

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF HISTORY EDUCATION GAP ON NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OBOWU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF IMO STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study investigated the Perceived Impact of History Education Gap on Nigeria's Democracy among Secondary School Students in Obowu Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. It employed mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and interfaced with Toxic Leadership theoretical framework. A total of 250 Senior Secondary School (S.S.S.11) students were sampled for the study, while questionnaire were used for data collection. The 2023 elections witnessed “grab it, snatch it and run with it,” capped with the judiciary filching mandates. The electronic bivass meant to improve on electoral transparency and accountability was hunched into fraud aiding device. Consequent upon this blunder, we take turns at awful governance. Currently, we howl Endbadgovernance protest, tagged “hardship/hunger protest, a national protest expressing citizens' grievances: uncontrolled insecurity, economic hardship occasioned by ill-planned fuel subsidy removal, hunger, bad governance, undue government borrowing and expenditure, inflation and corruption. History, a universally recognised major source for national democracy awareness, was erased from the curriculum from 2009 to 2022. This thirteen year solemn gap in history education indicated a possibility of murdering democracy. Based on the findings the study recommends that; history education should be made compulsory in every school. Adequate time should be allocated to history on the school time tables, as well as well-equipped history resource rooms, archives, museum, historical sites and modern libraries should be made available in order to assist research and investigations.

Keywords: Impact, Historical Education, Gap, Democacide.

Introduction

Nigeria's democracy is metaphorically suffering *democracide* (murdering of democracy) presently. The 1960 independence placed Nigeria as the fourth (4th) biggest nation in the democracy world, (Cheta, 2015). Sadly, gloomy circumstances in a quick sequence wrecked her popular democracy itinerary. Six years after in 1966, some eager military boys sacked the government of Alhaji Abubarka Tafawa Balewa in a coup de tat. A consequential civil war busted in 1967 and lasted for over thirty months (1967-1970). In 1979, democracy course was restored under President Shehu Shagari, but four years on in 1983, it was again disconcerted through another military coup led by General

Muhammadu Buhari.. Resolute to keep on democracy course, Nigeria made another homecoming to democracy in 1999 after a whooping period of thirty-three years of autocratic military rule.

At the moment, Nigeria has managed to keep its feet on democratic track for almost three decades, but not without a gamut of clueless and unaccountable leaderships. The journey has been challenged mainly by bad administrative dispositions, democratic inexperience, corrupt gerontocratic and clueless leadership, squandering, and sit tight syndrome, and above all, history, which is the major machinery for democratic enlightenment and acculturation was

neglected and eschewed from schools curriculum for over a decade. This has worsened the challenges to good democratic governance as well as participation by citizens of the country. These resulted in many essential and important democratic lessons unlearned by Nigerians. These have translated into committing of blunders in the name of democracy.

The abandonment of historical education by the Federal Government of Nigeria's in primary and post primary schools for over a decade (2009-2022) can be gravely implicit for the loss of these democracy catalysts. History as a collective memory of the past of a nation would have naturally brought to the fore the salient and significant past of democratic events which could be utilized for contemporary national democratic updates and development (Nkwocha, 2012). Really this edict widened a generational gap on students' democratic mental development as it tends to ruin the lessons derived from national heroes like Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Dr.Nnammdi Azikiwe, Sir. Tafawa Balewa and Hebert Macaulay among others, which inspire nationalistic spirit and patriotic zeal, and impact meaningfully on democratic growth.

The study investigated the perceived impact of history education Gap (i.e., the removal of history from the national curriculum from 2009-2022) on Nigeria's Democracy. This is with the view to finding pathway to the revival of democratic standard in Nigeria. It reviewed the Nigeria's poor democracy practices which may be largely attributed to our refusal to learn from past historical events. It is not enough to restore history in the curriculum, but history should be made compulsory for all students from primary to tertiary and adequate facilities should be made available for research in historical studies.

Statement of the Problem

This research investigates the sudden relapse in national democratic practices, especially since the period of relegating history to the background and eventual expulsion from the national schools' curriculum. Culture has established school as the basic instrument for producing the kind of

citizens the society desires; however, eschewing history, which is the major machinery for realizing this goal by Nigeria's educational policy for over a decade, tends to frustrate this objective. According to Nkwocha and Ohajanwa, (2018), Nigeria has continued to grapple with socioeconomic factors such as high inflation, widespread corruption and poor infrastructure; rising inflation, growing insecurity, erratic but, expensive electricity and internet accesses, yet nobody seems to be learning from these past checkered historical events. More than a century after amalgamation and over half a century after the Nigeria - Biafra civil war, the same basic acrimonies behind the Nigeria-Biafra conflict are still festering on precariously. Biafra has transformed into MASSOB and IPOB, demanding a referendum; Arewa youths are giving out quit notices; Middle Belts are issuing restraint orders, while Niger Delta youths are making convoluted political protective statements. Boko Haram and Herdsmen are killing more Nigerians than COVID-19. Many stakeholders, through symposia, public lectures print and electronic media advocate for devolution of constitutional powers. National Assembly (NASS) recommends a review and adoption of resolutions of past constituted National Conferences. Upon all these, no serious attention is being given to history education in Nigeria. There is a perceived impact of this action and the possible consequent effect on our democracy and the researchers warn that if history education is not given a central attention as a core and compulsory general study course in all our schools, with sustainable resources for research, the Nigerian nation may finally brake into total anarchy.

Objectives of the Study

This study is worried over the perceived impact of the gap of thirteen years of suspension of history education from the national curriculum and the eminent effect of a *democracide* in Nigeria. It broadly charts a way forward to putting the Nigeria's democracy back on track.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which the gap in historical education has affected

- democratic practices of students in Nigeria?
2. Identify how making history a compulsory general study subject interface with effective use of historical instructional materials can improve democratic practices of students in Nigeria
 3. Identify ways to maintain effective and continuous teaching of history in our schools to restore standard democratic practices in Nigeria through history education

Research questions

1. How has the gap in historical education affected democratic practices of students in Nigeria?
2. Will making history a compulsory general study subject interface with effective use of historical instructional materials improve democratic practices of students in Nigeria?
3. What can be done to maintain effective and continuous teaching of history in our schools in order to restore standard democratic practices in Nigeria through history education?

Review of Related Literature

Toxic Leadership Theoretical Framework

Defining toxic leaders can prove vexing, at best, since one individual's toxic leader is another's heroic savior; given that context, history and perspective weigh heavily in such judgments. According to LinkedIn, (<https://online.keele.ac.uk/the-histo>, accessed, 16 May 2024), leadership is derived from the Old English word “laedere”, which means the one who leads, with the noun being “laedan”, which means to guide or to bring forth. Lipman, (2005) also throws further light on a type of bad leadership which he tagged toxic: toxic leadership refers to a process in which leaders, by dint of their destructive behaviour and/or dysfunctional personal characteristics, inflict serious and enduring harm on their followers, their organisation and non-followers alike. (Lipman, 2005, accessed, 16 May 2024).

In simple term, a toxic leader is a person who abuses the leader–follower relationship by leaving the group or organization in a worse condition than it was in. Toxic leaders therefore create an environment that may be detrimental to employees, thus lowering overall morale in the organization, (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>, accessed, May, 2024). The three most common forms of toxic leadership are avoidant, arrogant, and affable. They create self-defeating cultures that stifle innovation, undermine trust, and destroy engagement.

By giving deaf ears to history, Nigeria might be implicit of the toxic leadership traits. The antidote to toxic leadership however, begins with early identification of potentially toxic behaviours. Ideal leadership skill presupposes the understanding of the nature and role of the past in navigating the future, which demonstrates that intentional historical perspective-taking, provides sort-of wisdom for leadership in the present and future and equips leaders to leverage the past to help their organizations thrive; this is the domain of historical education. Lempert (2020), in his advocacy for making democracy popular through the peoples history, recommends giving the educational vision of people's history an additional step, combining it with experiential approaches to democratic education that have developed over the past century. According to him, it places this vision within a global framework for human survival, democratic protections, creative research, and responsive education, and then presents at a local level the tools for students and adults to take control of their own historical study, control their heritage, and personalize the study of history on the very landscapes of their own communities' cultures.

Through this approach, Lemper, (2020) believes that history will become an exciting democratic exercise not merely in storytelling, but in discovery of, participation in, and interaction with history on the very grounds of the community. The new approach to history, being tested in several communities, takes history as a collection of “stories,” and roots and expands it to places, landscapes, and environment in

everyday life, where history is unavoidable and where protecting and making history are ordinary household and community activities. This is the sort of remedy Nigeria needs to revive her dying democracy: (*democracide*).

Conceptual Discourse

According to Collins Dictionary (2006), historically, the word democracy was first used in Athens, which is considered as the birth place. It is a combination of two Greek words: demos (a citizen of a city-state) and kratos (power or rule). Modern democracy took shape centuries later as citizens came together and worked towards a fairer society. The major features of modern democracy include individual freedom, which entitles citizens to the liberty and responsibility of shaping their own careers and conducting their own affairs; equality before the law; and universal suffrage and education. Such features have been proclaimed in great historic documents, for example, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, which asserted the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which affirmed the principles of civil liberty and of equality before the law; and the Atlantic Charter, which formulated the four basic freedoms. *Democracide* describes behaviour, which technically murder democracy.

Nigeria officially became a democratic nation from independence in 1960. What we call Nigerian's modern democracy however, was the promise by the former head of the state Abdusalami Abubakar to transit Nigeria into democracy and which he actually realized when a new constitution was adopted on May 5th, 1999. Elections were held and the former Military Head of state General Olushegun Obasanjo was elected as the new Nigeria's president. Since then, Adeyinka and Emmanuel (2014) opine that Nigeria and democracy are like Siamese twins, though conjoined, are uncomfortable and under intense pressure that could result in all firms of hurt even death.

Accordingly, as revealed in Department of Education (DoE),(2002), scholarly definitions of history include as “a narration of past events

among mankind, including the account of the rise and fall of nations as well s other great changes which have affected the political and social conditions of the human race” Congruent to this, Anderson, Seller and Yeatman (<https://www.thoughtco.com>), see history as “the study of change over time which covers all aspects of human society, political, social, economic, scientific technological, cultural, intellectual, religious and military developments” (<https://www.valdosta.edu.com>). Similarly, Professor Arthur Marwick in his discussion of the fundamentals of history (saw history as “the bodies of knowledge about the past, produced by historians, together with everything that is involved in production, communication of and teaching about that knowledge.” (<https://.archives.history.ac.uk>),

Understanding the evolution of leadership thinking helps leaders recognize the challenges and opportunities that shape the field. By studying leadership and management history, we can gain both a theoretical baseline as well as historical perspective, which can form our understanding of the contemporary leadership and management practices. Unfortunately, the Nigeria's Policy on Education eschewed this all important democracy awareness catalyst, history from the national educational curriculum for about a decade (2009 – 2022) (<https://www.guardian.ng>), undermining the negative impacts of gap on our perilous democracy. This is akin to a case of the Toxic Leadership, whereby leaders by dint of their destructive behavior or dysfunctional personal characteristics, inflict serious and enduring harm on their followers and produce undevelopmental results. This indictment is demonstrated in the leader's encouragement of the gullible masses into the rigging syndrome of “seize it, grab it and run with it” as experienced at the 2023 elections in Nigeria. This toxic leadership mal-advice carelessly impacts negatively and undermines the critical fact that history is indelible and will surely vindicate the just as well as implicate the unjust in future. Furthermore, this re-emphasises the need for deeper reflection on fostering the relationship between historical thinking and democratic citizenship. To breed democratic

ideal citizenship, Mike, Waltzer (2022), states that three variables are involved: a national curriculum which offers education in the history of all the national democratic institutions and practices; teach the philosophy or political theory of democracy and classes and must cover the history of practical political structure of the perspective government, past, present and likely in the future. With these in place in Nigeria, the Council of Europe's portal publication in 2024 confirms that "history education can put democracy back on track".

Nigeria however, can achieve this and consequently restores her democracy from the mortuary (*democracide*) by taking history education more seriously through the setting up of history as a compulsory general studies subject/course in the national curriculum, from primary, post primary to tertiary institutions. More so, there should be adequate complementary research studies to restore, revive and sustain appropriate laboratories, archives and other necessary pedagogical resources in history.

Historical Education

Education has been conceptualized in various ways by different scholars. According to Fru, (2012), education is "the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviors which are of positive value to the society in which he lives". Also, it is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.

UNESCO (2000:40) views "education" as,

The total process of developing human ability and behaviors. It is an organized and sustained instruction designed to communicate a combination of knowledge, skills, and understanding value for all activities of life. Education develops the individual physically, mentally, morally spiritually, and socially for his own wellbeing and wellbeing of the society to which he belongs. It prepares its

recipients for the adult role expected of them as members of the society concerned.

In the same vein, Department of Basic Education (DoBE), (2011a) defined education as a systematic procedure for the transfer and transformation of culture through formal and informal training of people in a society; it deals with mental, physical, psychological and social development of citizens in a given society. Education is of different types; traditional, formal and informal. For the purpose of this work, education is used to mean formal or western education.

Historical education specifically, refers to the teaching of history at the school levels with aims to promote self-understanding, give students a proper conception of time and society, and enable students to assess the values and achievements of their own age. (<https://www.scribd.com>, accessed, 2024). In congruent with this, Alan Sears, (2017) affirms that teaching history is vital to the common good, not least because it's a step toward encouraging political engagement at all levels.

How History Develops Democracy

As opined by Nkwenti, (2015), historical education will introduce Nigerian students to their heritage by teaching them about their society - what it is, how it grows, the way it works, and what it has achieved. This implies that heritage can appear in both tangible (such as monuments, artifacts, statues) and intangible forms (such as songs, indigenous knowledge, oral History and memory and in performing arts or rituals). Promoting pride in heritage through Historical education will create a sense of identity (Fru, 2010) and culture that is prerequisite for nation building (Wasserman, 2010). This need is more imperative in a politically and religiously diverse society like Nigeria, where the need for a common thread that can create harmony and cohesion is paramount. Through a narrative of the national story and an emphasis on distinctive features of the national experience, more so, historical education drives home and understanding of national value that brings with it a commitment to national loyalty

(Fru, 2012). According to Deacon (2004), learners who are aware of their heritage, can understand their role in its conservation.

As alerted by Ogbeche (2018), our public discourse has become dangerously polarized, making democratic deliberation about collective memory, history and the common good almost impossible. Across the world, societies are built on the history of nations; founded on a well-preserved narrative about their forbears, such societies are shaped by history lessons on moral values, social cohesion, politics, as well as cultural and national integration. On the strength of these ideals, national development picks up as citizens understand their roles and contributions to economic, social and political advancement.

More than a century ago, there has been an explosion in theoretical and empirical research on the relationship between the teaching of history and advancement on democratic practices. According to Nkwocha and Ohajanwa (2018), some major variables of those scholarships consist of the following:

- History education must move beyond the transmission of what historians know to include attention to historical method. This is often referred to as historical thinking.
- History education include attention to historical consciousness, or how history and memory work to shape how we think about ourselves, our communities and our place in the world.
- Historical education brings to bear to us realities about our tribes, cultures, peculiarities and differences, languages, and other affinities.
- History education engages students in thinking about what constitutes evidence about the past national events such as civil wars, national agreements, discords, conflicts, peace accords, and how we assess and construct these accounts these past events to advance better our national future.
- Research evidence makes it clear that students, even those in primary school, can learn to think in sophisticated and complex ways about the past

administrations and their relationship to the present and the future.

- Furthermore, Historical education develops in students the ability to think critically through the weighing of evidence, discerning facts from fancy, and by being less susceptible to propaganda (Carr, 2008; Giliomee, 2010; Van Eeden, 2012). In the process, students will become responsible, reflective, and active citizens who can make informed and reasoned decisions about issues confronting their societies from local to global levels.

Methodology

Design of the Study

A qualitative, descriptive field survey research methodology was adopted.

Area of Study

The study is conducted in Obowu Local Government Area. The Local Government Area is among the twenty-seven (27) Local Government Areas in Imo State. The headquarters of Obowu Local Government Area is located in Otoko and situated in Okigwe Education zone of Imo State. At present, there are fifty (50) secondary schools in Obowo, public and privates.

Population of the Study

The population consists of all the Senior Secondary school students (SSS11) of the fifty Secondary Schools in Obowu Local Government Area, which has the total population of three thousand, one hundred and thirty one (3,131) students.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A total of 250 Senior Secondary School (S.S.S.11) students from the total population in Obowu Local Government Area were randomly selected.

Instrument for Data Collection

A Questionnaire titled: "The Perceived Impact of History Education Gap on Nigeria's Democracy in Secondary Students in Obowu Local Government Area of Imo State", was utilized. It

has two sections, (A and B). Section “A” is concerned with personal and demographic data of respondents, while section “B” contains the items for the respondents. The questionnaire comprises fifteen (15) items structured in the four likert points scale, with the responses options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity of the Instrument

Copies of the initial draft of the questionnaires were submitted to two professionals to ascertain the face and content appropriateness of the instrument. The comments and suggestions were incorporated to produce the final copy of the questionnaire.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot test will be carried out on 30 students drawn from 10 secondary schools not included in the study. The responses in the questionnaire was

analysed using CronbachAlpha statistics in order to examine the consistency of the instruments and how the items are in harmony to measure the variables.

Method of data collection/administration.

The administration of the instrument is carried out through personal contact and students were instructed on how to respond to the questionnaire. Two research assistants administer the instrument. Two hundred and fifty (250) copies of the instrument are carefully distributed such that none is void. Responses from the respondents are then used for data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected for the study were analyzed and presented using simple mean and standard deviation.

Results

Research question 1: How has the gap in historical education affected democratic practices of students in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent to which the gap in historical education affects democratic practices of students in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std	Decision
1	History education teaches students democracy awareness	70	80	40	60	250	2.64	2.12	Accepted
2	No history education, no knowledge of our past	90	80	50	30	250	2.92	1.81	Accepted
3	Many years of no history education in Nigeria can cause democracide (murder of democracy) in Nigeria	70	60	78	42	250	2.63	2.08	Accepted
4	No history education in a nation leads to clueless and toxic leadership	90	60	60	40	250	2.80	1.96	Accepted
5	Citizens who do not learn from history cannot correct past mistakes	70	100	60	20	250	2.88	1.79	Accepted
							2.77	1.95	Accepted

Data in Table 4 above shows that the students were of the opinion that items 1 to 5 with their individual mean and corresponding standard

deviation should be agreed as the effects of the gap in historical education on democratic practices of SS II students in Obowo Local

Government Area of Imo State Nigeria. Although, 5 out of the 5 items were accepted because their individual mean is greater than the cumulative mean average of 2.50. The grand mean set stood at 2.77(Std=1.95) indicating that the students from the area under study agreed that to a high extent, democratic practices of students is affected by gap in historical education.

Research question 2: Will making history a

compulsory general study subject interface with effective use of historical instructional materials improve democratic practices of students in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on making history a compulsory general study subject interface with effective use of historical instructional materials to improve democratic practices of students in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std	Decision
6	Making history compulsory in every schools can improve democracy awareness	80	60	50	60	250	2.64	2.14	Accepted
7	Provision of effective study materials for history will improve the efficacy of history education	79	80	45	46	250	2.77	1.98	Accepted
8	Giving history more classes on the timetable will improve grass root historical learning	70	60	78	42	250	2.63	2.09	Accepted
9	Opening more research opportunities for history teacher can improve historical education as well as democracy	90	60	60	40	250	2.80	1.96	Accepted
10	Provision of rich history resource rooms will improve historical as well as democracy awareness	70	40	60	80	250	2.40	2.37	Rejected
							2.64	2.10	Accepted

Similarly, the data in Table 2 above shows that the students were of the opinion that items 6 to 9 with their individual mean and corresponding standard deviation should be agreed as the extent to which making history a compulsory general study subject interface with effective use of historical instructional materials improve democratic practices of students in Nigeria. Although, 4 out of the 5 items were accepted because their individual mean is greater than the cumulative mean average of 2.50. The grand

mean set stood at 2.648(SD=2.108) indicating that the students agreed that to an extent, that making history a compulsory general study subject interface with effective use of historical instructional materials improves democratic practices of students in Nigeria.

Research question 3: What can be done to maintain effective and continuous teaching of history in our schools in order to restore standard democratic practices in Nigeria through history education?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on what can be done to maintain effective and continuous teaching of history in our schools in order to restore standard democratic practices in Nigeria through history education

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Std	Decision	
11	Awarding of scholarships to history education students will inspire professionalism in history and lift our democracy	70	80	50	50	250	2.68	2.06	Accepted	
12	Immediate employments of history graduates in schools can solve the lack of adequate number of history teachers	90	69	45	46	250	2.81	1.96	Accepted	
13	Special offer of employment of history teachers in the ministries and agencies will boost his torical education as well as democracy	40	78	90	42	250	2.46	2.19	Rejected	
14	Consolidation of Archives, Musium, Historical Sites, etc improve historical education as well as democracy	70	80	60	40	250	2.72	2.00	Accepted	
15	Attractive remuneration for history graduates will make historical education attractive as well as improve democracy awareness	80	40	60	70	250	2.52	2.26	Accepted	
								2.63	2.09	Accepted

Again, the data in Table 3 above shows that the students were of the opinion that items 11,12,14 and 15 with their individual mean and corresponding standard deviation should be agreed as on what can be done to maintain effective and continuous teaching of history in our schools in order to restore standard democratic practices in Nigeria through history education . Although, 4 out of the 5 items were accepted because their individual mean is greater than the cumulative mean average of 2.50. The grand mean set stood at 2.64(SD=2.09) indicating that the students agreed that to an extent that Awarding of scholarships to history education students, immediate employments, consolidation of Archives, Musium, Historical Sites and

attractive remuneration for history graduates will make historical education attractive as well as improve democracy awareness in Nigeria.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The results indicate that:

1. History education is relevant in promoting grass root democracy awareness among the citizenry of Nigeria. The contrary denies this benefit. The finding is in line with Nkwocha, (2013) and Wilke (2022) that highlighted some relevance of history education in enlightening and molding leaders for proper democratic culture.

2. The compulsory study of history as general study subject/course by every student in all Nigeria's schools, interface with enabling historical resource research materials, will foster historical thinking, build democratic citizenship and put Nigeria's dying democracy back on track.

This finding is in line with Lopez and Schugurensky (2023), which highlighted the effectiveness of historical lesson outcomes in reviving national Democracy by "taking the people's history back to the people" . It transforms toxic leadership into beneficial leadership and imbues in them the needed accountability capacity. It further protects gullible citizens from being cultured in political violence, electoral gerrymandering and clueless followership, which also derail Nigeria's democracy course.

Recommendations

From the findings that were made at the end of the inquiry, these recommendations become pertinent:

1. History education should be made compulsory in every school. Adequate time should be allocated to history on the school time tables
2. Well-equipped history resource rooms, archives, museum, historical sites and modern libraries should be made available in order to assist research and investigations.
3. History teachers should be provided with motivators such as sponsorship grants, timely employments at graduation, good remuneration and good quality professional environments.

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