



Challenges Arising from the Scarcity of History Teachers in Secondary Schools in the North Central Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract

The scarcity of history teachers in secondary schools in the North central zone of Nigeria presents a significant challenges to the education system. This scarcity results in a lack of qualified educators to impart historical knowledge and skills to students, potentially leading to a decline in historical understanding and appreciation. As a result, this study addresses the challenges arising from the scarcity of history teachers in secondary schools in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. The research utilized a descriptive survey design, targeting a total population of 157,602, consisting of 92,361 students and teachers in Nassarawa state and 65,241 in Niger state. Employing simple random sampling, 720 participants were chosen from six secondary schools across both states. The primary instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. Descriptive statistical method was used. The findings highlight a unanimous agreement among students and teachers on the shortage of qualified history teachers in the North Central zone, aligning with existing literature. It also provide consensus on the adverse effects of this scarcity on historical education, student performance, and interest in history. The findings identified the root causes of the scarcity of history teachers which include inadequate incentives, insufficient training programs, and limited government support, corroborating existing literature. Based on the findings, recommendations are made to address these challenges comprehensively. These include implementing targeted teacher training programs, enhancing remuneration packages, government support in recruitment and retention, promoting the importance of history education, fostering collaborations between teachers and educational institutions, and establishing continuous professional development opportunities for history teachers. These recommendations aim to mitigate the scarcity of history teachers and improve the quality of historical education in the North Central Zone of Nigeria.

Keywords: Scarcity, History Teachers, Secondary Schools, North Central Zone, Nigeria

Introduction

The scarcity of qualified history teachers in secondary schools throughout North central zone of Nigeria is a complex issue with far-reaching implications for the region's education system and, consequently, its cultural and historical identity. This scarcity has arisen due to several factors which includes; insufficient training and an overall shortage of resources dedicated to history education. The subject of history holds great significance, as it imparts priceless insights from bygone eras that extend beyond geographical, national, and cultural borders. Consequently, it is crucial to provide effective education in schools to ensure that students develop a

deep appreciation for its relevance. Different philosophers of History and Historians have varying

interpretations of the term "History." According to Animba (2018), History serves as a collective memory for societies, much like individual memory functions for people. Consequently, People who are unaware of their history or ignorant of it are prone to repeating mistakes from the past. This is due to their collective amnesia, which causes them to move forward into the future without any awareness or reference to prior events (Alabi, 2020). As a result, Animba further suggests that such individuals are prone to experiencing historical myopia, leading to an uncertain future.

Similarly, Boadu, Awuah, Ababio, and Eduaquah (2017) emphasized the crucial role of history in helping individuals master and comprehend the past, which is essential for understanding the present. Nevertheless, a nation cannot effectively function in academic, political, cultural, social, and economic realms when its students lack knowledge of their history. Neglecting the teaching and learning of history is comparable to a nation existing without memories or a functional brain, highlighting the crucial importance of treating history education seriously. This emphasis becomes crucial, as overlooking history has the potential to adversely affect the younger generation and the future workforce of the country. Furthermore, the consistent concern over the academic performance of secondary school students remains a significant issue for various educational stakeholders, encompassing parents, educators, students, and the government. Despite numerous measures taken over the years to enhance the situation, a substantial number of junior secondary school students continue to perform poorly. This poor performance is attributed to their inadequate foundation in historical knowledge and the experiences passed down from previous generations, which are critical for them to recognize and appreciate values such as hard work, determination, resilience, and cooperation, all of which contribute to individual achievement and national development (Boadu, 2016). North central zone of Nigeria is known for its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, addressing this issue is of paramount importance to ensure that future generations have a comprehensive understanding of their nation's past and the broader context of world history (Akinwale & Yoloye, 2016). Thus, the North Central zone of Nigeria holds a unique and integral place in the nation's history and culture. It is home to a diverse array of ethnic groups, each with its own rich traditions and historical narratives. The region has witnessed numerous historical events that have shaped the trajectory of Nigeria as a nation. From the pre-colonial era to the colonial period and Nigeria's post-independence history, the North Central zone's contributions are undeniable. The scarcity of history teachers in this region poses a direct threat to the preservation and dissemination of this invaluable heritage (Osifeso & Ajayi, 2018).

As a result, the scarcity of history teachers in secondary schools has far-reaching implications for in the North Central educational zone. Students are deprived the opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of their own history, culture, and identity. This shortage results

in curricular gaps, reduced educational quality, and missed opportunities for students to engage with and appreciate their heritage. These consequences not only hinder academic development but also jeopardize the development of a well-informed citizenry (Oni, 2015). The shortage of history teachers has broader implications for the preservation of Nigeria's national identity (Boadu, 2018). Understanding the nation's history is vital for fostering a sense of patriotism and unity among its citizens. By not addressing this issue, there is a risk that future generations will lack the knowledge and appreciation of their country's historical and cultural diversity, potentially affecting social cohesion and national pride. This study explored the challenges arising from the scarcity of history teachers in secondary schools in the North central zone of Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

The scarcity of history teachers in secondary schools within the North Central Zone of Nigeria poses significant challenge. This shortage of qualified history educators hampers the effective delivery of history education in the region, thereby jeopardizing the quality of historical knowledge and critical thinking skills among students. This problem not only affects the immediate educational experience of students but also has broader implications for their understanding of the past and the preservation of cultural and national heritage. The scarcity of history teachers is a multi-faceted issue that has several adverse consequences. It results in larger class sizes, overburdened teachers, and a lack of specialized expertise in history instruction. As a result, students do not receive the necessary guidance and mentorship to foster a deep understanding of historical events, critical thinking, and analytical skills. Furthermore, the scarcity of history teachers in the North Central Zone contributes to a diminished interest in history as a subject among both students and potential educators. This situation can have a long-term impact on the preservation and promotion of the region's unique historical and cultural heritage. Without qualified history teachers, students may miss out on invaluable lessons from the past that are essential for their personal and collective development. Ultimately, the inadequate number of secondary schools history teachers in the North Central Zone of Nigeria presents a pressing issue that affects the quality of history education, hinders the development of critical thinking skills among students, and jeopardizes the preservation of the region's rich historical and cultural heritage.

Addressing this challenge is essential to ensure a well-rounded education and a deeper appreciation of history among the students in the region.

Literature Review

A literature review on the challenges arising from the scarcity of secondary schools history teachers in the North Central zone of Nigeria would begin by examining the current state of history education in the region and its implications for students and the educational system. This review will touch upon issues such as the shortage of qualified history teachers, the decline in interest in history as a subject, and the potential impact on historical and cultural knowledge. Historically, there has been a shortage of qualified history teachers in Nigeria, particularly in the North Central Zone. This scarcity can be attributed to various factors such as inadequate training facilities, low remuneration, and a lack of incentives to attract individuals to the teaching profession. (Adeyemi, 2015; Jekayinfa, 2016). Audu (2014) argues that the primary objective of instructing History in secondary schools is to facilitate the cultivation of a cohesive spiritual worldview among students. This is achieved by integrating ethno-cultural, national, and universal values that have evolved throughout history, providing students with opportunities to define their identities in relation to these values. Moreover, the teaching of History in secondary schools serves the purpose of preventing students from losing their way in life. It accomplishes this by ensuring that students are well-informed about the political, moral, value, and religious implications inherent in historical events. Consequently, students gain a profound understanding of the legacy of the past in the present and learn to accord it the respect it deserves, as emphasized by Animba (2019).

The scarcity of history teachers affects the overall quality of education. The inadequacy of qualified teachers results in increased class sizes, potentially impeding both effective learning and meaningful teacher-student interaction. This can have detrimental effects on students' academic performance and their understanding of history as a subject. (Olayemi, 2017) The scarcity of history teachers may lead to a decline in students' interest in history as a subject. Students often find it challenging to engage with a subject when there are few well-qualified teachers to inspire and guide them. This could have a long-term impact on the preservation of historical and cultural knowledge. (Adegoke, 2018) The scarcity of

history teachers can result in an inequitable distribution of educational resources. Students in urban areas or better-funded schools may have more access to qualified history teachers compared to their rural counterparts. This exacerbates educational disparities in the region (Ogbonna, 2019).

Some government policies and interventions have aimed to address the shortage of history teachers. For instance, initiatives to improve teacher training programs, increase teacher remuneration, and provide incentives for teachers in underserved areas have been proposed and implemented in some cases. (Obi, 2020). The scarcity of history teachers not only affects education but also has broader implications for the preservation of local history and culture. History teachers play a crucial role in imparting knowledge about the cultural heritage and traditions of Nigeria. The shortage of qualified history teachers can result in a loss of cultural knowledge. (Yakubu, 2019). Technology, particularly e-learning platforms and online resources, has the potential to mitigate some of the challenges arising from the scarcity of history teachers. Online courses and digital resources can supplement traditional classroom instruction and help students access history education even in the absence of qualified teachers. (Bala, 2017). So, addressing these challenges requires a different approach, including improving teacher training programs, offering incentives to history teachers, and leveraging technology to enhance history education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. To what extent is there a shortage of qualified history teachers in secondary schools in the North Central zone of Nigeria?
- ii. What impact does the scarcity of history teachers have on the quality of historical education, student performance, and interest in history among secondary school students in the region?
- iii. What are the root causes of the scarcity of history teachers in the North Central zone of Nigeria, including factors related to recruitment, retention, and training?

Methodology

To achieve the aim of this study, descriptive survey design were adopted. The research was conducted in the North Central zone of Nigeria, which comprises the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, as well as the states of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa,

Niger, and Plateau. The North central was chosen because it is one of the regions that needs to preserve their cultural heritage for students to understand their past history. The study's population includes a total of 92,361 students and teachers in secondary schools in Nasarawa state and 65,241 students and teachers in Niger state. This combined to form a collective population of 157,602 under investigation. Simple random sampling techniques were employed to select 720 students and teachers from three secondary schools in Nasarawa state and three secondary schools in Niger state, making a total of six secondary schools across the two states. The data collection instrument utilized for this study was a questionnaire, structured on a four-point Likert

scale with options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree. Two experts from the Department of History at Nassarawa State University validated the instrument. A pilot study was conducted, involving the administration of the questionnaire as a trial test, and it was repeated after a few weeks as a post-test to assess the reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was directly administered to the participants, i.e., students and teachers of the selected schools, with the assistance of six trained research assistants. This approach aimed to ensure the respondents' clear comprehension of the instrument. The research employed descriptive statistical methods, specifically Mean and Standard Deviation, to address the research questions.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Students and Teachers on the Shortage of Qualified History Teachers in Secondary Schools
N720

S/n	Items	Students			Teachers		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	There is a shortage of qualified history teachers in secondary schools.	3.42	1.81	Accepted	3.47	1.78	Accepted
2	The scarcity of history teachers negatively affects the overall quality of historical education in secondary schools.	3.25	1.55	Accepted	3.12	1.61	Accepted
3	The demand for qualified history teachers exceeds the current supply in secondary schools.	3.33	1.44	Accepted	3.32	1.71	Accepted
4	The shortage of qualified history teachers adversely affects the educational experience of secondary school students.	3.43	1.85	Accepted	3.18	1.55	Accepted

Table 1 shows students and teachers agreed opinion on the shortage of qualified history teachers in secondary schools in the North Central zone of Nigeria. The mean values and standard deviations suggest the extent of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The

study indicate that both students and teachers generally agree with the statements indicating a shortage of qualified history teachers and the negative impact of this shortage on the quality of historical education in secondary schools.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Students and Teachers on the Impact of Scarcity of History Teachers on the Quality of Historical Education, Student Performance, and Interest in History among Secondary School Students
N720

S/n	Items	Students			Teachers		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	The scarcity of history teachers has a negative impact on the quality of historical education in secondary schools.	3.33	1.57	Accepted	3.29	1.48	Accepted
2	The shortage of history teachers is correlated with a decline in student performance in history subjects.	3.27	1.49	Accepted	3.24	1.38	Accepted
3	The scarcity of history teachers contributes to a decreased interest in history among secondary school students.	3.45	1.48	Accepted	3.22	1.35	Accepted
4	The lack of qualified history teachers hinders the development of critical thinking skills among secondary school students in history classes.	3.45	1.63	Accepted	3.25	1.37	Accepted

The results in Table 2 indicate that both students and teachers believe that the scarcity of history teachers has a negative impact on the quality of historical education, student performance in history subjects, and students' interest in history. The "Accepted" decisions suggest a general consensus among respondents that the shortage

of history teachers is associated with adverse effects on these aspects. These findings provide valuable insights into the broader consequences of the scarcity of qualified history teachers in secondary schools in the region.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Students and Teachers on the Root Causes of the Scarcity of History Teachers and Factors Related to Recruitment, Retention, and Training
N720

S/n	Items	Students			Teachers		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Insufficient incentives for individuals to pursue a career in teaching history contribute to the shortage of history teachers.	3.51	1.51	Accepted	3.31	1.44	Accepted
2	Inadequate training programs for history teachers contributes to the scarcity of qualified educators.	3.14	1.61	Accepted	3.23	1.42	Accepted
3	Inadequate government policies and support for the recruitment, training, and retention of history teachers exacerbate the scarcity.	3.21	1.44	Accepted	3.48	1.49	Accepted

4	Limited opportunities for professional development and advancement hinder the retention of qualified history teachers.	3.53	1.53	Accepted	3.24	1.43	Accepted
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In table 3, the results suggest that both students and teachers identify several root causes of the scarcity of history teachers in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. The accepted decisions indicate agreement among respondents. The identified factors include insufficient incentives for individuals to pursue a career in teaching history, inadequate training programs for history teachers, inadequate government policies and support for recruitment, training, and retention, as well as limited opportunities for professional development and advancement. These findings provide insights into the multifaceted challenges contributing to the shortage of qualified history teachers in the region, emphasizing issues related to recruitment, training, and retention.

Discussions

The findings from table 1 indicate a unanimous agreement among both students and teachers on the shortage of qualified history teachers in the North Central zone of Nigeria. This aligns with the existing literature that has consistently highlighted the scarcity of qualified history teachers in the country, particularly in the specified region (Adeyemi, 2015; Jekayinfa, 2016). The literature also underscores the historical challenge of attracting individuals to the teaching profession due to factors like low remuneration and inadequate training facilities. The current study reinforces these claims, establishing a foundation for the subsequent discussions on the consequences of this scarcity.

The results in Table 2 indicates a consensus among respondents that the scarcity of history teachers has adverse effects on the quality of historical education, student performance, and interest in history. The literature review supports these findings by explaining how larger class sizes resulting from the shortage hinder effective learning and teacher-student interaction, potentially leading to a decline in students' interest in history (Olayemi, 2017; Adegoke, 2018). The study extends this by providing empirical evidence of the perceived impact, thereby emphasizing the urgency of addressing the shortage for the betterment of historical education.

The findings from Table 3 indicates the root causes of the scarcity of history teachers in the region. These root causes, identified by both students and

teachers, align with existing literature that points to factors such as inadequate incentives, insufficient training programs, and limited government support for recruitment and retention (Adeyemi, 2015; Ogbonna, 2019). The literature review establishes a theoretical foundation for these findings, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions in teacher training programs, remuneration, and government policies to address the scarcity comprehensively.

Conclusion

The scarcity of qualified history teachers in the North Central zone of Nigeria is a critical issue, as highlighted by both students and teachers in this study. The findings confirm the existing literature that outlines the historical challenges associated with attracting and retaining individuals in the teaching profession, particularly in the specified region. The consequences of this scarcity are far-reaching, affecting the quality of historical education, student performance, and interest

in history. Addressing the scarcity of history teachers requires a multi-faceted approach that combines immediate interventions with long-term strategies. By implementing different strategies, stakeholders can work towards overcoming the challenges and ultimately enhance the quality of history education in the North Central zone of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendation emerge:

1. The school manager should implement comprehensive and targeted teacher training programs for history teachers, focusing on enhancing their pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and classroom management. Collaborate with educational institutions to develop specialized courses and certifications for history teachers, addressing the specific needs of the discipline.
2. The Administrators should review and enhance the remuneration packages for history teachers to make the profession more attractive. Consider offering financial incentives, bonuses, or other perks to

encourage individuals to pursue and stay in the teaching profession.

3. The government should support in the recruitment and retention of history teachers. This may include the allocation of funds for scholarships, infrastructure improvement, and the creation of conducive teaching environments.
4. Stakeholders in government and NGOs should launch campaigns and initiatives to promote the importance of history education at both the community and national levels. Highlight the significance of understanding one's history and culture as a foundation for national identity.
5. The teachers collaborate with universities and teacher training institutions to ensure the availability of quality history education programs. Foster partnerships that facilitate the seamless transition of history graduates into the teaching profession.
6. The government should establish continuous professional development opportunities for history teachers to stay updated with modern teaching methodologies, technology integration, and advancements in the field of history.

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