

HISTORY CURRICULUM AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This Study Stems From The Motivation To Find Out Whether The Nigerian School History And International Studies Education Curriculum Addresses The Canons Identified As Variables Of National Development. The Study, Therefore, Aimed At Examining The Content Of The Nigerian History Syllabus, As A Curriculum Document, And How It Promotes National Development. It Is A Qualitative And Quantitative Study. Three Research Questions Were Formed To Guide The Study. Senior Secondary School Students In Both Public And Private Secondary Schools Across Plateau Central Were Used To Satisfy The Quantitative Requirements Of The Study. Content Analysis Was Done By Examining The History Syllabus For Qualitative Requirements Too. Both Quantitative And Qualitative Data Established That The History Curriculum Inculcates National Values Which Invariably Promotes Development. It Is, Therefore, Recommended In View Of The Findings That The Compulsory History Education Policy Be Effectively Implemented, History Curriculum Should Be Adjusted, Ict Education Be Incorporated And Qualified History Teachers Employed To Teach History In Our Schools. This Would Help Instill Common Values And Deepen The Understanding Of National Issues In The Learners Which Are Required For Development.

Keywords: History, Education, Curriculum, Syllabus, Development, Underdevelopment, Patriotism.

Introduction

Nigeria Is Passing Through Many Challenges That Hamper Development Ranging From Rising Insecurity, High Rate Of Unemployment, Skyrocketing Inflation, Corruption And Lots More. Failure To Admit This Fact Forfeits Our Chances Of Finding Possible Solutions. Education Is An Important Tool For The Development Of Any Nation. As The Life Wire Of Human Resource Development, It Plays A Crucial Role In Long Term Productivity And Growth At Both Micro And Macro Levels. The Lofty Ideals In Education Are Embedded In The Curriculum. According To Kombe (2016), A Curriculum Is A Standards-based Sequence Of Planned Experiences Where Students Practice And Achieve Proficiency In Content And Applied Learning Skills.

History And International Studies Education Is A Branch Of Knowledge Dealing With Past Events; A Continuous, Systematic Narrative Of Past Events As Relating To A Particular People, Country, Period, Person, Etc. The Importance Of History As Foundation Of Life And Knowledge To National Identity, Civil Responsibility, Patriotism, Nation Building And Overall Human

Development Could Neither Be Over-emphasized Nor Quantified By Any Stretch Of Imagination. History Is Taught In Schools For The Purpose Of Instilling Civic Virtue, Patriotism. Under Dictatorship When Nigeria Was Under The Jackboot Of Military Despotism, Our Military Rulers And The Policy Makers And Their Advisers Found The Study Of History And The Allied Courses Irksome, Revolutionary And Totally Unacceptable. It Sorely Provoked Their Ways And Stroke It Out From The School Curriculum And Syllabi. Ever Since Then, The Nation Has Been Groping In The Dark, Lost Her Bearings, And It Has Become Rudderless.

A Curriculum Is More Or Less A Pictorial Diagram Of What The Society Was In The Past, What It Is Presently Or Now And What It Intends To Be In The Future (barbareev, 2015). According To Sanda And Maigoro (2018), History And International Studies Education Is Meant To Develop A Man To Study The Records Of The Past Achievements, So That The Present Society Can Improve On Them For A Better Future. This Assertion Is Supported By The Researchers, Arguing That Past Experiences Help In Planning For The Future In Order To Obtain Better Results That Will Positively Impact The Society. In Other Words, To Make Any Tenable Mark In Society, Reference Must Be Made To The Past Records. This Notwithstanding Is Largely Dependent On A Successfully Planned Curriculum.

Consequent Upon The Foregoing, The 1969 Curriculum Conference On Curriculum Reform And Development Was Convened In Lagos, Nigeria, Under The Auspices Of The Then Nigerian Educational Research Council (nerc) Now, Nigerian Educational Research And Development Council (nerdc). The Outcome Of The Conference Is The Modification Of The Educational System And Its Old Syllabus In Order To Meet The Demands Of The Nigerian National Aims And Objectives As Enunciated In The National Policy On Education (fnn, 1977, Revised 1981, 1998 And 2020). These Aims Envisaged The Building Of A Free And Democratic Society, A Just And Egalitarian Society, A United, Strong And A Self-reliant Nation, A Great And Dynamic Economy, And A Land Of Bright And Full Opportunities For All Citizens.

Development Is A Process That Creates Growth, Progress, Positive Change Or The Addition Of Physical, Economic, Environmental, Social And Demographic Components. The Purpose Of Development Is A Rise In The Level And Quality Of Life Of The Population, And The Creation Or Expansion Of Local Regional Income And Employment Opportunities, Without Damaging The Resources Of The Environment. Development Is Visible And Useful, Not Necessarily Immediately, And Includes An Aspect Of Quality Change And The Creation Of Conditions For Continuation Of That Change (unesco, 2018).

The Main Intent For The Introduction Of History Was To Encourage The People To Think Of Themselves As Nigerians, And Not As Differing And Unrelated Ethnic Groups. The Long-term Objective Was To Promote National Development After Colonial Rule. Adjepong And Kwarteng (2017) Emphasize That One Of The Strongest Bonds Uniting Large Social Groupings Is The Members' Consciousness Of A Common History, Without Which People Cannot Not Easily Acknowledge The Claims On Their Loyalty Of Large Abstractions. When The Citizens Are Patriotic, They Become Conscious About Their Nation, Ensure National Integration, And Assist In Advancing The Course Of National Development. When People Are Conscious Of Their Nation, They Contribute To Its Survival, Growth And Development. In Fact, Several Past Societies, Including The Kingdoms And Empires Of Pre-colonial Africa, Exploited The Awareness Of Their Common Ancestry And History To Ensure Unity Among The Members Of Their Groups In Their Attempts To Achieve Advanced Political, Economic And Social Development, (adjepong& Kwarteng, 2017). The Consciousness Of Sharing A Common Ancestry And History Made Them Regard Themselves As One People With A Common Destiny. This Historical Consciousness Reduced The Rate Of Rivalries Among The Citizens In Their Efforts To Build And Develop Their Societies. This Provides Us With Evidence To Maintain That Consciousness Of Common Identity And History Removes Some Of The Causes Of Strife Because The People Who Share These Common Features Have Less To Quarrel About, And May Develop A Habit Of Tolerance.

Recent Events In Nigeria Like The Boko Haram, Banditry, Farmer-herder Conflicts, Religious Crisis Etc Have Made The Knowledge Of History Indispensable. There Is The Need To Inculcate In Nigerian Citizens Values That Enable Them To Prioritize National Interest Before Those Of Their Individual Ethnic Groups. Politics Of Competence Is Achieved Over Ethnic Consideration When Citizens Are Conscious Of National Development. Certainly, One Of The Ultimate Goals Of History And International Studies Education Curriculum Is To Develop Citizens And Students Alike Who Display Appropriate National Values And Participate Effectively In Public Discourse For Nation-building. For Instance, The Inculcation Of National Consciousness Topped The National Agenda And Discourse In The United Kingdom Shortly After Terrorist Attacks On London Occurred In July 2005. Gordon Brown, Then Prime Minister, Called For A Revival Of British National History, To Be Achieved In Part By A History Curriculum Centered On The British National Story. *“i Propose That British History Should Be Given Much More Prominence In The Curriculum – Not Just Dates, Places And Names, Nor Just A Set Of Unconnected Facts, But A Narrative That Contains Our History That Will Stimulate In Citizens National Identity And Consciousness”* (brown, 2006, P. 10). For Sanda And Maigoro (2018), History Education Has An Influence On The Quality Of Society And The History Curriculum Has, In Many Instances, Been Used In Search Of A Better World For People. Also, It Is Expected That Through The Teaching Of History, The Nation Would Produce Responsible Citizens Who Are Well Informed About National And International Developmental Paradigms.

Statement Of The Problem

The Nigerian Nation Suffers From Gross Underdevelopment Occasioned By Disunity, Corruption, Rising Insecurity, Unemployment Etc. While There Is Plenty Work Regarding Politics And Media On National Developmental Issues, There Is Not Much Work That Seek To Establish The Relationship Between School Programs And The Development Of Nations. Moreover, Studies That Have Evaluated Nigeria's History Curriculum And Its Promotion Of National Development Are Rare. Therefore, A Study To Test Popular Assumptions About The Power Of The Nigerian School History And International Studies Education Curriculum In Building And Fostering Development In Nigeria's Modern Multicultural Democracy Is Necessary. For This Reason, This Study Examines The Content Of Nigeria's History Syllabus As A Curriculum Document To Determine The Manner In Which It Enhances National Development.

Research Questions

1. What Is The Content Of The History And International Studies Education Curriculum?
2. What Are The Factors Militating Against The Development Of Nigeria?
3. How Does The History And International Studies Education Curriculum Enhances Development In The Nigerian Society?

Methodology

The Methodological Approach Used For This Study Combined Quantitative And Qualitative Paradigms. A Questionnaire Was Developed On Research Question One To Collect Quantitative Data From Senior Secondary School History Students In Ten Private And Ten Public Senior Secondary Schools In Plateau State Central Senatorial District. The Choice Of Senior Secondary School History Students Was Informed By The Belief That These Were Students Who Had Been Exposed To More Content Of The History Syllabus. Therefore, They Were In A Better Position To Provide Appropriate Evaluative Responses. The Responses Are Analyzed Using Mean Scores. Similarly, The Formula For Computing Mean Score Is Given Below:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} \text{ for Ungrouped Data.}$$

Where: $\bar{X}$ = Mean Score

$\sum$ = Sum Of Individual Observations

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{\sum f}$$

N = Number Of Observation

Where: X = Mean Score

$\sum X$ = Sum Of Individual Observation And Their Corresponding Frequencies

$\sum f$ = Sum Of All Frequencies

Secondly, A Qualitative Interpretive Inquiry That Uses Content Analysis As A Tool To Examine Documents Was Also Employed In The Examination Of The History Syllabus. Qualitative Content Analysis, As Awotunde And Ugodulunwa (2007) Explains, Is An “approach That Emphasizes The Role Of The Investigator In The Construction Of The Meaning Of Texts.” When Used To Analyse Documents, It Allows The Researcher(s) To Construct Categories Or Themes Out Of The Data, Which Can Then Be Interpreted In The Light Of The Research Objective.

In The View Of The Above, The Nigerian History Syllabus Was Considered Critical And Adequate For The Analysis Of What It Was That The History Curriculum Wanted The Students In The Country To Think About, Be Aware Of, And Be Contributing To. With The Content Analysis, The Themes That The Data Lent Itself To Were Developed And Examined To Identify The Symbolic Meanings Of How The Syllabus Contained Contents That Propelled Development. The Collection Of Quantitative Data Allowed Frequencies And Percentages To Be Determined, Which Gave Direction To The Results.

Table 1. Analyses Frequency Of Responses And Calculated Mean On The Factors Militating Against The Development Of Nigeria.

S/N	QUESTION	S/A	A	D	S/D	SCORE	MEAN
1	Low investment in Education	111	52	17	20	200	3.27
		444	156	34	20	654	
2	Political instability	68	79	34	19	200	2.98
		272	237	68	19	596	
3	Rising insecurity	156	33	6	5	200	3.7
		624	99	12	5	740	
4	Bad Leadership	144	27	10	19	200	3.48
		576	81	20	19	696	
5	Overdependence on imports	111	40	11	34	200	3.1
		444	120	22	34	620	
6	Low Investment in the Agricultural and industrial sector	63	56	50	31	200	2.76
		252	168	100	31	551	
7	Corruption	158	21	8	23	734	3.67
		632	63	16	23		
8	A mono economy with overdependence on oil	55	69	44	32	200	2.71
		220	207	88	32	547	
9	Inefficiency in policy implementation and project supervision	70	65	31	34	200	2.53
		280	130	62	34	506	

The Analyses On The Table Above Were Intended To Find Out The Factors Militating Against The Development Of Nigeria. The Results Shows That Low Investment In Education, Political Instability, Rising Insecurity, Bad Leadership With Mean Scores Of 3.27, 2.98, 3.7 And 3.34 Are Factors Affecting The Development Of Nigeria.

Similarly, Findings In Respect Of Items 5, 6, 7, 8, And 9 Also Indicates That Over Dependence On Imports, Low Investment In The Agricultural And Industrial Sectors, Corruption, A Mono Economy With Over Dependence On Oil And Inefficiency In Policy Implementation And Project Supervision A Major Factors Militating Against The Development Of Nigeria. These Assertions Are Supported By The Various Mean Scores Of 3.1, 3.76, 3.67, 2.71 And 2.53 From Table 1 Above. Hence, From The Above, It Is Obvious That Several Factors, Including But Not Only Low Investment In Education, Corruption, Over Dependence On Imports, Underdeveloped Industrial And Agricultural Sectors, Rising Insecurity, Political Instability, A Mono Economy With Over Dependence On Oil, Bad Leadership And Non Implementation Of Policies Are Responsible For The Underdevelopment Of Nigeria.

Table 2. Analyses Of Questionnaire On The Role Of The History And International Studies Education Curriculum In The Development Of Nigeria

S/N	QUESTION	S/A	A	D	S/D	SCORE	MEAN
	The history curriculum teaches origin and peopling of Nigeria	144 576	41 123	6 12	9 9	200 720	3.6
	The Nigerian history curriculum inculcates great lessons from heroes and heroines	179 716	7 21	2 4	12 12	200 753	3.77
	The content of the History syllables covers inter -group relations in Nigeria, Africa and the wider world	77 308	79 237	35 70	16 16	200 631	3.16
	The economic History of Nigeria is effectively captured in the curriculum	104 416	75 225	8 16	13 13	200 684	3.42
	The Nigerian school History curriculum instills national consciousness	108 432	87 261	2 4	3 3	200 700	3.5
	The content of the History curriculum is capable of fostering tolerance, unity and peaceful coexistence	111 444	59 177	10 20	20 20	200 661	3.31
	The history subject substantially reflects issues on national identity	99 396	22 66	45 90	34 34	200 586	2.93
	Values for functional citizenship are incorporated in the Nigerian History Education curriculum	75 300	102 306	13 26	20 20	200 652	3.26

The political development of Nigeria is an aspect in the Nigerian History syllabus	144	33	19	14	200	3.68
	576	108	38	14	736	
We acquire knowledge that prepares us for global citizenship through the content of the history curriculum	138	54	2	6	200	3.62
	552	162	4	6	724	
The content of the History curriculum is capable of fostering international relations	138	54	2	6	200	3.62
	552	162	4	6	724	
History Education curriculum promotes Development	177	12	6	5	200	3.81
	708	36	12	5	761	

Findings

The Quantitative Result Of The Study In Respect To Research Question 2 Is Presented In The Table 2 Above. The Result Evolved From The Responses Provided By The Senior Secondary School History Students Randomly Selected From Plateau Central Senatorial District. The Analyses Of The Students' Views On Whether The Nigerian History Syllabus Teaches Origin Of The Nigerian People And Its Heroes And Heroines Shows That The History Education Curriculum Content Captures The Origin And Peopling Of Nigeria And The History Of Nigerian Heroes And Heroines With Mean Scores Of 3.6 And 3.7 That Are Far Above The Criterion Mean Of 2.5.

The Findings On Item 3, 4 And 5 Also Show That The Nigerian History Curriculum Incorporates Inter-group Relations In Nigeria, Africa And The Wider World, Economic History And National Consciousness With Respective Means Of 3.16 And 3.42. Hence, There Is No Doubt That The History Education Curriculum Covers The Stated Content.

Furthermore, The History And International Studies Education Curriculum Fosters Unity, Tolerance, Peaceful Coexistence, National Identity And Instills Values For Functional Citizenship As Portrayed In The Computation Of Item 6, 7 And 8 In Table 1 With Mean Scores Of 3.33, 2.91, And 3.26 Accordingly.

Finally, Findings From The Analyses Of Items 9, 10, 11 And 12 Also Proved That History And International Education Curriculum Imparts Political Awareness, The Right Attitude For Global Citizenship, Promotes International Relations And Enhances Development. This Assertion Has Been Corroborated By The Calculated Mean Scores Of 3.68, 3.62, 3.62 And 3.81.

Discussion

Results From The Calculated Mean In Table One Shows That Many Factors Are Responsible For The Underdevelopment Of Nigeria. The Major Factors As Corroborated By Findings With Mean Scores Above The Criterion Mean Of 2.5 Are Poor Investment In The Education Sector, Non Implementation Of Formulated Policies, Corruption, Bad Leadership, Over Dependence On Imports, A Mono Economy With Over Reliance On Crude Oil, And Rising Insecurity. These Findings However Negates The Postulation Of Rodney (1972) Who Affirmed In A Book "how Europe Underdeveloped Africa" That Africa Was Deliberately Exploited And Underdeveloped By European Colonial Regimes. Rodney Argued That Africa Developed Europe At The Same Rate That

Europe Underdeveloped Africa. The Findings However, Have Been Corroborated By Aloko (2018) Who Posited That Bad Leadership, Corruption, Insecurity And Other Related Factors Are Responsible For The Underdevelopment Of Nigeria.

Similarly, From The Interpretation Of The Data Analyzed In Table 2, Majority Of The Respondents Agreed That The History And International Studies Education Curriculum Of Nigeria Inculcates Learning Experiences For Sensitizing Citizens To Promote National Development . It Is, Therefore, Inferred From The Data That Learners Were Exposed To Local, Regional, National And International Issues In The History And International Studies Classroom. From The Respondents' Viewpoint, The Research Found That Enormous Learning Experience Is Real When We Teach Children About Local, Regional, National And International Issues In The History Curriculum. Perhaps, The Inclusion Of National Consciousness Related Topics In The History And International Studies Education Curriculum Is To Inform Students Of The Existence Of Nationhood. Specifically, The Finding Is Suggestive That Topics Dealing With National Development Inculcate Into Students The Appropriate National Values That Enable Students To Participate Effectively In Public Discourses And Contribute To The Community And Nation-building.

A Content Analysis Of The History Syllabus Was Also Carried Out. The Analysis Examined The Topics In The Syllabus, And How These Topics Addressed National Development Issues. There Are Three Broad Categories Of Topics In The Nigerian History And International Studies Education Curriculum. These Include Local And Regional History, National History And International Or Global History And International Relations. Topics Such As The Origin And Peopling Of Nigeria, Heroes And Heroines, Local Craft And Traditional Occupations, Inter-group Relations, The Industrial Revolution, The Trans Saharan Trade, Othman Danfodio Jihad, Scramble And Partition Of Africa, Africa And The Wider World, Colonialism, The Trans-atlantic Slave Trade, The Rise Of Nigerian/african Nationalism, The Nigerian Independence, Post-colonial Developments In Nigeria, Neo Colonialism, International Organizations Such As The African Union, Ecowas, United Nations, Nato, The European Union, Etc Are Quite Adequate In Preparing History And International Studies Education Students For The National And Global Work Environment Leading To Development.

These Topics Contain Specific Themes On The Development Of Nigeria And Her Struggles For Independence. They Also Describe The Various Upheavals That Occurred After Independence And The Current Democratic Dispensation. The Effects Of These Various Political Events That Characterized The Period Are Also Noted. Teaching These Topics, Most Of The Elements Of National Development Are Brought To Bear. In Studying These Topics, Students Are Encouraged To Engage In Extensive Reading That Relate To Peaceful Co-existence Among Ethnic Groups, Common Identity And Other Moral Values. These Topics Could Be Used To Enhance National Development By Encouraging, For Example, Hard Work, Moral Values, Tolerance And Common Identity. Discussion Of Findings In Table 2 Showed That The Senior Secondary School History Education Curriculum Of Nigeria Explicitly And Implicitly Creates Learning Experiences That Are Appropriate For Inculcating National Consciousness And Development Into Students. In Studying History, Students Are Equipped With Requisite Information, Knowledge And Skills That Are Framed Around The Virtues Of Hard Work, Patriotism, Nationalism And Unity. The Findings Agree With Sanda And Maigoro (2018), Longkat (2018) Who Postulated That History Curriculum Creates Learning Experiences On National Development. The Content Of Nigerian History Curriculum Helps Learners In The Discharge Of Their National Duties Towards National Development. Positioning Students To Contribute To Nation Building Is Part Of The Core Objectives Of Nigerian School History And International Studies Education Curriculum(sanda And Maigoro, 2017). The Argument And Evidences Above, Therefore, Indicates That Many Nations Use History To Achieve Specific National Developmental Goals. For Instance, The Fostering Of National Unity For A Common National Development Agenda Is Achievable Through The Study Of History. Indeed, When People Study History They Recognize Their Common Bonds Within A Nation (or Even As Belonging To The Global Human Community), And Not See Themselves As Significantly Different

From Other Families, Tribes, Religions Or Different From The Nation. That Is, They All Consider Themselves As Citizens Of The Nation To Which They Belong. Arguably, When Learners Are Exposed To Different Cultures As Occasioned In A Topic Like The 'the Origin And Peopling Of Nigeria', It Makes Way For Cultural Accommodation, High Level Of Tolerance, Reduction In Religious Intolerance And Conflicts Of Various Magnitudes. This Observation Is Tied To Clark's (2009) Call For The National Story That Seeks To Propagate A Particular Narrative That Re-images The Nation In A Positive Light. In Her View, There Is A Popular Understanding That History Education Comprises The Essential Facts About The Nation, And Should Thus Play A Positive And Uplifting Role In National Development. The Content Of The Nigerian History And International Studies Education Curriculum Will Help Them To Be Nationally Conscious And Achieve A State Of Mind That Allows Them To Realize Their Own Objectives In Time, As Players In A Continuous Process Of Nation Building And Development.

Therefore, It Could Be Argued That The Identified Topics In The Nigerian School History Syllabus Provide A Sample Of National Development Themes That Range From Continental Awareness, Through National Identity To Largely Peaceful Social And Political Co-existence In The Nation And On The Continent Of Africa. This Observation Provides An Overview Of The Role Of History Curriculum In Instilling The Virtues Of Hard Work In A Way That Affects Social And Political Attitudes Within The Varied Ethnic Groupings And Political Systems That Have, Within Living Memory, Encountered Different Models Of Social And Political Crises Particularly In Nigeria, And Generally In Africa. In This Regard, The History And International Studies Education Curriculum Could Be Seen As Providing An Outlook That Widens The Circle Of Peoples' Acquaintances, Provides Learning Content That Seeks To Cultivate Tolerance, National Identity, Bond And Unity Which Are The Nucleus Of True Development. Therefore, The Findings From This Research Make A Strong Case That The Nigerian History And International Studies Education Curriculum Undoubtedly Promotes Development By Instilling Requisite Knowledge, Skills, Values And Attitudes That Are Much Desired For Ending The Web Of The Multiple Development Problematic Of Nigeria.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, The Nigerian Society Has Experienced Series Of Developmental Changes Over The Years, And One Of The Main Influences Of These Changes Has Been The Education Curriculum That Is Taught In Schools. In Particular, The Study Of History And International Studies Education Has A Profound Impact On The Development Of Nigerian Society. It Has Shaped And Affected The Nigerian Society In Regards To National Identity, Economic Opportunities And Civil Discourse. The History And International Studies Education Curriculum Has Been An Important Element In The Development Of Nigeria. The Nigerian National Identity Is Shaped By Its Rich History. History And International Studies Education Curriculum Has Played An Integral Role To Foster This Identity. Through Studying History And International Studies Education, Nigerian Students Are Provided With An Understanding Of Nigerian Cultural Roots, Diversity Of Its People And An Insight Into The Major Events That Have Shaped The Nation.

Recommendations

In View Of The Findings Of This Research, The Following Recommendations Are Made:

1. The Compulsory History Education Policy Should Be Effectively Implemented
2. There Is Need For Content Adjustment Of The History And International Studies Education Curriculum To Incorporate Current Issues And Information Technology Education
3. Teachers Are The Drivers Of Education Programs. Hence, There Is Every Need To Recruit Well Trained History And International Studies Education Teachers For Proper Transmission Of The Content Of The Curriculum

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