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PAGES: 183-197

ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/885312>

Is History Losing its Popularity as an Academic Discipline? A Case Study of USA and Nigeria¹

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Received-Accepted: 08.07.2019-06.09.2019

Research Article

Abstract

During the past few decades, there has been attacks directed towards the discipline of history especially from postmodernist scholars who continue to emphasize that history is simply a form of narrative with questionable objectivity. These writers construe history as human construct that signifies and facilitates our understanding of the past. Throughout the development in human societies, History was a fundamental pillar and was once conceived as a noble discipline reserved only for the Royal families and the Nobles surrounding them. However, the 21st century is recording one of the lowest points for the discipline which has increasingly come under threat from the transformations in the dynamics of the society fuelled by a deeply entrenched capitalist system that influences the choice of careers in modern day society. Consequently, History has been relegated to a selective subject as a complement to other disciplines that are perceived to have higher income capacities such as international studies and diplomacy. This paper therefore, attempts to examine the study of History as an academic discipline in the United States and Nigeria by identifying the causes for such diminishing popularity of History as an academic discipline.

Keywords: Education, United States, Nigeria, Decline, Teaching History

Tarih Bir Akademik Disiplin Olarak Popülerliğini Kaybediyor mu? Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Nijerya Örneği

Öz

Birkaç geçmiş on yıl boyunca, tarihin basit bir anlatım şekliyle objektifliğinin şüpheli olduğunu vurgulamaya devam eden özellikle post-modernist bilim insanları tarafından tarih disiplinine doğrudan saldırılar vardır. Bu yazarlar tarihi, bizim geçmiş anlayışımızı kolaylaştıran ve ifade eden insan yapısı olarak tefsir ederler. Buna rağmen, ilk olarak insan toplumları içindeki gelişimler üzerine tarih asil aileler ve onların etrafındaki soylular için soylu bir disiplin olarak tasarlanmış ana bir sütundur. Ne yazık ki, modern toplumda kariyer seçimini etkileyen derinden sağlamlaştırılmış kapitalist sistem tarafından doldurulan toplumun dinamikleri içindeki dönüşümleri tehdit eden en düşük disiplin noktasını 21. yüzyıl kayıt altına alıyor. Sonuç olarak, tarih seçmeli bir konu olarak uluslararası çalışmalar ve diplomasi gibi yüksek gelir kapasitesine sahip olacağı algılanan diğer disiplinlerin bir tamamlayıcısı gibi aşağı bir mevkiye indirildi. Bu çalışma tarihin akademik disiplinini canlandırıcı bir ileri yol önererek ve böyle bir çöküşün sebeplerini açıklayarak Amerika ve Nijerya'daki çalışmaların çöküş analizini elde etmek için bir çalışma yapacak.

Anahtar Kelimeler. Eğitim, Amerika, Nijerya, Çöküş, Tarih Öğretimi

¹ This article is analyzed by two reviewers and it is screened for the resemblance rate by the editor. (Bu makale iki hakem tarafından incelenmiş ve editör tarafından benzerlik oranı taramasından geçirilmiştir)

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Introduction

In reference to a famous claim by Marcus Garvey that, “a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without a root”, it is crystal clear that historical knowledge and thought is of great relevance in shaping the direction of our societies not only today, but also in the ages to come just as it has been through-time. Indeed, historical knowledge is key as it for instance, provides a premise on which we understand our forms of government and an understanding that informed decisions require that the masses be rational and knowledgeable. History facilitates this as it enables individuals to be well equipped with requisite knowledge for independent judgement on contemporary issues. In the absence of historical knowledge, it becomes easy for the masses to for instance, be persuaded by emotional appeals, charisma or commercials in making very important decision that have a direct impact on the society.

This paper has adopted the case studies of USA and Nigeria because they represent different dynamics both regionally and globally. The United States for one, has been at the helm of advancing the capitalist societal structure driven by among other tenets, the pursuit of maximum financial gains in any given socio-economic and political transaction. Notably, this capitalist ideology has developed and consequently been adopted across different regions globally. As is discussed further herein, the capitalist system to a very large extent has impacted significantly on the choice of careers that individuals seek. This trend has seen history included among the academic disciplines that have been relegated down the career pecking order. Nigeria on the other hand, is a key regional actor in Africa representing the continent as the most populous nation of 190 million people as of 2017 (UN Population Division, 2019) and Africa’s economic power house (International Monetary Fund, 2019). On the international front, it also represents a long list of developing countries. As such, both the USA and Nigeria also provide the perspectives of the study from developed and developing regions.

Following the industrial revolution that begun in Europe in the late 18th century (Goldstone, 2000, p. 332) to the age of globalization from the 20th century (Acosta, 2010, p. 6), there has been significant changes witnessed in organization of societies in regard to how knowledge is obtained and distributed down to the new generations. Societies have transformed in how politics and economics are conducted largely due to technological breakthroughs and new perspectives regarding social status that is dependent on career choices and financial status. The changes leading to the contemporary times, have notably impacted on how History as an academic discipline has been approached. The discipline is witnessing an increasingly popular thought that history has indeed become obsolete. Over the last decades, History unlike other disciplines, has continued to experience a steady decline in intellectual attention. It has become increasingly rare to experience historical debates, institute conferences that have historical themes, or witness competing output of historical intellectual works comparatively to the other intellectual disciplines in humanities and social sciences. Primarily, one of the biggest contributors to this phenomenon may be due to the underwhelming attention given by a majority of the modern historical scholars in trying to connect the historical past and the present.

Moreover, the generalizations commonly attached to historical knowledge further erodes the relevance of historical knowledge. The continuously poor structuring of historical questions for instance, when a student of history would perhaps ask how historical knowledge of the social structures during the Neapolitan society in the sixteenth century could help understand or perhaps shape the contemporary world, a historian perhaps wouldn't have much to say except to argue that it doesn't. However, this question, to avoid any twisted understanding ought to be moulded in the form of; how does the attempt to understand the social structure of such historical societies help to influence the ability to understand or even shape the modern society?

The existing circumstances in which modern day professional historians operate such as in schools, colleges, universities, public and private libraries and the modern nation-state academic print publishing systems are undergoing rapid, extensive and unpredictable changes. By the turn of the 22nd century, it is challenging to fathom what “doing history” would actually look like as technological advancements continue to dominate the world through visual media, cyberspace technologies and the global cultural exchanges. Therefore, in the complex modern world today, it is not just adequate to argue that the foundational relevance of historical knowledge is to broaden an individual's perspective and how it is a significant quality of the modern educated being. Yes, to this extent these assertions are adequately true, but emphatically, what the historical discipline requires is a transformation from the generalizations to issues of specificity. As such, a new analysis of historical thought needs to be able to address the link between the past and the present and, secondly, whether these experiences of the past and present are transferable.

In the past, there have been several studies conducted to examine the trends in historical studies from the elementary level of education in different regions across the globe. A study by Brophy, Vanstedright and Bridn (1993, p. 12) purposely to investigate the extent by which students understood history from the fifth grade discovered that the majority of the students perceived history as nothing more than past events or novels about important individuals in history; showed a lack of understanding of the relevance of teaching history or the nature of historical scholarship; and, there was confusion between the discipline of history and archaeology. Another study to examine the degree of intellectual historical thinking skills by both students and education practitioners in elementary schools yielded that both the students and teachers had acquired minimal historical thinking skills (Yeager and David, 1994, p. 4- 8).

The current general trends being experienced in historical scholarship from the elementary levels of education to post-graduate studies is concerning to the discipline. Throughout the years, the discipline of History has produced some of the most influential scholars and leaders whose influences continue to shape how we conceptualize societal affairs today. While the 20th and 21st centuries have also produced equally influential Historical scholars who have and continue to influence our societies in one way or the other, the current trends witnessed in the discipline raises concern about the future of Historical studies by the turn of the century. It remains a reserve for future observation whether the 22nd century would reflect historical scholarship to the magnitude similar to the ancient historical scholars. Great historians such as Herodotus (484-425BC) who is acclaimed by Cicero as the “Father of History” provides classical literature that reflects a systematic collection of

historical materials, testing of the accuracy of such materials and organizing them to provide a flowing and vivid narrative of events as witnessed in his works, 'The Histories,' (Herodotus, 1998). Other reputable scholars with immense contribution to the discipline include; Thucydides (460-395 BC), Sallust (86 BC), Xenophon (430 – 354 BC), Ibn Khaldun (1332-1395. A.D.), Al-Masudi (circa 893), Jarir al-Tabari (839–923 A.D), Fernand Braudel (1902-1985), Ali Al'amin Mazrui (1933- 2014) and Fuad Köprülü (1890-1966).

This study adopts a rigorous qualitative method to gather secondary data and conduct a comprehensive analysis on the declining popularity of History as an academic discipline. Whereas there is still a wide gap in available literature, this paper has attempted to analyse reports from government institutions, publications from internationally recognised print media as well as published academic articles to examine the trends in enrolment of students in the discipline of History in the United States and Nigeria. A special focus is put on methods and techniques of teaching History and how this has impacted on the perception of the discipline.

Understanding the Definitions

History is vast as it spans beyond the present into the past, uncovering the activities of mankind in all aspects of social, political, economic, technological, cultural, artistic, religious and scientific life at both local and international levels. Historical phenomena such as wars, the emergence and decline of empires and societies alike, revolutions, natural disasters and great fortunes in human life that explain the present and forecast the future, are a subject matter of history. However, the definition of history continues to shy away from a singular universally accepted understanding, fundamentally because of the fact that the discipline of history is one that no academic expert can claim monopoly over. Moreover, this absence of monopoly over the discipline of history is because history is an integral part of the society because of its tendency to impact the society through the various direct transformations experienced by each and every member of the society at large. For instance, those who lived during the 19th century would comparatively have a different judgement of history to those who live in contemporary 21st century world despite that the events that led to these transformations being historical in nature.

Understanding the meaning of history requires systematic studies and analysis. From the earliest historians to modern day proponents of social sciences, the mainstream assumption is that they have the capacity to identify essential patterns in people's lives or the activities of collective social groups. As such, Kramer et al. (2007, p. 6), argues that historical thought is a form of creative cultural work that projects the past as a shaping influence on later historical events and in extension, providing an understanding on why the world is as it is. This is because, proponents of this argument believe that the occurrences in human societies and individual lives are a consequence of specific causes and it is the discovery of such patterns of causality that provide an understanding of history. According to Foster et al. (1999, p. 296), history is not a mere documentation of past activities, but rather a form of investigation that enhances meaning of our collective memories over time and purposed to facilitate the analysis, generation and reconstruction of past elements about ideas, people and events. Carr (1964, p. 16), argues that the interaction between facts and a historian is a continuous process of endless dialogue

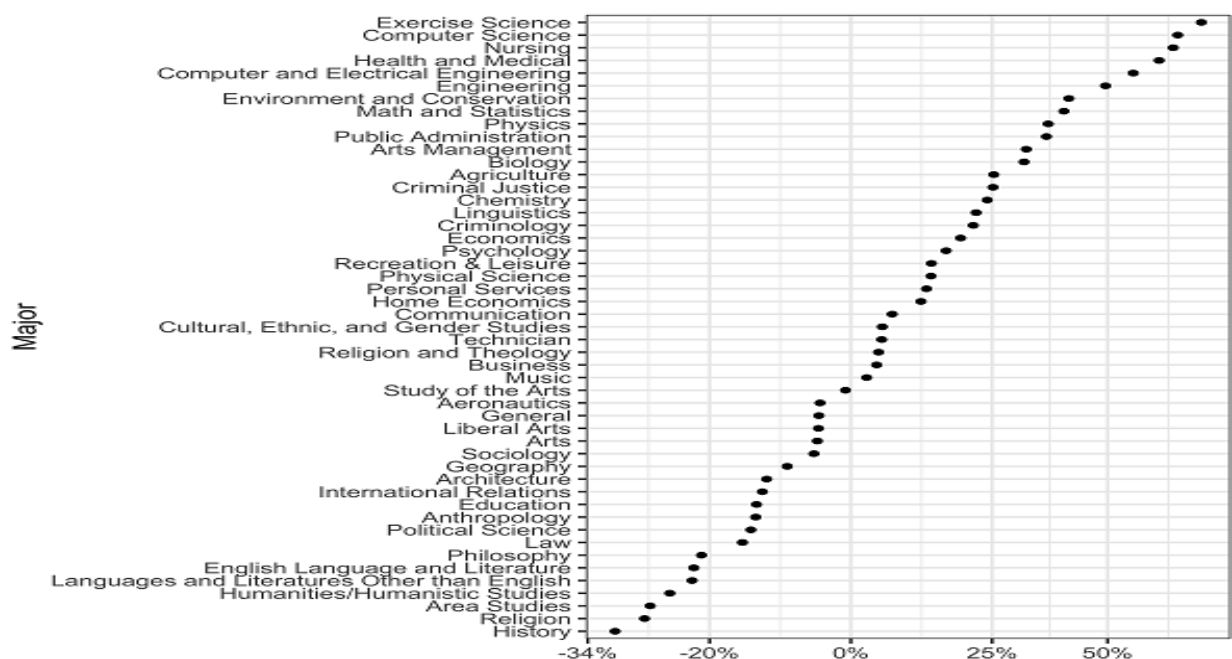
between the past and the present. Additionally, Rao (2000, p. 1) while emphasizing on the social role of history, conceives history as the memories of a society therefore, history provides a narrative of historical events that have shaped the present and future of humanity.

Evidence of decline in History as a discipline

i. United States

Active representation of History as an academic discipline in the United States commenced in 1893 when a panel of historians including former president Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) made recommendations for an eight-year course from 5th grade to junior high school in History and subsequently, leading to the establishment of the American Historical Association in 1884 (Link, 1985, p. 4) to promote scholarship in History. In all the American public high schools, all students were expected to undertake a two-year course in both American and world history. However, today, this period has been reduced to one year dedicated to American history. Notably, over the last few decades, there has been less dedication awarded to the discipline of History in the United States public schools. According to Ravitch (1985, p. 14), a report by National Assessment of Educational Progress in 1970 revealed that 44, percent of students in the age bracket of 17 years understood what Cold War meant and that only 62 percent were knowledgeable that the Supreme Court had the capacity to declare Congressional acts as unconstitutional. By recognizing how Cold War is a fundamental aspect of American history, these statistics demonstrated the existence of low grasps of the historical knowledge possessed by students.

Change in degrees awarded 2011-2017

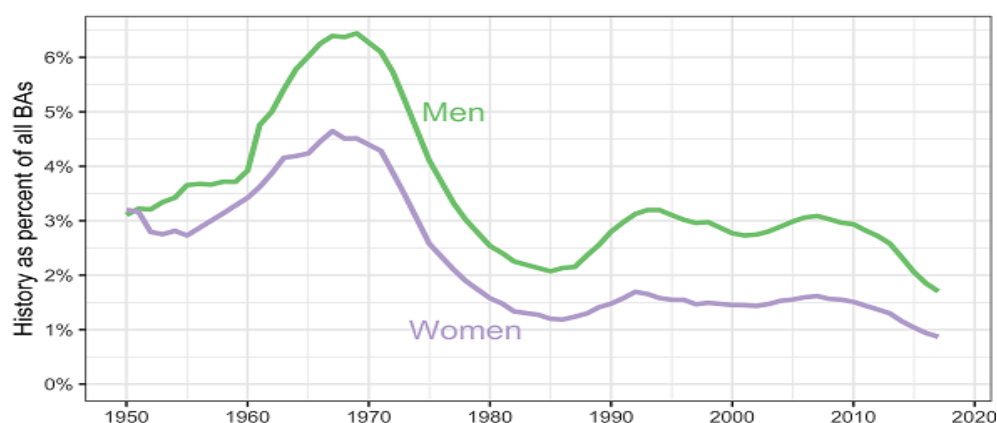


Sources: NCES IPEDS data taxonomy adopted from American Academy of Arts and Sciences

(2017)

Additionally, according to Schmidt (2018, p. 3), even before this daunting economic crisis, data collected between 1969 to 1985 represents a significant drop of about 66% making the period one of the lowest in terms of the decline of the discipline. As a percentage of college students in the US, Schmidt (2018) documents that History only accounts for about 5.3 degrees awarded out of 1000. This represents a decline from the statistics acquired in 1971 and 1993 that yielded 11.8 per 1000 and 7.6 per 1000 awarded degrees respectively (Schmidt, 2018p. 4). Moreover, empirical data collected in 2016 to examine the number of undergraduate degrees for the year 2014 revealed that the uptake of undergraduate studies had decreased consecutively for four years by 9 percent generally and by 13 percent in the leading universities in the country (Brookings, 2016, p. 2). This decline was also witnessed across the demographic categories. More specifically, there was a significant decline in women's interests partly due to the emergence of the pre-professional majors such as business and communications that attracted more interest from women. Consequently, the low rates of admissions in the 2014-15 academic year by a margin of 19 percent comparative to 2009-10 admissions in the bachelor's level as was indicated by the American Historical Association, is reflective that the graduating class of 2017 and 2018 had fewer graduates of History than previously witnessed in the class of 2014.

History's share of all US Bachelor's degrees since 1950



Source: IPEDS & HEGIS (2015)

The 2008 economic crisis turned out to be a baseline for the commencement of a pattern that was witnessed across the undergraduate education in the United States relative to admissions. According to Schmidt (2018, p. 3), history became the least academic discipline in terms of the number of admissions because the period recorded the steepest decline in the number of bachelor's degrees in History. Additional data from the US National Centre for Education Statistics (2008, p. 1), the number of history majors was recorded at 34,642 before the number further declined to approximately 24,266 in 2017.

Tworek (2013, p. 2), argues that this trend can perhaps be attributed to the consequences of increasing gender equality that influenced women to turn away from pursuing degrees that were allegedly considered as traditional feminine occupations. Moreover, Tworek (2013) argues that pre-professional degrees appealed as more

practical and applicable, and therefore, easier to gain employment and probably generate higher income. However, the anxiety over career prospects for students who decide to pursue History as a major is misguided. According to a research by the University of Texas (2018, p. 4), History majors often tend to translate to higher earnings compared to other fields such as psychology, ecology, neurobiology, zoology and English just to mention a few.

Indeed, the experience of History as an academic field in the United States was greatly influenced by the global economic crises that had a big impact in the direction of historical studies and in extension, humanities in general. According to Katz-Gerro (2012, p. 12), there have been significant budgetary cuts witnessed from both private and, or, public funding for Arts and Humanities research in exchange for projects and research that are deemed to be life-saving research. In overall, there has been extensive studies (Berner, 1973; Baker and Gutheil, 2011; Borgonovi, and O'Hare, 2004; and, Brinkley, 2009) that elaborate extensively on the impact of economic crises on research funding for Arts and Humanities. However, this paper gives cognizance that these researches were tailored to specific geographical localities.

ii. Nigeria

The attainment of independence by African countries marked the beginning in decline in interest for the discipline of history. Previously, the earlier generations of African political and military leaders as well as the general African civilian masses developed a strong understanding that history, and more specifically African history was compromised as it reflected to a large extent Eurocentric thought. African political leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmed Toure, Muamar Gaddafi and Robert Mugabe viewed history as having served its purpose in facilitating the liberation of African countries from European colonialism (Mahadi, 2008, p. 22)

Nigeria has not been a different case. During the 1980s, academicians and even more specifically, historians, vehemently opposed the policies of president Babangida especially regarding the structural adjustment programmes introduced by the World Bank. During his regime, Government was introduced as an alternative subject to History in secondary schools. Mahammad (2006, p. 34), documents that, in 2003, president Obasanjo developed the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy economic policy that was vehemently opposed by historical scholars such as Bala Usman in Nigeria who published an open letter to the president about the government inconsistent policies. President Obasanjo reacted by labelling historians as troublemakers and began advocating for the scrapping of humanity courses (Mahammad, 2006, p. 27-37).

With Nigeria trying to industrialise, there has been a general preference for scientific and technical courses supported by economic dynamics at the expense of humanities. Disciplines such as History, have therefore been accused of not meeting the demands of the society and therefore, considered irrelevant as the world is rapidly advancing towards technology. It is imperative to note that the Nigerian governments specifically under the regimes of Babangida and Obasanjo, have been accused by historians as participating in the erosion of society's consciousness for the role they played in weakening the discipline of History in Nigerian institutions of learning. According to a report by National Commission for Education in Nigeria (NCCE, 2018, p. 17), there are

proposals to scrap history as one of the courses provided in various colleges under the justification that teachers with National College Education qualifications are involved in teaching in both primary and junior secondary schools, thus, there is no need for studying history in colleges. Additionally, Esedebe (2003, p. 15), documents that despite history being an important component or tool of instilling patriotism and nationalism in a state, the discipline has been relegated in Nigeria as it is no longer offered as a compulsory course in either primary or secondary levels of education.

The mainstream offensive on the study of history in Nigeria is also attributed to the assumptions of American trained educators, influence of institutions such as the Comparative Education Studies and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) and the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC) (Abijo, 1981, p. 11) backed by a powerful bureaucracy emerging from dictatorship. Lobbying by these institutions led to changes in curriculum with the introduction of social studies in primary and secondary school at the expense of a gradual elimination of history (Adeyinka, 1991, p. 13).

According to Esogbue (2008), instead of establishing History, specifically Nigerian or African history as one of the compulsory subjects in primary and senior secondary school, the government has opted to subject History as a selective subject. A majority of students opted to study Government instead of history leading to significant decline in enrolment as witnessed between 2002-2012 (West African Examination Council, 2013). Additionally, at the college and university level, the discipline of History is losing its popularity because it has to a large extent been merged with other disciplines such as African Studies, Diplomacy, International Relations and Strategic Studies (Esogbue, 2008). Moreover, the discipline of History has been criticized as having an extensive curriculum content and as such, the discipline is considered as too complex and therefore, difficult. According to Oluwatoki (2012, p. 3), History has not been given proper attention in the Nigerian education system. Ultimately, the contemporary challenges facing Nigeria such as election malpractices, political violence, ethno-religious conflicts, inter-state boundary conflicts and other challenges to nation-building project the failure to learn from History.

Discussion

Notably, the declining popularity of History comes from a combination of myths wrapped in advises to students, parents and found in mainstream discussions that are articulated by the state through legislative priorities. These myths are founded in misinformation about prospective lives of History majors that are painted to reflect a discipline that is plagued with either underemployment or unemployment. Increasingly, students tend to pursue majors with higher employment prospects in the science, technology, engineering, pre-professional courses and mathematics that has drawn them away from pursuing humanities such as History.

From the trends witnessed in the empirical data, this paper argues that economic and social changes in the society have significantly contributed to the declining popularity of History as an academic discipline. Today, the discipline has undergone massive fragmentation and, or overspecialization. As a consequence, there has been

a consistent loss of the academic appeal that was attached to the discipline during the classical era. The incapacity of the discipline to play a dominant role in addressing the challenges of the day through providing more intellectual figures in the society to engage in public debate is doing the discipline no service. When writing of history commenced in Greece during the 5th centuries, classical historians became key figures in the society by contributing to different discussions involving the society such and wrote extensively on wars such as the Peloponnesian and Persian Wars, foreign countries such as Egypt and Mesopotamia, local and regional history (Momigliano, 1978, p. 194). Today, Historians have not adequately taken the lead in public discussions which has been filled to a large extent by political commentators. While this does not necessarily mean that Historians must engage in television debates which oftenly are not best platforms for intellectual debate, more visibility of the discipline to the public ought to take advantage of the print media such as newspaper commentaries and periodical releases so as to express the wider intellectual culture of the discipline.

In a book volume of essays “What is History Now?” by Cannadine (2002, p. 3-14), there exists a comparative difference to the work of Carr (2018), “What is History?”. Whereas Carr’s (2018) has been subjected to debate, it nonetheless depicts coherency that ought to be associated with the study of any discipline. However, while this paper appreciates that a volume containing a collection of essays may not yield unity of a given volume, what has been exhibited in the essays by Cannadine (2002), is History not as collection of fragments but rather, as a discipline buried in different facets. The significance of this reference is that the book has consequently depicted History as a discipline that has become extremely specialised by attracting minimal intellectual coherency that commands respect. It therefore is increasingly cumbersome to know the commonality that is shared by graduates of History similar to other disciplines such as Psychology.

In light of these, there is indeed an urgent need to redress the discipline of History in order to attract more students to the department. Firstly, the history program must be reconstituted as a program that has reputation for rigor. Departments of History need to rethink on how to meet the expectations of new-generation students for the program. There is dire need to embrace transformation that will strengthen the departments in order to reassure prospective students that the program is structured to facilitate academic achievement and professional development.

Secondly, there should be a movement away from extensive overreliance on the mandatory introductory courses to recruit students to the department and emphasis placed on previous academic credentials (Ludvigsson and Booth, 2015, p. 18-19). For decades most departments of history have relied upon these introductory courses as the recruitment tool for history majors. However, college and university education has extensively transformed over the last decades such that, students who gain admission to the bachelor’s degree programs may have previous course credits from either community colleges, dual or concurrent enrolment. As such, it is imperative that departments of history expand beyond the on-campus introductory courses. But even more importantly, findings by several studies across different academic backgrounds have emphasized that there ought to be some aspects of direct engagement or coordination between faculty peers to identify and facilitate students who may be strongly interested in pursuing historical studies (Cliffordson, 2008; Morgaman et al., 2002;

Urban et al., 1999; Martin et al., 2001; Tumen et al., 2008). Additionally, even as there are increasing choices for students, facilitating double majors for history alongside other peer departments will improve enrolment in the department.

Thirdly, there needs to be changes in the general education curriculum towards a system that seeks to advance the introductory courses beyond mere surveys of extensively broad topical issues and more towards emphasis on rigorous and effective training in core concepts and historical thinking. According to Mikaelian (2014, p. 4), historians need to develop communication skills for proper dissemination of Historical thought; nurture historical skills which have become a basis for many career paths; and, be able to outline the range of occupations especially to undergraduate students. Barton et al. (2011, p. 21) documents that the type of history taught in schools narrowly applies focus on issues such as marginalization of minority groups, women or members of a particular working class. However, the teaching of history ought to allow students to become critical thinkers and readers of history.

Teaching history ought to transform the conceptions of the discipline fundamentally by facilitating a change in historical thinking by students 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 and 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 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. It should be an enabler for students to familiarize themselves with their own heritage, cultural backgrounds and identity as well as those of other cultures and world perspectives. According to Yilmaz (2008, p. 42), History should be a platform through which individuals develop to appreciate cultural pluralism and tolerance towards other different groups in the society and as such, should be an important aspect of education in all societies. More comprehensively, Historical discipline should be taught as an essential discipline that develops the abilities of students to critically evaluate the perspectives of other people; provide historical knowledge, skills and procedures through the capacity and ability to differentiate opinions and facts, distinguish bias and prejudices. These considerations result in establishment of history as an active, a rigorous discipline and more attractive to students.

Conclusion

Historiography as a branch of history that emerged in the 19th century Europe (Klein, 2000, p. 127; Stern, 1970, p. 171) provides an important platform through which the development of historical writing can be traced from the ancient times to modern day as it incorporates the changing techniques in the writing of history, the stages of development in historical writing and even more importantly in the context of this paper, the transformation or change in attitude towards the nature and understanding of history as a discipline itself. Therefore, by acting as the lenses through which the understanding of the past is represented, the modern-day historical scholars must be at the peak of their professional strata so as to have a reasonable understanding on how

particular subjects or issues that they are discussing have been approached in the past and how they are conceived in the present. It becomes imperative that there needs to be a broader understanding of historiography in order to improve on or advance the already existing historiographical knowledge that has taken place in the last decades and reaffirm History as a rigorous intellectual discipline.

In conclusion, the current decline in popularity of history majors appears to be driven by structural changes in the incredibly diverse landscape of higher education, national economies, local variables that reflect the consequences of actions and policies at several levels, and longer-term demographic shifts. It will be at least a few years before we can see how faculty and administrators' efforts to revitalize and promote history undergraduate programs will influence the size of future history cohorts and the quality of their learning. In the meantime, the trends witnessed in both Nigeria and the United States are 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 both in institutional setting and the larger public discourse. Amongst other key issues, the debate that surrounds revitalizing the discipline should be inclusive of brainstorming on how to improve on professional development opportunities, access to historical resources, continuity of the discipline and strengthening departments of History through adequate funding. This is not the first time that the survival of History as an academic discipline has been challenged, such attempts were witnessed in the 1960s and were shot down. The threat may be greater today, but with commensurate commitment, History will stand the test of time.

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