

HISTORY TEACHERS' QUALIFICATION, EXPERIENCE AND LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY CURRICULUM IN PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract

This research work investigated History teachers' qualification, experience and level of implementation of the senior secondary school History curriculum in Plateau State. The study raised and answered two research questions. The study employed survey research design. The population of the study comprised all public senior secondary school students that offer History in Plateau State. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw up the sample of the study and a self-developed questionnaire containing 16 items tagged "Availability of Qualified and Experienced History Teachers, Questionnaire for Teachers" (AQEHTQT) was used in collecting data that were used in answering the research questions. The instrument was subjected to validation by three experts in fields related to this study and the internal consistency co-efficient for AQEHTQT was established using the Cronbach Alpha. The researchers conducted a pilot study outside the population and sample of the study and a reliability index value of 0.67 was obtained. Face-to-face procedure for the collection of data was specifically used to ensure 100 percent return of copies of the questionnaire. Descriptive statistical tool of percentage was used for the analysis of data generated. Some of the findings of this research study were that; most of the teachers teaching History were holders of NCE and some did not have the required qualification to teach the subject. The study also revealed that most of the History teachers were not experienced History teachers. The researchers recommended that History Education should be introduced in all conventional colleges of education and universities where it is not offered in order to produce qualified teachers needed for the teaching

of the subject. The quota for History in terms of admissions at the tertiary level should equally be increased.

Keywords: *History, Teacher, Qualification, Curriculum.*

Introduction

History is one of the subjects taught in senior secondary schools in Nigeria and Plateau State in particular. It deals with the study of mans' past events. The significance of history to students, to be specific, cannot be overemphasized. Among some of these are: History inculcates the spirit of patriotism, encourages tolerance; nurtures the spirit of citizenship, trains the mind, quickens peoples' imagination; develops critical thinking and enables students to have a world view on their fingertips. To actualize these objectives, History as a discipline has an expanded curriculum which made Bozimo (1992) to call for the mainstreaming of the subject's workload to a manageable one just like it is the case with other subjects in the Arts and Humanities. Equally due to the vast nature of the subject matter, it is imperative for the subject to be taught by highly qualified, experienced and skilled History teachers. This means that the teaching of History should be taken very seriously at all levels of education. 21st century teaching and learning supports transmission and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values with the teacher acting as a guide, while the learners take control of the learning process.

Despite the lofty objectives of History as a subject, it is very disheartening to note that, in the study area; the subject has been plagued and besieged by a myriad of problems. Also, there are growing incidences of dwindling interest and achievement in History as can be seen in the academic achievement of the students in recent West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) (WAEC & NECO Examiners' Reports, 2019). This is seen in the dwindling interest of students towards the subject which has consequential effects on their achievement in the subject. Unfortunately, too, indices from various examination bodies, such as the West African Examination Council (WAEC) (WAEC Chief Examiner's Report, 2019) and National Examination Council (NECO) (NECO Chief Examiner's Report, 2019), indicated there was low enrolment and poor achievement of students in History examinations. At present, students' achievement in secondary school internal and external examinations in History in the study area showed that it has been low. Equally, statistics of students' achievement in the subject from 2016 – 2019 indicated that students who passed History at credit level and above are minimal.

Academic achievement is the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution achieved the educational goals. This is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment (Kiamba & Mutua, 2017). In general, various studies attempt to explain academic success or failure of students from multiple angles involving family-causal and academic-causal factors with teachers at the centre of it. Among these players, however, the society prefers to point all accusing fingers at the teachers for the failure of students in the educational system. Even the students many a time, prefer taking the glory for their good grades but turn around to blame the teachers for their bad grades. More so, the National Examination Council Chief Examiner's Report (2018; 2019) and Nakaka (2011) identified lack of adequate and qualified History teachers as a bane in the implementation of the History curriculum. A situation where there are no adequately qualified and experienced teacher to implement the curriculum makes the whole processes a waste of time. Adeyinka (1989) stated that History teachers were not given adequate motivation, leading to poor teacher presentation and incompetence. Other problems facing the teaching of History are scarcity of adequate qualified teachers and frequent transfer of History teachers. Taylor (2001) stated that most schools either handed over the subject to incompetent persons to teach or simply replaced it with any other subject. Adeyinka (1989) reported that unlike science teachers that were given special allowances, History teachers, like other art subjects' teachers, were given nothing. That seemed to have had a serious impact on the morale of the History teachers and those who aspire to be History teachers.

Teachers' qualification entails the basic training acquired by a teacher to enable him / her to practise in the teaching profession. Kola and Sunday (2015) defined qualification as a special skill or type of experience or knowledge that makes someone suitable to do a particular job or activity. Under these circumstances, one needs to be qualified or certified to teach. It is the government who supervised the implementation of the National Policy on Education by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) which made the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) the minimum requirement to teach. However, on many occasions, the government and private school owners keep on recruiting unqualified (non - education) graduates to teach in institutions of learning. The reports of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), accentuated by Alafiatayo, Anyamwu and Salau (2016) indicated that more than 49 percent of teachers in Nigeria were unqualified. This is synonymous with putting round pegs in square holes, thereby making education graduates flood the streets with no jobs.

The teaching profession in Nigeria has often been seen as a dumping ground for jobless graduates irrespective of their course of study, a transitional camp where graduates wait for better days to come. In fact, different scholars at different times have shifted the blame of poor achievement of senior secondary students in their external examination in History on low teacher quality or low qualification of History teachers teaching History within the area. The problem of History teachers' qualification and years of teaching experience and its attendant effect on the achievement of senior secondary school students' external examination cannot be over emphasized. Most History teachers in secondary schools today do not have the qualification to be called History teachers, those unqualified teachers are employed by school proprietors who look at schools as a means of making profit rather than giving the needed quality education to students. Even in situations where some quality History teachers are employed to handle the discipline, they usually display negative attitude towards the job due to lack of motivation, in terms of salaries and other incentives. That is why Maigoro (2008) had also observed that some institutions of learning in Nigeria did not offer teacher training programmes in History and if nothing is done to address the situation, the future of History would be bleak. This discrimination meted out on History as a discipline and virtually the teachers is appalling. The lack of implementation of History teachers' programme in most teacher training institutions is responsible for the dearth of History teachers today. Consequently, effective teaching will be difficult to achieve without quality teachers.

Students often complain about the broad nature of History and the strategies employed by the teachers as some reasons why they find History uninteresting. It is based on this assertion that Richard (2010) opined that students find History difficult, abstract and boring owing to the teacher's ineffectiveness in arousing their interest in the subject. In the same vein, Adodo (2017), argued that one key overriding factor for the success of students' achievement is the teacher. The author believed that teachers brought about students' high academic achievement. Considering therefore this assertion, Budi and Zamorro (2009) posited that teacher's quality was a key element in students' academic success. In addition, Zwalchir (2010) observed that appropriate and quality education depend on the quality of teaching staff and how they are treated. This is because the teachers plan, organizes, direct, coordinates and control the use of other available resources for the achievement of educational goals and objectives.

Inadequate motivation of History teachers was found to be a major problem affecting History teaching. Similarly, a study by Adeogun (2001) in Nigeria found that the quality of any educational system depends on the quality of its teachers, as no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Arafah and Sihes (2015) corroborated that teaching and learning activities could be disrupted without teachers because they are at the centre in formulating and organizing effective teaching and are highly essential for a successful operation of the educational system. Teachers are responsible for the crucial educational development of the learners because they partake in formulating and implementing policies that affect them. Teachers are the change agents standing in the gap between the students and the subject matter who ensure the permanent change in learners' behaviour. The instrumentality of the teachers in students' learning and in the preparation of students to succeed in examinations and the real world cannot be debated. This is perhaps, the reason why Adegbelemile (2011) averred that teachers hold the key to nation – building. Obasi (2010) also asserts that the professional academic training and qualification of the teacher can raise the prospects of a student's academic achievement. The job of a teacher is a difficult one, for it cuts across planning of lessons, improvisation of instructional materials, teaching, classroom management, marking of scripts, evaluating students work to mention but a few. Okoronka (2011) conceptualized the teacher as the fulcrum upon which the entire business of curriculum implementation in school revolves. Drawing from the aforementioned functions of the teacher, one may not be surprised that all accusing fingers point to the teacher any time there is failure of the educational system.

These complaints, though largely built on sentiments and not empirically tested, can go both ways. However, the question that still lingers is, what could be the actual problems affecting the teaching and learning of History in secondary schools of Plateau State? For teaching and learning to be effective, the teacher must be qualified. Awosiyani (2012) also stated that the dearth of History teachers is one of the most fundamental issues facing the teaching of History in Nigeria and Plateau State in particular. The author further stressed that this was killing the teaching of History but Muhammed (2012) stated that History will not die if the relevant things are done by policy makers and stakeholders.

The main purpose of this research work was to assess History teachers' qualification, experience and level of implementation of the senior secondary

school History curriculum in Plateau state. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Find out the extent to which there are qualified History teachers for the implementation of Senior Secondary School History curriculum in Plateau State?
2. Assess the extent to which there are experienced History teachers for the implementation of Senior Secondary School History curriculum in Plateau State?

The following research questions were raised:

1. To what extent are there qualified History teachers for the implementation of Senior Secondary School History curriculum in Plateau State?
2. To what extent are there experienced History teachers for the implementation of Senior Secondary School History curriculum in Plateau State?

Method

The survey research design was used for the study. The researchers evaluated the implementation of Senior Secondary School History curriculum in public senior secondary schools in Plateau State, in terms of availability of qualified and experienced History teachers. The population of the study comprised all History teachers from public senior secondary schools in Plateau State. There was no sampling as the population was manageable. Thus, all the 105 History teachers within the study area were used for the study.

Purposive sampling technique was used for the study. A baseline survey was conducted to identify only public senior secondary schools which offer History as a subject and has History teachers in the entire 17 Local Government Areas of Plateau. Results of the baseline survey indicated that as at the time of this research work, there 105 History teachers, who were used for the study. This is because not all schools in Plateau State offer History and there abound low enrolment in History. The History teachers were used because they are conversant with the History curriculum and are better positioned to answer the questions objectively.

The researchers used a self-developed questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. This instrument was tagged Availability of Qualified and Experienced History Teachers Questionnaire for Teachers (AQEHTQT). AQEHTQT consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A contained instruction on what the respondents were required to do. Section B contained

personal data about the respondents, such as school, number of History teachers in a school, highest educational qualification, and years of teaching experience. The questionnaire was administered to History teachers in all the public Senior Secondary Schools teaching History in Plateau State. AQEHTQT consisted of 16 items measuring the availability of qualified and experienced History teachers teaching in the study area. History teachers were required to indicate their highest educational qualifications and years of teaching experiences.

The face validity was established for AQEHTOT to determine the extents to which there are qualified and experienced History teachers to implement the senior secondary school History curriculum in Plateau State. Validation of the instrument was handled by three experts, one each from Test and Measurement, Curriculum Studies, History and International Studies Education, all from the Faculty of Education, University of Jos, Nigeria. These experts were specifically requested to indicate the appropriateness, comprehensiveness and clarity of the language used in constructing the questionnaire items.

To establish the reliability of AQEHTQT, the instrument was subjected to a single questionnaire administered to Senior Secondary School History teachers during the pilot study in Nasarawa State. The internal consistency coefficient for AQEHTQT instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method. This in turn was to establish the homogeneity of items of the instrument. The reliability coefficient index value of 0.67 was obtained.

Having obtained consent from the relevant authorities, the researchers with the help of two research assistants administered the instrument by using the face-to-face method of questionnaire administration. The face-to-face or Direct Delivery Technique (DDT) enabled the researchers to have contact with the respondents; it reduced the rate of incomplete responses and the number of refusals or returns. The exercise lasted for two months due to security situation in the state and distance between the schools in the Local Government Areas of the State. After successfully completing the questionnaire and obtaining data, they were collected and collated for analysis. Data collected for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools of frequencies and simple percentages. Hence, research questions 1 and 2 were answered using frequency and percentage.

Results

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of History Teachers by Qualification

Items	Qualifications	Number	%	Remark
1.	PhD History Education	-	-	Qualified
2.	M. A. History	6	5.7	Not Qualified
3.	M. A. History / PGDE	-	-	Qualified
4.	M. A. Ed. History	4	3.8	Qualified
5.	M. Ed. History	5	4.8	Qualified
6.	B. A. History	17	16.2	Not Qualified
7.	B. A. History / PGDE	7	6.7	Qualified
8.	B. A. Ed. History	30	28.6	Qualified
9.	NCE History	35	33.3	Not Qualified
10.	Others	1	0.9	Not Qualified
	Total	105	100	

Source: Field work, 2019

The data in table 1 shows that 5.7% of History teachers had M. A. History; 3.8% had M. A. Ed History; 4.8% had M. Ed. History; 16.2% had B. A. History; 6.7% had B. A. PGDE; 28.6% had B. A. Ed History; 33.3% had Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), 0.9% possessed other qualifications not related to History such as N. C. E.; B. Ed; M. Ed in English Education or Religion Education. From the data, it is evident that there are no qualified History teachers because 33.3% of the teachers are NCE holders and others with the sum total of 22.8 % had no training in education. The categories qualified are those who obtained either a degree in History and Education or a degree in History with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of History Teachers by Years of Teaching Experience

Items	Years of Teaching Experience	Number	%
1.	1 – 5	23	22.0
2.	6 – 10	35	33.3
3.	11 – 15	12	11.4
4.	16 – 20	18	17.1
5.	21 – 25	09	8.6
6.	26 – 35	08	7.6
	Total	105	100

Source: Field work, 2019

The data in table 2 shows percentages of the teachers that teach History had years of teaching experience as follows: 22.0 % had between 1 – 5 years of teaching experience, 33.3% between 6 – 10 years, 11.4% between 11 – 15 years, 17.1% between 16 – 20 years, 8.6% between 21 – 25 and 7.6 % between 26 – 35 years of teaching experiences. This data indicated that most of the teachers teaching History are new in the system as this set of teachers constitutes 33.3%.

Discussion

Results presented in tables 1 and 2 to answer research questions one and two respectively show that 33.3% of the teachers teaching History are Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) holders. 22.8% did not have the required qualification to teach the subject as they can only teach at the primary schools. 55.3% of the teachers had between 1 – 10 years teaching experience which constitutes more than half of the teachers' population. This negates the National Policy on Education requirement that NCE certificate holders are qualified to teach in primary schools rather than in secondary schools; and in this case at the senior secondary schools. The policy further stated that at the secondary school level, only teachers with first degree in History and above, that is B. Ed., B. A. / PGDE, M. Ed and M. A. Ed in History are qualified to teach the subject. This lack of qualified and experienced teachers for the implementation of the History curriculum is in agreement with Taylor (2001), Maigoro (2008), Zwalchir (2010) and Awosiyan (2012) who stated that enough teachers were not trained for the effective implementation of the History curriculum in Senior Secondary Schools in Plateau State and Nigeria in general.

The results further confirmed the usefulness of the need to evaluate the level of implementation of the curriculum. This means that the evaluation of the implementation of curricula in all subjects including History and not only in the Sciences and Languages can equally save the Nigerian educational situation as it has in other parts of the world, especially the developed world. This will reposition education for the advancement of mankind. The enthusiasm the study generated among History teachers, especially during the pilot study and main study was evident and remarkable. This was done through support, remarkable participation and readiness to help the researchers during the fieldwork.

Conclusion

It was deduced from the findings of this study that there were no adequate, qualified and experienced History teachers needed for the implementation of the Senior Secondary School History curriculum in Plateau State.

The study also concluded that it is not enough to design an acceptable curriculum without taking care of the instructional materials as well as the employment of qualified and experienced teachers who can use relevant and recommended methods of instruction for lesson delivery. It is as a result of the ineffective implementation of the curriculum, that there is poor performance of the students in external examinations. This worrisome situation will persist if steps are not taken to reverse the trend.

Recommendations

In the light of the major findings of this research, the following recommendations which are considered essential in improving the implementation of the Senior Secondary School History curriculum in Plateau State are made:

1. History Education as a course of study should be introduced in more conventional Colleges of Education and Universities where it is not offered in order to produce qualified teachers for the teaching of History in senior secondary schools.
2. The admission quota for History Education into tertiary institutions should be increased. This will help address the issue of short fall in the number of qualified and experienced History teachers available for the teaching of the subject in senior secondary schools.

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