



ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARD STUDYING HISTORY AND CIVICS IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TUMKUR CITY, KARNATAKA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' attitudes towards studying History and Civics in selected secondary schools of Tumkur City, Karnataka. The study was conducted in both purposively and simple random sampled private and public secondary schools in Tumkur City, Karnataka. The target population was form two (2) students and their respective History and Civics teachers. Data were collected using teachers and students questionnaires. The teachers' questionnaire comprised of both open ended and closed items. The students' questionnaire used a 5 point-likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The data collected was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics and presented with the aid of tables, percentage and, graphs. From the analyzed data major discussions were made and reported. Most of the students were found to be having negative attitude towards studying History and Government and Heuristic strategies of teaching were suggested and many other more.

Key words: Teaching Methodology, Attitudes, Heuristic, and Expository.

Introduction

Background to the Study

H/C is a distinct discipline in the school curriculum. History is the memory of human experience. He further argues that if human experience is ignored and forgotten we would cease to realize our responsibility. He further states that, without history of our past we would not be able to know who we are' who our relatives are, where we came from and how we came to be what we are today. We would be in darkness about our own identity.

H/C is not a popular subject amongst the learners today in some secondary schools worldwide because it does not give the learners job security. Hence there may be a serious exodus of the learners from H/C to other school subjects that guarantee job security. This indicates that the students have already developed different attitudes towards the subject. The strong bias in science has pushed H/C to a corner; hence it is not given prominence by policy makers and employers. Therefore many students are unlikely to be interested in studying the subject because it does not offer job security.

Objectives of the Study

The underlying objectives of this study were to:

- (a) Establish the attitudes held by secondary school students towards studying H/C,
- (b) Establish the readiness of secondary school students to learn H/C,
- (c) Determine the secondary school teachers' opinions in relation to the teaching and learning of H/C,
- (d) Establish the factors influencing secondary schools students' attitudes towards studying H/C.

Methodology

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of students towards studying H/C in the selected secondary schools in Tumkur city, Karnataka. This study was a descriptive survey. A descriptive survey attempts to describe characteristics of phenomena, opinions, subjects, preference, attitudes and perceptions of people of interest to the investigation. The research used both qualitative and quantitative paradigms in collecting and analyzing data. Qualitative research design describes and develops an understanding for a particular social situation event or interaction. The qualitative design was used because it is naturalistic and thus allows participants to express the feeling more freely to collecting and analyzing data. The human phenomena that cannot be investigated by direct observation such as attitudes and other emotions are best studied using the qualitative method.

Sampling Procedures

Sampling is the procedure of selecting individuals for a study. Secondary schools, both public and private. In order to achieve sample representativeness, purposive sampling was used. The researcher purposively selected the private girls' secondary school, the public boys' and girls' secondary schools. This is because they were the only schools of such category that were found in Tumkur city. Points out that a sample that is drawn at random is unbiased in the sense that no member of the population has any more chance of being selected than any other member. The three schools were chosen through the lottery



method. This sample is more than y which is an acceptable representation of the target population to participate in a study.

Research Instruments

For the purpose of this study, data was collected using the students' and teachers' questionnaires. The two questionnaires were used as supporting pillars because they were used to complement each other and bridge the gap that could be left using any one of them alone.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data was obtained from the open-ended items in both the students' and teachers' questionnaires. The data was grouped into different categories depending on the responses given by the respondents. Those categories helped in establishing themes, which were further coded and entered in a computer. Through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean and frequencies.

Data Analysis and Presentation and Discussion

Table 2: The Type and Category of Schools Used in the Research

Category of School	Private		Government	
	F	%	F	%
Girls' school	1	14.29	1	14.29
Co-education	1	14.29	3	42.86
Boys' school	-	-	1	14.29
Total	2	28.58	5	71.44

Students' Attitudes toward H/C

Items in section I on H/C in the S.A.S were out to investigate the students' attitudes towards H/C. The students were to indicate whether they strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). Table 3 provides a summary of the results that were arrived at.

Table 3: The Students Responses on the Negative Items Related to H/C as Subject

Items	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1 I don't like learning H/C.	78	52	30	20	2	1.3	20	13.3	20	13.3
2 H/C lessons are not interesting.	94	62.6	29	19.3	3	2	24	16	0	.
3 Learning H/C is a waste of time.	57	38	53	35.3	1	0.6	7	4.7	32	21.3
4 I find H/C too difficult.	6	4	1	0.7	0		23	15.3	120	80
5 Learning H/C is just remembering what the teacher says.	90	60	6	4	2	1.3	24	16	28	18.7
6 H/C lessons are very boring	118	88.7	0	.	0	0	17	11.3	15	10
7 H/C will not help me in any way to secure a job in future.	70	46.6	35	23.3	1	0.6	24	16	20	13.3
8 I have no interest in increasing my knowledge in H/C.s	69	46	35	23.3	0		16	10.7	30	20
9 H/C is a very useless subject to me.	51	34	58	38.7	2	1.3	32	21.3	7	4.7
10 I have a negative attitude towards studying H/C	110	73.3	20	13.3	0		0		20	13.3
11 I do H/C for the sake of it	85	58	28	18.7	2	1.3	3	2	32	21.3
12 I rarely do my H/C assignments	120	80	1	0.7	1	0.7	26	17.3	2	1.3

The findings of Table 3 revealed that the general attitude towards H/C was quite negative as about 86.6% of the students indicated in item 10. From the total items in Table 6, majority (88.7%) of the students indicated that H/C lessons were boring. Majority (81.9%) of the students also indicated that the H/C lessons were not interesting. About 73.3% of the respondents



also pointed out that they pursued H/C for the sake of it. While 72% of the respondents admitted that they never liked H/C as a discipline in schools.

Table 4: The Student’s Responses on Positive Items Related to H/C as A Subject

Items	SD		A		U		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1 I like H/C.	20	13.3	20	13.3	0	-	30	20	80	53.3
2 I think H/C should be made compulsory.	28	18.7	28	18.7	1	0.6	64	42.7	29	19.3
3 I want to go on learning H/C.	30	20	29	19.3	0	-	0	-	91	60.7
4 I understand most of the things in H/C	117	78	28	18.7	4	2.7	1	0.7	0	
5 I work hard in H/C because it is a very important subject.	30	20	26	17.3	2	1.3	0		92	61.3
6 H/C is useful as it helps me in everyday life.	30	20	1	0.7	0	-	53	35.3	66	44
7 H/C is a very easy subject	100	66.7	43	28.7	0	-	1	0.7	6	4
8 I have a positive attitude towards studying H/C.	14	9.3	0		1	0.6	23	15.3	112	81.3
9 H/C is an important subject.	32	21.3	26	17.3	0	-	0	-	92	61.3
10 H/C is more important than Sciences.	20	13.3	0	-	3	2	7	4.7	120	80

From Table 4 the students’ attitudes can be described to be unfavorable since they have expressed positive items negatively. Majority (73.3%) of the students said that they never like H/C while 84.7% pointed out that H/C is not more important than sciences. This meant that they had a lot of value for the sciences than H/C. A high percentage of the respondents (60.7%) said that they are not ready to continue learning H/C as 62% indicated that H/C should not be made compulsory on the school system. About 61.3% of the respondents indicated also that H/C was not an important discipline to them.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following were the conclusions of the study

First, the students’ attitude towards the subject is negative. This was very clearly expressed by responses given by the respondents to questions such as how they liked the subject, how they valued the subject. The students’ negative attitudes are evidenced in Tables 3, 4 & 5. Many of the teachers also said that the students did not value the subject so much. There is need for the students to be active members in the classroom rather than being passive participants. That way the H/C will be very interesting and motivating for the learners and the teachers. Students learn well when they are interested. They learn best when they are active. Though interest is very essential, it is not enough they must be active in the process of learning. H/C would be more interesting if there were provisions for project teaching and field excursions. The training of teachers should emphasize teaching techniques as an important factor in motivating learners in learning.

Recommendations

- The teachers should take the initiative to sensitize the students that all the subjects in one way or the other contribute to different training careers in the future. Therefore, they should all be given a fair and equal treatment.
- Hence they should allocate enough time for each discipline in their personal timetables.
- Teachers should always avoid expository methods of teaching H/C. They should avoid the use methods like the lecture and note taking because it is contrary for the students to sit, passive and inactive for more than a few minutes. The students should be offered an opportunity to become researchers of history.

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