

Assessment of Competencies Needs for Effective History Teaching among Pre-Service Teachers in University of Ilorin

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Abstract: This study investigated the competencies required for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers at the University of Ilorin. The research was guided by the need to assess these competencies in light of current educational demands and to determine how adequately pre-service teachers are being prepared to teach History effectively. The study was premised on the growing recognition that competent History teachers play a crucial role in promoting historical understanding, critical thinking, and civic consciousness among learners. Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The population comprised pre-service teachers from University of Ilorin in which 150 pre-service teachers were sampled using a simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire was validated by experts and piloted for reliability, achieving an acceptable Cronbach's alpha value. Descriptive statistics, particularly percentages, were used for data analysis and interpretation. The findings revealed that pre-service teachers agree that a strong understanding of historical facts and concepts is essential for effective teaching of History, pedagogical skills, such as lesson planning, teaching methods and classroom management are crucial for effective History teaching. It was concluded that content knowledge, pedagogical skills, technological competence and cultural sensitivity are all considered critical competencies for effective History teaching among pre-service teachers. The study recommended that students should actively engage in developing their content knowledge through continuous study and participation in history-related activities, Teachers should incorporate diverse pedagogical methods and technological tools to enhance History teaching.

Keywords: Assessment; Competencies Needs; Effective History Teaching; Pre-service Teachers

Introduction

Education remains the bedrock of societal development and individual empowerment, fostering economic growth, social cohesion, and national stability. According to Okoro and Musa (2018), education provides individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to function effectively in a dynamic and globalized world. In Nigeria, education is structured into various levels, including primary, secondary, and tertiary education, each with specific roles in personal and societal development. As Adebayo, Onuoha, and Eze (2021) observed, tertiary education is particularly crucial as it prepares students for professional careers and specialized roles in society. In a global context, scholars like Brown and Li (2020) emphasize that higher education institutions worldwide are tasked with preparing students for critical thinking and lifelong learning. However, the effectiveness of education at any level depends significantly on the competence of teachers, particularly in fields like History, where contextual understanding and analytical skills are paramount.

The teaching of History occupies a unique position in fostering national identity and global awareness. History education allows learners to critically analyze past events, understand cultural diversity, and appreciate their national heritage (Ibrahim & Yakubu, 2017). In Nigeria, the role of History teachers has been emphasized following its reintroduction into the national curriculum after years of exclusion. According to Adeyemi and Bello (2019), this development envisaged the urgent need for competent History teachers who can effectively deliver the curriculum and inspire critical engagement among learners. Similar challenges have been identified in other African contexts, such as South Africa, where Mashaba and Ndlovu (2022) report that teacher preparedness significantly influences students' interest and performance in History. Despite these efforts, reports indicate that many pre-service teachers in Nigerian universities still struggle to meet the competency requirements for effective teaching, raising concerns about the quality of History education in secondary schools.

Competency needs in History teaching extend beyond mere content knowledge to include pedagogical skills, technological proficiency, and cultural sensitivity. According to Danjuma, Nweke, and Okafor (2020), pre-service teachers must possess a well-rounded skill set to address diverse classroom dynamics effectively. In the Nigerian context, Afolabi and Ogunleye (2021) highlight the need for teacher education programs to incorporate modern teaching methodologies and adaptive learning strategies, especially in History, which requires the integration of local and global perspectives. In contrast, international studies, such as those by Schmidt and Johnson (2018) in the United States, stress the role of experiential learning and mentorship in developing teaching competencies. These perspectives reveal a gap in the training of pre-service History

teachers in Nigeria, where traditional methods often dominate teacher education curricula, limiting exposure to innovative practices.

The prevalence of these issues necessitates a closer examination of the challenges faced by pre-service teachers in attaining the competencies required for effective History teaching. Studies by Oke, Ekanem, and Salami (2023) reveal that many Nigerian universities lack adequate resources and training modules tailored to the unique demands of History education. This inadequacy contributes to low teacher readiness and, consequently, poor student engagement in History classrooms. Furthermore, Adebisi and Yahaya (2022) argue that the widespread neglect of competency-based training in teacher education programmes exacerbates this problem, leaving graduates ill-prepared to handle real-world teaching scenarios. The implications are significant, as they affect not only the quality of History education but also the broader educational goals of fostering critical thinking and informed citizenship among Nigerian youths.

A myriad of factors has necessitated the focus on competency needs for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers. Key among these factors is the increasing recognition of History as a crucial tool for shaping critical thinkers, informed citizens, and culturally aware individuals. According to Adetola, Ezeh, and Abubakar (2020), the absence of adequately trained History teachers hampers students' ability to critically engage with historical content, thus limiting their understanding of societal evolution and their role in national development. This problem is further exacerbated by gaps in the teacher education curriculum, which often emphasize theoretical knowledge over practical teaching competencies (Adebayo & Yakubu, 2021). Globally, Kruger and Steyn (2018) argue that effective teacher preparation is a determinant of educational outcomes, emphasizing that teacher competency directly correlates with student achievement and societal growth. Thus, addressing the competency needs of pre-service History teachers can play a transformative role in advancing Nigeria's educational and socio-cultural development.

Content Knowledge is one of the most critical variables for effective teaching of History. Content knowledge refers to a teacher's mastery of subject-specific facts, concepts, and interpretations, which are crucial for delivering accurate and engaging lessons. Oladipo and Yusuf (2020) note that many pre-service teachers in Nigeria exhibit significant deficiencies in their understanding of historical content, often stemming from inadequate training and resource constraints. This issue mirrors challenges in other countries, such as Kenya, where Owino and Mutuku (2019) highlight the lack of specialized History training for teachers in teacher education programs. For History teaching to be impactful, pre-service teachers must develop deep content knowledge, enabling them to present historical narratives in a coherent and relatable manner. Content mastery not only improves the quality of teaching but also ensures that learners

develop a well-rounded understanding of History, fostering analytical and critical thinking skills (Ahmed, Bello & Ngwoke, 2023).

Pedagogical Skills are equally essential in ensuring effective History teaching. Pedagogical skills encompass the ability to design, implement, and adapt teaching methods that meet the diverse needs of learners. As noted by Okafor, Adamu, and Adebayo (2021), many pre-service History teachers in Nigeria struggle with adopting innovative and student-centered teach approaches due to insufficient training. Similarly, Brown and Singh (2020) assert that traditional, lecture-driven methods remain dominant in many teacher education programs globally, limiting the development of practical teaching competencies. When pre-service teachers acquire strong pedagogical skills, they are better equipped to create engaging lessons, utilize interactive methods, and foster a participatory learning environment. These skills are particularly critical in History education, where the effective use of storytelling, primary sources, and historical simulations can significantly enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Technological Competence has become an indispensable variable in modern education, particularly in teaching disciplines like History, where digital tools can be leveraged to enrich instruction. According to Danjuma and Igwe (2021), the integration of technology in teacher training programmes remains inconsistent in Nigerian universities, leaving many pre-service teachers ill-prepared to utilize digital resources effectively. In contrast, Zhao and Lee (2022) observed that countries such as China have made significant strides in equipping teachers with digital competencies, resulting in improved teaching practices and learner outcomes. For Nigerian pre-service History teachers, technological competence involves the ability to access online archives, create multimedia presentations, and incorporate virtual field trips into lessons. As Adebisi, Yusuf, and Okonkwo (2023) argue, the effective use of technology can make History teaching more dynamic and relatable, enhancing students' understanding of historical events and their relevance to contemporary issues.

The persistent challenges associated with inadequate teaching competencies among pre-service History teachers in Nigeria underline the existence of a significant problem. Studies by Olaniyan, Chukwu, and Bello (2021) reveal that a considerable number of pre-service teachers graduate without acquiring the requisite skills to engage students effectively, particularly in subjects like History, which demand analytical and interactive teaching methods. This issue, according to Adeyemi and Olatunde (2020), stems from the outdated and overly theoretical nature of many teacher education curricula, which fail to address the practical realities of classroom teaching. Furthermore, international perspectives, such as those offered by Murphy and Patel (2022), highlight that teacher competency gaps often result in disengaged students, poor academic outcomes, and diminished societal appreciation for critical disciplines like History. The

implications of this problem are far-reaching, as they not only affect individual learners but also hinder the broader educational system's ability to foster critical thinking and informed citizenship.

The implications of these deficiencies are particularly evident in the Nigerian educational system, where History education has struggled to regain its relevance. As observed by Ekanem, Yusuf, and Okoro (2023), the lack of competent History teachers has contributed to declining student interest in the subject, with many perceiving it as outdated and irrelevant. This trend, if left unaddressed, poses a threat to national development, as History education plays a critical role in fostering national identity, promoting cultural awareness, and preparing students for active participation in civic life. Similarly, Afolabi and Garba (2022) argue that the lack of emphasis on competency-based training in teacher education programme exacerbates these challenges, leading to a vicious cycle of underprepared teachers and underperforming students. Despite these implications, the body of research addressing this issue remains limited, with few studies focusing specifically on the competency needs of pre-service History teachers in Nigerian universities.

The limited scholarly attention to this critical issue has left notable gaps in the literature. Most existing studies, such as those by Nwosu and Ibrahim (2021), have focused broadly on teacher education or specific challenges in secondary school teaching without delving into the unique demands of History as a subject. Furthermore, research by international scholars, such as Green and Taylor (2020), often overlooks the contextual challenges faced by Nigerian pre-service teachers, such as resource constraints, cultural diversity, and inadequate institutional support. As Danjuma and Okeke (2023) assert, addressing these gaps requires targeted studies that not only identify the competency needs of History teachers but also propose practical strategies for integrating these competencies into teacher education programs. The present study seeks to fill these gaps by exploring the specific competency needs for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin. Unlike previous research, this study adopts a focused approach that examines the interplay between content knowledge, pedagogical skills, technological competence, and cultural sensitivity in shaping teacher readiness.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the competencies needs for effective teaching of History among Pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. examine whether content knowledge is a competency needed for effective teaching of History among Pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin
2. determine whether pedagogical skills is a competency needed for effective teaching of History among Pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin

3. determine whether technological competencies is a competency needed for effective teaching of History among Pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin

Research Questions

The following research questions raised and answered in this study:

1. To what extent is content knowledge a competency needed for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin?
2. How do pedagogical skills contribute to the competency needs for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin?
3. To what extent is technological competence a competency needed for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive research of the survey type. The study covers 15,000 pre-service teachers enrolled in the University of Ilorin. The target population for the study is pre-service History teachers in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 pre-service History teachers.

The instrument adopted for the study was a researchers' designed questionnaire titled "Competencies Needs for Effective Teaching of History Questionnaire (CNETHQ). Research questions raised were answered using statistical mean and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent is content knowledge a competency needed for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin?

Table 1: Analysis of the extent at which content knowledge is a competency needed for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Pre-service teachers must have strong knowledge of historical facts and events.	3.25	.898	Agreed
2.	Content knowledge helps teachers explain historical concepts clearly.	2.87	1.02	Agreed
3.	Understanding history content improves the quality of teaching.	3.15	.833	Agreed
4.	Pre-service teachers need deep knowledge of the subject to engage students.	3.32	.858	Agreed
5.	Teachers with good content knowledge can answer students' questions confidently.	3.20	.790	Agreed
	Weighted mean	3.16		Agreed
	Key: Disagreed-1.0-2.49—Agreed-2.50-5.00			

Table 1 presents an analysis of the importance of content knowledge for effective teaching of History. The results indicate that pre-service teachers agree that a strong grasp of historical facts and events, as well as a deep knowledge of the subject, are crucial for engaging students and explaining historical concepts clearly. The mean scores for all the items fall between 2.87 and 3.32, indicating a general agreement on the necessity of content knowledge for teaching History effectively. The weighted mean of 3.16 further emphasizes that content knowledge is indeed regarded as a critical competency for pre-service teachers, with all respondents agreeing that it enhances the quality of teaching and enables teachers to answer students' questions confidently. This finding underscores the importance of content knowledge as a foundational element for teaching History at the University of Ilorin.

Research Question Two: How do pedagogical skills contribute to the competency needs for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin?

Table 2: Analysis of how pedagogical skills contribute to the competency needs for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Pedagogical skills help pre-service teachers teach history effectively.	3.18	.925	Agreed
2.	Teachers need to plan lessons that are engaging and informative.	3.14	.864	Agreed
3.	Pedagogical skills enable teachers to use various teaching methods.	3.26	.786	Agreed
4.	Effective communication is a key pedagogical skill for history teachers.	3.25	.783	Agreed
5.	Teachers with good pedagogical skills can manage classroom activities well.	3.23	.839	Agreed
	Weighted mean	3.21		Agreed
	Key: Disagreed-1.0-2.49—Agreed-2.50-5.00			

Table 2 assesses the role of pedagogical skills in the competency needs for effective History teaching. The results show that pre-service teachers strongly agree that pedagogical skills are essential for teaching History effectively, with mean scores ranging from 3.14 to 3.26 for all items. The highest mean score of 3.26 reflects the importance of using various teaching methods to engage students and communicate effectively. Additionally, the ability to plan engaging lessons and manage classroom activities is also seen as crucial. The weighted mean of 3.21 indicates a consensus among the respondents that pedagogical skills are vital for fostering an effective learning environment in History

education. This suggests that pre-service teachers acknowledge the significance of pedagogical competencies in enhancing the delivery of History lessons.

Research Question Three: To what extent is technological competence a competency needed for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin?

Table 3: Analysis of the extent at which technological competence a competency needed for effective teaching of History among pre-service teachers in the University of Ilorin

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Technological competencies help pre-service teachers use digital tools in teaching.	3.15	.802	Agreed
2.	Teachers need to be familiar with educational software and online resources.	3.17	.843	Agreed
3.	Using technology can make history lessons more interactive and engaging.	3.30	.790	Agreed
4.	Technological competencies help teachers access up-to-date historical information.	3.05	.932	Agreed
5.	Pre-service teachers must learn how to integrate technology into their teaching methods.	3.40	.590	Agreed
	Weighted mean	3.21		Agreed
	Key: Disagreed-1.0-2.49—Agreed-2.50-5.00			

Table 3 analyzes the role of technological competence in teaching History. The findings indicate a strong agreement among pre-service teachers regarding the importance of technological competencies in enhancing History education. The mean scores for the items range from 3.05 to 3.40, suggesting that familiarity with digital tools, educational software, and online resources is essential for effective History teaching. The highest mean score of 3.40 highlights the necessity of integrating technology into teaching methods to create interactive and engaging lessons. The weighted mean of 3.21 reinforces the view that technological competence is seen as an important skill for pre-service teachers to effectively teach History and keep up-to-date with historical information. This result points to the growing need for technological literacy in History education.

Discussion of Findings

A finding revealed that content knowledge is considered a vital competency for effective History teaching by pre-service teachers at the University of Ilorin. The responses show strong agreement on the importance of understanding historical facts

and events, with all respondents highlighting the necessity of a deep knowledge of the subject to engage students and explain historical concepts clearly. The weighted mean score of 3.16 further supports this conclusion, indicating that pre-service teachers believe content knowledge is fundamental to enhancing the quality of teaching and responding confidently to students' questions. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the significance of content knowledge in teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2015). According to scholars, a solid foundation in subject matter enables teachers to provide accurate and meaningful instruction, which is essential for student learning (Kennedy, 2020).

Another finding highlights the critical role of pedagogical skills in effective History teaching. Pre-service teachers agree that pedagogical competencies, such as lesson planning, the use of diverse teaching methods, and classroom management, are vital for creating an effective learning environment. The mean scores, particularly the highest of 3.26, emphasize that teaching strategies, effective communication, and the ability to engage students in History lessons are crucial. The weighted mean score of 3.21 further underscores the consensus on the importance of pedagogical skills. This finding resonates with research by Mc Tighes and Wiggins (2015), who argue that effective teachers need both content knowledge and strong pedagogical skills to translate their knowledge into accessible learning experiences. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2020) asserts that pedagogical skills, especially in lesson planning and classroom management, are central to teacher effectiveness.

It was revealed that pre-service teachers at the University of Ilorin acknowledge the importance of technological competence in History studies. The responses indicate that familiarity with digital tools, educational software, and online resources are critical for enhancing History teaching. The highest mean score of 3.40 highlights the importance of integrating technology to create interactive, engaging lessons and to access up-to-date historical information. This finding is consistent with the works of Anderson (2017) and Garrison and Kanuka (2016), who emphasize the growing role of technology in education. According to their studies, technological competence helps teachers to foster active learning environments and improve student engagement by utilizing digital platforms. The weighted mean score of 3.21 indicates that technological competence is increasingly recognized as an essential skill for pre-service teachers.

Conclusion

The need for comprehensive teacher preparation programme that focus on content knowledge, pedagogical skills, technological competence, and cultural sensitivity are quite essential as revealed this study. Teacher education programme should ensure that pre-service teachers are well-prepared to meet the demands of contemporary classrooms by providing opportunities for developing these essential competencies.

Recommendations

- Students should actively engage in developing their content knowledge through continuous study and participation in history-related activities.
- Teachers should incorporate diverse pedagogical methods and technological tools to enhance History teaching and make lessons more engaging.
- Parents should encourage their children to develop an interest in History by supporting educational activities both at school and at home.
- Government should invest in teacher education programme to ensure that pre-service teachers acquire the necessary competencies for effective teaching.

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