



Assessment of Teaching Methods Used in the Implementation of Senior Secondary School History Curriculum in Plateau State

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Abstract

This research study was pinned on assessing teachers methods used in the implementation of senior secondary school History curriculum in Plateau State. The study raised two objectives and two research questions to guide the work. Survey research design was employed for this study, which comprised all senior secondary schools where History is being taught and their History teachers as its population. All the 105 senior secondary school History teachers drawn from all the government secondary schools made up the sample of the study. The purposive sampling technique was used for the study. Equally, the researchers made use of one instrument of data collection which is named History Teachers Questionnaire for Teaching Methods (HTQTM). The instrument was subjected to experts' validation and a reliability test was conducted using Cronbach – Alpha Method and reliability coefficient value of 0.67 was obtained. The instrument was found to be valid and reliable. Some of the findings of this research work showed that the History teachers make use of all the teaching methods, but the most commonly used are Project, Assignment / Library and Discussion methods. It was also found out that History teachers often use 15 out of the 18 teaching methods that they were asked to respond to. At the end the study recommended that teachers of History should be encouraged to use different methods of instruction through proper monitoring and supervision by different authorities charged with the responsibilities.

Key Words: *Methods, History, Curriculum*

Introduction

Since the British colonized and subsequently introduced Western education in Nigeria, History as a subject has been a prominent discipline of study in the country's school curriculum, not until in 2007 that government expunged it. Nigerian government has of recent re – introduced it into the school curriculum to be taught as a standalone subject. Retrospectively, the Nigerian National History Curriculum for Senior Secondary



School through the Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) of 1985 pointed out some course items for History instruction, such as what is History, the nature of History and the importance of History. History students are required to start learning peoples of Nigeria, without knowing or having an in-depth knowledge of what History is all about and the requirements of the discipline unlike our British counterparts. There is a serious need to rectify this anomaly not only in Plateau State, but nationwide. The new curriculum introduced in 2010 has succeeded in including the definition of the subject, but without handling the nature of History.

It is in proffering solutions to this perceived problems that Adeyinka (1993) stated that the main objectives of History teaching in senior secondary schools in order of ranking are: Introduction of children to their heritage, the imparting of historical knowledge, critical thinking, problem solving, citizenship, international understanding, imagination, the inculcation of moral values, tolerance, enjoyment of leisure and development of the power of wisdom and knowledge of truth. In the same vain, Bozimo, (1992) had earlier stated that History should be taught to introduce children to their heritage, implant moral values, quicken children's imagination, lay the foundation for a tolerant outlook, impart a sense of human solidarity, train the mind, give pleasure and provide a stimulus for the development of children's minds. With this in sight, the onus lies with the History teacher and his pedagogical process to achieve these lofty proposed objectives.

The issue today in History classroom pedagogy is the gradual disappearance of the subject due to many factors. WAEC and NECO Chief Examiners' Reports (2017 & 2018) were unanimous concerning the problems facing the teaching of History, in which the major one as opined by them is the method of teaching employed by History teachers. This assertion was also pointed out by Ezenwa (2011) that lack of using different methods of teaching is responsible for the poor performance of students, low enrolment and making the teaching of the subject very dull, abstract and uninteresting. Sadly too, Richard (2010) have adduced some reasons for candidates' poor performance in History. Among some of the problems identified is the poor implementation of the Senior Secondary School History curriculum in the state. Every subject curriculum is bedeviled by one form of challenge or the other. However, that of History is more pronounced due to its marginal status. Some of these challenges according to Maigoro (2013) include: History as discipline is often entrusted to teachers who are not trained in the discipline, its restriction to certain levels of education, the way and manner History is being taught by some teachers is also constituting serious problems to the History curriculum and some incompetent History teachers have turned History into mere narratives or storytelling.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that teaching is a complex activity, which is often discussed at different fora of educational sittings. Teaching and learning has over the years



employed some basic systems which make it transferable from the sender (teacher) and receivable for the receiver (student). This shows that, every teaching – learning process must adopt a particular style, which will make such teaching and learning worthwhile. Admittedly in Nigeria, the teaching and learning of History in schools is a challenging one mostly in terms of methodologies which can be understood only in the context of students' performance at both internal and external examinations.

With the aforementioned, it is of interest to put on record that though most subjects have certain teaching methodologies shared, however, some are peculiar to particular disciplines. This indicates that the subjects are interwoven. But as far as History is concerned, though it shares some methodologies with some courses, yet it has some others exclusive to it. This means that as much as some methods of teaching can be used both in History and other subjects, some other methods are only applicable in the teaching and learning of History alone (Osiyale, 2012).

Essentially, the bane of History pedagogy lies on the problem of choice of teaching method by the History teachers. Methods form the most important link in the total teaching - learning chain, which has on one hand, the goals and purpose and on the other hand, results and value. Ajayi (2015) stated that History instruction in Nigerian schools has suffered tremendously when looking critically on the methodology used by History teachers in teaching the subject. It is on this note too that Alabi (2020) observed that the problem of principle guiding the selection of teaching methods in History is another problem confronting the learning of History in schools in Nigeria. Poor teaching methods which do not provide for effective teaching and learning experiences, as a result of the frequency of using the lecture method which makes learning boring and uninteresting is also a challenge.

Similarly, Jekayinfa (2012) also asserted that teaching and learning is famous of conventional teaching where teacher is the centre of the teaching, a controller of the class activities and a dictator, while the learner is a passive learner who takes all the words of the teacher without interaction between him and the teacher. To further buttress this fact 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. However, no teaching method is adjudged the best as each method has its own strengths and weaknesses. So this makes History lessons dull and uninteresting and this results in boredom among the students. Covering the material in "encyclopedia fashion" entraps History teachers, using the text book thus becomes the most expedient way to teach. The students often become passive receivers of more information than one could ever hope to comprehend, analyze and decode. The traditional, chronological approach to History which advocates that everything must be "crowned" is making the subject unpopular. This usual



coverage at the expense of learning or getting through the syllabus for WAEC and NECO examinations, always lead to poor performance by students.

This sorry situation is in need of urgent attention in order to make the subject sustainable not only in Plateau state, but also in Nigeria. Several proposals aimed at restoring and improving the teaching and learning of History in secondary school classrooms have been offered, however, the actual gains of such proposals are still being awaited. It is based on the above that Oluwagbohunmi and Abdu-Raheem (2014) stressed that old methods of teaching must be discarded and new ones that are activity based and ensure active involvement of learners must be employed to ensure achievement of learning objectives. Today, the emphasis is on active student – centred approach to learning where students are given the opportunity to discuss, think, analyze and develop the skills necessary to understand cause, effect, change and chronology (Bozimo, 2001).

Infact, according to Sumber, Ndofirepi and Gwirayi (2012), the teaching style of the teacher should match the learning style of the learners in order for learners to understand what the teacher is teaching. The authors further posited that learners should be at the forefront or in the driver's seat and in charge of their own learning while the teacher acts as a facilitator during teaching- learning process. This is because good teaching makes learning more meaningful. Furthermore, while good teaching helps the learner to learn more quantitatively and qualitatively, poor teaching would lead to poor learning and hence poor performance. Also, Adesanya and Adesina (2014) noted that meaningful teaching and pleasant learning of basic concepts and processes can only be accomplished within the instructional framework with the combination of teaching strategies and approaches. Teaching needs to take account of the pupil or student as the case may be and the teacher as well as the subject. However, this is not always the case with some History teachers (Boadu, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

It was observed that many students do not pass well in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations in History. Among the factors responsible for the students' poor academic performance in the subject is the inappropriate teaching methods adopted by History teachers and the poor implementation of the Senior Secondary School History curriculum in the State. By implication, the effective method of teaching History has not been identified. Process evaluation is needed to provide feedback on the implementation objective procedure. Process evaluation which is concerned with the interpersonal activities between a teacher and a student functions to reveal the extent to which context input evaluations have been performed adequately. It is applicable to this study because it was used to determine the level of the implementation plans and procedure,



especially the teaching methods and the interpersonal activities between teachers and students, to ascertain whether the stated objectives were achieved or not.

Methodology

The survey research design was used for the study. The researcher evaluated the implementation of Senior Secondary School History curriculum in public senior secondary schools in Plateau State. Descriptive survey design focused mainly on finding out facts about people, their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivation and behaviour. The design is deemed appropriate according to Awotunde and Ugodulunwa (2004), because the study focused on the vital facts about finding out the opinions of History teachers on the implementation of the Senior Secondary School History curriculum in public Senior Secondary Schools in Plateau State. It is also considered appropriate because opinions of a representative of the entire population were collected and generalized on the population.

The population for this study comprised all senior secondary schools where History is taught and their History teachers. The History teachers were drawn from public senior secondary schools in Plateau State. The population described above can provide the most authentic and dependable data necessary for assessing the type of method (s) and the implementation of History curriculum in Senior Secondary Schools in Plateau State. All the 105 Senior Secondary School History teachers drawn from all public schools, were purposively used for the study. These schools are selected based on the fact that they possess similar characteristics such as teacher qualification, academic records and learning environment and can be conveniently used for the study since the number of schools offering the subject in the state are few. The purposive sampling technique was used for the study. All the History teachers from the seventeen Local Government Areas of Plateau State were used for the study. This is due to the low enrolment rate in History. The History teachers were used because they are conversant with the History curriculum and are better placed to answer the questions objectively as key implementers of such curriculum.

The researchers used one instrument for data collection. This instrument is tagged "History Teachers Questionnaire for Teaching Methods" (HTQTM). The HTQTM consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A contained instruction on what the respondents were required to do and the three (3) point rating scales was used by the respondents in responding to the items on the questionnaire. Section B contained eighteen items that were generated. The questionnaire set out to find out the methods and the extent to which it is considered relevant in achieving the set objectives of the implementation of the Senior Secondary School History Curriculum in Plateau State. The HTQTM consisted of eighteen (18) items made up of different methods of teaching History at the Senior Secondary School level. The methods were drawn from the Senior Secondary School



History Curriculum. They are the methods recommended for the teaching of the subject. The items for the present study were specifically structured items where teachers were given options to choose the one that appeal to them most. The respondents were required to choose an option from the three (3) point rating scales. The first stage of the validation of the instruments started with an extensive review of literature to source for relevant information for the research instrument. The second and the final stage of the validation of the instrument was handled by experts, one each from Test and Measurement, Curriculum Studies, History and International Studies Education, all from the Faculty of Education, University of Jos.

The type of validity established for HTQTM was the content validity. Experts in History and International Studies Education were requested to validate the methods for the teaching of History in senior secondary school. For the reliability of HTQTM, it was subjected to a single questionnaire administered to Senior Secondary School History Teachers during the pilot study in Nassarawa State. The internal consistency coefficient for HTQTM instrument was established using the Cronbach – Alpha method. This in turn was to establish the homogeneity of items of the instruments. The reliability coefficient value of 0.67 were obtained for the methods. The coefficient reliability for the instrument was high. It was therefore concluded that the instruments was reliable. Having obtained consent from the relevant authorities, the researchers administered the instrument History Teachers Questionnaire for Teaching Methods (HTQTM).

The questionnaire was administered by face to face method to the proposed respondents. Since the face to face or Direct Delivery Technique (DDT) allows for contact with the respondents, it reduces the rate of incomplete responses and the number of refusals or no return, it was used. The exercise lasted for two months due to security situation in the State and distance between the schools and the Local Government Areas of the State. After successfully completing the questionnaire and obtaining data on assessment of method of teaching History by its teachers, the questionnaires were collected and collated for analysis using the three (3) point rating scales of often, sometimes and rarely corresponding with 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Thus, the criterion mean for accepting or rejecting an item is 2.5.

Results

Research Questions One and Two

1. What are the teaching methods commonly used by Senior Secondary School History teachers in Plateau State?
2. How often do History teachers use the recommended teaching methods in senior secondary schools in Plateau State?



Table 1: Showing analysis on research questions one and two.

S/No.	Teaching Methods	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Total	X	Decision
1	Story telling Method	87 (261)	9 (18)	9 (9)	288	2.74	Accepted
2	Lecturing	50 (150)	36 (72)	19 (19)	241	2.29	Accepted
3	Questioning	85 (255)	4 (8)	16 (16)	279	2.66	Accepted
4	Field Trip/Excursion	84 (252)	4 (8)	17 (17)	277	2.64	Accepted
5	Debate	85 (255)	7 (14)	13 (13)	282	2.69	Accepted
6	Project	75 (225)	16 (32)	14 (14)	271	2.58	Accepted
7	Assignment/Library	89 (267)	4 (8)	12 (12)	287	2.73	Accepted
8	Resource person	74 (222)	14 (28)	17 (17)	267	2.54	Accepted
9	Dramatization	82 (246)	13 (26)	10 (10)	282	2.69	Accepted
10	Role play	79 (237)	12 (24)	14 (14)	275	2.62	Accepted
11	Discussion	87 (261)	7 (14)	11 (11)	286	2.72	Accepted
12	Brain Storming	72 (216)	22 (44)	11 (11)	271	2.58	Accepted
13	Electric	47 (141)	35 (70)	23 (23)	234	2.23	Accepted
14	Inquiry	74 (222)	14 (28)	17 (17)	267	2.54	Accepted
15	Problem solving	71 (213)	19 (38)	15 (15)	266	2.53	Accepted
16	Simulation	65 (195)	20 (40)	20 (20)	255	2.43	Accepted
17	Devil's advocate	44 (132)	28 (56)	33 (33)	221	2.10	Accepted
18	Textbook	84 (252)	7 (14)	14 (14)	280	2.67	Accepted

Source: Field work, 2019

The analysis in table 1 shows that History teachers made use of all the teaching methods. The most commonly used methods by History teachers are storytelling assignment / library and discussion with means of 2.74, 2.73 and 2.72 respectively. History



teachers accepted that they sometimes make use of project, questioning, field trip / excursion, debate, resource person, dramatization, role play, brainstorming, inquiry, problem solving, and text books. These methods have means of 2.58, 2.67, 2.66, 2.69, 2.62 and 2.67 respectively. History teachers scarcely make use of lecturing, eclectic, simulation and devil's advocate with means of 2.29, 2.23, 2.43, and 2.10 respectively.

Discussion of Findings

Results presented on table 1 to answer the research question on the methods often, sometimes or scarcely used generated positive responses from the teachers. The teachers accepted that they use fifteen of the eighteen methods that they were asked to respond to. The methods they scarcely made use of are lecturing, eclectic, simulation and devil's advocate. This is in consonance with Ezenwa (2011) who confirmed that lack of using different methods of teaching is responsible for the poor performance of students, low enrolment and making the teaching of the subject very dull and uninteresting.

Similarly, Table 1 also showed that most History teachers do not use some of the recommended or best methods of teaching the subject. This concurred with the suggestion of Cambridge University Institute of Education, UCLES (2008) on the best methods for History instruction such as Projects – imaginative writing – investigation by students, individually or group, dramatization and discussion. Equally, 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.

The results confirmed the usefulness of the evaluation of the implementation of the curriculum. This means that the evaluation of the implementation of curricular in all subjects and not only in the sciences and languages can equally serve the Nigerian educational situation as it has in other parts of the world, especially the developed world in order to 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 researcher during the fieldwork.

Conclusion

It was concluded in this study that History teachers most commonly used teaching methods are Project, Assignment / Library and Discussion methods. It was also noted that most of the teachers rarely used the recommended or best methods of teaching the subject. Consequently, it was also observed that History teachers need to be well equipped in the methods of teaching as the teacher is responsible for translating policy into action in the classroom.



Recommendations

In the light of the major findings of this research endeavor, it becomes pertinent to make the following recommendations which are considered essential in improving the implementation of the Senior Secondary School History Curriculum in Plateau State.

1. Teachers of History should be encouraged to use different methods of instruction through proper monitoring and supervision by the different authorities charged with these responsibilities.
2. History teachers too should be encouraged to use the recommended or best methods of instruction which will enhance better understanding and consequently performance of the students.

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