

THE IMPERATIVE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN RESEARCH: AN EXAMPLE OF HISTORY AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

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Abstract

This paper examines the imperative of interdisciplinarity in the production of knowledge in the academic community using history and other disciplines as reference point. Adopting secondary sources, the work establishes that fresh insights, approaches, methodologies, tools, theories and concepts from other cognate disciplines can be integrated to address historical research problems no matter their complex nature or forms. Moreover, since history is both a humanist and never a stand alone academic discipline, it can combine are blend new perspectives from one of more disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, natural and applied sciences, and medical science to tackle complex and contemporary societal problems. The study maintains that the approach would be of great benefit to the historian and wary researchers as it would enable them to ask new questions and find flesh answers as to why things happened the way it did. On the other hand, history is capable of providing contexts and backgrounds to researchers from other disciplines. The paper concludes that scholars should depart from their disciplinary silos and embrace interdisciplinary approach which is capable to find actionable solutions to man's complex problems.

Keywords: *History, Interdisciplinarity, Discipline, Integration, Research.*

Introduction

The concept of academic disciplines or fields of study is a recent creation. Human knowledge was initially approached from a holistic view, implying that there was no disciplinary boundaries. Put differently, there was no natural division of knowledge. For example, researchers during the early civilizations adopted collaborative approach to research. Ancient Egyptian scribes made use of literary skills, mathematical knowledge and engineering principles to document significant events. The Greek scholars, like Aristotle, carried out researches with

the blend of poetic analysis, biological observation and logical reasoning to preserve and transmit ancient knowledge. Thomas Aquinas, also integrated theological analysis with philosophical reasoning and natural science to document historic happenings. Alagoa (1978, p. 13) attests, “this unitary view of knowledge was of course, the tradition among early civilizations as the Greeks and most African societies did not traditionally, distinguish and partition knowledge into compartments. In this scientific age, it has become the fashion to create specializations out of the study of different perspectives of the human condition or the physical environment”. Akpan (2025, p. 1) concurs that “the concept or field or discipline first emerged in Germany following the establishment of research universities and later gained global adoption in the modern-day university”.

The creation of academic fields of study or disciplines in the body of knowledge birthed distinct methodologies, theoretical frameworks, perspectives and/or techniques, resulting in the establishment of academic boundaries of each discipline. In other words, there emerged clear distinctions between academic fields located in what is known today as the humanities, social sciences, physical science, natural and applied sciences to mention but a few. Accordingly, most practitioners of these disciplines depended solely on the research tools and methodologies of that field of study. This is single-disciplinary approach, meaning that:

The researcher does not concern him/herself with generating data and tools used by other disciplines on the same subject.

The researcher carries out the research solely or in conjunction with persons of the same discipline with him/her and does not involve persons from other disciplines (Fwatshak, 2007, p. 66).

The adoption of single-disciplinary approach to research created mistrust among researchers and/or practitioners of other disciplines, narrowed the intellectual view points of researchers and rendered the outcome of the research valueless.

The trend is that researchers have moved beyond disciplinary silos in their determined effort to develop more holistic and actionable solutions to complex research problems which cannot be handled by a single discipline. As a matter of fact, there is increasingly huge interdisciplinary collaborations between scholars of two or more disciplines to advance the course of knowledge inspite of their unique jargons, languages, methodologies, terminologies, communication styles, and cultures. The point is that the disciplinary boundaries of all areas of human study, deliberately or unconsciously are changing rapidly. Akpan (2025, p. 1) reveals, “the boundaries and the character of disciplines are constantly changing, merging, splitting, and rearranging themselves in response to discoveries, better methods, and changing needs in society. This means that the disciplinary arrangement is not fixed or natural”.

History, as both a multifaceted and human based academic discipline, requires the services of other disciplines to provide a holistic and near complete picture of the past. Above all, no single discipline is capable of providing a complete picture of the past of man. Thus, to convincingly analyse, evaluate, reinterpret, explain, recreate or reconstruct the past, historians or student-researchers must rely on perspectives, insights, concepts, theories, and methodologies from cognate disciplines such as archaeology, linguistics, anthropology, political science, economics and other fields. This is compellingly necessary for historians and/or

researchers in African history so as to investigate his/her subject from a holistic viewpoint. Alagoa (1978, pp. 13-16) posits:

Historians seek the assistance of other disciplines in order to obtain full benefit from unusual documents. Thus, the difficulties of penetrating the distant past of African societies through oral traditions, literature, ethnographic data, and ancient artifacts have imposed on African historians the necessity of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach.

Pointing out that,

It is now generally agreed that the earlier history of most African societies can best be reconstructed through the combined use of insights from archaeology, linguistics, anthropology, and other disciplines. The reason is, of course, the absence of the written documents on which historians of societies with a long tradition of literacy rely for an understanding of the past.

Against this backdrop, the crux of this paper is to scientifically examine the inherent connections between history and other disciplines, straddling the humanities, social sciences, natural and applied sciences, and medical sciences. We shall reverse to this later.

Conceptualizing the Concepts of Interdisciplinarity and History

For this paper to be properly understood and beneficial, the key concepts of interdisciplinary approach and history have to be defined. This is also to avoid misunderstanding and miscommunication given that concepts in the humanity are variously defined and differently conceived.

Interdisciplinarity

Mombe (2025, p. 9) defines interdisciplinarity as “a research and educational approach that synthesizes insights from two or more academic disciplines to create more comprehensive understanding and innovative solutions to complex problems”. He further refers to the concept as “a systematic mode of inquiry that integrates knowledge, methods, and perspectives from two or more academic disciplines to address questions, problems, or topics that are too complex to be understood adequately from a single disciplinary perspective”.

For Klein (1990, p. 10), interdisciplinarity is “a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline”. Interdisciplinarity, therefore, refers to the research approach that blends or integrates knowledge, methods and perspectives from two or more disciplines to tackle some complex problems or subject matter which cannot be adequately handled by a single – discipline. This problem-solving approach transcends borrowing of tools, theories, methods, techniques and insights to enhance holistic approach to knowledge production. Like cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, interdisciplinarity cut across disciplinary silos. In spite of its limitations, interdisciplinarity is the best approach to interrogate complex problems.

History

Etymologically, the term history is derived from the French word *histoire*, the Arabic word *Tarikh* and the Greek word *historia*, meaning inquiry. Like other concepts in the humanities, history is defined differently by many scholars and/or practitioners of history from their vantage points. For instance, Alagoa (1978, p. 12) defines history as “the study of man through the evidence of his past actions”. In the same manner, Marwick (1970, p. 15) sees history as “the entire human past as it actually happened”. To Amadi (2010, p. 1) history has to do “with the issues related to the whole life of man in past society, that is, through the evidence or knowledge of the actions taken by him”. For Elton (1967, p. 10), history is simply “the present traces of the past while Perkin (1970, p. 13) conceives history as “the summarized traces of the society”.

Obviously, the common trend in the above conceptualizations of history is that the heartbeat of history is man. Man produced the linkages between his past actions and present occurrences either positively or negatively. History deals with man’s significant accomplishments and woeful failures in the past. Since the past of man is varied, straddling every field of human endeavour, the historian willing to fully reinterpret, recreate and reconstruct the past of man should consult and integrate concepts, insights, perspectives and approaches from other academic disciplines.

History and other Disciplines

As discussed above, the past of man and how they shape our present and future are complex, vast and straddled in other fields of study, implying that history is a multifaceted and not a stand-alone academic discipline. History synergizes with and is enriched by cognate disciplines both within the humanities of which it is part and parcel and other disciplines in the natural sciences, social sciences, and medical sciences. Evidently, history has since departed from the use of mono causal or a single factor to interpret or explain historical events. Alagoa (1973, pp. 12-13) argues that history,

Is a discipline that must of necessity embrace aspects of several other disciplines which are able to contribute to an understanding of man by means of what he has attempted or accomplished in the past... Thus, all the disciplines in the Humanities dealing with the mental, spiritual, and physical aspects of human development must be relevant to a degree in a comprehensive view of historical studies.

Stressing that,

Historians seek the assistance of other disciplines in order to obtain full benefit from unusual documents. Thus, the difficulties of penetrating the distant past of African societies through oral tradition, literature, ethnographic data, and ancient artifacts have imposed on African historians the necessity of an inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary approach... The earlier history of most African societies can best be reconstructed through the combined use of insights from archaeology, linguistics, anthropology, and other disciplines.

To tell the truth, for the historian to fully recreate the past of man, he/she must integrate insights, techniques, results and approaches from diverse related academic fields of study. This is anchored on the fact that “other disciplines are required for a full and satisfactory historical understanding” (Alagoa, 1973, p. 13). Besides, it is practically impossible for the historian alone to provide answers to all the questions he/she must ask and know in his/her quest to reconstruct the past. Starkly put, the dependence on other related disciplines will help the historians to succeed in dealing with the shortcomings or limitations of mono causal or single-disciplinary approach. This is because “the historian will be judged by the contributions he makes, in cooperation with other related disciplines in using his knowledge of the past for shaping the future” (Bawa, 2007, p. 27).

Resulting from the aforesaid, it is germane to scientifically and objectively examine the inherent connections that history has with some of the key cognate disciplines in the humanities, social sciences natural and applied sciences, and medical sciences. These include; economics, geography, archaeology, linguistic, anthropology, literature, psychology, graphology, political science, philosophy, sociology, fine/visual arts, biology, physics, palynology, ethnozoology, epidemiology and computer science.

History and Economics

History has a special affinity with economics. Their relationship is of great antiquity. This is given that most activities in history have economic undertone. History practitioners must eat before they profitably and successfully embark on any activities. “Economic need is man’s most fundamental need. Unless man is able to meet this need he cannot exist in the first place. Man must eat before he had can do anything else – before he can worship, pursue culture...” (Ake, 1981, p. 1). Economic system influences the ways societies are organized; how people live, and cultures develop. Economic history also affects the way people make, share, and use goods. The economic systems of a given country determine to a great extent the way the country is run.

Economic historians assist us understand how economic systems affect history. The use of economic theories, statistics and methods to interpret historical data has provided the economic historian new insight about the past. For instance, the Marxists use the theory of dialectical materialism or the materialist conception of history to declare that economic system (i.e. substructure) pre-determines the super substructure, maintaining that conflict in history arose inexorably out of fierce struggle of socio-economic classes over the surplus value. Laying credence to the above position, Amugo (2008, p. 171) testifies that “the economic concept occupy central place in the world history, especially the Marxist economic history; in which the economy is the base while the other aspects are the superstructure. The theories of economists and the methods of their analysis are very useful to the historian”.

Bawa (2007, pp. 32-33) emphasizes that “no historian will try to explain the rise of price anywhere without some knowledge of the quantity theory of money... The link between history and theory are closer in the analysis of economic changes than in other branches of historical study. Economics is the science of something which men actually do, even if the science did not exist, men would still make economic decisions...” According to Aghalino (2023, p. 59):

The historian needs some economic expertise, which aided the birth of economic history. Economic history is the study of a society’s economy in the past. Historians can benefit from some of

the methods used by economists. He must be equipped with the appropriate theoretical and statistical skills if he is to grasp man's economic growth across time.

Furthermore,

The historian need economic instruments and a research strategy in order to write about the structural adjustment program, deregulation, and even the oil sector and energy problem, as well as development planning. Statistical data has also had a significant impact on history. The historian has stopped using vague terms like "the majority of historians believe in quantitative methods", "many people died during the peak period of the Covid 19 pandemic", "a number of respondents" and "a large group was interviewed", and had instead begun quoting exact figures and percentages.

In essence, "economic history is the study of a society's economy in the past" (Aghalino, 2003, p. 59) while "the economic historian is a historian who has decided to study one part of history in great depth by use of economic tools" (Bawa, 2007 p. 33). The main motive of the economic historian is to trace and record economic causes and effects. This explains why there are economic history, history of money, and history of commerce to mention but a few. The point of divergence is that while economic history emphasized the development of the economy in the distant past. Economics describes the activities of man in relation to production, distribution, consumption and exchange as well as the effect on their wellbeing. Nevertheless, economics has contributed greatly to enlarge and broaden the historical horizon.

History and Geography

History, by its nature, mutually relates with geography. The latter is one of the strongest and greatest causative factors of the former. "One of history's eyes is geography, and the other is chronology. The right view point of history is provided by time and space... Geography is the foundation of history" (Agahlino, 2023, p. 58). History and geography deal with what man does as regards human and physical factors. Geography has really served (and is still serving) as the foundation of history by providing answers for the differences in the historical development of African communities.

This is evident in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria where geography hugely influences the lives of the dwellers politically, religiously, economically, philosophically and culturally among others. In the Niger Delta, fresh water communities are mainly farmers, traders and keepers of domestic animals while their neighbours in the salt water coastal zone are traditional fisher folk, traders and producers of salt. For the salt water coastal dwellers to survive, they require tuberos products of the fresh water upland zone people for their subsistence. Also, the geography of Nigeria gives ample opportunities for interethnic relations between the people of savannah zone and those of forest zone of Nigeria. Due to their difficulty to rear animals, the inhabitants of the forest zone depend on the people of savanna zone for the supply of meat and other dairy products. Given this scenario, Alagoa (2009, p. 393) was absolutely correct when he posits that:

Geography determines frequency of intercourse, the borrowing of language items and exchange cultural trait and ideas. Any innovations achieved by one group are quickly adopted and adapted by its neighbours, and the linkages are strengthened.

Amugo (2005, p. 171) brilliantly extends the convergence between history and geography in this manner:

Geography has been very crucial in historical study as it studies the environment in which man; the object of historical study operates. Geography to a great extent shapes the history of people. The nature of a people's environment could pose limitations or opportunities for the people. Maps produced by geographers occupy a central place in historical studies.

Bawa (2007, pp. 34-35) supports:

Without a geographical basis, the people who make history will walk on air. The soil is important because of its relations to food and climate. The importance of the relation of history and geography is that the study of relationship of past societies must have knowledge of classificatory categories employed by the geographer. The concern with geographical contest of history is to fulfill a primary condition, that of observing and analyzing our present landscape.

The difference between them is that while history is a report of phenomena which follow one another and have reference to time, geography is a report of happenings beside each other in space. Also, history is narrative, geography, on the other hand, is descriptive. In the words of Kant, a German scholar, "the description according to time is history, that according to space is geography... History differs from geography only in consideration of time and area" (cited in N-ue, 2011, p. 30). The point to note is that geography has actually widened the historians' vision and provided them with new techniques of research. Thus, geography must be afforded due consideration in the attempt to reconstruct the history of a people. The importance of geography to historical studies can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ The availability and provision of maps, diagrams and other cartographical equipments enable the historian to locate and describe the location of the people, stressing the impact of geography on man.
- ❖ It provides historians the required knowledge of man's environment which serve as an introduction and a launch pad of their investigations.
- ❖ The historian through geography is able to discover the routes of a people's migration, origin, settlement, trade, and so forth.
- ❖ Changes in geographical considerations enable historians to know how human communities inter-related over times.
- ❖ Geography reveals the motives behind people's migration, occupation, technological development, population distribution and resources to a historian.
- ❖ The historians use geographical methods, strategies and techniques to interpret the past of man.

- ❖ Geography helps to stimulate historical imagination and a sense of time in history students.

History and Archaeology

Archaeology is one academic discipline that is very close and crucial to history. Archaeology, according to Derefaka (1997, p. 111) "is the study of the past of man and his ancestors by means of the material remains which survive to date". To Bacon (1971, p. 234) archaeology is "history without documents, finding out the past by reasoning from objects that survived". Shaw (1963, p. 1) sees the discipline as "comprises a system of techniques for deriving the maximum amount of information from the material culture and physical remains which have been left behind by past generations of mankind, and which have survived to the present". It is also "the study of ancient objects, which may be sold that may have been lost and found buried in the ground, or which may be preserved above the ground" (Amugo, 2008, p. 108). It is simply the study of man in the past through his material remains or objects discovered. Archaeology is often referred to as "dug up history", "prehistory" or "protohistory". Some scholars humorously call it "the science of rubbish because of excessive concerns with artifacts.

The basic aim of archaeology is to recreate the past ways of man, reconstruct his culture history and explicate the cultural processes as well as the relationship between man and culture. The fundamental duty of archaeologists is to recover and examine the artifacts, showing how man interacted with his environment in the past. From these primary goals, it is crystal clear that history and archaeology are intertwined in their objective which is to use the material remains to reconstruct the past. Both disciplines, in short, strive to learn about man's activities in the past. They differ in their methods of discovering man through different forms of evidence. The historians use both written and oral evidence to investigate man's actions in the past while archaeologists use material objects that survived. Archaeological methodology involves the excavation of particular sites recommended either through oral tradition or with the use of electric currents that passed through the ground. While emphasizing the cordial relationship between oral tradition (history) and archaeology, Atagher (2007, p. 162) notes:

We, therefore, must rely heavily on oral tradition as our main guide for the identification of ancient sites. Sometimes, it is this tradition that point to the archaeologist, precisely where to dig his trenches and what he can expect to find, so that he does not operate blindly. Since we live in a society rich in oral tradition, hardly can we start a research in African archaeology, for example, without making use of oral tradition.

Artifacts (material objects) recovered through excavation include terracotta, bronze works, fish, animal bones, pipes and so forth.

Having unearthed the ancient material remains, the archaeologist interpret them in terms of the culture, technology, cultural practices, and religion. More often, the services of both local and professional historians are sought to provide more information on their possible uses and significance. Apart from historians, other professionals invited to interpret the finds are metallurgist whose duty is to analyze samples of metal objects, stones and rocks to a

geologist, charcoal or wood specimen to a botanist, human bones to a physical/biological anthropologist.

Archaeology telescopes deeper into the past, providing history much information about a people who had lived long before written history was invented and periods prior to when the oldest tradition was first imbibed, that is planted in one's memory. Alagoa (1973, p. 17) expatiates:

When historians try to go very far back into the past, they often find their traditional sources no longer adequate to answer all the questions they wish to ask. Thus, even in parts of the world where documentary evidence is the prime source, we discover that this source covers a comparatively brief period of the history of man on earth. This problem is even more acute in Africa where we have to rely on orally transmitted evidence.

Noting that,

The difficulty with oral traditions has been that they can rarely supply reliable evidence over an extensive time span and *in such circumstances the historian turns to the archeologist for evidence of human activity from the distant past* through doffing into the earth for things made by man, or even parts of human beings which have been preserved (Emphasis ours).

The finds recovered by the archaeologist make what the historian talked about to be real or concrete. Abundant artifacts recovered from beneath the earth by archaeologists in Africa have helped the African historian to substantiate the fact that Africa produced advanced civilization before its contact with the Europeans. Alagoa (1973, p. 17) contends, "in Africa especially, the concrete, visual evidence of archaeological artifacts has been very important as a supplement and corrective to the eager evidence of oral traditions".

Another important thing archaeology does to history is chronology. Archaeology uses both relative and absolute chronology to date man's materials in the distant past. In terms of relative chronology, archaeology uses stratigraphy. This states that digging of the soil must be done from the top to bottom when excavating a site. The principle of stratigraphy states that "what lies beneath is older than what lie on top". Put differently, finds found deepest in the ground are termed to be the oldest. The second type of relative chronology is typology. This method relates one object to another. For instance, in the Niger Delta there were a lot of clay pots and pipes. The archaeologists try to sort them out into types. When this is done, changes will be indicated as well as development.

Absolute chronology, which is based on science, is another type of the archaeologist's dating techniques. With the aid of radio-carbon, archaeological data like charcoal and potsherds could be analyzed and dated. According to Alagoa (1979, p. 20) "the archaeological work has produced radio-carbon dates mainly from charcoal. These dates have confirmed the estimates from oral traditions and glottochronology that communities were settled in the Eastern Niger Delta at such places as Saikiripogu (Okpoma, Nembe), Ke in Kalabari, Ogoloma and Okochiri near Okrika from at least the ninth century, that is, over a thousand years ago". The radio-carbon technique is also used to determine the period of origin of rocks. This is

achieved by “measuring the ratio of radio-carbon argon to radioactive potassium in the rock” (Aghaliho, 2023, p. 62). To be intellectually honest, archaeology has done a lot to chronology by assigning both relative and absolute dates to African proto-history development. Nzewunwa (1981, p. 204) reinforces that,

Archaeology had contributed to the knowledge of our hitherto dim past by extending chronology of man... back in time through a series of radiometric dates; by unearthing artifacts for the study of art history and for furnishing museums; by making people aware of extinct civilization and by providing data for academic pursuits and the enrichment of human knowledge. Moreover, archaeology has given Nigerians a place of pride as a people with a rich highly developed cultural heritage. It has become the more relevant to the study of Nigerian as indeed African past in the week of nationationalism and the Blackman’s search for an identity rooted in antiquity.

Ki-Zerbo (1981, pp. 6-7) affirms,

The silent witnesses revealed by archaeology are often more eloquent than the official chroniclers. The marvelous discoveries of the archaeology have already served African history well, especially when, as it the case with several thousand millennia of African past, there is no oral or written chronicle available. Then objects alone, buried with those for whom they bear witness, keep vigil beneath the heavy shroud of the earth over a past without a past without a face and without a voice. Some of these objects are particularly significant as points of reference in the measuring of civilization.

Archaeological finds in Nok, Nle-Ife, Benin, Igbo-Ukwu, Owo, Kursakata, Daima, Iwo Eleru, Katsina-Ala, Waniba, Nsukka, Ke, Onyoma, Ogoloma, Sai Kiripogu, and Okochiri and so forth in Nigeria have shedded more interesting light on cultural progress in Nigeria. These material remains have equally helped to give Nigerians a sense of pride and inspiration. This is also correct of the primitive stone culture at Olduval, popularly known as Old-Owan George in Tanzania, East Africa. The artifacts recovered have validated the theory that Africa is the earliest home of man. Archaeology actually provided the foundation for cultural history in Africa in general and Nigeria to be specific.

History and Linguistics

Linguistics can be seen as the scientific study of human language. It is simply the study of languages and their relationship. It is concerns with how languages are structured, how they are used, and how they have evolved over time. On the other hand, a linguist is a specialist in the scientific study of language. He examines various aspects of language, including its structure, use, history, and social context. A historical linguist, also known as diachronic linguistics, studies the changes in language so as to understand language origin, evolution, and the relationships between languages.

History and linguistics are inextricably connected. Practitioners of both disciplines are interested in themselves because they always learn from each other. While the historian is

interested in how to use language to bring about the history of the speaker(s), the linguist is interested in language itself. The historian, through linguistic data, can obtain culture change, contact, and loan words of the ethnic groups he/she is researching on. "The study of loan words, for example, can show in what ways the speakers of one language have been related to another culture from which their language has borrow items" (Alagoa, 1973, p. 19).

Furthermore, it was the linguistic examination of Kanuri loan words in Hausa, that Joseph Greenberg, a seasoned historical linguist, established that the Hausa must have obtained their political titles from the Kanuri. This is a clear testament that the Kane Bornu Kingdom may have exercise some measures of influence on the Hausa state in the distant past. Likewise, it is plausible to infer that the Hausa through the Kanuri learnt the art of writing and borrowing some of their cultural items from the Arab world (Alagoa, 1973, Aghalino, 2023).

Kay Williamson, an erudite historical linguist, through the study of names and loan-words in the Niger Delta was able to determine that common crops, like cassava, were introduced into the region from South America through the Portuguese connection (Alagoa, 1973). Moreso, with the aid of the linguistic data, she revealed that the bitter leaf (*Veronica amygdalina*), which is a highly desirable ingredient of most Niger Delta food items, is of Igbo heritage. Interestingly, too, most Niger Delta peoples have adopted the name and variously called it *Origbo*, *Oligbo* or *Olugbo* (Aghalino, 2023). Indeed, linguistic data enables the historian to gain insights into historical events, migrations, and cultural contact as well as linguistic model and techniques.

History and Anthropology

Anthropology, which concerns itself with the simple uncivilized or primitive and non-primitive societies, and history, which deals with the past of man, have an important point of convergence. They are interconnected disciplines that examine man in the past. They both investigate the effect of man's past actions in shaping the present.

The anthropologist's work on critical concepts like symbol, kingship, religion, lineage, and rituals and methods of generating data such as the use of direct observations and interviews as well as their concentrations on small societies are extremely useful to the historian in his attempt to recreate the past. Amugo (2007, p. 171) stresses that "anthropologists in their field work undertake observation of peoples and their cultural practices. The anthropologist also engage in direct participation in the activities of the societies; study, living and mixing up with people. Their manners of field recording is also effective". Like anthropologists, historians focus their investigative lenses on man's form of social relationship, social organization, religion, government, language, legends, economy, customs and other essential aspects of man. It is not an exaggeration that most of the bulk of materials used by historians to reconstruct African past were supplied by anthropologist's works despite their gross inadequacy. Bawa (2007, pp. 30-31) sheds more light on this when he writes that:

Anthropology has exerted influence in a number of ways, as a corrective to the historian's inherent ethnocentrism and that the writing of history is not dependent upon the availability of written records and it has provided tools for historians concerned with areas where written records are rare or non-existent. Historians dealing with institutions of kingship can use the work of anthropologists like

Vansina on African kingdom or E.E. Evans Pritchard on divine kingship among the Shilluk people of Sudan.

In the same vein, Aghalino (2023, p. 60) avers:

Anthropology might be used creatively to provide light on historical events. The majority of the unwritten sources about Africa were, sociologists', anthropologists' and ethnographers' works. Historians have used some of these texts as raw materials and starting points for reconstructing the history of Africa. While it is true that the majority of the works include racial hubris, oversimplification of historical facts, there is no denying that some of the works are epochal.

It follows, therefore, that caution must be applied while making use of these anthropological data, especially those that were done by foreigners. This is because they are limited to temporal depth and did not really capture the true reflection of historical experiences of the people they are researching on. Vansina (1981, p. 161) points out". A foreigner writing about a country usually restricts himself to economic and financial facts which are often still incompletely understood. The oral source, which is in words looking, mentions foreigners only causally, if at all". Nevertheless, anthropologist benefitted from the works of historians. They "took to history as a way of repositioning itself in the post-modern curriculum of social analysis" (Leis, 1997, p. 185). The anthropologist and historian differ in the areas where anthropologists limit their study to the primitive past, historians investigate both literate and non-literate societies in Africa in the distant past.

History and Literature

History and literature are intrinsically connected. Both disciplines reinforce each other. Literature, which refers to "compositions that tell stories, dramatise situations, express emotions, and analyse and advocate ideas" (Roberts & Jacobs cited in Rabiou, 2011, p. 22), has a lot to do with history. Literature provides valuable insights and methodologist for historical research and interpretation. There are evident in the historical periods, cultural contexts, and the individuals and societal perspectives. Again, literature serves as the foundation of any historical work. It provides rich information about past societies, customs, and beliefs.

History and literature are deeply related in the area where most available literary texts discuss various themes like geography, gender, class, ethnic and racial boundaries and boundaries crossings that are connected to history of our country. In this way, literature has help to quicken students', and readers' understanding of history. Bawa (2007, pp. 35-36) argues that literature,

Is important because of its ability to stimulate students historical imaginations as it "enacts" life through the characters, plot and setting, literature captures students interest in effective way that contributes to a greater investment in historical issues and ideas, it engages students in varied and complex understandings of the consciousness of an era. Because of the multiple perspectives embedded in literary texts, literature is an effective vehicle for teaching point of view, and this is one of the most important facets of historical analysis.

History also has a lot to contribute to literature. Most writers need to understand the historical period in which a literary work was written. This is very crucial for interpreting its meaning and significance. More so, historical events can serve as powerful sources of inspiration for writers, shaping their narratives and themes. For example, Ken Saro Wiwa's *On the darkling plain: An account of the Nigerian Civil War* (1989), Chinua Achebe's *There was a country: A personal history of Biafra* (2012) and Elechi Amadi's *Sunset in Biafra* (1973) were influenced by the 30-month bloody internecine war which occurred in Nigeria between 1967-1970.

Most prominent novelists, poets, essayists, and critics rely heavily on history or historical knowledge contained in oral tradition to write their works. This is evident in Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart* (1958). The writer explored the past history of the Ibo to narrate the clash between traditional Ibo society and the British imposed colonial rule. This is equally true of *Arrow of God* (1964) which explores the complexities of tradition and modernity in Igbo, Nigeria. Both disciplines actually interrogate human experiences through narrative.

History and Psychology

History and psychology are symbiotically related since remembered time. The connection is so deep that "some historians have thought themselves as psychologists" (Bawa, 2007, p. 31). Although, history examines human actions in the past, psychology focuses on the individual behaviour, both disciplines explore human condition, using different approaches. Psychology offers insights into historical events. The historian usually borrows insightful concepts, and methods from psychology. Confirming this statement, Aghalino (2023, p. 60) maintains that psychological inputs "has provided historians with valuable insights into group behaviour. This can help historians better understand collective attitudes such as religious ardour, ethnic preferences, stereotypes, and cosmological view point. Historians have studied the effects and consequences of war, as well as the ultimate victims, using psychological insights to determine the view that the soldiers alone are not the victims of war".

In addition, there is a paradigm shift of historians' emphasis on the origin or/and causes and course of the wars to their consequences of bombing upon civilian morale. These mattered most to both the historian and psychologist. This has become the point of interest between historians and psychologists. No historians, as a matter of fact, especially social historians, can successfully carry out his/her craft of biographical writing without the inclusion of the view point of psychologist. As Bawa (2007, p. 32) puts it, "no historian could write biographical study without betraying the influence of psychology".

History and Philosophy

The disciplines of history and philosophy are lined in various ways through different means. While history's emphasis is on the past important events, philosophy explores essential and relevant questions concerning man's life knowledge, and values. It has been revealed that philosophical ideas have greatly influence historical events. For instance, enlightenment philosophy seriously affected the American and French Revolution which ultimately shaped ideas about human rights and democracy we are enjoying today.

Philosophy is crucial to history as historians draw upon philosophical concepts to analyze the past. They might use ideas from political philosophy to understand how different

societies were organized or they might use ethical theories to interrogate past decisions and actions of political actors, statesmen and history-makers. It also helps historians understand world views and belief systems. In fact, philosophy has tremendously push historical studies and research into new directions.

Philosophy of history, which was coined by Voltaire, the French foremost philosopher, is the philosophical study of history and its discipline. It assists historians to scrutinize the theoretical basis of history, promote the understanding of history, analyse the nature of the historical events, and the techniques historians utilize. Philosophy of history also assist the historian to examine how we study and write about history. It asks questions like: can we really know what happened in the past? How our own beliefs affect how we see history? This helps historians think critically about their craft.

History and Political Science

History and political science are well related disciplines. Political science deals with the theory and practice of government and political behaviour and power relations. The study also examines institutions, and relations within public life. History, on the other hand, focuses on the past of man, analyzing and interpreting events and their causes to understand the development of human civilization in time. History equally examines past political happenings and their impact on today's societies. Perhaps, this explains why some scholars regarded history as the past politics and present politics as the future history.

Political scientists provide useful and workable theories about how governments work can explain historical events like revolutions or the fall of great empires in time past. Professional historians often use concepts from political science to analyse past political systems. They might take a look at how different types of governments affected people's lives. Put differently, the historian might investigate the ways in which political ideas spread and promoted historical events.

It has to be added that the historian draws on the knowledge of the analysis of political scientists to understand our political history and continuity. For example, the generalizations like African societies being stateless and acephalous supply important insights that prove useful to historians' recreation of African past. The relationship goes both ways. Historical case studies are crucial for political scientists developing theories about how politics works. Again, history provides the raw materials that political science practitioners use to build and test their ideas. In this wise, history serves as the store house and laboratory of politics.

It is worthwhile to note that history provides important information about revolutions and political movements which help us to formulate political strategy, diplomacy, propaganda, policies and so on so as to bring about change. It is plausible to infer that history is a search light of politics and light house for political research. Commenting on their mutual relationship, Lord Action (cited in N-ue, 2011, p. 31) observes that "the science of politics is one science that is deposited in the stream of history like the grains of gold in the sand in the river". Also, stressing their cordial connection, John Seeley (quoted by N-ue, 2011, pp. 31-32) emphasizes the consequences of their separation that "one becomes a cripple if not a corpse". In fact, without historical foundations, politics becomes merely speculative.

History and Sociology

History and sociology share deep ties. Although, history is older than sociology, both disciplines are interested in the study of man in his social environment. Sociology, which studies how people interact and behave in groups, helps historians understand why, and how, certain events occurred. The major theoretical perspectives in sociology such as functionalist, conflict and interactionist, etc. are borrowed by historians to analyse past societies. Adebayo (1994, p. 42) paints the picture clearer:

The historian to some extent borrows concepts and methodologies of the social sciences (which sociology is part of) in order to enhance historical scholarship, especially applying the concepts and methodologies in modern African historiography.

Aside from the above, the sociologist's scientific description of social structure helps paint a fuller picture of life in different time periods. According to Aghalino (2023, p. 60) "through their research into social dynamics, sociologists may be able to help historians determine the social structure of the society they are researching on. History is tangible and deals with specific occurrences, whereas sociology attempts to discover universal rules". Citing Max Weber, Marwick (1970, p. 112) elaborates that:

The formation of typological concepts (is) the major contribution of sociology to history because they seek to go beyond the data and establish abstract concepts. They help historians to escape from the limitation of particularity. The importance of models for historians is not the offer of solutions but the indication of relationships and pattern employed to interpret historical evidence.

History and sociology are not always on the same page. While "sociology is interested in the study of the present social phenomena with all their complexities, history deals with the past events of man" (Ogunbameru, 2009, pp. 25-26). Also, sociology is abstract in nature, and history is concrete. What is more, sociologists after a scientific enquiry of the social phenomena seek to generalize whereas what mattered to historians is to establish the chronological order in which events took place.

History and Fine/Visual Arts

The visual artists translate significant historical happenings into reality by moulding them. Such works of arts from the past can tell us more about the historical periods include paintings, sculptures, and architecture. Examples are the Benin bronze, Ife arts, Tsoede bronze casting etc. All these abundantly show how people lived, what they believed, and what they thought was important. Historians use art as evidence about the past. This is true or Egyptian tomb paintings which give us vital information about ancient Egyptian life and beliefs.

It is also worth stressing that visual arts equip African historians with necessary skills like constructive and modeling skills. The drawing of the maps of Africa, West Africa; and Nigeria among others instill and stimulate the skills of modeling and construction. Arts can also record historical events. For example, paintings of battles or coronation can provide or point to details about these events. The historians must be very careful of these works as the author might change things to please their patrons and/or pay masters or to exaggerate a scene so as to look better.

History and Biology

Biology, the study of life and living organisms, is deeply intertwined with history. This is very clear when considering evolution and the history of life on earth. Indeed, the history or evolution of biology relies mostly on historical data, like fossil and genome sequences, to infer the origins and relationships of species.

Both disciplines utilize the scientific method to investigate and understand life processes, using observation, experimentation, and data analysis. Recently, biology, especially genetics, has become an indispensable tool for historians. DNA analysis can provide useful information about human migrations, population changes, and even family relationships in the past. Alagoa (1973, p. 20) confirms that “the biological sciences are relevant in such studies of the history of agriculture. Thus, when we hear that the Ethiopian Highlands and the bend of the Niger could have been early centres of crop domestication, it is possible to think of them also as early centre of population and civilization”.

The study of ancient diseases is another important area where biology and history meet. By analyzing DNA from ancient remains, scientists can identify diseases that affected past populations. This helps historians understand things better than they do. History, on the other hand, can shed light on the impact of biological changes on human societies and *vice versa*.

History and Physics

History and physics have very strong affinity. A pointer to this is where the history of physics provides context and backgrounds for understanding modern physics, pointing out how scientific ideas evolved and the human factors that influenced their development. It also displays interactions between seemingly disparate scientific ideas, thereby stimulating and arousing new research.

Physics is particularly valuable to history as it has been applied to the study of man's past by using radioactive isotopes to provide the chronological age of objects. The potassium – argon method helps historians date objects to periods more than a million years ago, supporting historical evidence, judgement and conclusion. On the hand, historical studies can explain the social, intellectual, and political backgrounds in which scientific discoveries were made, offering a more holistic view of physics as an academic discipline.

History and Computer Science

There is a deep and cordial relationship between history and computer science particularly in their shared interest in understanding systems, patterns, and the evolution of knowledge. Computer science provides active tools for managing and analyzing large data sets, including historical documents, records and archaeological finds. It might provide oral records that are buried in ballads, tales, sagas, tape-recorders, interviews, and translation and transcriptions. This is made possible as computer accepts, stores, processes and accommodates historical data.

The computer is also of great relevance to the historians. It displays the African works of art and some artists, showing our advancement in indigenous technology and economy. These are essential and of prime importance as they enable historians to recreate the past of man in his totality. Recall that history does not claim monopoly of knowledge, especially in Africa where the part of man cannot be recovered from or found in a single document.

Computer science has also gained a lot from history. History provides context for the development of computing. Also, both historical events and societal changes have significantly impacted the development and adoption of computing technologies. The knowledge provided by history is essential for appreciating the broader impact of technology on society. Computational analysts also draw upon historical expertise. Such collaboration between history and Computer science might help to solve problems and deepen knowledge. Both fields have benefitted from cross-disciplinary approaches.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to examine the unbroken relationship between history and other cognate academic disciplines. It revealed that man is the center piece of history. As a humanist discipline, it is multifaceted, complex, straddling all areas of human endeavour. By implication, history delves into other disciplines domicile in the humanities, social sciences, natural and applied science as well as medical science.

The work has discussed that interdisciplinary approach is appropriate to investigate many facets of man and all his activities in the past. The adoption of this approach would enable historians and researchers to understand the past comprehensively and holistically. It would also enable them to gain new and diverse tools, methodologies, perspectives, insights, concepts, and theories from other academic disciplines to address complex historical problems which history cannot adequately address alone. Interdisciplinary approach would afford historians and student-researchers to ask new questions and find fresh answers as to why, when, and how the past events influenced humankind today and their relevance to future generations.

The application of interdisciplinarity would also assist other academic fields of study. For instance, history provides contexts, and background to the works of scholars in other disciplines. Daniels (1972, p. 8) posits that "history... offers the raw record of what has happened, and it sets the context of unique situations in the stream of time within which the other forms of specialized inquiry must operate". This explains why history is often described as "the mother of all disciplines". Indeed, history stands out as an important discipline for the understanding of the roots and depths of most academic disciplines.

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