

INFLUENCE OF POOR ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE AND ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS IN THE NIGERIA POLITICS.

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Abstract

This research work focused on the problems of teaching and learning of history in senior secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Its objectives were aimed at finding out the problems of teaching and learning of history in secondary schools, the problems students encounter during their studies in history, the reasons why history is not recognized and also why the government do not pay attention to this course, history as a subject, the reasons why students at times do not perform very well in examination in history as a subject. During this research, information were collected by means of oral interview which was carefully administered to randomly selected respondents. The findings revealed that inadequacy of teachers and employment of unqualified teachers has created a lot of deficiencies in history as a subject. The findings also revealed that majority of the students cannot practice or learn on their own without the guidance of their teachers, therefore teachers in history should be adequately trained as they have much impact on students performance.

Key words: Influence of poor attitudes, Towards teaching and learning of History, in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. It's negative effects in Nigerian politics.

Introduction

The poor performance of students in public examination is a clear manifestation of the fallen standard of education in Nigeria in recent years. Nwora (2003) observed that the poor performance of students who sat for History examination in recent years has driven many away from the subject. For instance students who studied the issue of poor performance of students in History in 2006 have revealed that out of 200 candidates that sat for History in the West African School Certificate Examination only 20.3% of the students passed at credit level. This is a clear indication of the difficulties associated with the teaching and learning of History among other factors that cause students poor performance.

According to Omebe (2006) teaching cannot be said to have taken place until the learners, are able to produce that which the teacher has taught them. This could be taken to mean that, since the students were unable to produce what they were taught, it therefore means that learning did not take place. What then could be the cause of this ugly situation? Even at the expense of the good spirited

individuals, does it mean that the teachers had spent all their time in the classroom doing nothing hence the poor performance?

Indeed, there must be problems that are associated with the teaching and learning of History in senior secondary schools. Could this problem be associated with poor teachers' factors or students' non-challant attitudes towards their studies?

According to Igoche (2006) the teacher is the indispensable pillar of the educational enterprise, they are the main motivator in the teaching and learning process. Admittedly therefore, one could say that if anything goes wrong in the teaching and learning process, the teacher had gotten a blame to share. The question then is what aspect of the teacher makes the teaching and learning of History problematic? This question will be effectively answered at the end of this research.

More so, one cannot hold only the teachers responsible for this poor outing considering the fact that various factors such as socio-economic factors influence students academic performance. The students themselves are not left out in the blame because according to Abdullahi (1999) students study habits is made up of perceiving, recognizing, doing home works and assignments, preparations for examination and teachers consultation by the students, time allocation for studies, reading and note taking, concentration and study period. Since the mind is not passive during teaching and learning process, one can still hold the students responsible for their failures.

The difficulty in learning History which is manifested in students poor performance in examinations have caused many to abandon the subject for other elective subjects in secondary Schools like Literature and Geography. For example, Nwanadm (2007) in his research on causes of students' poor performance in History, revealed that at Aguata Boys Secondary School, Anambra State, 33 students sat for History examination in West African Examination Council (WAEC) in 1999, while only 12 students sat for same examination in the following year (2000).

No doubt, the outcome of the various evaluations carried out by examination body such as West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) etc, could be used as a yardstick to measure the performance of our educational institution; hence we can conclude that from the performances recorded in different researches carried out across the country based on students performance in History subject, this conceived research work centered on the problem of teaching and learning of History in senior secondary schools. In other words, this study critically focuses on the role of teachers in secondary schools and even the students on their own side irrespective of their poor performance in national examinations.

It is specifically directed at what poses challenges to the teaching and learning of History in senior secondary schools in Ebonyi State that had led to the poor state of affairs in our secondary schools generally in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the problems that are associated with the teaching and learning of History in senior secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

The recurring problems of poor performance of students in History subject in national examinations is a great source of worry and challenge to the entire public. This particular problem has been with us for the past years, notwithstanding, the recommendations of various researches carried out across the country and huge financial allocations by the government and spirited individuals on education year after year. The problem of this study therefore lays on the need to identify how, and why students had continued to perform abysmally poor in History subject in national examination.

The Significance of the Study

This research study will be of immense help to those parents who have sent their children to secondary schools to study and become a beneficiary of History studies and even have the awareness of History as a subject taught in schools. This will enthrone the spirit of absolute dedication on teachers in this subject which is synonymous with government to compute data for academic planning and possible grant-in-aids to secondary schools. Finally, the study will help the students in secondary schools to have a sense of belonging and awareness in the ever changing society.

HISTORY AND NATION BUILDING

History as a Discipline or Course of Study

History is the systematic study and use of past events which are of relative significance. The point is that the origin of man on earth and his activities are so ancient that there is hardly any current event which has no antecedent.

The term history is derived from the Greek work *Historia* which means information or an enquiring designed to elicit truth. It is just “man-history” – the story of efforts to satisfy his craving for an orderly social life. History has been defined by different scholars in different connotations. Though the words and languages used often are different in character, but, the implications are not so different fundamentally.

According to the earliest definition of Aristotle, “History is an account of the unchanging past”. E.H Carr gave a very beautiful definition of history. He says – history is an unending dialogue between the past and the present. According to John 1. History is a narration of the events which have happened among mankind including an account of the rise and fall of nations, as well as of other great changes which have affected the political and social condition of the human race. Burckhardt said, “History is the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another”.

There is no universally agreed definition of history. It has been defined differently e, places and events of the past, arranged in chronological order, it tells us about our ancestors – their lifestyles, occupations, customs and traditions, religious beliefs, social and political systems and cultural patterns. It also tells us about their problems, aspirations as well as their achievements.

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The Importance of History in Nation Building

For us to have a society that has meaning for its citizens, the importance of history as the memory of human group experience cannot be over emphasized. Because History is the memory of human group experience, the history of each group conditions the attitudes of the groups towards other groups. Unless we understand this, we cannot explain in any meaningful manner the attitude of the group towards another. It is because this is so that history can be a potential force in Nigerian's development.

Fabian N.U (2005), maintained that to create awareness is the peak of any history, written or unwritten. To live without any form of an organized history is an implied form of anarchy. The main essence of history is self improvement. Improvement in relation to one's self right requires correct knowledge of history. However, the importance of history are discussed under the following headings:

Knowledge of the Past, the Present and Future

It is important for one to understand that adequate knowledge of history helps us to understand much better and thus, be able to look confidently into the future and live more purposeful life free from avoidable mistakes often occasioned by ignorance.

Ability to Resolve Contemporary Problems

Adequate knowledge of history helps in resolving contemporary problems such as the need for citizenship and patriotism which is available in historical thinking, historical interpretation and historical explanation. It is believed that a child's knowledge of his society, origin, life struggle and achievements help him to understand the society, believe in the society, love and work for the survival f the society and his security. Knowledge of his country gives him a sense of identity and belonging and develops a natural pride in him.

Moral Value and Character Training

Historians believe that history helps in character training by promoting ethical and moral values which include the right value of evil right actions of men, social norms, rules and standard of behavior. The intellectual values of honesty and truth as well as validity in argument and respect for evidence. Historians like Lord Arton Macualy and others believe that armed with such knowledge historians can be better positioned to criticize or produce value judgment on the actions of individuals, institutions, episode and events that influenced suffering of men and women like the action of Adolf Hitler who sent gas jet to millions of Jews during the First World War, exploitation of child labour in industrial Britain, corruption and self enrichment attitude among Nigerian leaders and politicians.

National Heroes and Villains

The children must be made to know national heroes who achieved fame and glory for

the nation and made positive impacts in the society – through their wisdom and courage. Children should also know national villains whose selfishness, corrupt attitude, wickedness, cowardice and greed produced negative and counter productive effects to our national life, the criminal minded people in the position of power or authority who played down on the importance of history so that posterity could be kept in the dark of their ignorance, should be exposed to generation yet unborn through accurate and systematic documentation of the past. Children should be made to know that “history like truth has refused to fix itself in water tight compartment”. and counter productive effects to our national life, the criminal minded people in the position of power or authority who played down on the importance of history so that posterity could be kept in the dark of their ignorance, should be exposed to generation yet unborn through accurate and systematic documentation of the past. Children should be made to know that “history like truth has refused to fix itself in water tight compartment”.

Development of Spirit of Tolerance and Sympathy

The study of history enhances other good characters like tolerance and sympathy for cultures other than one's own especially in heterogeneous society like Nigeria. In studying history, adult minds are broadened, deepened and one realizes and recognizes the right of others to live and freedom to think, speak and dress differently as well as the freedom to hold different religious beliefs and opinions.

History equally helps to develop the spirit of statesmanship that is why Niccolo Machiavelli said that “politicians and statesmen must drink from the wisdom waters of history to know what eminent statesmen before them have done”. Also E.H. Carr an English Historian collaborating the view of Niccolo Machiavelli argued that “you cannot look forward intelligently into the future unless you are prepared to look back alternatively into the past”. These authors argued that “to refuse to study history is to be out of touch with human development and reality. Hence the argument that “the past informs the present which conditions the future”.

Problems of Teaching History in Senior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State in particular and Nigeria in General

A lot of challenging problems have marred the smooth teaching of history as a course of study in educational curriculum in Ebonyi State school system. These problems include the followings:

Inadequate Instructional Materials

There is no gain saying that where there is no instructional material definitely teaching will experience a lapse. In order to embark on the active teaching and talk less in course of his teaching the teacher recurses on instruction materials because instructional materials inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiring and creativity through the exploration of nature and local environment, acts, music, drama and plays.

Eya (1999) notes that instructional materials tend to reveal inaccessible process in material events, things change in time, speed and space. Igwe (2008) declared that instructional materials increases the ability of teachers to use things such as drawing,

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practices. Instructional materials which include audio, visual and audio-visual materials could be the potential materials that would bring a better change instruction in history subject in schools in Ebonyi State Uzoegwu (2001) investigated that availability and uses of instructional materials for effective teaching. Offorma (1994) opined that these materials enhance learning by acquisition, retention and recall very easy, when these materials are effectively used, learners have the privilege of multiple learning and achieve wide range of experiences and teaching becomes easier and enjoyable to the teachers.

Inadequate Government Incentives

When there is no assistance from the government to the teachers, it affects teaching by the teachers hence they cannot discharge their duties effectively. hip award etc. It is a fact not far fetched that finance plays an important role in all aspect of life of human beings, that is to say that without finance human plans and efforts cannot be achieved. Some of these incentives include finance, workshops, seminars, scholarship award etc. It is a fact not far fetched that finance plays an important role in all aspect of life of human beings, that is to say that without finance human plans and efforts cannot be achieved.

Problem of Administering Instructional Materials

The sole aim of education in Nigeria is to produce educated Nigerians who will meet the manpower needs of the country. In realizing this goal, the federal government or the Federal Republic of Nigeria noted the point that some teachers encounter problems in the administration of instructional materials that serves the alternatives of the original ones.

Problems of Selection of Teaching Methods

Teaching method is one of the key elements that enhance the smooth running of teaching. Man (2004) opined the problems a teacher would have or experience is the wrong choice of teaching method. No wonder the encyclopedia of education says that, “the general statement that every teacher can teach effectively is an old fashioned statement”. That a teacher teaches well if he or she can adopt a teaching method that suits the topic he wants to embark on at a particular time.

Problem of Mismanagement of Time when Teaching

Many people said that time is money, yes it is true, this is because many teachers not only in history do not know how to manage or make use of their time appropriately mostly in the classroom. Some due to one condition or the other do not make good use of the time allocated for one particular lesson so as to enable his pupils or students to achieve that stated objectives or purpose. This has been a difficult problem that hinders educational objectives in enhancing teaching and learning in secondary schools because the teacher do not attach importance to the time allocated for him/her in a particular lesson. They mismanage the time and this particular problem has continued to increase and rendered the study of history an uphill task.

The Problems of Students Studying History in Secondary Schools and as well Nigeria in general

This section is primarily concerned and focuses on the problems that history students

in secondary schools in Ebonyi State school system encounter during their academic pursuit.

Omebe (2004) stated that the problem of students is that teaching can never be said to have taken place, until the learners are able to produce that which the teacher has taught them. This could be taken to mean that the students of history are unable to produce what they were taught, in external examinations; it therefore means that learning did not take place at all.

It is so obvious that many students in the secondary school level face a lot of challenges that hinder them from concentrating in learning of history and acquiring the basic knowledge which is required from them by their parents as well as their teachers who taught them. This is because every teacher has it in mind or assumes that by the end of the lesson his pupils/students should be able to give back i.e. re-produce what the teacher has taught them. Therefore this great challenge that faces the history students should be well handled.

Nwankwo F.R. (2006) in his research work, discovered that the most difficult problem students pass through which cannot be solved is when a child/student is not bold enough to ask question in the areas he does not understand during lesson period. He further explained that many students feel shy and cannot stand and ask for a better clarification for the areas they are confused in the class. While some of the wise ones do not go to their friends who are more intelligent than them for a better explanation.

The following are some of the major problems the students encounter during teaching and learning of history in the schools.

Inadequate Materials to Enhance Teaching and learning of History in Secondary Schools

Instructional materials inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature and local environment. It also makes learning easier and enjoyable but when there is inadequate instructional materials in history lesson the students find it difficult to learn.

Time Management

Many teachers in history do not know how to manage or make use of their time appropriately, mostly in the classroom. Some due to one reason or the other do not make good use of the time allocated for one particular lesson so as to enable his pupils or students to achieve that stated objectives or purpose. Because of the mismanagement of time the student find it difficult in the teaching and learning exercise.

Teaching Methods

Teaching method is one of the key elements that enhances the smooth running of teaching but when the teacher does not adopt the teaching method that suits the topic he wants to embark on, it will make the student not to learn fast.

Unqualified Teachers

Many teachers that teach history students in secondary school's level are unqualified teachers, they don't know the concept they teach. Because of that, instead of them impacting the required knowledge to the students they mislead and confuse them.

Attitude of the Government toward History

The government preference to other subjects as core subjects has also in no small measure hindered or created problem to teaching/learning of history in Ebonyi State school system.

Misappropriate use of Teachers' Role in the Classroom

It is very bad to say that most of the teachers teaching history do not know their roles as teachers, this had made majority of them to mislead their students instead of leading them to the true light called knowledge. A good example of this is maltreatment of the students by the teachers such as using physical force on his students like slapping, shaking or turning the child around, asking him to stand away from the rest of the class in a corner facing the wall and other punishments by the teacher might lead the student to abstain himself from the classroom learning because of this obvious punishment here and there.

Inadequate Government Incentives

When there is no assistance from the government to the teachers, it tampers with teaching by the teachers and hence they cannot discharge their duties effectively. Since there is no money to buy the necessary books/materials that will help the students in the teaching and learning of history. Buy the necessary books/materials that will help the students in the teaching and learning of history.

Suggestions to the Problems of Students

The following are the suggestions to the problems students encounter during teaching and learning of history.

- The necessary instructional materials should be provided. These include teaching aids and chalk among others. These will help to enhance teaching and learning as well as facilitate the understanding of the lesson taught especially history.
- When there is no assistance from the government to the teachers, it tampers teaching by the teachers and hence cannot discharge their duties, so government should assist the teachers to discharge their duties effectively by making money available to them to buy the necessary books/materials. It is always a fact fetching that finance plays an important role in all aspect of life of human beings, that is to say that without finance human plans and efforts can not be achieved.
- Teaching method is one of the key elements that enhance the smooth running of teaching, so the teacher should adapt or select the teaching method that suits the topic he wants to embark on at a particular time.
- Time management, teacher should know how to manage or make use of their time appropriately so as to enable their students to achieve that stated objective or purpose.
- The teacher should exhibit the characteristics of a good spirited teacher. These

- include friendliness, sympathy and being preferred or ready to understand students' feelings and problems. These qualities of the teacher will help to inspire the students to do a good job of studying harder.
- The instructional materials to be used must be self explanatory. In other words the instructional materials should be such that as soon as the learners see them will understand without much difficulty.

Repositioning History in our School Curriculum

In repositioning history in our schools curriculum or to get things back on track, the stakeholders including the history of education society of Nigeria, the History Society of Nigeria should be up and doing to get the subject returned to our classrooms as lively as before.

They must write relevant textbooks, redesign the curriculum to accommodate new developments because the study of history guarantees the promotion of integration and development of our great country. What should be done also is making learning of history compulsory for a particular period of time which they could call emergency period because of the lost glories.

This will enable it to be properly restored because this cannot just be achieved under ordinary circumstance by making it optional. Rather, it has to be made compulsory to ensure everyone or all our pupils/students have knowledge of their past.

Summary

This study is directed to examine the problems of teaching and learning of history in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. To ensure the accuracy of the research carried out, few questions were asked. It was discovered that the extent of the availability of professionally qualified teachers in History has a negative impact on students in their examinations.

Further, discoveries made concerning the problem of teaching and learning of History in senior secondary schools include inadequate instructional materials, scarcity of professionally qualified history teachers, lack of in-service training for teachers, inability of choosing appropriate teaching method to enhance learning effectiveness. Hence the need to organize seminars and workshops for teachers and stakeholders of the society to orient them on the proper teaching techniques on methods of history so as to achieve the desired goals in teaching and learning of history among students in Ebonyi State in particular and Nigeria at large.

Conclusion

The study focuses on problems of teaching and learning of history in senior secondary schools. From the result of the findings, the researcher has to conclude that, there are some factors that were found to be responsible for the problems of teaching and learning of history in senior secondary schools. These factors are as follows: lack of instructional materials, that is inefficient use of instructional materials in teaching and learning of history, inadequate government incentives, standard teaching aids, resources rooms are not built in secondary schools. The use of instructional materials in teaching and learning of history can improve students' performance in history and also help the students to be familiar with the history concepts taught. The above

factors should be tackled so that they should be effective teaching and learning of history in senior secondary schools in Ebonyi State school system.

The principals in every secondary school should make sure that the provision of instructional materials is made during the lesson period since it makes students put more interest in the lesson and ease understanding and saves students from theoretical imagination to practical reality. Above all, teaching materials should be standardized for effective teaching and learning of history to take place in secondary schools since it was found that teaching and learning of history play many roles in students life, mostly in senior secondary school level. The study of history has much impact on students as it exposes them to greater level.

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