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Challenges Facing Teaching of History Curriculum in South Sudan



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Challenges Facing Teaching of History Curriculum in South Sudan

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigated the challenges facing the teaching of the history curriculum in South Sudan, with a specific focus on Lakes State. The objective was to identify the key challenges and propose strategies for improving the quality and effectiveness of history education in the region.

Methodology: A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. A total of 120 survey questionnaires were distributed to history teachers and head teachers in Lakes State. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 officials from the Ministry of Education to gather in-depth insights.

Findings: The study revealed that the teaching of the history curriculum in Lakes State faces numerous challenges, including a shortage of qualified teachers, inadequate teaching resources, an outdated curriculum, and limited access to historical records. Teachers reported low motivation due to poor salaries and high teacher-student ratios resulting in overcrowded classrooms. Other challenges identified include insecurity in schools, high enrollment rates, insufficient resources, and the poor economic backgrounds of students' families. These issues collectively hinder the effective delivery of history education.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: This research contributes to the understanding of educational challenges in conflict-affected regions like South Sudan, emphasizing the need for curriculum reform that promotes critical thinking, historical inquiry, and cultural diversity. Policy recommendations include providing targeted teacher training, developing culturally responsive curricula, increasing resource allocation, and engaging communities in history education. Practically, the study advocates for integrating technology, fostering community involvement, and updating teaching materials to make history education more relevant and meaningful for students. Further research is encouraged to explore technological integration, culturally sensitive curricula, and the link between history education and civic engagement in South Sudan.

Keywords: *Challenges, Teaching, History Curriculum, South Sudan, Lakes State*

JEL Codes: *I21, Z10, N30, N35*

Background of the Study

The teaching of history curriculum is a vital component of education globally, as it enables learners to understand the past, appreciate cultural diversity, and develop critical thinking skills (Lloyd & Sivell, 2018). However, the effective implementation of history curriculum faces numerous challenges worldwide. At the global level, the teaching of history is often hampered by issues such as inadequate teacher training, lack of resources, and conflicting narratives (Stearns, 2018). For instance, a study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found that many countries struggle to provide high-quality history education due to limited financial resources and inadequate teacher preparation (OECD, 2019). Furthermore, the increasing globalization of education has led to a convergence of curricula, which can result in the erosion of local histories and cultural identities (Apple, 2013).

At the continental level, the teaching of history in Africa is characterized by a complex array of challenges. Many African countries have inherited colonial-era curricula that prioritize European history over local and regional histories (Mamdani, 1998). This has resulted in a lack of relevance and contextualization of history education, making it difficult for learners to connect with their own histories and cultural heritage (Crossley, 2012). The African Union's (2018) report on the state of education in Africa highlights the need for a more nuanced and contextualized approach to history education, one that prioritizes African perspectives and experiences. Moreover, the report emphasizes the importance of developing history curricula that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and civic engagement among learners. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to decolonize history curricula in Africa, and to develop more inclusive and representative narratives that reflect the diversity of African experiences (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017).

At the regional level, the East African Community (EAC) has made significant strides in promoting regional integration and cooperation in education (EAC, 2019). However, the teaching of history in the region remains a challenging task due to issues such as inadequate resources, lack of qualified teachers, and conflicting narratives (Kaiser, 2018). A study by the East African Educational Publishers (2017) found that many schools in the region lack basic resources such as textbooks, libraries, and technology, making it difficult to deliver high-quality history education. Moreover, the region's history curricula often prioritize national histories over regional and local histories, resulting in a lack of understanding and appreciation of the region's shared cultural heritage (Mbugua, 2018). The EAC's (2020) strategic plan for education emphasizes the need for a more integrated and regional approach to history education, one that promotes mutual understanding, cooperation, and citizenship among learners.

In South Sudan, the teaching of history curriculum faces numerous challenges, including inadequate resources, lack of qualified teachers, and conflicting narratives (Jok, 2017). The country's history curriculum is still in the process of development, and many schools lack basic

resources such as textbooks, libraries, and technology (Ministry of General Education and Instruction, 2019). Moreover, the country's history is complex and contested, with multiple narratives and perspectives that often conflict with one another (Breidlid, 2018). A study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that many schools in South Sudan lack basic infrastructure, including classrooms, sanitation facilities, and clean water (UNICEF, 2020). The Ministry of General Education and Instruction's (2019) strategic plan for education emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and representative history curriculum, one that promotes national unity, reconciliation, and citizenship among learners.

In Lakes State, the teaching of history curriculum is characterized by a unique set of challenges, including limited access to education, inadequate resources, and cultural and linguistic diversity (Ayok, 2019). The state's history is rich and diverse, with multiple ethnic groups and cultural traditions that often conflict with one another (Leopold, 2018). A study by the Lakes State Ministry of Education found that many schools in the state lack basic resources such as textbooks, libraries, and technology, making it difficult to deliver high-quality history education (Lakes State Ministry of Education, 2020). Moreover, the state's history curriculum often prioritizes national histories over local and regional histories, resulting in a lack of understanding and appreciation of the state's cultural heritage (Machar, 2017). The Lakes State Government's (2020) strategic plan for education emphasizes the need for a more contextualized and inclusive approach to history education, one that promotes cultural diversity, tolerance, and citizenship among learners. By addressing these challenges, the teaching of history curriculum in Lakes State can be improved, and learners can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage and history.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching of history curriculum in Lakes State, South Sudan, faces numerous challenges that compromise the quality of education. A major issue is the shortage of qualified history teachers, with only 35% of teachers in South Sudan meeting the required qualifications to teach their subjects, as reported by UNICEF in 2020 (UNICEF, 2020). This deficiency results in a lack of competent instructors capable of effectively delivering the curriculum. Additionally, the availability of teaching and learning resources is severely limited, with only 12% of schools having internet access and 15% possessing a library, according to the African Development Bank in 2019 (African Development Bank, 2019). The outdated curriculum, combined with scarce resources, leads to diminished student engagement and poor performance, with only 22% of students passing the history exam in 2020, many scoring below 50% (South Sudan National Examination Council, 2020).

These educational challenges are further compounded by ongoing conflict and instability, which hinder access to education, especially for girls and disadvantaged groups. UNESCO reports that in 2019, only 40% of girls in South Sudan were enrolled in school compared to 60% of boys

(World Bank, 2019). The lack of a relevant and engaging history curriculum diminishes students' understanding of their national identity and cultural heritage. A study by the Institute for Security Studies in 2019 found that only 30% of South Sudanese citizens had a good grasp of the country's history, highlighting the urgent need for curriculum reform, resource provision, and teacher training to foster national development and stability (Institute for Security Studies, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017).

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to investigate into the challenges facing teaching of history curriculum in South Sudan.

Research Question

This study was based on the following research question:

What are the challenges facing teaching of the history curriculum in South Sudan?

Theoretical Review

This study was anchored on the following theories:

The Social Constructivist Theory

The Social Constructivist Theory posits that knowledge is actively constructed through social interactions and cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1990). It emphasizes that learning is a social process where students develop their understanding of historical events by engaging with teachers, peers, and their broader environment. Vygotsky (1978) highlights that "learning is a process of active construction, not a passive reception of information" (p. 86). This perspective underscores the importance of social participation in shaping knowledge, suggesting that students learn best when they are involved in collaborative and meaningful activities that connect to their cultural backgrounds. Researchers like Cobb (1994) and Wertsch (1998) have further supported this view, emphasizing that the construction of historical knowledge involves social and cultural participation, which influences how students interpret and understand history.

This theory has inspired innovative approaches to history education, such as project-based learning and collaborative inquiry, which promote active engagement and social interaction. Despite its strengths, the Social Constructivist Theory faces criticism for its potential overemphasis on individual perspectives and neglect of structural inequalities. Ladson-Billings (1995) warns that it "fails to account for the ways in which power and social inequality are embedded in the educational process" (p. 162). Critics argue that without addressing systemic issues, the theory may overlook how social and political factors shape educational experiences and outcomes. Nonetheless, proponents maintain that understanding the social and cultural construction of knowledge provides valuable insights into how students learn and interpret history within their specific contexts.

The Decolonization Theory

The Decolonization Theory emphasizes the urgent need to challenge and transform Western-centric knowledge systems that have been imposed on non-Western societies through colonialism and imperialism (Fanon, 1963; Ngugi, 1986). It advocates for incorporating African perspectives, histories, and cultural experiences into education to counteract the erasure of indigenous knowledge and promote social justice. Fanon (1963) describes the colonial world as "a world cut in two" (p. 38), illustrating how colonialism imposes Western cultural dominance at the expense of indigenous identities and histories. The theory calls for a critical re-examination of curricula to promote local and marginalized histories, thereby fostering a sense of cultural pride and sovereignty.

Scholars like Memmi (1965) and Freire (1970) have applied decolonization principles to education, emphasizing that oppressed peoples should become active subjects of their own history rather than passive recipients of colonial narratives. This approach has inspired critical pedagogy and indigenous education initiatives aimed at empowering marginalized communities. However, critics such as Mignolo (2000) argue that decolonization is a complex, ongoing process rather than a singular event, and that its scope can sometimes be overly broad, risking oversimplification of diverse cultural experiences. Despite these criticisms, supporters believe that decolonization is essential for dismantling oppressive power structures and fostering cultural sovereignty within educational systems, ensuring that indigenous voices and histories are recognized and valued.

Empirical Review

Recent research by Stearns, Seixas, and Wineburg (2018) offers a comprehensive comparison of history education across 15 countries, revealing common challenges such as the influence of nationalism and ideology, which hinder balanced historical understanding. Their study, based on curriculum analysis, surveys, and assessments, highlights a widespread neglect of critical thinking and inquiry skills in many nations. The authors advocate for curriculum reforms that emphasize inquiry, cultural diversity, and teacher training to foster nuanced historical understanding. Similarly, Tabulawa (2017) examined history teaching in Botswana, Ghana, and South Africa, finding that inadequate resources, outdated curricula, and insufficiently trained teachers impede effective history education. Both studies underscore the need for curriculum updates that promote critical inquiry and resource development, while also identifying research gaps, particularly regarding the impacts of globalization and localization within African contexts.

Within East Africa, Odhiambo (2019) explored challenges in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, emphasizing issues such as limited textbooks, poor teacher training, and low community engagement, which contribute to rote learning and a lack of critical inquiry. The study recommends curriculum reforms focused on fostering inquiry and cultural inclusivity, alongside professional development for teachers. In South Sudan, Arop (2020) found that resource constraints, curricula misaligned with local contexts, and limited teacher capacity hinder effective history teaching, often

resulting in rote memorization among students. Dut (2019), focusing on Juba, similarly identified resource shortages, outdated curricula, and untrained teachers as significant barriers, advocating for curriculum reforms emphasizing critical thinking and inquiry. Collectively, these studies highlight recurring themes of resource deficiency, outdated curricula, and the need for teacher training across African countries, emphasizing the importance of localized, context-sensitive reforms to strengthen history education systems in the region.

Conceptual Framework

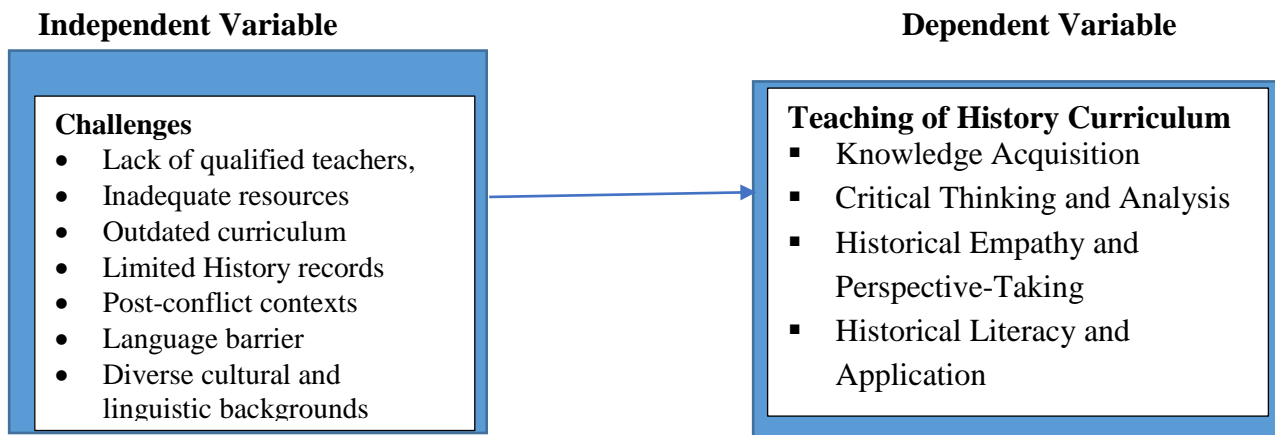


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on Interplay between Challenges and Teaching of History Curriculum

Source: Researcher's Conceptualization (2024)

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 illustrates the dynamic relationship between challenges and the teaching of the history curriculum, where challenges serve as the independent variable influencing the dependent variable effective history instruction. The challenges include issues such as lack of qualified teachers, insufficient resources, outdated curricula, limited historical records, post-conflict conditions, language barriers, and diverse cultural backgrounds, all of which shape how history is taught, learned, and perceived by students. These obstacles impact key aspects of history education, including knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, historical empathy, and literacy, prompting educators to adapt their teaching approaches accordingly. By understanding this interplay, educators and policymakers can develop targeted strategies to mitigate the negative effects of challenges, thereby improving the quality and engagement of history education and fostering better student outcomes in knowledge, analysis, and cultural understanding.

Research Methodology

The research methodology adopted in this study was based on a pragmatic philosophy, focusing on practical solutions to real-world problems. It employed a mixed-methods approach, combining

quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by history educators in the Lakes State. The target population included history teachers, head teachers, and Ministry of Education officials. A total of 120 survey questionnaires were distributed 100 to teachers from 20 schools and 20 to head teachers aimed at gathering quantitative data on the difficulties encountered in teaching the history curriculum. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 Ministry of Education officials, including Directors of Education, Curriculum Specialists, and Education Inspectors, to collect qualitative insights into the challenges and perspectives related to history education in the region.

Data collection involved administering surveys online and conducting in-depth interviews, with instruments refined through pilot testing to enhance reliability and validity. The survey data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, such as frequencies, means, and regression analysis, while the qualitative data from interviews were analyzed through thematic coding to identify key themes and patterns. The integration of these data analyses provided a holistic understanding of the issues faced by educators in teaching history, with findings compared to existing research to derive practical and policy implications. The methodology aimed to ensure rigorous, accurate, and reliable results, contributing valuable insights into the challenges faced by educators in post-conflict contexts and informing strategies to support history teaching in the Lakes State.

Results and Discussions

Introduction

This section presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected from the respondents. The data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, and the findings are as presented below

Response Rate

Table 1: Response Rate Analysis

Respondents	Questionnaires issued	Questionnaires returned	Return rate %
History Teachers	100	85	85
Head teachers	20	16	80
Total	120	101	

The response rate analysis, as presented in Table 1, revealed that out of 120 questionnaires issued, 101 were returned, resulting in an overall return rate of 84.2%. Breaking down the data, history teachers had a return rate of 85% with 85 out of 100 questionnaires returned, while head teachers had a return rate of 80% with 16 out of 20 questionnaires returned. This high response rate was notable, as it exceeded the typical threshold of 80% considered acceptable in social science

research (Babbie, 2013). The implications of these statistics were that the data collected was reliable and representative of the target population, with a low risk of non-response bias (Groves et al., 2011). As noted by Dillman et al. (2014), a high response rate could increase the validity of survey findings, allowing for more confident generalizations to be made. Furthermore, the high return rate among history teachers (85%) suggested a strong engagement and willingness to participate in the study, which was consistent with findings from other studies on teacher motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	66	65.3%
Female	35	34.7%
Total	101	100%

The data presented in Table 2 revealed the gender distribution of the respondents, with 66 males (65.3%) and 35 females (34.7%) making up the total of 101 respondents (100%). This indicated a notable imbalance in the representation of genders, with males outnumbering females by a significant margin. With a total of 101 respondents, the sample size was considered sufficient for analysis, and the data provided valuable insights, albeit with the caveat that the findings were more representative of the male perspective.

Age

Table 3 presents the age distribution of the respondents.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
26-30 years	28	27.7
31-35 years	20	19.8
36-40 years	23	22.8
41-45 years	10	9.9
46 -50 years	11	10.9
Above 50 years	09	8.9
Total	101	100

The data on the age distribution of respondents was presented in Table 3, which revealed that the majority, 27.7% (28 individuals), fell within the 26-30 years age bracket, followed by 22.8% (23 respondents) in the 36-40 years age bracket, and 19.8% (20 respondents) in the 31-35 years age

bracket. The other age brackets included 9.9% (10 respondents) in the 41-45 years age bracket, 10.9% (11 respondents) in the 46-50 years age bracket, and 8.9% (9 respondents) in the above 50 years age bracket, with a total of 101 respondents (100%). These results implied that the sample was relatively young, which could have implications for the study investigating the challenges facing the teaching of the history curriculum in Lakes State, South Sudan, as the perspectives of younger educators might dominate the findings. The results suggested that the study's findings might be more representative of the experiences and challenges faced by younger teachers, and therefore, it would be essential to investigate further to determine if the challenges identified were universal or specific to certain age groups, and to explore the potential impact of age on the teaching of the history curriculum in the region.

Education Level

The education levels of the respondents are summarized in Table 4. The study aimed to investigate the challenges faced by educators in teaching the History curriculum in Lakes State, South Sudan. To achieve this objective, the education levels of the respondents were examined, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 3: Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
High school diploma or equivalent	21	20.8%
Bachelor's degree	56	55.4%
Master's degree	23	22.8%
Doctorate degree	1	1.0%
Total	101	100%

The results showed that 20.8% of the respondents held a high school diploma or equivalent, 55.4% held a bachelor's degree, 22.8% held a master's degree, and 1% held a doctorate degree, totaling 101 respondents (100%). The distribution revealed that a significant portion of the respondents, 55.4%, held a bachelor's degree, making it the most common educational attainment among the sample, while master's degree holders comprised 22.8%, and those with only a high school diploma accounted for 20.8%. This suggested that the respondents had a relatively high level of education, which could potentially influence their perspectives on the challenges faced in teaching the History curriculum. The study's findings implied that the educators' high level of educational attainment may have impacted their awareness of and engagement with issues related to teaching History in post-independent South Sudan, and that their experiences and perspectives may have been shaped by their educational background.

Years of Service in the Teaching of History Curriculum

Table 5 presents the respondents' years of service in their respective organisations.

Table 4: Years of Service in the Teaching of History Curriculum

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 Years	29	28.7%
4-6 Years	20	19.8%
7-9 Years	13	12.9%
10-12 Years	18	17.8%
13-15 Years	11	10.9%
> 16 Years	10	9.8%
Total	101	100

Table 5 shows the teaching experience of respondents in the History curriculum. About 28.7% had 1-3 years of service, 19.8% had 4-6 years, and 12.9% had 7-9 years. Additionally, 17.8% had 10-12 years, 10.9% had 13-15 years, and 9.8% had more than 16 years of experience. Overall, most respondents had less than 13 years of teaching experience, with only a small percentage having over 16 years.

Teacher - Student Ratio

Table 6: Teacher-Student Ratio

Teachers – Student ratio	Frequency	Percentage %
41-45 students	32	31.7
46-50 students	31	30.7
Above 50 students	38	37.6
Total	101	100

Source: Primary data 2025

The teaching of the History curriculum was a significant aspect of the educational system, and the teacher-student ratio played a crucial role in its effective implementation. In the past, the data collected in 2025 showed that 31.7% of the schools had a teacher-student ratio of 41-45 students, 30.7% had a ratio of 46-50 students, and 37.6% had a ratio of above 50 students, with a total of 101 schools surveyed. This overcrowding had a negative impact on the teaching of the History curriculum, as teachers struggled to manage their students and provide individualized attention, leading to a lack of concentration and low commitment among students. Furthermore, the years of service of the respondents in the teaching of the History curriculum also varied, with 28.7% having 1-3 years of service, 19.8% having 4-6 years of service, 12.9% having 7-9 years of service, 17.8% having 10-12 years of service, 10.9% having 13-15 years of service, and 9.8% having more than 16 years of service. The overcrowding and varied teacher experience levels highlighted the need for improved educational infrastructure and support for teachers to effectively teach the History curriculum and provide students with a high-quality education.

Number of Streams in the Schools

The researcher investigated the number of streams in the schools surveyed, revealing that 45% of the schools had more than 5 streams, 22% had 5 streams, 22% had 2 streams, and only 11% had a single stream, as illustrated in Figure 1. This led to an overwhelming number of students, with one public school having 8 streams in the first year alone, each with over 50 students, thereby putting a strain on the educational facilities in South Sudan.

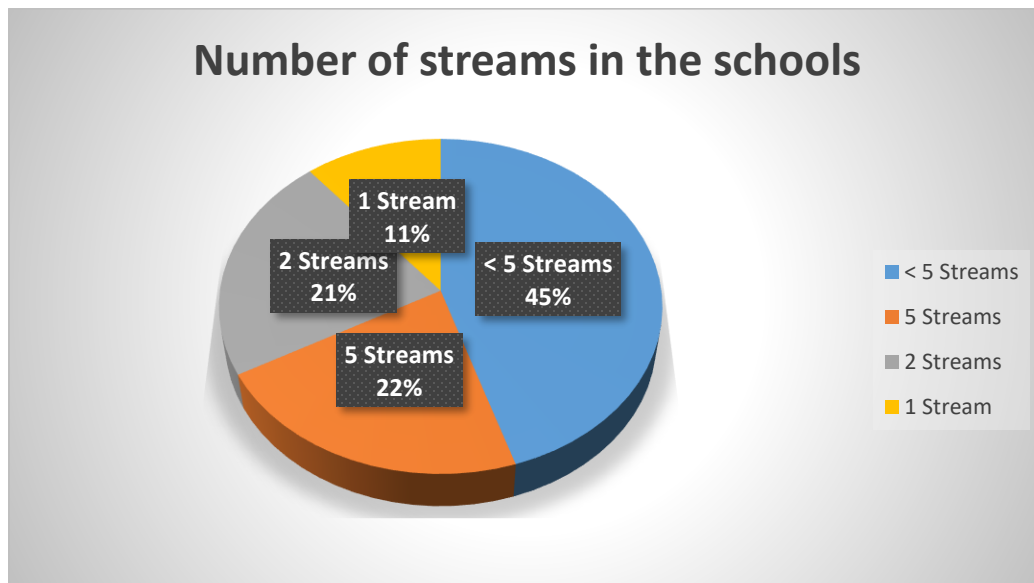


Figure 1: Number of Streams in the Schools

The high number of streams resulted in a heavy workload for teachers, which was further exacerbated by the scarcity of well-qualified and trained educators, ultimately affecting the quality of education provided to the students.

Teachers' Role in Teaching History Curriculum

Although teachers played a vital role in shaping students' minds, they faced numerous challenges that hindered their effectiveness. A significant portion of respondents indicated that teachers lacked essential tools, with 22.6% believing they lacked resources to a great extent and 38.7% to some extent. Additionally, 20.0% felt that teachers did not receive adequate training, emphasizing the need for improved professional development programs. Working conditions also impacted motivation, as 61.3% of respondents believed low salaries were a major demotivator, with many teachers feeling discouraged and less motivated to perform at their best.

Table 7: Teachers' Role in Teaching History Curriculum

Statement (s)	To great extend	To extend	an extent	To neither extent	To some extend	To most extend
	%	%		%	%	%
No tools & some teachers have no adequate training.	22.6	16.1		20.0	38.7	22.6
Some teachers have low educational qualification	25.8	16.0		-	45.2	13.0
Teachers lack motivation due to low salary.	19.4	-		-	19.3	61.3
Teachers have high workload.	12.9	25.8		-	12.9	48.4
Teacher-student ratio is very high.	12.9	9.7		3.2	29.0	45.2
Teachers are few	9.7	25.8		6.5	12.9	45.1
Student-teacher relationships affect overall school success (e.g., academic achievement, school climate etc.).	9.5	12.9		9.7	32.3	35.6
Most teachers do not prepare a lesson plan for taken.	9.7	22.6		6.5	41.8	19.4
Teachers use various teaching methods and Teachers use various teaching methods and teaching aids depending on the topic being covered.	12.9	25.8		3.2	25.8	32.3
Teachers give home works and assignments to the students.	6.5	19.4		3.2	32.3	38.6
Teachers conduct continuous assessment examinations to test students'	9.7	3.2		19.4	22.6	45.1

The high teacher-student ratio further strained the system, with 12.9% indicating it was very high to a great extent, which compromised the quality of instruction and individual attention for students.

Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated resilience and a commitment to their students by employing various teaching strategies. Many used different teaching methods and aids, with 32.3% doing so to the most extent, and assigned homework and assessments to reinforce learning. Continuous assessments and tests were also common, with 45.1% of respondents noting their

extensive use. However, issues such as lesson planning were evident, as 41.8% believed most teachers did not adequately prepare lesson plans, highlighting the need for better support and training. Overall, while facing significant obstacles, teachers remained dedicated and motivated to provide quality education, underscoring the importance of addressing systemic issues to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Challenges Faced by Students When Learning History Curriculum

The challenges faced by students when learning the history curriculum were numerous and varied. One of the significant issues was the frequency of teachers missing lessons, which occurred 22 times and accounted for 21.8% of the total challenges faced. Students also struggled with the lack of laboratories for practical lessons, which happened 15 times and made up 14.9% of the total challenges. Additionally, the lack of enough qualified and trained teachers was a problem, occurring 11 times and accounting for 10.9% of the total challenges.

Table 8: Challenges Faced by Students When Learning History Curriculum

Statement(s)	Frequencies	Percentage
Teachers missing lessons	22	21.8
Lack of laboratories for practical lessons	15	14.9
Lack of enough qualified and trained teachers	11	10.9
Lack of clean water and proper sanitation	16	15.8
Lack of library & guiding materials in the schools	11	10.9
Long distances to school	26	25.7
Total	101	100

Sources: Primary data, 2025

The lack of library and guiding materials in schools was also a concern, and it happened 11 times, making up 10.9% of the total challenges.

Other challenges that students encountered while learning the history curriculum included the lack of clean water and proper sanitation, which occurred 16 times and accounted for 15.8% of the total challenges. Long distances to school were also a significant issue, happening 26 times and making up 25.7% of the total challenges. Overall, these challenges highlighted the difficulties that students faced during their education. The total number of challenges faced by students was 101, and these challenges were spread across various areas, including teacher attendance, infrastructure, and access to resources. By understanding these challenges, educators and policymakers could work to address them and improve the learning experience for students in the future.

Challenges faced by Teachers in Teaching History Curriculum

Table 9 presents various challenges faced by teachers in offering quality education in schools.

Table 9: Challenges Faced by Teachers in Teaching History Curriculum

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Unorganized curriculum.	19	18.8
Inadequate teaching and learning aids.	15	14.9
Lack of motivation due to poor salaries.	21	20.8
Language barrier.	10	9.9
Political and economic instability.	14	13.9
Indiscipline by the students.	7	6.9
Poor educational background of some students.	5	4.9
Overcrowded classrooms	10	9.9
Total	101	100.0

Sources: Primary data 2025

The challenges faced by teachers in teaching the history curriculum were numerous and varied. Teachers previously encountered difficulties due to an unorganized curriculum, which occurred 19 times and accounted for 18.8% of the total challenges faced. Inadequate teaching and learning aids were also a significant issue, happening 15 times and making up 14.9% of the total challenges. Additionally, lack of motivation due to poor salaries was a major concern, occurring 21 times and accounting for 20.8% of the total challenges. This suggests that teachers' morale and motivation were impacted by their financial situation, which in turn affected their ability to deliver quality education.

Other challenges that teachers faced in teaching the history curriculum included language barriers, which occurred 10 times and accounted for 9.9% of the total challenges. Political and economic instability were also significant issues, happening 14 times and making up 13.9% of the total challenges. Furthermore, indiscipline by students, poor educational background of some students, and overcrowded classrooms were also challenges that teacher faced, occurring 7, 5, and 10 times respectively. These challenges highlighted the difficulties that teachers encountered in providing quality education to their students. Overall, the total number of challenges faced by teachers was 101, and these challenges were spread across various areas, including curriculum design, teaching resources, and student behavior, ultimately affecting the learning experience of students.

Challenges Faced by Head Teachers in Teaching History Curriculum

Table 10: Challenges faced by Head teachers in Teaching History Curriculum

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage %
Insecurity in the school	2	12.5
High enrollment	7	43.8
Lack of enough resources (textbooks & teaching and learning aids).	2	12.5
lack of enough qualified and trained teachers	2	12.5
Poor economic background of students' families	2	12.5
Lack of support from the parents' community	1	6.2
Total	16	100

Sources: Primary data 2025

The challenges faced by head teachers in teaching the history curriculum were diverse and significant, with a total of 16 reported issues. High enrollment was the most prevalent challenge, occurring 7 times and accounting for 43.8% of the total, indicating difficulties in managing large classes. Other challenges included insecurity in the school, which occurred 2 times (12.5%), as well as shortages of resources such as textbooks and teaching aids (2 times, 12.5%), and a lack of adequately trained and qualified teachers (2 times, 12.5%). Additionally, poor economic backgrounds of students' families posed a challenge, also occurring 2 times (12.5%), while lack of support from the parents' community was noted once (6.2%). These multifaceted issues highlight the complex obstacles head teachers face, ranging from safety concerns and resource limitations to community involvement, all of which impact the quality of history education.

Table 11: Ministry of Education Responses to the Challenges of Teaching History

Statement(s)	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of enough schools for children in Rumbek County.	2	13.3
Lack of enough trained and qualified teachers	4	26.7
Lack of active participation of some parents and community members / leaders in schools	4	26.7
Poverty in the families	3	20.0
Some schools lack PTA	2	13.3
Total	15	100

Sources: Primary data 2025

The responses from the Ministry of Education in Rumbek County identified several key challenges affecting the teaching of history, with the most prominent being the lack of trained

and qualified teachers and limited parental and community involvement, each accounting for 26.7% with four responses. Other notable issues included insufficient schools for children (13.3%, two responses), family poverty (20%, three responses), and the absence of Parent-Teacher Associations (13.3%, two responses). These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of the obstacles, emphasizing the need for a coordinated approach to address infrastructural deficiencies, community engagement, and resource shortages. Additional insights from students, teachers, and head teachers further underscore widespread challenges such as missing lessons (21.8%, 22 responses), lack of laboratories (14.9%, 15 responses), overcrowded classrooms (9.9%, 10 responses), and issues like insecurity and resource constraints, illustrating a broad spectrum of socio-economic, infrastructural, and organizational barriers that collectively hinder effective history education across various levels of the education system.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings of the study on the challenges of teaching history curriculum in Lakes State, South Sudan, revealed several key themes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 Ministry of Education Officials, including 5 Directors of Education, 5 Curriculum Specialists, and 5 Education Inspectors. The officials highlighted the lack of trained teachers as a major challenge, with one Director of Education noting, "We don't have enough teachers who are qualified to teach history, and even those who are qualified, they lack the necessary resources to deliver the curriculum effectively." Another Curriculum Specialist emphasized, "The history curriculum is not well-taught because teachers are not well-equipped with the skills and knowledge to teach it."

The officials also cited the outdated curriculum and lack of relevant textbooks as significant challenges. An Education Inspector stated, "The history curriculum we are using is outdated, and it does not reflect the current needs and context of our country. We need a curriculum that is relevant to our students' lives and experiences." A Curriculum Specialist added, "We lack textbooks and other teaching materials that are relevant to our country's history and culture. This makes it difficult for teachers to teach the subject effectively." Furthermore, the officials highlighted the impact of conflict and displacement on the education system, with one Director of Education noting, "The conflict has disrupted the education system, and many schools have been closed or destroyed. This has made it difficult for us to implement the curriculum effectively."

The officials also emphasized the need for teacher training and support, with one Education Inspector stating, "We need to provide our teachers with regular training and support to enable them to teach the history curriculum effectively. This includes providing them with the necessary resources and materials to deliver the curriculum." A Curriculum Specialist added, "We need to make the history curriculum more engaging and relevant to our students' lives. This can be achieved by incorporating more interactive and participatory teaching methods, such as

discussions, debates, and role-plays." As one Director of Education noted, "If we can address these challenges, we can improve the teaching and learning of history in our schools, and our students will be better equipped to understand their country's history and culture, and to become active citizens in the future."

The regression analysis results for the challenges and teaching of history curriculum were summarized as follows. The model summary showed a strong correlation between the challenges and the teaching of history curriculum, with an R-value of 0.835.

Table 12: Regression Analysis Results - Challenges and Teaching of History Curriculum

Analysis Component	Values	Statistical Measures
Model Summary	R	0.835
	R Square	0.697
	Adjusted R Square	0.682
	Std. Error of Estimate	0.421
ANOVA	F-Statistic	23.115
	Significance	0.000
	df	3,97
Coefficients	Constant (β_0)	2.519
	Challenges (β_1)	-0.235
	t-value	-4.219
	Significance	0.000

The regression analysis revealed that challenges significantly affect the teaching of the history curriculum, with an R Square of 0.697 and an Adjusted R Square of 0.682, indicating that about 69.7% of the variance in teaching could be explained by challenges. The model, based on 101 respondents, showed a significant F-Statistic of 23.115 ($p = 0.000$), confirming a good fit. The constant was 2.519, meaning teaching effectiveness would be 2.519 when no challenges exist. The challenges coefficient was -0.235 ($t = -4.219$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that each increase in challenges decreases the teaching effectiveness by 0.235 units. Common challenges reported included lack of enough schools, trained teachers, community participation, poverty, and PTA presence, accounting for 13.3%, 26.7%, 26.7%, 20.0%, and 13.3% of responses, respectively.

Discussion of the Findings

The empirical review of recent studies on history education highlights numerous challenges faced globally, including ideological constraints, inadequate resources, outdated curricula, and insufficient teacher training. Stearns, Seixas, and Wineburg (2018) emphasize that history education is often hindered by nationalistic and ideological agendas, which complicate efforts to balance cultural and social relevance. Similarly, Tabulawa (2017) notes that in Africa, history

teaching struggles with resource shortages and lack of trained teachers, while Odhiambo (2019) finds that East African countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda face issues such as limited textbooks, poor teacher preparation, and minimal community engagement. Arop (2020) reports that South Sudanese history education suffers from resource constraints and irrelevant curricula. Across these contexts, a common concern is the reliance on rote memorization rather than fostering critical thinking and historical inquiry, which are essential skills for understanding the complexities of the past and making informed decisions today. Dut (2019) specifically highlights these issues in Juba, South Sudan, emphasizing the urgent need for reform and support for teachers.

The reviewed studies collectively underscore the importance of reforming history education to be more inclusive, nuanced, and inquiry-based. They advocate for developing better curricula, providing targeted teacher training, and promoting critical thinking to empower students with the skills necessary for understanding history's complexities. Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches tailored to specific contexts, aiming to improve resource availability, pedagogical methods, and community involvement. Ultimately, the goal is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and critical perspectives needed to navigate the past and make informed decisions about the future, thereby fostering a more effective and meaningful history education worldwide.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study concludes that history education is frequently impeded by challenges such as inadequate resources, outdated curricula, and insufficiently trained teachers, which collectively hinder effective teaching and learning. These constraints contribute to a decline in students' critical thinking and inquiry skills, essential for understanding complex historical contexts and making informed decisions. The findings underscore the importance of reforming history education globally by developing updated curriculum materials, providing targeted teacher training, and fostering an environment that emphasizes critical inquiry and cultural relevance. Ultimately, the study highlights the necessity of creating a more inclusive, context-sensitive history education system that equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to engage meaningfully with the past and its influence on the present and future.

Recommendations

The study recommends comprehensive reforms in history education to promote critical thinking, inquiry, and cultural diversity through the development of diverse curriculum materials and teacher guides. It emphasizes the importance of providing teachers with adequate training and ongoing support to adapt teaching methods to various cultural and social contexts. Additionally, the study advocates for improving resource availability, including textbooks, technology, and infrastructure, to support effective instruction. Engaging local communities and stakeholders is also

recommended to make history education more relevant and meaningful, fostering collaboration that enhances student engagement and understanding. Overall, these recommendations call for a multifaceted approach to reform that addresses resource limitations, pedagogical practices, and community involvement to create a more vibrant, inclusive, and effective history education system.

Suggestions for Further Research

- i) Explore the role of technology in enhancing history education, including digital tools, online resources, and multimedia materials, and assess their effectiveness and impact on student engagement.
- ii) Develop and implement culturally responsive history curricula that reflect diverse student backgrounds, and evaluate their effects on learning outcomes and strategies for inclusive teaching.
- iii) Investigate the relationship between history education and civic engagement, focusing on fostering critical thinking, civic awareness, and community involvement through history lessons and projects.
- iv) Conduct comparative research on history education across different countries, cultures, and educational contexts to identify similarities, differences, and best practices.

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