



Teachers' Perceptions of the Problems faced in the Teaching of History in Senior High Schools

Gideon Boadu¹

ABSTRACT

History is an important school subject which conveys invaluable lessons from the past and whose worth transcends regional, national and cultural boundaries. Such a subject needs to be taught well in order to make learners gain deep appreciation of the relevance of their learning. However, effective teaching of history in Ghanaian schools has long been blighted by problems and challenges that have often gone unaddressed. With little empirical literature emerging from Ghana, this study, drawing on 32 history teachers from 18 senior high schools, examined history teachers' perceptions of the problems faced in the teaching of history in the Cape Coast metropolis and Komenda, Edina, Eguafu, Abrim district in the Central Region of Ghana. The descriptive cross-sectional research design was used for the study and data were collected through questionnaires. The study found that overloaded syllabus, insufficient human and material resources, lack of support for the subject and large classes were the major problems facing the teaching of history. Based on the findings, the study concluded that the problems confronting the teaching of history in the two districts are administrative and pedagogical in nature. On this conclusion, it was recommended, among others, that syllabus content should be integrated to make it sync with the period given for its implementation. Also, the necessary resources should be provided to enhance the teaching of the subject.

Keywords: History syllabus, history teaching, history teachers, problems.

Available Online: 21st July, 2016.

This is an open access article under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

1.0 Introduction

There are different subjects at the Senior High School (SHS) level in Ghana that are deemed essential in contributing to national development and forging international cooperation and integration. These subjects range from the Arts to the Sciences and are recognized as genuine fields of academic scholarship. History as a subject falls within the General Arts, and has for a long time, enjoyed a place in Ghana's school curriculum. The teaching of history in Ghana could be traced informally to the pre-colonial days when parents and elderly persons recounted the past of their communities to the younger

¹ Department of Arts & Social Sciences Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana, Email: gidboadu@gmail.com.

generation through folktales, music, and other art forms. These were chief means of conveying invaluable lessons and values that were highly cherished in traditional societies. The teaching of history took a formal turn in the colonial period when it was taught in the schools established by the missionaries and those established by the British colonial officials. In the period after colonialism, history was amongst the four subjects which were taught and examined in the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination (M.S.L.C.E). History was also offered as an elective subject in the Secondary Schools (form 1 to 5) for Arts students who wrote the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (SC/GCE 'O' Level). At the sixth form, history still remained one of the subjects offered for the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE 'A' level) examination. With the introduction of the 1987 educational reform, history was incorporated into social studies at the basic school level and offered as an elective for General Arts students at the Senior Secondary School (now Senior High School) level (Cobbold & Oppong, 2010b). The case is not different today as history is offered at the SHS level as one of the elective subjects for students pursuing the General Arts course. However, some aspects of history are assimilated into citizenship education and social studies which are taught at the Upper Primary, and Junior/Senior High School (J/SHS) levels respectively. As it stands, students stand to gain a full appreciation of history as a subject only when they choose it as an option in the General Arts course at the SHS level.

The long existence of history in the Ghanaian school curriculum could be as a result of the numerous purposes that it serves. As a study of the past, history draws on significant events of the past to inform the present and to safeguard the future. In effect, history does not study the past in isolation from the present, but relates intricately, the successes, achievements and failures of antecedent generations to the contemporary case and sets the stage for a better living in the morrow. With the seemingly importunate problems society is subjected to, especially in the 21st Century, the utility of history cannot be overlooked as most of the current problems facing society have deep-lying historical geneses. The universalistic worth of history notwithstanding, it is one of the least patronised subjects in Ghana. For instance, Dwarko (2007) compared the entry statistics among history, government, religious studies and economics for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in Ghana (now West African Senior School Certificate Examination, WASSCE) organised by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) between the period 2000 to 2005. In the comparison, it emerged that over the period, history recorded the least increase, that is, 70% as against 230%, 160%, and 140% increase in government, religious studies, and economics respectively. Subsequently, out of the 150,590 General Arts students who sat for the WASSCE in 2006, only 10.3% offered history as compared to 45.0% who offered economics. Further decline was seen from 2007 onwards when the proportion of history students dwindled to a little over 9% compared to enrolment in other subject areas in the Arts. At the university level also, Dwarko (2007) reports that upon the large numbers of students admitted yearly to read history at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, only a few ended up reading the subject in their final year. According to him, the university, between 1996 and 2002 admitted 1,336 students to read history, but only 555 continued reading history in their final year. Also, out of the 390 students admitted to into history in the 2002/2003 academic year, only 146 were still reading History in their final year. The trend continues today as many students turn down invitations given them by the history department to major in the subject. In the 2015/2016 academic year, for example, there was only one final-year undergraduate student doing single honours in history at the University of Cape Coast.

The foregoing picture points to the fact that the subject has become increasingly unpopular among students in Ghana. Despite its overwhelming importance (Bam & Visser, 2002; Cobbold & Oppong, 2010b; Dwarko, 2007; Fisher, 2000; Taylor & Young, 2003; Yilmaz, 2008), history is gradually losing its grip on Ghana's education system. A question that is certainly worth an answer is; what accounts for the current state of history in the country? Historians, history educators and history students may be quick to point to a host of factors relating to pedagogy, availability of human and material resources, and the turn of attention towards the so-called economically viable subjects. Though it might be difficult to hold a single factor as the cause, the problem certainly cannot be dissociated from how the subject is taught. For instance, Boadu, Awuah, Ababio and Eduaquah (2014) observe that for some time, history teachers have adopted the classical methods of teaching with little or no innovation. Since interest in the subject is

gained primarily through how the subject is taught and/or presented to learners, issues and conditions surrounding the teaching of the subject might plausibly explain the current state of history especially at the SHS level. The issues raised above point to a need to seek teachers' views as to what factors hamper the teaching of history. This study therefore aims at uncovering history teachers' perceptions of the contending issues obstructing the effective teaching of history in senior high schools in the Cape Coast metropolis and Komenda, Edina, Eguafu, Abrim (K.E.E.A) district in the Central Region of Ghana.

2.0 Literature review

The teaching of history in schools cannot be said to be without problems and challenges. Some studies (eg. Adeyinka, 1989; Cobbold & Oppong, 2010a; Ruto, 2013) highlight several factors that affect the teaching and learning of history. For instance, a study conducted by Adeyinka (1989) on the problems of history teaching in some Nigerian secondary schools revealed that lack of essential teaching aids was the most serious problem of history teaching as the majority 41 (56.9%) of respondents regarded it as a very serious problem, 22 (30.6%) as serious, and 5 (6.9%) as an average problem. Other problems revealed by the study were the absence of well-equipped libraries or history rooms, large classes, inadequate motivation of teachers, and students' low standard of written English. Assessing the teaching and learning of history in the Central Region of Ghana, Cobbold & Oppong (2010a) found that recommended methods were not used by history teachers in teaching the subject, and even those used were not used appropriately. It was also revealed that instructional resources were not frequently used in history lessons because such resources were either not available at all or were inadequate. Also, the number of periods allocated for history on the school timetable was found to be inadequate for the entire syllabus to be covered. Students were also found to possess negative perceptions about the subject as they regarded history as a compendium of facts to be memorised.

Ruto (2013) studied the challenges associated with the managerial support in the teaching of history and government. It was found that most of the challenges associated with the teaching the subjects ranged from inadequate instructional materials to teacher motivation. Even though schools were able to provide support in the form of textbooks, maps, charts, and other instructional materials, such materials were not adequate for teaching. Again, funds to support teaching and learning were found to be lacking as was the opportunity for teachers to attend refresher courses to enhance the teaching of the subjects. Moreover, teachers indicated that lack of motivation was a major challenge as well as head teachers' underestimation of the importance of history and government. The study concluded that managerial support for teachers was inadequate in the procurement of instructional materials for teaching, recruitment of teachers, provision of funds for seminars and workshops, and motivation of performing teachers. In a similar study on secondary school teachers' attitudes and challenges on the teaching and learning of history and government, Ruto and Ndaloh (2013) revealed that the subjects were overloaded with more topics than what teachers could cover. This was coupled with teachers' feeling that the periods allocated to the subjects were insufficient. The findings further showed that there were a limited number of history and government teachers despite the large number of students. Besides, there were lack of history and government sections in most school libraries, and even in schools which had history and government sections in their libraries, these sections were not well stocked with relevant books and instructional materials.

Boadu et al. (2014) in their study on the use of technology in the teaching of history in the Cape Coast metropolis in Ghana found that though teachers were aware of the various technologies that could be used in the teaching of history, they (teachers) used such technologies sparsely for instructional purposes. The study reported that teachers' positive perceptions about technology were not translated into practical use due chiefly to the unavailability of most of the technological devices. This definitely took off some shine from history lessons as the use of technologies such as overhead projectors, interactive boards, computers, etc. contribute to making history less abstract and more meaningful to students. Rono (2015) also studied the constraints on effective history and government instruction in secondary schools in the Bomet district in Kenya and revealed several factors which affected the

effective teaching of the subject. According to the study, a major constraint that hampered the effective teaching of the subjects was the unavailability of instructional resources as there were challenges in purchasing resources, especially textbooks. Again, the instructional periods allocated for the coverage of the syllabi were found to be insufficient. Coupled with insufficient instructional time was lack of in-service training of teachers on new methods of teaching, subject knowledge and materials and resources development. Also, there was inadequate number of history and government teachers in most of the schools. It was also reported that history and government lacked direct relevance to the job market and this negatively affected how teachers taught the subjects.

The literature gives an idea of the issues that are affecting history teaching in some regions of Africa. This suggests that the problems might be pan-African in nature. Key challenges, as observed from the literature, are the unavailability of instructional resources, loaded syllabus and lack of administrative support for history teachers. With little evidence emerging from Ghana, a study of this kind becomes necessary as it would enlighten school administrators and education officials on the challenges in history teaching in senior high schools and the need for such challenges to be addressed. Again, the study would inform policy makers and curriculum developers on the possible causes for the decline in the patronage of history as a school subject for the purpose of ensuring quality in the history curriculum. It is hoped that the results would contribute to the formulation of policies that would help position history as a keystone subject in Ghana's educational system.

2.1 Research question

What are history teachers' perceptions of the problems faced in the teaching of history in senior high schools in the Cape Coast and K.E.E.A districts?

2.2 Research hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in history teachers' perceptions of the problems faced in the teaching of history in private and public senior high schools in the Cape Coast and K.E.E.A districts.

3.0 The history curriculum in Ghana: An overview

3.1 Rationale

Rationale is the motive for which something is done. It is meant to convince people on the purpose and importance of an innovation or activity that is to take place. Every worthwhile curriculum must be based on a well-defined statement of purpose which should be in sync with a broader institutional or national aspiration. This is because it is the rationale that provides the justification, direction and driving force for implementation. Unless a rationale exists, educational goals and objectives cannot be pushed. The rationale for the pursuit of history in senior high schools in Ghana is clearly enshrined in the SHS history syllabus. The rationale conveys succinctly the philosophical grounding of the subject, the need for its study, and reflects the how the nation prides herself on her past and that of Africa. This is captured in the statement below:

History is the study of the past to help us understand our present situation so that we can build a better future. At the Senior High School (SHS) level, History should not be seen as memorising historical facts and dates, but should be presented in a way that shows its relevance for the development of the Nation. ... through the achievements of others in the past, the student can become patriotic, be able to know and take pride in his or her own heritage and be motivated to build on it. Studying History also promotes national harmony and unity as it enables the students to learn about, appreciate and respect the cultures of other ethnic groups besides their own. This syllabus... offers an opportunity for the student to appreciate the achievements of his/her ancestors and thus develop pride in being a Ghanaian and an African. It hence, challenges the student to show loyalty to the country and

always seek to build on what their ancestors have achieved (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2010, p. ii).

It could be gleaned from the above rationale statement that at the SHS level, history is designed to furnish the student with the skills and dispositions to enable him/her fit well into society. This connotes the development of patriotic tendencies, critical and analytical thinking skills, and deep national awareness through knowledge of the past (Oppong, 2009). Ultimately, history as a subject is taught to give the student an understanding of the present through knowledge and appreciation of the past, to equip him/her with desirable lifelong traits and to cushion him/her to contribute meaningfully to the progress and survival of society. The foregoing is a pointer to the fact that the teaching of history at the SHS level has well thought-out intents and motives. This suggests that there is a purpose for the inclusion of all the contents and activities outlined in the syllabus. Therefore, whatever obstructs the achievement of any of the objectives or activities prescribed in the syllabus is a problem and therefore, a threat to the purpose for which history is studied at the SHS level.

3.2 General aims

The general aims of the SHS history curriculum are related to the rationale statement. The curriculum is aimed at equipping students with the skill to redirect the study and interpretation of Ghanaian and African history from an insider African perspective. Specifically, the SHS history programme is targeted at helping students to develop skills for gathering and objectively analysing historical data such that they will be well positioned to interpret the actions and behaviours of the people of Ghana from a Ghanaian viewpoint. It is also aimed at the acquisition of a detailed study of the history of the people of Ghana and some other African civilizations with the aim of appreciating, *inter alia*, the achievements and advancements of earlier ages. Recognition is also made of the interdependence of societies and the development of a strong sense of national consciousness, national identity and international unity through the acquisition of positive habits and attitudes. The purpose is to make students appreciate the relevance and utility of the study of history in both the present and the future (MoE, 2010).

3.3 Scope of content

The SHS history syllabus adopts the thematic approach to present the content to be covered. The content is intended to help students learn about the history of Ghana and Africa as the basis for planning for the present and the future of the country, the continent and the wider world. The content is divided into three sections and focuses on:

1. Landmarks of African history up to AD 1800.
2. Cultures and civilizations of Ghana from the earliest times to AD 1900.
3. History of Ghana and her relations with the wider world from AD 1900 - 1991.

Section one (Landmarks of African History up to AD1800) comprises nine units out of which seven cover various African civilisations, while the first two units treat introductory issues on history and African pre-history. In section two (Cultures and civilizations of Ghana from the earliest times to AD 1900) also, nine units are presented on thematic aspects of Ghanaian history as such the pre-history of Ghana, rise of states and kingdoms, social and political organisation, economic history, the coming of the Europeans, among others. The third section (History of Ghana and her relations with the wider world from AD 1900 – 1991) covers four units on social, economic and political developments in Ghana, independence and after, Ghana after the Nkrumah Era 1966-1991, and Ghana in the Comity of Nations. The scope of the SHS history syllabus thus goes beyond the confines of Ghana and Africa and embraces the wider world. It is intended furnish students with the history of Ghana, Africa and the World as a step in building national and global feelings and dispositions that are crucial for the present and future development of the world.

3.4 Profile dimensions

These are the underlying behaviours or abilities students are expected to acquire as a result of having gone through a period of instruction in history. Three profile dimensions have been specified for teaching, learning and testing in the history syllabus. These are Knowledge and Understanding (KU), Use of Knowledge (UK) and Attitudes and Values (AV). KU bothers on the ability to remember or recall material already learned and also the ability to grasp the meaning of the material be it verbal, pictorial, or symbolic - the lowest level of learning. UK is the ability to use or apply the knowledge acquired. This has a number of learning/behaviour levels including application, analysis, creativity or innovation, synthesis and evaluation. These are higher levels of learning since they go beyond simplistic acquisition of knowledge and understanding. AV relate to the affective domain of knowledge and behaviour. The dimension consists of a number of learning and behavioural levels such as receiving, responding, valuing and organizing. Even though each of these profile dimensions are important in history, the syllabus gives them different weightings. KU and AV are allotted 30% each, while UK is given 40%. This means that the history syllabus places more emphasis on students' ability to apply historical knowledge in different contexts and not just its mere acquisition. Application of knowledge should therefore be the prime focus of teaching, learning and assessment of history in schools.

4.0 Methodology

The descriptive cross-sectional research design was employed in the study. This finds explanation in the researcher's quest to give a vivid presentation of the phenomenon at a point time without motivating and/or influencing the views of respondents. The study made use of all history teachers in the senior high schools that offered history in the Cape Coast metropolis and the K.E.E.A district in the Central Region of Ghana. At the time of the study, there were 18 schools that offered history as a subject in the two districts and a total of 32 history teachers. Seven (7) of the teachers were student-teachers from the University of Cape Coast (n=5) and the University of Education, Winneba, (n=2) while the remaining (twenty-five) were practicing teachers. Among the schools, four (4) were private while fourteen (14) were public. There were six (6) history teachers in the private schools and twenty-six (26) history teachers in the public schools. Owing to the small number of schools that offered history, the census method was used to select all the schools and all the history teachers therein. For the purpose of the study, it was assumed that all the teachers had attained professional status, that is, they had gone through both content and pedagogical training. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up a series of close-ended problem statements designed on a 4-point scale as follows; 'not a problem', 'moderate problem', 'serious problem', and 'very serious problem'. Individual items on the questionnaire were gleaned from the commonly observed issues found in the literature. However, these statements were not deemed exhaustive as they did not cover all aspects of the teaching of history. To ensure validity, the instrument was vetted by a research assistant who checked for appropriateness, ordering and clarity of the items. As a measure of reliability, the instrument was pilot-tested on 10 history graduate teachers who were having their national service in various non-educational institutions in the Central Region of Ghana. A Cronbach's alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.82 was obtained from the pilot-study. Thus, the instrument was deemed appropriate for the study based on the suggestion of [Fraenkel and Wallen \(2000\)](#) that a reliability co-efficient of 0.70 or above is high enough for research purposes.

The researcher visited the schools to inform the teachers about the study and also to administer the questionnaire. Teachers who showed readiness to respond to the questionnaire on the first visit were administered the instrument. For those who were not ready on the first visit, later dates were arranged for the administration of the questionnaire. For the purposes of confidentiality and anonymity, teachers were not required to write anything that could be associated with their identity. The data were collected over a period of 4 weeks and the return rate was 100%. The returned questionnaires were cleaned and numbered serially to ensure easy identification. Individual items on the questionnaire were then coded based on the response chosen on the scale. The coding was done as follows; 'not a problem = 1', 'moderate problem = 2', 'serious problem = 3' and 'very serious problem = 4'. Statistical tools such frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the data. Means for individual items were computed

and used to determine the rank of each item. The two independent samples t-test was also used to test the hypothesis.

5.0 Results and discussion

The results were presented in relation to the research question and hypothesis that guided the study. Results regarding the research question are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Teachers' perceptions of the problems faced in the teaching of history

Statements	Not a	Moderate	Serious	Very serious	Mean	Rank
	problem n (%)	problem n (%)	problem n (%)	problem n (%)		
Lack of suitable history textbooks	8 (25.0)	22 (68.8)	2 (6.3)	-	1.81	11
Unavailability of audio materials	4 (12.5)	8 (25.0)	14 (43.8)	6 (18.8)	2.69	5
Unavailability of visual materials	3 (9.4)	12 (37.5)	14 (43.8)	3 (9.4)	2.53	6
Unavailability of audio-visual materials	2 (6.3)	7 (21.9)	19 (59.4)	4 (12.5)	2.78	2
Insufficient instructional time	5 (15.6)	13 (40.6)	11 (34.4)	3 (9.4)	2.38	9
Large class size	4 (12.5)	6 (18.8)	17 (53.1)	5 (15.6)	2.72	4
Overloaded syllabus	2 (6.3)	5 (15.6)	12 (37.5)	13 (40.6)	3.13	1
Insufficient qualified history teachers	3 (9.4)	14 (43.8)	13 (40.6)	2 (6.3)	2.44	7
Lack of teacher incentives	6 (18.8)	11 (34.4)	14 (43.8)	1 (3.1)	2.31	10
Lack of effective supervision	5 (15.6)	12 (37.5)	12 (37.5)	3 (9.4)	2.41	8
Lack of administrative support for the subject	2 (6.3)	10 (31.3)	14 (43.8)	6 (18.8)	2.75	3

As observed from table 1, overloaded syllabus was seen by most teachers as the biggest problem facing history teaching as 12 (37.5%) of the teachers regarded it as a serious problem while 13 (40.6%) deemed it as a very serious problem. Per the result, it might be that the SHS history syllabus prescribes contents and activities that require more time for their completion. The figures indicate that teachers perceived the SHS history syllabus as containing more materials, facts, and information that cannot be completed within the number of years allotted. The consequence could be two-fold: teachers may be compelled to rush through the topics in order to achieve a superficial coverage of the syllabus, or they may resort to selective teaching where a few topics, especially, examinable ones, would be taught in depth at the expense of full syllabus coverage. An overloaded syllabus is certainly a major bother to the effective implementation of the any history curriculum. It was therefore not surprising that teachers perceived it as the most challenging problem in the teaching of history. This finding relates to [Ruto and Ndaloh's \(2013\)](#) revelation that the history and government syllabi were often overloaded with more topics that could not be covered within stipulated time period.

Another problem in the teaching of history as identified by teachers in the study was related to the teaching-learning resources (TLRs). In this area, the unavailability of audio-visual materials was seen to be the major problem as the majority of teachers (n = 19 = 59.4%) perceived it as a serious problem while 4 (12.5%) saw it as a very serious problem. Also, unavailability of audio materials was deemed as a serious problem by 14 (43.8%) teachers while 6 teachers representing 18.8% of the teacher population considered it as a very serious problem. Again, 12 (37.5%) teachers deemed the unavailability of visual materials as a moderate problem, 14 (43.8%) as a serious problem, while 3 (9.4%) said it was a very serious problem. These figures suggest that to the teachers, TLRs, importantly, audio, visual, and audio-visual materials were not available for their use in the teaching of history. The absence of these TLRs recommended for the teaching of history insinuates that history lessons taught by the teachers lost some shine in terms of engaging learners and sustaining their interests. The reason is that these resources appeal to learners' emotions and intellect, give them a true picture of the historic past and enable them to appreciate the 'hows' and 'whys' of past happenings. The unavailability of these resources do not only reduce the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process but also make history lesson abstract. The results

further showed that lack of suitable textbooks was the least ranked problem. Most of the teachers ($n = 22 = 68.8\%$) considered it as a moderate problem. It could be that teachers had access to a number of history textbooks and this might have informed their responses. Notwithstanding, the result could also mean that teachers did not have textbooks but they did not care because they knew better ways of teaching history. Thus, lack of textbooks could be a moderate problem even though there were not any in schools. In all, these results show that in the view of the teachers, schools were not well resourced to provide the requisite TLRs to enable them carry out effective teaching of the subject. The findings lend themselves to the results of studies by [Adeyinka \(1989\)](#); [Cobbold & Oppong \(2010a\)](#); [Rono \(2015\)](#); and [Ruto \(2013\)](#) which showed that the unavailability, limited use and lack of sufficient instructional resources were key problems in the teaching and learning of history.

Following the problem of TLRs (unavailability of audio-visual materials) was lack of administrative support for the subject. On this score, 10 (31.3%) teachers indicated that lack of administrative support was a moderate problem while most of the teachers ($n = 14 = 43.8\%$) also saw it as a serious problem. Also, 6 (18.8%) teachers regarded it as a very serious problem. This could mean that to the teachers, support from school administration was not enough to enhance the teaching and learning of history. It could be that head teachers did not offer the necessary help to teachers in the implementation of the history curriculum. Probably, head teachers and other school administrators did not appreciate the worth of history and thus downplayed its importance as a school subject. This finding is similar to [Ruto's \(2013\)](#) revelation that managerial support for teachers was inadequate to improve the teaching and learning of the subject. The issue of large class size was the fourth ranked problem found to be facing the teaching of history. This was shown by the majority of teachers ($n = 17 = 53.1\%$) who rated it as a serious problem while 6 (18.8%) and 5 (15.6%) teachers considered it as a moderate problem and a very serious problem respectively. With this situation, teachers were likely to spend a lot of instructional time trying to reach each student and managing their behaviours effectively. Large class sizes could also add to teachers' workload as they would have to mark and give prompt feedback on a lot of class exercises, assignments and examination scripts among other duties. Large class sizes, therefore, might have affected the quality of teaching and learning as teachers might have been compelled to adopt methods that did not enhance historical understanding. The result corroborates the finding of [Adeyinka \(1989\)](#) which showed that large class size was among the problems affecting history teaching.

There was also the issue of insufficient qualified history teachers. History as a subject is unique from other disciplines in terms of content and methodology. As such, history teachers need to be trained in the content, theories and principles underlying the subject in order to equip them with a unique set of knowledge, skills and dispositions to be able to teach the subject effectively. Teachers in the study indicated that the insufficient number of history teachers was a problem to history teaching. This was shown by most of the teachers ($n = 14 = 43.8\%$) who regarded it as a moderate problem, while 13 teachers representing 40.6% of the total number of teachers in the study considered it as a serious problem. This result point to a history teacher deficit in the schools. The insufficiency of qualified history teachers, as indicated by the teachers' responses, raises the likelihood of out-of-field teaching where teachers of other subjects such as social studies and government are called upon to teach history. The inadequate number of history teachers, therefore, poses a threat to the quality of instructor-student interaction. [Rono \(2015\)](#) and [Ruto and Ndaloh \(2013\)](#) obtained similar findings in their studies that there was a limited number of history teachers despite the large number of students in schools. Lack of effective supervision was ranked eighth on the continuum. Regarding this statement, 12 (37.5%) teachers apiece indicated that it was a moderate problem and serious problem. Only 3 (9.4%) teachers indicated that it was a very serious problem. This suggests that the state of supervision was poor in the schools. The implication is that the canons of teacher and instructional quality, which include performance monitoring, information sharing, goal attainment, and professional growth were likely not to be observed and this posed a threat to the effective teaching of history.

Teachers also indicated that there was insufficient instructional time. The SHS history syllabus recommends that history be allocated six instructional periods per week, with each period consisting of

40 minutes. In spite of this provision, teachers felt that the instructional time allocated for history was not enough for the coverage of the syllabus. Most of the teachers ($n = 13 = 40.6\%$) pointed out that insufficient instructional time on the timetable was a moderate problem while 11 (34.4%) said it was a serious problem. It might be that the time allotted for history was considered insufficient because of the overloaded nature of the syllabus as established earlier in this paper. This finding, hence, resonates with the revelations of [Cobbold & Oppong \(2010a\)](#) and [Rono \(2015\)](#) that the number of periods allocated for history was inadequate for the entire syllabus to be covered. Lack of incentives was another problem teachers considered as hampering the teaching of history. On this score, 11 (34.4%) teachers indicated that it was a moderate problem while the majority ($n = 14 = 43.8\%$) of teachers indicated that it was a serious problem. Though teachers might have had the intrinsic motivation to carry out their duties, they certainly needed some form of extrinsic motivation to whip up their interest in the teaching of the subject. This form of motivation, to a very large extent, is propelled by the amount of incentives available to teachers. Even though the availability of incentives may not be a sufficient condition for teacher effectiveness, it might spur teachers on to go the extra mile to get things accomplished. From the teachers' responses to this item, it might be that incentives such as teacher awards were not available for teachers in the schools. This relates to the results obtained by [Adeyinka \(1989\)](#); and [Ruto \(2013\)](#) that inadequate motivation of teachers was a key inhibitor to history teaching.

5.1 Hypothesis

The two independent samples t-test was run to determine whether a significant difference existed in history teachers' perceptions of the problems faced in the teaching of history in public and private schools at 0.05 level of significance. Table 2 shows the statistics of the two school types in relation to the problems.

Table 2: Two independent samples t-test for public and private senior high schools

School type	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig.
Public	26	28.62	4.535	1.717	30	.096
Private	6	25.0	5.177			

The two independent samples t-test was used to establish the level of significance of the difference in the mean values between the two types of schools. A Levene's test of equality of variances indicated that ($F = .896$, sig. > 0.05), therefore, equal variances were assumed. Table 2 shows that teachers' perceptions of the problems faced in the teaching of history in the public schools ($M = 28.62$, $SD = 4.535$) were not significantly different from the perceptions of teachers in the private schools ($M = 25.0$, $SD = 5.177$); $t(30) = 1.717$, $p = .096$ (2-tailed). This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the problems faced in the teaching of history in the public and private schools in the two districts. The study, therefore, fails to reject the null hypothesis. The result implies that the problems faced in the teaching of history, as perceived by history teachers, were prevalent in both private and public senior high schools.

6.0 Conclusion

The current state of history at the SHS level partly finds explanation in the fact that there are several problems surrounding the teaching of the subject that have often been left unaddressed. The study has shown that factors such as overcrowded syllabus, inadequate instructional resources, poor administrative support of the subject, insufficient qualified history teachers and large class size are the major problems perceived by teachers to be plaguing the classroom procedure. Other problems affecting history teaching, as indicated by teachers, were lack of effective supervision, insufficient instructional time and lack of incentives. These findings point to the fact that all is not well with the teaching of history as the conditions and structures required for the effective teaching of the subject are not in place in schools. It is deducible from the results that all the problems identified by teachers in the study as

affecting the teaching of history are administrative problems which work to compound greater pedagogical problems. Their administrative nature means that they fall outside the direct scope of teachers duties. Even though it could be argued, for example, that teachers have a role to play in the selection and adoption of instructional resources, much of the work lies with school and educational administrators who have a prime duty of spearheading resource selection, provision and adoption. Again, issues with supply of qualified history teachers, supervision, syllabus design, class grouping and incentives provision, in the Ghanaian context, fall greatly in the domain of higher educational administrators other than teachers. These problems become pedagogical as they affect the direct work of the teacher in the classroom. For instance, lack of instructional materials could lead to poor teaching as would lack of supervision. Though history teachers are often accused of overly using traditional methods, strategies and approaches in teaching and assessing students' learning, the study has shown that there are some underlying administrative issues that could inform teachers' choice of approach to teaching the subject. While this is not meant to exonerate defaulting teachers, it is to draw attention to the point that the administrative challenges that operate in the background often lead to the problems that history teachers contend with in the classroom. It could thus be concluded that the problems teachers face in the teaching of history in senior high schools in the Cape Coast and K.E.E.A districts are largely administrative and derivatively pedagogical. If these problems persist, it is not likely that the general aims, goals and objectives outlined in the syllabus and conveyed succinctly in the rationale for history teaching would be realized. This suggests that the future of the subject at the SHS level is not bright if practical steps are not taken to address these problems.

7.0 Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusion made in the study, the following recommendations are suggested for policy and practice. Regarding the problem of overloaded syllabus, curriculum designers at the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) should synthesize the content of the history syllabus to make it compatible with time given for its implementation. As the units and topics outlined have their own educational worth, and as such, may not be removed, similar issues or topics could be grouped together and completed at a time instead of teaching related events at different times and in different classes. For example, the various African civilizations under the first section of the syllabus, landmarks of African history up to AD 1800, could be grouped and taught together as a single unit and individual cases could be cited from various periods and regions rather than teaching them in isolation from one another. Such an integrative approach would make the syllabus' expanse of coverage more meaningful and thus enhance teachers' completion of the syllabus within the stipulated time-frame.

In addition, educational policies should be designed to draw more attention to history and its place in the 21st Century. The government through the MoE should initiate policies by which history can be introduced at the lower levels of education and also made a core subject at the SHS level. Head teachers, principals, and school administrators should also give their full support to the teaching of history in their schools in order to create a conducive ambience for the effective teaching and learning of the subject. This could be done by ensuring that history is allotted more time on the school timetable and history teachers are well resourced and motivated to carry out their duties.

In relation to TLRs, teachers are encouraged to be innovative by improvising simple teaching aids that could help convey content effectively to students. Again, teachers must endeavor to draw practical examples from the community during lessons to make the subject more vivid to students. Also, the MoE, GES, and other stakeholders in education should play their part by providing schools with the necessary human and material resources needed for the teaching and learning of history.

Further, large history classes could be divided into smaller classes to ensure that each learner is reached during lessons. This means that more teachers would be needed to handle the resultant classes. In this light, teacher-producing universities are encouraged to make their history education programmes

attractive so that more students can enroll to be trained as history teachers. This will help meet the demand for history teachers at the SHS level. Moreover, the GES, MoE, higher education institutions should provide experts and specialists to undertake the needed supervisory exercise at the SHS level. Head teachers should also join the fray and ensure that the subjects taught in their schools are supervised. It is hoped that these recommendations would help resuscitate history at the SHS level and enhance its teaching and learning so that the overriding purpose for which history was introduced could be achieved.

References

- Adeyinka, A. A. (1989). Current problems of history teaching in some Nigerian senior secondary schools. *Ilorin Journal of Education*, 9(6), 55-63.
- Bam, J. & Visser, P. (2002). *A new history for a new South Africa*. Cape Town: Kagiso.
- Boadu, G., Awuah, M., Ababio, A. M. & Eduaquah, S. (2014). An examination of the use of technology in the teaching of history: A study of selected senior high schools in the Cape Coast metropolis, Ghana. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 8(1), 187-214.
- Cobbold, C. & Oppong, A. C. (2010a). Assessing instructional resources and methods of teaching history in senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Leadership* 3(3), 77 – 88.
- Cobbold, C. & Oppong, A. C. (2010b). Re-echoing the place of history in the curriculum. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*, 3(3), 89-96.
- Dwarko, D. A. (2007). History-our ailing subject: The need for revival in the 21st century. In D. E. K. Amenumey (Ed.), *Challenges of education in Ghana in the 21st century* (pp. 167-178). Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Fisher, D. (2000). History teaching with ICT: The 21st century's 'gift of Prometheus'? *ACE Research Papers*, 7, 46-58.
- Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, N. E. (2000). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (4th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Ministry of Education (2010). *Teaching syllabus for history*. Accra: Curriculum Research and Development Division.
- Oppong, A. C. (2009). *An evaluation of the teaching and learning of history in senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana*. (Unpublished masters thesis), University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- Rono, D. (2015). *Constraints on effective history and government instruction in secondary schools in Bomet district, Rift-Valley province in Kenya*. (Unpublished masters thesis), Moi University, Kenya.
- Ruto, Z. J. (2013). The role of teacher characteristics and managerial support in implementation of history and government curriculum in Wareng district, Kenya. *International Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 2(4), 86-96.
- Ruto, Z. J. & Ndaloh, A. M. (2013). The impact of secondary school teachers' attitudes and challenges on the teaching and learning of history and government in Wareng district, Kenya. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 4(2), 369-374.
- Taylor, T. & Young, C. (2003). *Making history: A Guide for the teaching and learning of history in Australian schools*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Yilmaz, K. (2008). A vision of history teaching and learning: Thoughts on history education in secondary schools. *The High School Journal*, 37-46.