitude of students to the teaching and learning of History based on their faculties. The reason was that the calculated significance value (0.00) is lower than 0.05 alpha level, ($0.00 < 0.05$). This is in favour of students from faculty of Arts with mean score of 30.02 greater the mean score of students from education students 28.32 ($30.02 > 28.32$).

Discussion

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents have positive attitudes to the teaching and learning of History. This is in contrary with submissions of Adeyinka (1981) and Jekayinfa (2009) that both teachers and students have poor attitudes towards teaching and learning of History. They attributed the poor attitudes to the teaching and learning of History to some factors such as insufficient good History textbook, congested nature of the History syllabus. Also, among other factors as identified by Jekayinfa (2009) are factors like poor teacher presentation. Abiri (2006) also supported this fact when he identified poor communication between the teacher and the students. History students in the University of Ilorin have disagreed with these two scholars because they get on well with their History lecturers which means the communication between lecturers and students are effective and efficient. As observed by Adebayo (2005), History lessons have been found to be one of the duller in our schools today in contrast to its fascinating nature. The students of History in the University of Ilorin disagreed with this scholar because they usually find the work in their History classes interesting and they enjoy being in History classes.

Conclusion

The researcher has been able to determine the attitude of the undergraduate students of University of Ilorin to the teaching and learning of History to be positive. History which is pretty important for general knowledge has created the

interest in the students to have a positive attitude to its teaching and learning. Also, the students get on well with their History lecturers and they find most of their lessons interesting. They also enjoy being in History classes and learn a lot from their History lecturers though the curriculum is too wide

Recommendations

In the light of the above studies, the researcher hereby recommends the following:

- a. The curriculum developers should take a critical look into the History syllabus with a view of making amendment to either reduce the topics for the semester or allocate more time to the number of hours for each lesson for the semester.
- b. The Institution management should in their effort construct and provide more conducive classroom environment for proper and accurate learning of the students.
- c. The lecturers of History must familiarise themselves with the use of instructional materials/resources which facilitate the teaching and learning of the students. They must also adopt diversified methods of teaching History during lessons in conformity to the contents of the subject.
- d. Teachers of History should continue to be friendly and make their lessons more interesting by allowing the students to participate during the lesson.

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