

Comparative Investigation on Student's Dwindling Interest in the Study of History in Public and Private Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria

NGOZI PRISCILLA, OKORO Ph.D

Educational Foundations and Management, School of General Education, Federal College of Education, P.M.B.
2096, Abeokuta, Nigeria E- mail: npokoro@fce-abeokuta.edu.ng

Abstract

History as a subject has been facing a decline in popularity among Nigerian secondary school students especially after the ban and re-introduction of the subject resulting to loss of interest by students who decided to seek refuge in other alternative subjects. This trend has sparked concerns among educators, policymakers, and historians, as History plays a vital role in shaping national identity, cultural heritage, and informed citizenship. This phenomenon has been attributed to various factors, including outdated teaching methods, lack of relevance, and inadequate resources. The study employed mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative research. Five research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Six hundred (600) secondary school students from five public and five private secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria of Ogun, Osun and Ekiti States and one hundred and twenty (120) history teachers were randomly selected. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the differences between the response of teachers and students in public and private schools was analyzed using descriptive data analysis and T-test. Base on the findings, there is a significant mean difference in the strategies to enhance students' interest in history as perceived by teachers. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, teachers from public schools (mean = 29.89) had a better perceived strategies when compared to their counterpart in private senior secondary schools (mean = 21.17). The result showed a significant outcome ($t = 19.625$, $df = 692$, $p < 0.05$). There is a significant mean difference of students' interest in History when public and private senior secondary schools were compared. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, students from private schools (mean = 41.73) had a higher interest in learning history when compared to their counterpart in public senior secondary schools (mean = 28.61). Hence, teachers should make history lessons interesting and adopt a learner centered teaching approach in order to encourage students. Students must pay attention in history classes and attend classes. The curriculum content of history should be reviewed in order to meet the expectations of the learners

Keywords: Comparative, Interest, Dwindling, History

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1. Introduction:

History as a subject has been an integral part of secondary school education in Nigeria, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of the past, its impact on the present, and shaping their future. History promotes good citizenship by cultivating and promoting ethical and moral system as a member of a society. It is not enough to teach students at secondary level about rights and obligation, amalgamation, independence among others, without giving them a well detailed analysis of how they came to be. It gives students better understanding on why the present is the way it is. History is a relationship between man and man, and between man and his environment. In essence, history refers to the totality of the changes and experiences which humanity has undergone ever since the emergence of mankind. It is the reality outside one's events and actions that together make up the human past. History can also be referred to as the academic discipline which uses a narrative to examine and analyze the sequence of past events, and objectively determine the patterns of cause and effect that determine them. It is relevant to note that, the main issue in the occurrence of events as well as their study is change (Adeyinka, 2018; Okeke, 2020). Hence, to address the problem of national development, it is relevant to go back to history which is the basis of understanding the magnitude and nature of events and changes. As such, History which studies past events and change, provide the basis and foresights for national development. In spite of the peculiar nature and structure of History, its special broad-based curriculum and cognitive process, as well as its objectives, there seems to be a general neglect and dissatisfaction of its instructional outcomes in the Nigerian society.

However with the universalistic worth of History notwithstanding, History is one of the least studied subject in secondary schools especially in South western states of Nigeria. For stance, West Africa Secondary School Examination Council, compared the entry statistics among History, Government and Economics for the senior secondary school certificate examination in Nigeria from 2000- 2006. From the comparison, it was observed that the period prior to the eventual banning of History in secondary school, History recorded the least among subjects registered by senior secondary students in external examinations. Subsequently, out of all students who sat for general Art subjects, only 2% offered History as compared to 65% and 60% in Government and Economics respectively. Further decline was seen from 2007 onward when the population of History students divided further to 0.05 as compared to enrolment in other subjects in the Art category . This decline further accelerates to 0.005% when the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria banned it as a school subject in 2010-2017. At the University level also, there was massive decline on studying of History as a course due to the fact that it was no longer an education subject at Secondary school level. This was seen in the instance where only a few undergraduate students ended up graduating regardless of the number of students admitted yearly to study History. Some universities ended up making it look attractive by combining it with International Relation; yet students run away from studying it. This trend continued today as many students turn down invitations given to them by History departments to major on the subject. The foregoing picture points to the fact that the subject has become increasingly unpopular among students in Nigeria (Adeyemi 2011; Ogunleye 2013).

Hence, factors contributing to the decline of students' interest in the study of history according to Adeyinka, (2018) and Vanhover (2018) are outdated teaching methods; lack of relevance to students' lives (Nwosu, 2019; Mont-Sano, 2018 and Ugwu, 2018); inadequate resources (Akintunde, 2019); overemphasis on memorization (Okeke, 2020; Nwosu, 2019), limited teacher training and support (Adeyinka, 2018). Though measures have been taken over the years in order to improve on the situation like the government has developed a new curriculum for history which focused on Nigerian and African history and the establishment of teacher training programmes in order to improve the quality of history teaching, nevertheless, a large number of secondary school students still perform poorly. This is because they lack adequate foundation from memories of the past, and experiences from older generation which helps them see and appreciate hard work, determination, resilience, cooperation among others as factors which foster individual achievement and national development. This research will therefore, attempt to investigate the study of History as an academic subject in Nigeria secondary schools by identifying the causes for such diminishing popularity and lack of interest by students to study History as an academic discipline. This trend witnessed in Nigeria is reflective of a wider concern that the discipline of History is facing numerous and very significant challenges which need to be countered through consistent debates and research both in institutional setting and the larger public discourse. Only recently, there was a presidential directive to reintroduce history and make history a core subject, thereby giving salience to this research.

1.2 Problem Statement

Nigeria is on the verge of losing the youths who are supposed to use the knowledge of history to familiarize themselves with their own heritage and cultural backgrounds and also, identify their culture as well as other cultures in the world perspectives. The knowledge of History should transform the conceptions of the discipline fundamentally, by facilitating a change in the historical thinking of students so as to identify and analyse, the essential historical questions about the past. In this sense, understanding of history is therefore not conceived as an end in itself but rather, as a way to improve the abilities and capacities of students to internalize the complex nature of past human experiences. The study of History therefore, should be a platform for transmitting or socializing students from different socio-economic, ethnic or racial backgrounds into the mainstream world views, culture and, or, values. However government is yet to take the teaching and learning of History very serious in junior and senior secondary schools as proposed through its policy to bring back the glory of the subject, hence the ban and re-introduction of the subject resulting to loss of interest by students who decided to sought refuge in other alternative subjects like Civic Education, government and Social Studies. The researcher will therefore investigate the factors militating against students' interest in studying history among secondary schools in South Western States of Nigeria and proffer possible solutions of making History a viable subject once again, while taking its rightful place in the communities, states and national levels as the pivotal role of history in the continued development of a country cannot be over emphasized.

1.3 Objectives:

To identify the factors contributing to the decline in students' interest in History as a subject in Nigerian Secondary Schools.

To compare the level of interest in the study of history between students in public and private secondary schools.

To explore innovative strategies to rekindle students' interest in History in Nigeria secondary schools.

To examine the consequences of the decline in students' interest in history for Nigeria's Cultural and National development.

1.4 Research Questions

- What is the level of students' interest in history in private junior secondary schools?
- What is the level of students' interest in history in public junior secondary schools?
- What are the factors affecting students' interest in History among students of private junior secondary schools?
- What are the factors affecting students' interest in History among students of public junior secondary schools?
- What are the teachers' perceived strategies to enhance students' interest in history?

1.4.1 Research Hypotheses

- HO₁:** There is no significant difference in the interest in studying History between public and private secondary school students.
- HO₂:** There is no significant mean difference of students' interest in History when public and private junior secondary schools are compared.
- HO₃:** There is no significant mean difference of teachers' perceived strategies to enhance students' interest in history when public and private junior secondary schools are compared.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a macro-theory of human motivation, personality, and well-being developed primarily by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan. It is one of the most comprehensive and empirically supported theories for explaining the quality of student motivation and its impact on engagement, learning, and academic achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2017). SDT's fundamental premise is that humans are inherently active organisms with a natural propensity for psychological growth and development. This growth is driven by the quality of one's motivation, which SDT organizes along a continuum of self-determination. Therefore, SDT emphasizes that the goal for educators or teachers is to move students from controlled motivation (External, Introjected) toward autonomous motivation (Identified, Integrated, and Intrinsic) (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT provides a practical universal set of steps directly building the environment that allows genuine intrinsic interest to flourish. SDT posits that three innate, universal, and essential Basic Psychological Needs (BPNs) must be satisfied for optimal human flourishing, motivation, and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017):

SDT provides a clear, causal framework for transforming student motivation from simple compliance to deep, sustained interest. SDT is best because it specifically addresses the quality of motivation and provides direct, research-backed guidance for instructional practice. It posits that students develop intrinsic motivation (the purest form of interest and enjoyment) when three innate psychological needs are satisfied:

Need	What it Means for Interest	Classroom Strategy
Autonomy	The feeling of having choice and control over one's own learning.	Offer choices in assignment format, reading material, or project topics.
Competence	The belief in one's own ability to succeed at the task (self-efficacy).	Provide optimal challenges (not too easy, not too hard) and meaningful, constructive feedback.
Relatedness	The feeling of being connected to and cared for by others (teachers & peers).	Foster a safe, inclusive classroom where students feel respected and can collaborate.

By focusing on these three universal needs, an educator moves beyond simply offering rewards (extrinsic motivation) and instead cultivates an environment where interest naturally emerges and persists.

2.2 Students' Interest in School Subjects

Interest is regarded as a response to liking or disliking to an event, an activity, person or situation. It is a state of concern or curiosity. It is to cause or become involved in something (Nwafor, 2019; Abimbola & Abdullahi, 2019). Hornby (2008) defined interest as the feeling that one has when he/she wants to know or learn about something. To show interest in a thing is to be actively involved with that thing. It is also to show concern or be curious in that thing. Interest in an activity cannot be absolute, it involves not only showing concern for but

being actively involved in all the activities of that thing hence the more interesting the activities are, the higher such activities will score on the scale of interest (Nwafor, 2019; Abimbola & Abdullahi, 2019).

2.3 The Role of Teachers on How to Stimulate Students' Interest in History Classes

The process of teaching history is a complex pedagogical process, creating interest in learning for students is very important in improving the effectiveness of teaching history (Ca, Nguyen & Chung, 2020). Learning with interest will help students comprehend deeply and remember events and phenomena in the history. Not only do they “know” history but more importantly, through an active learning process with the activation of psychological processes, students will “deeply understand” the essential content of historical knowledge by acquiring concepts, rules, lessons, and so that knowledge can be used to explain historical events (Asyaari, 2023). In teaching history, creating excitement for students has a great role and significance in the implementation of comprehensive education tasks for students, contributing to improving the effectiveness of history lessons in particular and quality of subject teaching in general (Ca, Nguyen & Chung, 2020). According to Abimbola and Abdullahi (2019) and Nwafor (2019), Teacher must do in the learning process is to arouse enthusiasm in students because their ideas and how they communicate are the most important.

Finally, Asyaari (2023) opined that the teacher should also put into consideration the following factors in order to generate and facilitate the interest of the students in the learning of school subjects:

- a. Good/adequate demonstration and application of concept
- b. Using good and relevant illustrations/examples
- c. Simple explanations of common phenomena and events
- d. Allowing the students to be actively involved in the teaching and learning not just giving them lecture all through the class.
- e. Encourage creativity in the students

2.4 Factors affecting Students' Interest in School Subjects

Over the years, scholars have worked on several factors and challenges affecting students' interest in learning school subjects. There are several factors which could either be positive or negative factors affecting the level of students' interests in school subjects. For instance Animba (2021) opined that there are factors affecting the teaching and learning of history among junior secondary school students which include Effective teaching methodology; Lack of instructional materials in teaching and learning of History; Lack of knowledge on subject content Government Policy (Ajayi, 2015), Misconceptions about History (Rai, Hopwood and Sherab 2024)

2.5 Strategies for Stimulating Students' interest in School Subjects

Over the years, several researchers have opined and discussed several strategies useful for stimulating students' interest in school subjects. For instance, Nwafor (2019), Abimbola and Abdullahi (2019) in their works highlighted and discussed several ways and strategies of stimulating students' interest in school subjects which are:

Reward: Reward is an important strategy that will help to motivate students' interest towards Science and Mathematics education, extrinsic motivators in the form of reward can help students who do not yet have powerful intrinsic motivation to learn. In classroom, the teacher can give students such simple but encouraging rewards like praising and applauding students, presenting material gifts and so on.

Effective Teaching Method: According to Van Hover,(2018) integrating technology and multimedia resources is a vital strategy to reclaim the interest of students in History. Utilization of online archives, such as the Library of Congress or the National Archives, in order to access primary sources and historical documents, create engaging presentations using multimedia tools like PowerPoint, Prezi, or Google Slides, incorporating images, videos, and audio clips will rekindle the students' interest in History. Also Akinwumi, 2020, opined that the implementation of a flipped classroom approach, using technology to deliver instruction at home and reserve class time for discussions, debates, and hands-on activities should be encouraged.

According to Nwosu, (2019) and Ugwu, (2018) by incorporating local and oral histories, educators can make History more relatable, personal, and engaging for students, helping to reawaken their interest and enthusiasm for the subject. This can be achieved by encouraging students to collect stories from family members, neighbours, and community elders about local historical events or cultural traditions. According to Ugwu, (2018) local historians, storytellers, or cultural practitioners should always be invited to share their knowledge and perspectives with students. Students should be encouraged to document and preserve local histories through

writing, photography, or video projects. Discussions should be facilitated between students and older generations to explore how historical events have shaped the local community. Events or festivals should be organized to celebrate local cultural heritage and historical traditions. Other techniques the teacher could employ during the period of classroom interaction are as follows:

- a. Jokes, short stories and questioning such that student's attention is assured.
- b. Classroom discussion aimed at involving the student actively in the teaching and learning science and mathematics
- c. Field trips to show students things in their natural environment
- d. Projects to enable student do it themselves and carryout activities independently or by consulting peers, parents, persons or even literature.
- e. Practical for the purpose of giving the students an opportunity to do science. To verify claims, analyse and synthesize scientific facts.
- f. Inquiry to help student discover and see relationship in what they discover and organize their new discoveries into meaningful ideas.
- g. Cooperative learning to enable the students cooperate with each other to perform or complete a particular task.
- h. Games and play to give enjoyment and satisfaction to the students. It will also make learners lively and actively involved in learning.

2.6 Students' Interest and its Determining Factors

The interest of students in the learning of school subjects is very crucial in deciding how they would learn school subjects, how teachers will achieve their teaching objectives and how the curriculum of school. However, many factors or challenges affecting students' interest in learning school subjects have been identified in recent years. For instance, Lahon (2017) carried out a study to explore why students are not interested to learn history and also tries to provide some ways and means to motivate the students to learn history. Descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The population of this study covers all the children of class X living in Sivsagar district of Assam. A sample of 126 respondents which represents 120 students and 6 teachers were randomly selected from three secondary schools of Sivsagar District of Assam. Results revealed that students are not interested in History because many opined that learning history is waste of time. A smaller number of students know that history will help them to know about the past of the society, past of the country as well as the past of the world they live in. Many students do not understand history properly. Few students regularly study history subject at their home.

Namamba and Rao (2017) examined the perception and experiences of History teachers in the teaching and learning of history in secondary schools in Kigoma region in Tanzania. This research adopted a qualitative research approach. Fifteen history teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique from seven secondary schools. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using content analysis method. The findings showed that the teachers highly perceived History as an important subject in secondary school education. Both teacher-centred and learner-centred teaching methods were used in teaching History, with more use of teacher-centred methods. Teachers highlighted the various challenges to history teaching and learning in their schools which include shortage of teaching and learning materials, use of English as the medium of instruction, lack of professional development opportunities and examination-oriented teaching. Similarly, Mensah and Frimpong (2020) carried out a study to examine the factors that affect students' attitude towards Social Studies and assessed how students' attitude towards Social Studies could be improved. Using a sample of 72 teachers selected using simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling technique, questionnaires were administered on all of them. Results showed that the factors affecting students' attitude towards learning include teachers not showing interest in teaching controversial issues, teachers' inability to give needed assistance to students, teachers' inability to use different teaching methods in teaching, inadequate teaching and learning materials and inability of Social Studies teachers to employ resource persons in times of difficulty.

2.7 Strategies for Sustaining Students' Interest and Engagement in Learning School Subjects

In order to stimulate students' interest in school subjects, several studies have provided information on strategies needed to arouse or stimulate students' interest in school subjects. For instance, Namamba and Rao (2017) examined the perception and experiences of History teachers in the teaching and learning of history in secondary schools in Kigoma region in Tanzania. This research adopted a qualitative research approach. Fifteen history teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique from seven secondary schools. The findings indicated that the teachers highly perceived History as an important subject in secondary school education.

Teachers highlighted the various challenges to history teaching and learning in their schools which include shortage of teaching and learning materials, use of English as the medium of instruction, lack of professional development opportunities and examination-oriented teaching.

Owora and Chika (2019) carried out a study on the strategies adopted for arousing students' interest in mathematics. Results showed that the strategies adopted for arousing students' interest include creating awareness, using assessment method, encouragement from parents at home, usage of teaching techniques like teaching personality, variety of learning materials, giving feedback, giving rewards, establishing subject related clubs or associations in the school. Furthermore, lack of instructional materials, motivation, good teacher/students' relationship and caring for individual differences also affects the effective ways of teaching mathematics. Similarly, in the studies of Abimbola and Abdullahi (2019) and Nwafor (2019), they all agreed that the strategies include rewards, effective teaching methods, and satisfying students' interest among others. They believed that these strategies would sustain interest in the subject.

3.Methodology

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-method design. Sequential explanatory mixed methods design is a type of mixed method design whereby the quantitative strand of the study is carried out first before the qualitative strand. Afterwards, the qualitative strand would provide explanation for the result of the first phase (quantitative strand) (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The notation is QUAN qual notation whereby the qualitative only provides explanation around the quantitative data which is the main study focus (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The target population includes all teachers teaching history and all senior secondary students (SS1) offering History in both Public and Private Senior Secondary Schools situated in A Ogun, Osun and Ekiti states of Nigeria.

The sample of the study involved one hundred and twenty (120) history teachers and six hundred (600) senior secondary students (SS1) selected from both Public and Private senior secondary schools situated in Ogun, Osun and Ekiti states. For the quantitative strand, multi-stage sampling was used to select six hundred (600) senior secondary students (SS1) (i.e., 5 SS1 students were drawn from 20 private schools & same for 20 public schools making a total of 200 students from each state). Also, forty (40) history teachers were also randomly selected from the selected schools (i.e., 1 history teacher per school drawn from 20 private schools & same for 20 public schools). After data collection, only 594 questionnaires (96% return rate) were returned (341 students from private & 253 students from public schools). Furthermore, a sub-sample of twelve (12) senior secondary students (SS1) (i.e., 6 SS1 students were drawn from 3 private schools & same for 3 public schools) were selected using purposive sampling technique.

The instrument adopted students' interest in history questionnaire (SIHQ), Strategies for Improving Students' Interest in History Questionnaire (SISIHQ) and students' interest in history interview guide (SIHIG). SIHQ is a fifteen items questionnaire design to measure students' interest in history as a school subject. It is a four Likert scale questionnaire adapted from Dan and Zhao (2013). The validation of SIHQ was established using a pilot testing procedure, which involved administering SIHQ on forty students outside the sample coverage. The outcome yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability index of 0.891. Furthermore, SISIHQ is a nine item questionnaire designed to measure the strategies needed for Improving Students' Interest in History. The validation of SISIHQ was established using a pilot testing procedure, which involved administering SISIHQ on thirty teachers outside the sample coverage. The outcome yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability index of 0.71. Finally, SIHIG is a semi structured interview guide designed to elicit information on reasons why students' interest in history improved or reduced. SIHIG was validated by administering the interview on two students outside the sample coverage. Afterwards, participant check method was used to establish the validity while audio recording was used to establish the reliability.

The data collected were analyzed using frequency, mean and t-test (quantitative) while thematic analysis (qualitative analysis) after transcribing the data verbatim.

3.1 Results

Research Question one

What is the level of students' interest in history in private senior secondary schools?

Table 1 Students' Interest in History in Private Senior Secondary Schools

	SD	D	A	SA	Sum	Mean	Remark
I know history pretty well.	23	115	141	62	924	2.71	High
I read more history books than my classmates.	27	138	130	46	877	2.57	High
Compared to my peers, I think my knowledge in history is above the average	28	146	127	40	861	2.52	High
I know more historical allusions than my peers.	24	195	27	95	875	2.57	High
I am satisfied with how much I know about history.	35	159	16	131	925	2.71	High
Reading history makes people wise.	36	180	29	96	867	2.54	High
Learning history is important.	27	51	237	26	944	2.77	High
Learning history increases people's capabilities in judgment and analysis.	25	46	209	61	988	2.90	High
Many historical figures worth learning from.	21	57	212	51	975	2.86	High
History knowledge is essential for being an informed citizen.	31	144	29	137	954	2.80	High
I feel very excited when a new history topic is initiated	24	133	31	153	995	2.92	High
I am interested in history.	27	53	39	222	1138	3.34	High
I like touring history museums.	27	130	123	61	900	2.64	High
I enjoy reading history stories.	27	138	20	156	987	2.89	High
I like doing assignments relating to history.	38	92	58	153	1008	2.96	High
Grand total	420	1777	1428	1490	14218	2.78	High

Criterion mean = 2.5

Table 1 presents the results of the level of students' interest in history in private senior secondary schools. From the table, Students' interest in history is high in private senior secondary schools because its grand mean (2.78) exceeds the criterion mean (2.5).

Research Question two:

What is the level of students' interest in history in public senior secondary schools?

Table 2 Students' Interest in History in Public Senior Secondary Schools

	SD	D	A	SA	sum	mean	Remark
I know history pretty well.	50	250	46	7	716	2.03	Low
I read more history books than my classmates.	57	282	6	8	671	1.90	Low
Compared to my peers, I think my knowledge in history is above the average.	56	268	23	6	685	1.94	Low
I know more historical allusions than my peers.	69	272	3	9	658	1.86	Low
I am satisfied with how much I know about history.	125	87	118	23	745	2.11	Low
Reading history makes people wise.	124	68	149	12	755	2.14	Low
Learning history is important.	54	280	7	12	683	1.93	Low
Learning history increases people's capabilities in judgment and analysis.	184	117	39	13	587	1.66	Low
Many historical figures worth learning from.	52	275	13	13	693	1.96	Low
History knowledge is essential for being an informed citizen.	208	118	7	20	545	1.54	Low
I feel very excited when a new history topic is initiated	56	268	22	7	686	1.94	Low
I am interested in history.	167	136	24	26	615	1.74	Low
I like touring history museums.	42	268	42	1	708	2.01	Low
I enjoy reading history stories.	129	184	21	19	636	1.80	Low
I like doing assignments relating to history.	126	133	52	42	716	2.03	Low
Total	1499	3006	572	218	10099	1.91	Low

Criterion mean = 2.5

Table 2 presents the results of the level of students' interest in history in public senior secondary schools. From the table, Students' interest in history is low in private senior secondary schools because its grand mean (1.91) is below the criterion mean (2.5).

Research Question three

What are the factors affecting students' interest in History among students of private senior secondary schools?

Table 3 Factors affecting students' interest in History among students of private senior secondary schools

Themes	Sub themes
Factors contributing to the improvement or decline of students' interest in History	Interesting story Content
	Eagerness to learn
	Promote knowledge

Table 3 presents the results on factors affecting students' interest in History among students of private senior secondary schools. Firstly, students in private schools had interest in history because the subject contains interesting stories.

“The stories from the past are interesting, we learn many facts and stories and topics under history...” (Private student 1)

Also, some students revealed that their eagerness to explore the past and know more about the past makes history interesting to them

“We are eager to know about the past of our country or the world...”
(Public student 4)

Finally, some students revealed that history helps them with the knowledge of the past in terms of knowing more about past traditions, culture, beliefs, trade and religion of the country and other countries.

“History brings us facts. It brings us knowledge. It doesn't only bring knowledge about your religion, it brings knowledge about other traditions, beliefs of other countries and their historical facts about what happened in their past, their treasure, their trade and others...” (Private student 5)

“I find it interesting; it is good to know more fact about past traditions and beliefs of the country and other countries...” (Private student 3)

Research Question four

What are the factors affecting students' interest in History among students of public senior secondary schools?

Table 4 Factors affecting students' interest in History among students of public senior secondary schools

Themes	Sub themes
Factors contributing to the improvement or decline of students' interest in History	Truancy
	Laziness
	Boring lessons
	Unmet expectation

Table 4 presents the results on factors affecting students' interest in History among students of public senior secondary schools.

Some students in public senior secondary schools complained they had no interest because they are truants, not always present in class for lessons; so they lost interest in history as a subject.

“...Not staying in the class when the history teacher is teaching or explaining the topic.” (Public student 1)

Another factor is Laziness because the students in public school admitted that they do not complete tasks around the subject and pay attention in class

“...By being lazy because we did not do the right thing at the right time, we do not pay attention in class because we have no desire to read or learn history” (Public student 6)

Also, some students complained that history lessons are always boring and they do not find the lessons interesting.

“...They do not really talk about the exact thing or point I love to learn about history. It is boring” (Public student 2)

Lastly, some students complained that the content of history lesson does not meet their expectations. They prefer to learn other historical facts different from the current curriculum content

...There are somethings I would like to know about history, there are not there in the scheme of work. They do not talk about it so I have less interest in it (Public student 4)

Research Question five

What are the teachers' perceived strategies to enhance students' interest in history?

Table 5 Teachers' perceived strategies to enhance students' interest in history

	level of priority				sum	mean	ranking
	lowest	low	high	highest			
improved working condition	0	4	30	96	130	3.6	1st
provision of textbooks	2	2	54	60	118	3.3	4th
provision of instructional materials	6	8	42	48	104	2.9	6th
better government policy	6	16	39	36	97	2.7	7th
improved funding	8	12	36	40	96	2.7	7th
workshop & conferences for teachers	9	22	27	28	86	2.4	9th
better classroom facilities	4	12	39	52	107	3	5th
curriculum review	2	8	24	88	122	3.4	3rd
better remuneration package	1	6	30	88	125	3.5	2nd

Table 5 presents the results of teachers' perceived strategies to enhance students' interest in senior secondary schools. From the table, improved working condition of teachers (3.6) was the most important strategy to enhance students' interest in history. Other strategies based on their hierarchy include better remuneration package (3.5), curriculum review (3.4), provision of textbooks (3.3), better classroom facilities (3), provision of instructional materials (2.9), better government policy (2.7), improved funding (2.7), workshop and conferences for teachers (2.4).

3.2. Statement of Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant mean difference of students' interest in History when public and private senior secondary schools are compared.

Table 6 t-test result on students' interest

	School Category	N	Mean	Std. Dev	df	t	Sig.
student interest	Private schools	341	41.73	10.499	692	19.625	.000
	Public schools	253	28.61	6.779			

Table 6 presents the results of the mean difference of students' interest in History when public and private senior secondary schools are compared. From the table, the result showed a significant outcome ($t = 19.625$, $df = 692$, $p < 0.05$). There is a significant mean difference of students' interest in History when public and private senior secondary schools are compared. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, students from private schools (mean = 41.73) had a higher interest in learning history when compared to their counterpart in public senior secondary schools (mean = 28.61).

HO₂: There is no significant mean difference of teachers' perceived strategies to enhance students' interest in history when public and private senior secondary schools are compared.

Table 7 t-test result on teachers' perceived strategies

	School Category	N	Mean	Std. Dev	df	t	Sig.
Proffered solution	Public schools	18	29.89	5.279	34	3.668	.001
	Private schools	18	21.17	8.597			

Table 7 presents the results of the mean difference of teachers' perceived strategies to enhance students' interest in history when public and private senior secondary schools are compared. From the table, the result showed a significant outcome ($t = 3.668$, $df = 34$, $p < 0.05$). There is a significant mean difference in the strategies to enhance students' interest in history as perceived by teachers. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Furthermore, teachers from public schools (mean = 29.89) had a better perceived strategies when compared to their counterpart in private junior secondary schools (mean = 21.17).

3.3. Discussion of Findings

From the results, students in private schools had high interest in learning history. Furthermore, the third result further explained the result of research question one by showing that in private schools, factors like interesting story content, eagerness to learn history and quest for knowledge improved the students' interest in history provide reasons for the high interest. This shows that private school students' interest in history is high due to the mentioned factors and this is good because students will perform better and history curriculum objectives will be achieved

The second result revealed that students in public schools had low interest in studying history. In addition, the result of the fourth research question explained the low interest by showing that factors like Truancy, Laziness, Boring lessons and unmet expectations reduced students' interest in history in public schools. This means that public school students' interest in history is affected by these factors which make them loose interest in learning history. These would have negative implications on achieving history curriculum objectives

Teachers suggested that improved working condition of teachers was the most important strategy to enhance students' interest in history. This would be good for the school if government improves teachers' working condition as because this would improve classroom learning and improve students' interest in learning history especially in public schools.

Moreover, there is a significant mean difference of students' interest in History when public and private senior secondary schools are compared. Students from private schools had a higher interest in learning history when compared to their counterpart in public senior secondary schools. This result supports the earlier results in research question one, two, three and four on students' interest in history and the factors responsible for it.

Finally, teachers from public schools had better perceived strategies when compared to their counterpart in private senior secondary schools. This reflects the type of challenges faced in this schools when compared with each other.

2. Conclusion

The study carried out a comparative investigation into senior secondary school (SSS) students' dwindling interest in studying history in Abeokuta metropolis area of Ogun state. From the results, students in private schools had high interest in learning history while students in public schools had low interest in studying history. In private schools, factors like interesting story content, eagerness to learn history and quest for knowledge improved the students' interest in history. However, factors like Truancy, Laziness, Boring lessons and unmet expectations reduced students' interest in history in public schools. Teachers suggested that improved working condition of teachers was the most important strategy to enhance students' interest in history. Finally, there is a significant mean difference of students' interest in History when public and private junior secondary schools are compared. Students from private schools had a higher interest in learning history when compared to their counterpart in public junior secondary schools. Also, teachers from public schools had better perceived strategies when compared to their counterpart in private junior secondary schools.

3. Recommendations

1. Teachers should make the history lessons interesting and adopt a learner centered teaching approach in order to encourage students to learn history
2. Students must pay attention in history classes and attend classes in order to improve their interest in history
3. The curriculum content of history should be reviewed in order to meet the expectations of the learners
4. Teachers' working condition must be improved in order to improve the teaching and learning condition of history

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