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EXAMINING THE NATURE AND RELATIONSHIP OF HISTORY WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES

YUSUF, FATAI LATEEF; & SHEHU, MUSA
Department of History, Federal College of Education, Kontagora.
Corresponding Author: *yusuffatai449@gmail.com*

Abstract

This study is on the Nature and Relationships of Historywith other Disciplines.The fact that other disciplines such as Economics, Political science, Art, Archaeology, sociology, among others, have continued to be relevant in historical studies has contributed to its unique and complex nature which has continued to shape how history has been defined to date. Every nation of the World is the product of history. It is history that gives a people, ethnic group, a nation its identity. For people and society to comprehend their situation in time and place, cope with present challenges and preside over the future, they need to have a sound idea of where they are coming from, where they are presently and where they hope to be in the future. For people and society seeking answers to questions germane to their present circumstances and future aspirations, the honest path is to befriend their past, which resides in Political, Economic and Cultural history. The implication of the above is that, history had laid the foundation for distinguishing itself as a reputable body of knowledge as a result of its multidisciplinary approach. Traditionally, the study of history was limited to the written and spoken word. However, the rise of the creation of new scientist field in the 19th and 20th centuries changed this notion. Since then, the effort to grapple with the meaning of history and its multidisciplinary approach has become an unending one. Therefore, a multidisciplinary approach to history will help strengthen the discipline for functional employment and global relevance. The study adopt a historical research method to collects, verify and synthesis evidence from the past to establish facts that defend or refute any hypothesis.

Keywords:
Relationship, Objectivity, Political Science, Economics, Art, Causation, fact

Introduction

Scholars like American Industrialist Henry Ford have often argued that knowledge of history will not provide much help as he characterized history as a "bunk", French scientist and Mathematician Rene Descartes worries that undue curiosity about the past would result in excessive ignorance of the present. Marie Arouet de Voltaire, a philosopher and historian described history as a pack of tricks we play on the dead. Even so powerful a thinker as Fiedrich Hegel fear that the only thing we can learn from history is that no one learns very much from history. (Ikime, 2018).

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. A.I. Mteiye [MALAWI]

But some scholars for example, Fukuyama properly suggests that observers or participants in the events of the present day will have trouble understanding much about their World unless they possess a solid grasp of history (Fukuyama, 1989).

A Harvard philosopher George Santayana affirmed that lessons learned from experience could aid in the avoidance of mistakes, pitfalls and catastrophes in the future.(Adeogun, 2020). Contemporary American historian Paul Cokin provided a succinct description that "history is a true story about the human past" true and human are crucial, the quality of the truth distinguish history from legend, fable, and myth (Cokin, 1971).

A point emerged early in 1991 from a discussion "The Uses of History" by Albert Shankar former President of American Federation of Teachers. Pointing specifically to the debate in the U.S congress over the question of whether to wage war against Iraq in the Persian Gulf, Shankar noted that the speakers filled their arguments and counter arguments with reference to history. Members talk about Socrates and Abraham Lincoln; the Mexican American war and the Peloponnesian war… they cited St. Augustine and St.Thomos Aquino's, James Madison and Winston Churchill. Some talked about the appeasement of Hitler at Munich and Mussolini in Ethiopia; others about the Tonkin Gulf resolution that led to deep entanglement in the Vietnam War. All these was to help the congress think about and explain the decision they were making, different delegates drew different conclusions but they all used history as a tool to reason and think about the crises, to make clear exactly where they stood.(Robert, 2001). As Shanker observed, no one could have followed the debate or had an intelligent opinion about the wisest course of action without at least a basic knowledge of , "Political history" For this reason, he assigns a large measure of public significance to the discipline. (Ibrahim, 2018).In 2016, the then President of Historical Society of Nigeria Professor BankolaNdubuisiOgbogbo with his team make a case for history to be reintroduced as an independent subject into the basic and junior secondary schools in the country. This initiative was approved by the National Council on Education during its 61st Ministerial section in September 2016. In his remarks, the then Minister of State for Education, Prof. Anthony Anwukah, said a nation without history was a nation without future as it could not understand nor address the present situations. He said, in order to move the nation forward and make it play its catalyst role as instrument for human and national development; there was need for the reintroduction of history in schools.

To accomplish this, prof. Anthony Anwukah successor as Minister of Education, MallamAdamuAdamu, as directed by Nigerian government, mandated schools all over Nigeria to teach history as a standalone subject (NCE, 2016).

Conceptual Clarifications of History

Barraclough (1953) defines history as "the attempt to discover on the basis of fragmentary evidence the significant thing about the past. This definition is myopic for reducing history to a "mere recordof human experiences". Carr (1961) in his view defines history as "a continuous process of interaction between the present and the past" the definition has been criticized for narrowing history to the mere process of historical interpretation.

Babatunde (2019) defines history as an insight to what occurred in the past, when it occurred and how it occurred, it is an insight into the inevitable changed in human relations in the past and the manners these changes influence affect or determine the patterns of life in the society. This definition was criticized for limiting history to past experience.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. A.I. Mteiye [MALAWI]

Afolabi (2020), history is science that pursues itsown techniques to establish and interpret facts like other natural sciences such as the physics and chemistry uses various method enquiry such as observation, classification, experiment and formulation of hypothesis and analyses of evidence before interpretation and reconstructing the past. Some scholars debunk this definition, particularly the schools that believe history is art no more no less.

Chechney defines history as a body of facts about the past activities of man to be studied, understood and explained (Daniel, 2018). This definition of history gives the impression that history contains nothing than a catalogue of facts about the past. It has been criticized as losing sight of the role of interpretations, inferences and comments.

Ifemeje (1988), history is a body of knowledge about past, especially the past acts of man in the society and consists of fact ascertained through honest inquiry as well as inference, interpretation and generalization arrived at by the historians, and his available in the firm of true records on paper or in the memory of man This definition remains the most acceptable one because it contains words that have element of facts, activities, records, society, and human past, present and experience that one found are shared by historians and however differently they are include defining history. This definition shows that history is true record of the past. The above array of definitions clearly illustrates the dicey nature and controversy surrounding the meaning of the subject matter "history". This seeming intractable problem of definition in history has led some people to conclude that history is actually ambiguous.

History and Objectivity

The writing of history with bias mind is one of the weaknesses of historiography today. This is mainly so because writers in different parts of the World misinterpret historical facts in order to encourage patriotism, self-pride and national prestige. (Oyerammi,2022). The question historian`s should ask is "is there objectivity in history?", that is, can knowledge acquired in history be objectives as the knowledge acquire in the physical sciences, in another word, can absolute truth be achieved in history?.

This controversy is traceable to the age of enlightment in Europe by 19th century. Knowledge of science assumed a very high momentum and any form of knowledge that cannot be explained scientifically is regarded not to be knowledge, it was perhaps in an attempt to defend the position of history that the subject is capable of being explained scientifically that make the history philosophers hurry to jump into the conclusion that history is science no more no less. This has to do with the issue of objectivity, that is, it is possible to arrive at objectivity in history, history tries to provide answer to series of questions but when such answers were provided, the answers are usually in two forms, a satisfying answer and a satisfactory answer.

Satisfying answers: is the one that is provided to satisfy the immediate need of the person asking the questions.

Satisfactory answers: it is based upon scientific and empirical bases which is subjected to limitations, modifications and even condemnations

Facts of History.

One of the problems usually confronted by the historian is the establishment of fact, although the presence of some evidence or documents may be regarded as fact of history, they may not be historical facts.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. A.I. Mteiye [MALAWI]

First, it must be realized that fact is a synthesis, simple knowledge, it must be clear, simple, concrete and unambiguous, apart from these, it must be related to the issue at hands, it must be genuine and come from genuine source, it must not be a product of fabrication or historian imagination. Fact of history becomes historical fact in the manner and mode of interpretation, they are evidence of unique past events which are interpreted objectively in the light of available evidence without fear or favour.

Causation in History

In historical writing, Causer explanation has been a major issue of discussion among historian`s and philosophers alive. In the discussion of history, events are sometimes considered as if in some way being agents that can bring about other historical events. For example, the combination of tribalism, political instability, and lackadaisical attitude of Nigeria government toward urgent issues in the early days of independent result to the January 15th 1966 coup in Nigeria, same goes for the political crises in 1993, 2007 and 2011,respectively, again poor harvests, hardships the peasants go through, high taxes, financial mismanagement are among the causes of the French Revolution in 1789(OlusegunAdeniyi, 2017).

The word "cause" is also used to mean explanation or answer to a question. It is defined as an antecedent or event leading to another event or activities given rise to other activities, from these definition it is generally accepted that events do not just happen without something or something's given rise to it.

An essential function of historian is to explain phenomena and in the process of this explanation there are usually reasons or causes and in this explanation there are two possible views.

The Commonsensical Method: Simply put is that anything that happen must have a cause and for every cause there is a consequence or effects.

The Philosophical View: explained that, it is impossible for historian or anyone for that matter to say that A will always lead to B, that is, any time there is an event A, event B most necessary follow. The philosophical view was propended by Bertrand Roussel, according to him "Since it is not possible to determine or assert that event A will always lead to event B and that since we cannot determine everything about A and B, we should limit our conclusion to probability as well as established what is described as hierarchy, grade or level of causes. This method or suggestion has been a generally accepted by historian, this acceptance is based on fact that events are cause not one single cause but by multiplicities of causes (many causes) and that these various causes do not carry the same weight and therefore historian must ensure that in Causer explanation, causes must be arranged according to their weight (Oyerammi, 2022).

Multi-Disciplinary Perspective in History

Multi- Disciplinary approach combines knowledge and skills from several academic disciplines to address complex issues and difficulties. It is a combination of many disciplines in relation with one another and each one complement the other in historical evolution, rather than studying each academic topic separately, a multidisciplinary approach focuses on connecting them.The sources of history are manifestly complimentary, any single discipline or source on its own will be defective and will give blurred image of the reality which can only be brought under sharp focus by means of other sources. (Bashir, 2021).This we shall see in the following analysis:

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. A.I. Mteiye [MALAWI]

Economy History

The term "economy history" implies the study of history using methodological tools from economics or with a special attention to economic phenomena with reference to industrial or trading activities, individuals or nations undertake to generate wealth for development (Onwuka , 2010).

Political History

Political history on the other hand is the narrative and survey of political events, ideas, movements, organs of government, voter's, parties and leaders that centered on relationship between the government and civil society which comprised of two entities, governed and the governance (Obilor, 2021). While history is the study of past events, in relationship to present development and future hopes, particularly in human affairs bases on evidence, which is the raw material of history teaching and learning (Usman, 2018).The definition above illustrates the close relationship shared among the three disciplines. History, Economics and Political Science are interwoven. It is therefore not surprising that theory of history and political economy notably capitalism, communism, welfarism, socialism among others have been among the most debated theories in the world.

If one wants to study the history of a particular people one must also study their political and economic system, the labour of ordinary people- peasants, artisans, and traders among others is vital hence without the labour of these ordinary people there will be no value in royalty and opulence of courtiers. This is why studying any economy we must go beyond the activities of the kings, their courtiers and other elites to the ordinary people who support the political elites, military elite and educated elite among others.

In both developed and developing countries of the world today, governments and the governed, rich and poor are preoccupied with the economy, that is how to increase wealth and remove poverty. Therefore there is need for political stability for economic to grow (Falola, 2018).

Art History

Obadare (1998) defined art history is the academic study of the history and development of painting, sculpture, and the other visual arts. It is an interdisciplinary practice that analyses the various factors - cultural, political, religious, economic or artistic - which contribute to visual appearance of a work of art. Art history to him, is the historical study of the visual arts, being concerned with identifying, classifying, describing, evaluating, interpreting, and understanding the art products and historic development of the field of painting, sculpture, architecture, decorative arts, drawing, printmaking, photography, interior design etc. Art is defined as craft plus inspiration, and cannot be understood without history. The language of art is essentially a message embedded in history, as people expressed themselves in the absence of writing. Art in this context goes beyond art works as we know them generally. The terra-cotta figurines and heads, wood carvings, bronze work and ivory of Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Ife and Benin, speak for themselves. Art particularly pre-history art, is condition by recording rituals, scarification, hair styles, music or songs, costumes and scenarios, art often act as museum of social (or even physical Anthropology). In music for instance, the African Drums which has its root in African tradition, is much more than a music maker; they are one of Africa`s living book in different size and shapes. Some drums are oracles; others are broadcasting stations, war cries, inciting heroism or chroniclers recording landmarks in the life of the community. (Oladosu, 2023)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. A.I. Mteiye [MALAWI]

Bronwen (2018) opines that; In Western culture, drumming is, most often, about entertainment. In Africa, drums hold a deeper, symbolic and historical significance. They herald political and social events attending ceremonies of birth, death and marriage. They spark courtships, they herald home-coming and going and they accompany religious rites and rituals, calling up ancestral spirits…Traditionally, the drum was the heartbeat, the soul of most African communities. Drums have been an intrinsic part of African life for centuries and for countless generations, an ancient instrument used to celebrate all the aspects of life.

Ruth Finnegan in Sesan, (2014) opines that "among many West African people, drummers at the king's gate play not only the king's praise names but also announce and honour important guests by drumming or piping their names as they enter the palace" the nobility attached to drum literature was enhanced by the insistence of the kings to have drummers within the palace. Drummers who are also known as court drummers played significant communicative roles in the palace. The palace drummer communicates with the king using his drum about the happenings at the palace's gate.

There are also masks in which Africans have lavished boundless imagination. We see some of them even today at traditional ceremonies. Mask is real personalities and familiar to the village; they are not only evidence of history, but contribute actively to the making of it.

Cowries are another item of history originally intended as coinage. They also serve as adornment, artistically strung together, and they were especially important at social occasions and religious ceremonies; to embark on the history of certain African societies without knowledge of the rich language of cowries and masks, would inevitably produce a defective version of their evolution.

Conclusion

Economy History is replete efforts to improve production, distribution and use of scarce resources in order to minimize inequality or unequal development between individuals, communities, nations and continents worldwide.

Political history on the order hand examines the political and social relationship of human groups in relationship to present development and future hopes particularly in human affairs based on evidence.

Art history is an interdisciplinary practice that analyses the various factors- political, economic, cultural or artistic- which contribute to visual appearance of a work of art. In order to minimize inequalities expressed in poverty/rich dichotomy and sustain equal development in economic, social and political affairs; leaders and followers of various developing economics should improve education, especially the study of history in relationship with other disciplines like economics, political science, and art to improve, agriculture, employment, mass poverty and external debt burden, cultural heritage, and political stability. A stable political environment is an indispensable element for economic growth, the government of developing countries should as a matter of necessity, identifies the root causes of unstable political, cultural and economic growth so as to ensure sustainable development through the study of history. Therefore, *a* multidisciplinary approach to history will help strengthen the discipline for functional employment and global relevance.

Recommendations.

Considering the relevance of multidisciplinary approach to history, which entails the understanding and interpretation of past through the solid help of other Disciplines. Historian's job is

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Prof. A.I. Mteiye [MALAWI]

characterized by the quest for multiple and diverse sources in order to achieve a broader view of an event. Professional duty of historians is to understand the past and not to judge it. The implication of this is that, history had laid the foundation for distinguishing itself as a reputable body of knowledge in following ways:

- Multidisciplinary approach in history enable society shares common memory of where it have been, what its core values are, or what decisions of the past account for present circumstances. Without Multidisciplinary approach we cannotundertake any sensible inquiry into the political, social, or moral issue in society.
- Multidisciplinary approach to history helps us to study the past; we can gain insights to causes and consequences of events, decisions, and patterns, enabling us to make informed decisions in the present. History helps us recognize reoccurring patterns, identity societal strengths and weaknesses and learn from past mistakes to build a better future.
- Multidisciplinary approach aim to improve collaboration and knowledge exchange between History and other field of study. It can also be used to enhance the study of ancient history by providing new insight and perspectives from different disciplines such as political science, Economics, arts etc.
- It also combines knowledge and skills from several academic disciplines to address complex issues and difficulties. Rather than studying each academic topic separately, a multi - disciplinary approach focuses on connecting them. This method is necessary for effective teaching and learning.

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