



Students' Attitude towards History Teaching and Learning in Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti

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Abstract This study examined students' thinking about the teaching and learning of history and also determined the extent to which their perceptions concurred with widely held views on the subjects. The purpose was to know the attitude of students towards the teaching and learning of history in Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. The study employed a descriptive design of the survey type. A total number of 300 students were used as sample for the study by using purposive sampling technique. The instrument "Attitude of Tertiary Institution Students towards History Teaching and Learning" that contained 15 items was used for the study. Data Collected were subjected to statistical analysis of mean and standard deviation. Result of the study showed that students have negative attitude towards teaching and learning of history, that history is boring and irrelevant to contemporary life, many of them say history becomes increasingly cumbersome. Perhaps this perception could be adjusted if students were introduced to history differently at early period. This study therefore has implication for curriculum policy and practice regarding the appropriate time history should be introduced as a subject in the school curriculum. Based on the findings in this study, it was recommended that: Government should ensure that history is placed high considering its roles in the nation building. Parent should be educated on the need to encourage their children to study history as a course and to avoid depriving the child its right from choice of course. Environment should be made conducive for the teaching and learning of history.

Keywords Students Attitude, Tertiary Institution, History Teaching, Learning

Introduction

History is an important subject that should be taught in the schools, it enables students to understand what has happened in the past. Burston [1], assert that history is the story or the evolution of one's environment, its development and the explanation of the present. Elton [2], in his work claims that history is concern with all those human sayings, thought, deeds and suffering which occurred in the past.

Walsh [3] claims that history is a study of the past human beings. He asserts that history begins to be interested in the past when human beings first appeared. In it attitude, motivation and genuine interest are the most important characteristics associated with successful studies [4-5].

Attitude towards history is essential; it denotes interest or feelings towards studying history. Attitude and academic achievement are impact outcome of our education in schools to students' attitudes towards learning history fueled many students' projects for a long time. In the early 1990s, there was a significant decline in history education and towards the turn of the century, the issue of attitude towards an interest in history became an international concern. Recent publication presented a glowing picture regarding students' ignorance in history and decline in enrolment in history [6]. Some students also develop negative attitude towards the subject which may contrast sharply with the way teachers view their discipline. Hallden [7-8] reviewed that there is a negative attitude regarding the usefulness of the history courses for the student future career and a neutral attitude regarding the interest in the course itself.



Today needs to understand yesterday in term of urging people keep their past alive for religion, political, folkloric and other reasons. History has been recorded since the oldest civilization with writing and Sumerian [9]. Safran [10], on the other hand, asserted that history teaching is employed in the direction of three main objectives; history as a heritage, history for moral education, and history for understanding today's world.

Over the course of time pursuits for a standard in regards in history teaching have started regarding what should be taught and how [11].

Many factors contribute to student attitudes towards studying history such as; age, career interest, societal implication of history or cognitive style of students [12] identify the factors that compensably influence the student attitudes to learning history. These factors are;

- i. Teaching approach,
- ii. Educational tools
- iii. Non-formal educational material and activities

Hence, for enhancing attitudes to learning history [6] suggested three key factors that should be considered;

- i. The methods used to present the content (e.g. relevance and historical approach)
- ii. Instructional techniques that are implanted and
- iii. Gender issues

Furthermore, many secondary schools in Ado Ekiti do not begin formal instruction in history until the university level. Social studies are generally taught in secondary school as an alternative to history. This means that students of tertiary institutions who select history as a course for three or four years do not understand key history concept as well as to develop an appreciation to the subject. However, in the absence of adequate formal instructions in history in the early years, some students are likely to develop negative attitudes towards the subject and further find it difficult to appreciate the purpose and relevant of history to contemporary life.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined tertiary institution students' view about the subject of history and the extent to which their perception coincide with popular view on the subject. The study examines students' perception of the history curriculum and the influence of teaching methodology on students' attitudes toward history. It also explores possible external factors that may have been influenced students' thinking about history.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

- i. How do students feel about history teaching?
- ii. Is there any difference between parental influence and attitude of students towards teaching of history?
- iii. Does environment influence students' attitude towards history teaching?

Methodology

This study employed descriptive research design of the survey type. The study examined the tertiary students' attitude towards the teaching and learning of history. The population for the study consisted of 850 students offering history in Ekiti State University of 2016/2017 session as obtained from the office of the registrar and academic planning Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. A total of 300 students' were selected through purposive sampling technique as sample for the study. The instrument used in collecting data for this study was a self-constructed questionnaire that is 15 items. A test-retest method of reliability was used: the instrument was administered on 20 students who were not among the sample for the study on two occasions with an interval of two weeks. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation yielded a coefficient (r) 0.75.

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Results

Research Question 1: How do students feel about history teaching?

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of students' attitude towards teaching of history

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1	I like history as a subject.	120	100	15	65	1.76	3.00	Accepted
2	I see history as the best subject.	10	75	115	100	1.11	1.90	Rejected
3	I don't like combining history with another subject.	10	30	20	250	1.72	2.10	Rejected
4	I see history teaching as a male work.	100	100	45	55	1.45	2.80	Accepted
5	I see history as a difficult subject.	200	70	10	20	1.64	2.50	Accepted
6	History teachers are well respected in the society	100	105	45	50	1.87	3.50	Accepted

Table 1 shows that item 1, 4, 5 and 6 on students' attitude towards history teaching obtained a mean score of 3.0, 2.8, 2.5 and 3.5 as above 2.50 which is the average mean score, item 2 and 3 however, obtained mean score of 1.90 and 2.10 which is below the average mean score. The above shows that respondent rated items, 1, 4, 5 and 6 as agree while item 2 and 3 was rated disagree.

Research Question 2: Is there any difference between parental influence and students' attitude towards teaching of history?

Table 2: Descriptive analysis showing the difference between parental influence and students' attitude towards teaching of history

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Parental influence	300	16.57	3.10	Accepted
Students' Attitude	300	18.92	3.40	

Table 2 showed the mean score and standard deviation of the respondents on parental influence and students' attitude to be 16.57, 18.92, 3.10 and 3.40 respectively. The mean is apparently higher in favour of students' attitude.

Research Question 3: Does environment influence student's attitude towards the teaching of history?

Table 3: Mean rating of Environment towards history teaching profession

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	SD	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1	People feel history teachers are not well recognized.	100	150	20	30	1.49	3.1	Accepted
2	Society feels history teaching job is demanding.	175	95	20	10	1.84	3.4	Accepted
3	The public believe history is all about telling story.	100	150	20	30	1.09	3.1	Accepted
4	Society runs away from history teaching because dating in history is very difficult.	100	80	150	50	1.15	2.8	Accepted
5	General public feels history teaching is all about going to excursion and visiting a museum.	100	105	45	50	1.41	2.8	Accepted



6	People feel history class is dull and boring.	80	150	50	20	1.17	2.8	Accepted
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Table 3 shows that each of the item are on environmental views, obtained a mean scores of 3.1, 3.4, 3.1, 2.8, 2.8 and 2.8 respectively as above 2.50 showing agree. This result implies that environment have negative attitude to history teaching and learning profession.

Discussion

The study ascertained attitudes of students towards history teaching profession. Result of the study shows that thirteen (13) out of the fifteen (15) obtain a mean scores above the criterion of 2.50 (see table 1, 2, and 3). This result could implied that attitude of student towards history profession was negative. This was evidence from the respective scores obtained which is above 2.50. This has contributed to the low standard and control in the educational system.

Hence, history teaching and learning should be professionalized and enjoyed professional prestige. Moreover, history teacher should have passion for their profession while parent should encourage their children/wards to study history as a course. Finally, society should have a change notion towards history teaching learning. History as a course is a way of knowing the past to shape the present.

Conclusion

It is evidence that students, parent and society at large have negative attitude towards history teaching and learning profession. A lot of factors have contributed to the negative attitude of students towards history teaching and learning profession; poor environment, parents, students, qualification of teachers, etc. to improve this, Nigerian Society of Historians, History Educator, Curriculum planner, and the educational sector is to remedy this ugly situation recorded in the school system.

The maxim that no educational sector can rise above the quality of history and that no nation can rise above the level of its history shows that the essential role of history teaching and learning is very vital to national development.

Recommendations

Based on the finding in this study, it was recommended that:

1. Government should ensure that history is placed high considering its roles in the nation building.
2. Parent should be educated on the need to encourage their children to study history as a course and to avoid depriving the child its right from choice of course.
3. Environment should be made conclusive for the teaching and learning of history.

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