International Journal of Innovative Education Research 14(3):428-434, July-Sept, 2026

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DOI:10.5281/zenodo.22200459

A Review Of The Teaching And Learning Of History In Dutsin-Ma Education Zone, Katsina State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the teaching and learning of History in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma Education Zone, Katsina State, Nigeria, focusing on the adequacy of qualified teachers, instructional resources, students' attitudes, institutional and government support, and strategies for improvement. A mixed-methods descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised 13 principals, 42 History teachers, and approximately 2,500 senior secondary students offering History. A purposive sample of 48 respondents (14 teachers/principals, 24 students, and 10 community members) across six secondary schools provided data through structured questionnaires, interviews, and observation, analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and means. The findings revealed that inadequate qualified teachers, insufficient instructional materials, limited facilities, and weak institutional and government support were major constraints on effective History education. Only 28.6% of teacher/principal respondents agreed that qualified History teachers were adequate, while 92.9% reported the absence of dedicated History rooms or resource centres. Despite these constraints, students showed strongly positive attitudes: 100% reported enjoying History lessons and 91.7% agreed that History is important for understanding Nigerian culture. Among community respondents, 90.0% rejected the perception that History is merely storytelling, although only 30.0% actively encouraged their children to study the subject. Government provision of textbooks and resources was rated lowest, with only 14.3% agreement. The study concludes that although History remains relevant and positively perceived by students, its effective delivery is constrained by teacher shortages, inadequate resources, and weak institutional support, and recommends increased investment, teacher recruitment and professional development, provision of instructional materials, improved teacher welfare, and community sensitization.

Keywords: History education, teaching and learning, secondary education, Katsina State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental instrument for social, economic, and political development (Fafunwa, 1974; UNESCO, 2015). It is the continuous process through which knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes are transmitted from one generation to another to prepare individuals for useful membership of society. For any teaching-learning process to succeed there must be qualified teachers, motivated learners, relevant content, and a conducive learning environment (Adedeji, 2015); yet the Nigerian educational system continues to face inadequate staffing, poor instructional facilities, insufficient funding, and curriculum-related challenges (Adeyemi, 2018; Ogunleye, 2019).

History occupies a unique position within the school curriculum because it studies past human experience and societal development, enabling societies to understand their origins, preserve cultural heritage, and make informed decisions for the future (Carr, 1961; Collingwood, 1946). Colonial education emphasized European history while neglecting African experience; after independence,

scholars such as Dike and Ajayi sought to reconstruct African history and preserve indigenous heritage, and History remained compulsory in Nigerian schools until curriculum reforms removed it as a distinct subject from the 2009/2010 session (National Policy on Education, 2013). This removal was widely criticized for undermining national identity (Mohammed, 2010; Alao, 2019), and the Federal Government subsequently approved its reintroduction from the 2018/2019 session (Adamu, 2017; Janaidu, 2019).

Despite this renewed attention, History education still faces obstacles in Nigerian secondary schools. This study therefore examines the status, challenges, and prospects of teaching and learning History in Dutsin-Ma Education Zone, Katsina State.

Statement of the Research Problem

The teaching and learning of History in Nigerian schools has experienced persistent challenges, including inadequate staffing, insufficient instructional resources, limited facilities, and a perceived societal preference for science- and technology-related subjects (Olutaye, 2015; Shehu, 2003). Despite the reintroduction of History into the curriculum, questions remain regarding the availability of qualified teachers, instructional resources, student participation, and institutional support for its effective implementation. In Dutsin-Ma Education Zone, limited recent empirical evidence documents the extent to which these challenges affect History education, making it difficult for education managers to identify priority interventions. This study therefore assesses the teaching and learning of History in selected secondary schools in the zone, with attention to staffing, resources, perceptions, performance-related factors, and improvement strategies.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. assess the adequacy of History teachers, instructional resources, and facilities in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma Education Zone;
2. examine students', teachers', and community members' perceptions of the teaching and learning of History;
3. identify factors perceived to influence students' performance in History;
4. examine the level of institutional and government support for History teaching and learning; and
5. identify strategies for improving the teaching and learning of History in the study area.

Research Questions

1. What is the adequacy of History teachers, instructional resources, and learning facilities in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma Education Zone?
2. What are the perceptions and attitudes of students, teachers, and community members toward the teaching and learning of History?
3. What factors are perceived to influence students' performance in History?
4. What is the level of institutional and government support for the teaching and learning of History in the study area?
5. What strategies can improve the teaching and learning of History in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma Education Zone?

Significance of the Study

This study offers policymakers empirical evidence on the implementation challenges of the reintroduced History curriculum; provides school administrators with insight into resource allocation and teacher deployment; identifies professional-development needs for teachers; clarifies for students and parents the value of History education for cultural identity and citizenship; and contributes to the limited body of zone-specific empirical research, establishing a baseline for future monitoring, evaluation, and curriculum development.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Education is a continuous process of developing individuals intellectually, morally, socially, and economically (Fafunwa, 1974), introduced formally in Nigeria by Christian missionaries (Mohammed, 2010) and subsequently reformed to promote national unity and self-reliance (National Policy on Education, 2013). History has been defined as the systematic study of past events and human experience, concerned with recording and explaining human development across political,

social, economic, and cultural dimensions (Jamilu, 2001). Carr (1961) described history as a continuous interaction between the historian and the facts, while Collingwood (1946) emphasized it as the study of human thought and action in the past; in the African context, Dike (1956) and Ajayi (1969) showed how history could be used to reconstruct African identity and challenge colonial narratives. History education refers to the teaching and learning of historical knowledge, skills, and values in formal settings (Amadioha, 2019), with objectives that include promoting good citizenship and national consciousness (National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories. Social Reconstructionism (Counts, 1932) holds that education should be used to solve social problems and reconstruct society; applied to History, it suggests that historical knowledge enables societies to understand their problems, develop critical consciousness, and become active citizens (Banks, 2001). It is relevant here because it frames the importance attached to History education and the institutional conditions required for its effective teaching. Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964) holds that education enhances productive capacity and contributes to economic development; from this view, History education builds critical thinking, cultural awareness, and civic competence that constitute human capital, providing a basis for treating investment in teachers and instructional materials as core components of educational quality.

Challenges Facing History Education in Nigeria

Several studies identify the shortage of qualified History teachers as a major challenge, attributed to low programme enrolment, brain drain to better-paying professions, poor working conditions, and inadequate training (Shehu, 2003; Olutaye, 2015; Adedeji, 2015). Related studies report that many schools lack basic instructional materials, including textbooks, maps, charts, and dedicated History rooms (Shehu, 2001; Mohammed, 2003), while government attention and funding favour science and technology over the humanities (Amadioha, 2019; Adedeji, 2015). Many parents also perceive History as less valuable than science and technical subjects, owing to perceived limited employment prospects (Olutaye, 2015), and students' weak foundation in English and History further constrains reading comprehension, essay writing, and historical interpretation (Shehu, 2003; Mohammed, 2003).

Empirical Review

Shehu (2003), studying Sokoto State, found severe shortages of History teachers—only 30% of schools had qualified staff—alongside inadequate materials and poor student performance. Mohammed (2003), investigating Dutsin-Ma Education Zone before the 2018 curriculum reintroduction, similarly found critical teacher shortages, insufficient materials and facilities, and poor performance linked to weak foundational knowledge in English and History; the present study differs by examining the zone's current status following reintroduction. Olutaye (2015), across several states, found teacher quality and instructional materials to be the strongest predictors of performance, while Amadioha (2019) found that although schools were implementing the reintroduced curriculum, resource and capacity challenges persisted.

Gap in the Literature

Most existing studies are national or regional in scope, with limited attention to specific zones such as Dutsin-Ma, and there is little recent empirical data on History education since the 2018 reintroduction. This study addresses that gap by providing current, zone-specific evidence.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods descriptive design combining questionnaire surveys, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation. Descriptive surveys are suited to collecting and analyzing data on existing conditions, practices, and perceptions without manipulating variables (Nworgu, 1991; Best & Khan, 2014).

Population and Sample

The population comprised 13 principals, 42 History teachers, and approximately 2,500 senior secondary students offering History, with community members included as supplementary stakeholders. Six schools were purposively selected — Government Rural Boarding Secondary School, Kurfi; Government Day Secondary School, Darawa; Government Day Secondary School, Yantumaki; Government Day Pilot Secondary School, Dutsin-Ma; Government Girls Arabic Secondary School, Dutsin-Ma; and Government Day Pilot Secondary School, Safana — yielding a sample of 48 respondents: 14 teachers/principals, 24 students, and 10 community members.

Instrumentation, Validation, and Analysis

Three structured questionnaires, complemented by interviews and direct classroom observation, were administered to teachers/administrators, students, and community members. Face and content validity were established by three experts in History Education and Research Methods at Isa Kaita College of Education, whose feedback informed the final instruments. A pilot test at Government Secondary School, Kankara (outside the sample), using the test–retest method yielded reliability coefficients of 0.82 (teacher questionnaire) and 0.79 (student questionnaire). Data were coded and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26.0; frequencies and percentages summarized categorical responses, and means summarized three-point items coded Agree = 3, Undecided = 2, Disagree = 1, interpreted as positive/adequate (2.34–3.00), moderate (1.67–2.33), and negative/inadequate (1.00–1.66).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: Adequacy of Teachers, Resources, and Facilities

Table 1. *Adequacy of History Teachers, Instructional Resources and Facilities (N = 14)*

Item	Agree f(%)	Disagree f(%)	Undecided f(%)	Mean	Interpretation
Adequate qualified History teachers	4 (28.6)	9 (64.3)	1 (7.1)	1.64	Inadequate
Sufficient History textbooks	6 (42.9)	8 (57.1)	0 (0.0)	1.86	Moderate
Dedicated History room/resource centre	0 (0.0)	13 (92.9)	1 (7.1)	1.07	Inadequate
Adequate teaching aids (maps/charts)	3 (21.4)	10 (71.4)	1 (7.1)	1.50	Inadequate
Appropriate student-teacher ratio	4 (28.6)	9 (64.3)	1 (7.1)	1.64	Inadequate
Adequate number of History students	7 (50.0)	6 (42.9)	1 (7.1)	2.07	Moderate

Note. f = frequency; N = 14 teacher/principal respondents.

Shortages of qualified teachers, instructional materials, and facilities remain serious problems: only 28.6% of respondents agreed that qualified History teachers were adequate (M = 1.64), and 92.9% reported no dedicated History room or resource centre (M = 1.07). Teaching aids were similarly rated inadequate (71.4% disagreement). Assessment of student numbers was comparatively moderate (M = 2.07), indicating that student participation is more encouraging than the availability of teachers, aids, and facilities.

Research Question Two: Perceptions and Attitudes

Table 2. *Attitudes and Perceptions Toward History Education*

Group	Statement	Agree f(%)	Disagree f(%)	Mean	Interpretation
Teachers/Principals	History is given adequate curriculum importance	9 (64.3)	5 (35.7)	2.29	Moderate/Positive
Teachers/Principals	Students show interest in History lessons	11 (78.6)	3 (21.4)	2.57	Positive
Students (N=24)	I enjoy History lessons	24 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	3.00	Very Positive
Students (N=24)	History aids understanding of Nigerian culture	22 (91.7)	2 (8.3)	2.83	Very Positive
Community (N=10)	History is merely storytelling	0 (0.0)	9 (90.0)	1.10	Rejected
Community (N=10)	I encourage my children to study History	3 (30.0)	7 (70.0)	1.60	Low

Note. N = 14 for teacher/principal items unless otherwise indicated.

Perceptions of History were broadly positive: 64.3% of teachers/principals agreed the subject receives adequate curricular importance, and 78.6% observed students' interest in lessons. All 24 student respondents (M = 3.00) reported enjoying History, and 91.7% agreed it is important for understanding Nigerian culture. Among community members, 90.0% rejected the view that History is merely storytelling, yet only 30.0% actively encouraged their children to study it, suggesting that perceived career and economic value may shape community engagement more than intrinsic appreciation.

Research Question Three: Factors Affecting Performance

Table 3. *Factors Affecting Students' Performance in History*

Factor	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Poor background in English language	2.93	1	Major factor
Inadequate qualified History teachers	2.86	2	Major factor
Insufficient instructional materials	2.79	3	Major factor
Lack of parental encouragement	2.71	4	Major factor
Students' poor foundational knowledge in History	2.71	4	Major factor
Overcrowded classrooms	2.64	6	Major factor

Poor English-language background ranked highest (M = 2.93), followed by inadequate qualified teachers (M = 2.86) and insufficient instructional materials (M = 2.79), indicating that performance is shaped by a combination of linguistic, teacher-related, instructional, parental, and classroom factors.

Research Question Four: Institutional and Government Support

Table 4. *Institutional and Government Support for History Education (N = 14)*

Statement	Agree f(%)	Disagree f(%)	Mean	Interpretation
School provides adequate instructional materials	3 (21.4)	10 (71.4)	1.50	Low
School provides adequate time for History lessons	8 (57.1)	5 (35.7)	2.21	Moderate
Government provides adequate textbooks/resources	2 (14.3)	11 (78.6)	1.36	Low
Teachers receive adequate professional development	4 (28.6)	9 (64.3)	1.64	Low
Government provides adequate incentives/welfare	3 (21.4)	10 (71.4)	1.50	Low
Administrators provide adequate support	7 (50.0)	6 (42.9)	2.07	Moderate

Institutional and government support was generally low: only 21.4% of respondents felt their schools received adequate instructional materials, and government provision of textbooks and resources was rated lowest (M = 1.36; 78.6% disagreement). Professional-development opportunities (28.6% agreement) and incentives/welfare (21.4% agreement) were similarly rated low.

Research Question Five: Strategies for Improvement

Table 5. *Strategies for Improving History Teaching and Learning*

Strategy	Group	Agree f(%)	Mean	Interpretation
Improved instructional materials and teacher welfare	Teachers/Principals	14 (100.0)	3.00	Strongly supported
Recruitment of additional History teachers	Teachers/Principals	12 (85.7)	2.86	Strongly supported
Provision of more instructional materials	Students	24 (100.0)	3.00	Strongly supported

Stakeholder support for intervention was strong and convergent: all teacher/principal and student respondents endorsed improved instructional materials, teacher welfare, and additional resources, while 85.7% supported recruitment of additional teachers — reinforcing inadequate instructional resources and staffing as priority concerns.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings show that History education in Dutsin-Ma Education Zone is constrained primarily by teacher shortages, inadequate instructional materials, and weak institutional and government support, even as students display strong interest in the subject and recognize its cultural value. This pattern supports both theoretical perspectives underpinning the study: consistent with Social Reconstructionism, students' positive attitudes and recognition of History's role in cultural understanding affirm its potential to build national consciousness and responsible citizenship, though inadequate teachers and resources constrain schools from realizing this potential fully. Consistent with Human Capital Theory, the shortages of qualified teachers and weak professional development indicate insufficient investment in the conditions needed for quality History instruction, with implications for the analytical, interpretive, and civic competencies the subject is meant to build. The gap between community recognition of History's value (90.0% rejecting the storytelling stereotype) and active encouragement of children to study it (only 30.0%) further suggests that perceptions of the subject's economic and career value—not material investment alone—must be addressed if reform gains are to be sustained.

CONCLUSION

History education remains relevant and positively regarded by students in the selected secondary schools of Dutsin-Ma Education Zone: interest in lessons is high, and students appreciate its value for understanding Nigerian culture. Nonetheless, its effective delivery is hampered by shortages of qualified teachers, inadequate instructional materials and facilities, and students' weak foundational knowledge and English-language proficiency. Community recognition of History's value is not always matched by active encouragement of children to study it, and institutional and government support—particularly for instructional resources and teacher professional development and welfare—remains weak. Coordinated action among government, school administrators, teachers, parents, and the community is therefore needed to improve History education in the zone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. government recruit and deploy additional qualified History teachers to schools facing staffing shortages;
2. schools be provided with adequate textbooks, maps, charts, documentary materials, and other instructional resources;
3. History resource centres be established or developed, particularly in schools with sufficient enrolment;
4. teachers receive regular professional development in learner-centred approaches, historical inquiry, source analysis, and educational technology;
5. teachers employ varied instructional methods — discussion, debate, storytelling, source analysis, project work, and excursions — rather than relying on memorization;
6. students' foundational literacy, particularly reading comprehension and written expression, be strengthened;
7. parents and community members be sensitized on the importance of History for citizenship, cultural understanding, and national development;
8. teacher welfare be improved through professional-development opportunities, supportive working conditions, and incentives;
9. school administrators monitor implementation and ensure adequate instructional time and resources; and
10. future studies use larger samples and students' actual examination results to more rigorously investigate the relationship between teaching conditions and academic achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors acknowledge the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for financial assistance through the Institution-Based Research Grant awarded to Isa Kaita College of Education, Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria (Ref. TETF/DR&D/CE/COE/KATSINA/IBR/2026/VOL.I).

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