

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Ikelegbe, Samuel

Department of Office Technology and Management,
Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi- Uku, Nigeria.
Ikelegbesamuel@yahoo.com

Abstract

The paper discusses the concept of a teacher and the need for quality assurance in implementing teacher education programmes in Nigeria. It x-rayed the important roles of NUC, NCCE and TRCN in ensuring that quality assurance is achieved in teacher education programmes in Nigeria. Challenges in implementing teacher education programmes such as; inadequate funding; staff recruitment; inadequate teaching and learning materials; attitude of teachers; and quality of students admitted to teacher education were discussed. Recommendations were made which includes that; teacher education programmes should be funded; qualified staff should be recruited and that accreditation teams should be firm and focused in carrying out their duties, among others.

Keywords: Quality, quality Assurance, Teacher, Education, and Teacher Education

Introduction

Teacher education is the foundation of quality in educational systems and this is the key to unlock all facets of development. This is very relevant in nations that look up to education as a vehicle for attaining desired development in all sectors of national life. Educational systems all over the world have been worried with the problem of teacher quality. This is not surprising because the quality of teachers and teaching has direct effect on their products.

Quality is described by Idialu in Amesi (2017) as standards of something as compared to other things, that is, the degree of goodness or excellence. Quality assurance in the views of Okereke (2014) is the systematic management and assessment procedures adopted by higher educational institutions and systems to monitor performance against objectives, and to ensure achievement of quality outputs and improvement. Also, Okoli, Utoware and Nwanbi (2017) stated that quality assurance is a proactive measure of ensuring quality in any organisation. They added that in education, quality assurance aims at preventing problems and ensures that the system conform to the expected standards. It is a continuous process by which an institution can guarantee that standards and quality of its educational provisions are maintained and improved upon. Onyesom and Ashibougwu (2013) described quality assurance as the entire process of ensuring maximum effectiveness and efficiency of educational programmes and services in relation to their context, mission and stated objectives. It involves all operation techniques and activities which include all actions taken for standard to be met.

Education according to Cremin in Offorma (2016) is a deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, values, skills and sensibilities. Fafunwa (1989) sees education as a human act of informing, forming and strengthening of the powers of the body and mind; a process for transmitting culture for the knowledge to ensure social control and guarantee rational direction of society. Akuma (2016) stated that education turns around positively the life of members of any society by providing manpower that can be productive in any of its economic sectors, stimulate modern behaviours and ideological reorientation in citizens. It is the vehicle for advancing the frontiers of knowledge; it is a vital tool for social change and national development.

Concept of Teacher

A teacher is a professionally trained person who is knowledgeable in theory and practice of education. The person must be dedicated and committed to the course of effective, efficient and competent training of individuals (learners) under his/her care; and be functional members of their society. The teacher should guide others and serve as a role model, and with the current knowledge economy, as he/she should understand that a lot is demanded from him/her.

Obanya (2016) stated that today's teacher has to practice transformational pedagogy, whereby the teacher situates the practice of teaching strictly at the creative levels to create responsiveness to specific teaching, learning challenges. Ogbonnaya (2011) asserted that

teachers are very significant asset in the educational system, they translate the educational policies into practice; they make the policies operational and are involved in such roles as: curriculum planning, teaching, guidance and counselling, disciplining the learners, administration and supervision possible. According to Okeke (2004), a teacher is the person who discovers or orders, directs, transmits, disseminates, appraises and administers knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in any teaching and learning situation. Okeke further stress that the attitude of a teacher includes: having good professional and academic qualification; interest and flair for teaching; sound professional ethics; very good knowledge of content; emotional stability and well groomed. These qualities may not be found today in some of the teachers, that is why criticism of the teacher and the teaching profession has become the order of the day.

In Nigeria, according to Offorma (2016), the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria is empowered by law, Degree no. 31 of 1993, now Act cap T3 of 2004, to:

- Determine persons to be called teachers, for the purpose of the Act establishing it.
- Determine what standards of knowledge and skills are to be obtained by persons seeking to become registered as teachers and raising those standards from time as circumstances may permit;
- Regulating and controlling the teaching profession in all its aspects and ramifications; and
- Classify from time to time members of teaching profession according to their level of training and qualification among other responsibilities.
- Performing through the council established under the Acts 31 of 1993, the functions conferred on it by the Act.

The implication of all these according to Offorma (2016) is that teachers are special people who are subjects to the laws of the land, the educational law and other regulations made under it, as well as being involved in keeping the ethics of the teaching profession. They are the channels through which behavioural changes are facilitated in cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain.

Quality Assurance of Teacher Education Programme

Teacher education is an institutionalised procedure designed for the professional training of those who engage in the business of teaching. It is a major pillar that supports the growth and development of any society as the quality of the education determines the quality of the teacher and that subsequently give rise to the quality of students (Agwu and Iduma, 2016).

Teacher education according to Ipaye (1996) is charged with the task of developing knowledge and skills as basis for practice, with preparing personnel entry into the teaching profession (pre-service) and with contributing to the ongoing development of practicing professionals (in service).

Teacher education is therefore expected to function by equipping teachers with the wherewithal; both ethical, intellectual competencies and skills dispositions, emotional abilities that will enable them develop and impact in their students the requisite educational and societal dispositions.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) through the National Policy of Education (NPE), stated that in recognition of the pivotal role of quality teachers in the provision of quality education at all levels, “teacher education shall continue to be emphasized in educational planning and development and the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE)”. The goal of education in the provision of the NPE shall be to:

- Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of educational system.
- Further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- Help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situation; and
- Enhance teachers’ commitment to the teaching profession.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) further stated that:

- All teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained. Teacher education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties.
- Information technology (IT) training shall be incorporated into all teachers training programme.
- At the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) and Degree levels, education programmes shall be expanded to cater for the requirements of technical, vocational, business and special education.

The goals of teacher education as stated in the NPE (FRN 2013) are laudable and clear and the Federal and states Governments have supported education in various ways such as making policies to be of guide to educational institutions, providing funds, laying emphasis on quality education and review of curriculum through various agencies saddled with such responsibilities but the performance in education in Nigeria seems not to improve.

Ndidiamaka in Akuma (2016) subscribes to this observation and feels that the depreciating performance may be attributed to lapses and inadequacies that have besieged the process of teacher education. However, the desire to ensure that teacher education programmes meet the expected standard led to external measures, beside the internal mechanism within various institutions in order to enhance quality of programmes offered by them. Such external measures include establishment of agencies to regulate, accredit

and maintain acceptable standards of the programme (quality assurance) in the training institutions. These include:

- I. National Universities Commission (NUC)
- II. National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and;
- III. Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)

The National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education of (NCCE) are bodies established by the Federal Government to moderate the activities of Universities and Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Okebukola (2010) stated that the NUC and NCCE are to accredit, monitor, evaluate programmes implementation from time to time through the constitution of visitation panels or external audit panels empowered to examine the relevance and adequacy of the input process and output elements of the teaching, learning, research and other activities of the teacher education programmes based on set minimum standards. The Teacher Registration Council (TRCN) is the professional teachers' regulatory body, empowered by law to register teachers of different categories such as; NCE graduates, B. Sc/B. Ed Graduates, M. Sc and Ph.D teachers.

Challenges in implementing Quality Assurance in Teacher Education in Nigeria

Teacher education in Nigeria is characterized by a lot of problems which affect the quality of teachers churned out of the teacher education system into the schools and the outcome, of course is poor performance of students being trained due to inefficiency of student teachers and graduate teachers as well.

Agwu and Iduma (2016) observed that a lot of graduate teachers graduated with excellent results but have little or nothing to offer in the classrooms, they find it very difficult to express themselves in simple and correct English. Many of them do not have a good knowledge of the subject matter they teach. This therefore places a lot of question marks on how they were admitted into the teacher education programmes and how they managed to graduate with very good grades. Other challenges that beset teacher education programmes include:

1. Inadequate Funding.

Funding is a bane to education generally in Nigeria. This also affects teacher education. Education is capital intensive and substantial amount of money is required to pay teachers salaries, procure educational facilities, expand existing facilities, and embark on educational research and to provide enabling environment for effective teaching and learning. The effect of inadequate funding turns around as a problem as it is currently being observed in the education sector.

2. Staff Recruitment.

The quality of academic and non academic staff input in any teacher education programme is critical to smooth implementation of the approved programme. However,

many Chief Executives of teacher education institutions do not abide by due process in the appointment and promotion of staff. Quality of staff is no longer a major consideration. What matters most is “who you know”. Even when the candidates are exposed to competitive interviews during recruitment, the results are often manipulated in favour of the desired candidates. Some teacher education programmes in an attempt to meet accreditation requirements, fast track the promotion of staff to positions they lack the experience to fill or appoint new staff to position they are not qualified to occupy, this scenario has negative effects in teacher education programmes.

3. Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Materials.

A survey conducted for UNICEF by Institute of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, according to Eze (nd) (fceeshamufu.edu.Ng/img/qna.pdf) showed that most of the colleges of education both in the South-East and South-South geo-political Zones of Nigeria lack relevant facilities and learning resources and the available ones are not adequate when compared with students’ population. Lecturers lack office accommodation and students receive lectures in over-crowded classrooms. Such unhealthy environment may result to frustration among lecturers and students and may become a breeding ground for lecturer/students’ engagement in vices such as truancy, examination malpractices, material and non material exploitations of students.

It is no longer news that during accreditation, some institutions go out of their way to borrow some learning materials to meet up with the accreditation requirements only to return them to their owners after the accreditation team had left. Also some accreditation teams are not firm with their duties as money at times exchanges hands in exchange for quality. This is a reflection of the attitude of self deception that characterizes our national life and it is problem as it lowers quality of education generally.

4. Attitude of Lecturers towards Teaching and Teaching Practice Supervision.

The nature of teaching and learning interactions that take place in the classrooms, laboratories and workshop are important factors that determine the quality of teacher output. Experience has shown that some academic staff do not attain the minimum periods required before the examination of students, and such persons usually go on to examine students and turn in grades which may not reflect the learning achievement of students. This situation does not reflect the essence of evaluation. To some, what matters is good grade. Whether the grades earned or supposedly earned reflect learning achievement is not important. This has made many students to graduate with good results but without the requisite knowledge and skills required of an effective teacher.

Teaching practice and microteaching which are important components of teacher education programme are also been neglected as this situation has left graduates teachers bereft of basic competencies and attitude required for teaching effectively. Teaching practice creates for student teachers useful opportunities, for applying in real life situation the knowledge, skills and strategies acquired in the class theoretical presentation (Eze, 2001). In spite of the relevance of teaching practice in equipping student teachers with skills relevant to

their professional practice, a lot of problems appear to hamper the optimum realization of its usefulness.

Imogie (2010) observed that, many who participate in the teaching practice supervision adopt uncaring attitude. Some have been reported to award grades without visiting the teaching practice schools and students usually take advantage of such to play truancy, also students are object of exploitation by some supervisors who base the grades they award on the amount of gift given. This situation makes teaching practice in some institutions a mere formality and it has to a great extent reduced the quality of graduates produced in teacher education.

5. Candidates Admitted into Teacher Education Programmes.

The quality of the candidates that are admitted for teacher education programmes according to Akuma (2016) has lowered drastically. A good number of the students may probably not be in the programme if they had an alternative choice. Imogie (2010) noted that many students who get admitted have history of poor academic records and only opted to train as teachers when they fail to secure admission into other courses of their choice. This is also partly as a result of the poor image of the teaching profession. Not many Nigerians would want to train as teachers if they have alternative choices. Many who get admitted are not usually the best candidates and they came in because it was the available programme, as such, they lack the interest and many at times find it difficult to cope with the academic demands.

Conclusion

Quality teachers hold the key to national development and such quality teachers can only be produced through quality teacher education programmes. Effective teacher education is imperative if Nigeria must realize her dream, philosophy, and goals of education in Nigeria. Quality and effective teachers beget functional citizens, as education impacts on economic, political, social and moral development of a nation. The concern of teacher education world over is the training and preparing would- be- teachers for effective functioning at the school.

The teacher is at the centre of teacher education, it is therefore imperative for quality assurance in teacher education, in order to develop knowledge and desired skills in students. This means that quality control mechanisms put in place must be maintained and improved upon by both teacher education institutions and accreditation teams to overcome problems faced by teacher education in order to achieve expected benchmarks in teacher education programmes in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The quality of any educational system solely depends on the quality of the teachers one finds in the school system. It is therefore recommended that;

- 1 The Federal and state Governments of Nigeria in collaboration with other stakeholders in the education sector should ensure adequate funding of teacher education by providing educational facilities that will help in the training of would- be- teachers.
- 2 In recruitment, the authorities concerned should screen applicants to ensure that only those that are qualified with competent and desirable skills, and are interested in teaching should be given the chance to enter the teaching profession.
- 3 The administrators of teacher education need to reflect deeply on their professional practices and work, to discard attitudes and dispositions that neglect the principle of professionalism in the discharge of their mandate. They should strive to engage only in actions that will lead to excellence in the system.
- 4 The need to create an accommodating environment for both students and lectures for teaching and learning should be encouraged. This will create in people a sense of belonging, commitment and positive attitude that may lead to a community of people that aspire to achieve a common goal and see themselves as major stakeholders in educational process.
- 5 Teacher education should be taken more seriously to reflect what is written in the National Policy on Education of Nigeria: “that no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers”. The teacher’s salary scale should be brought to fruition and teaching profession which is the mother of all other professions should be accorded its due respect to attract the best brains to the classroom.
- 6 Faculties and institutions of education should not accept individuals who do not choose education at the first instance, to avoid using facilities of education as a dumping ground or a leeway for birds of passage. Only candidates who choose education should be considered for admission into education programmes not candidates who failed to secure admission elsewhere. This is to ensure that those admitted have the interest and will be committed to the teaching profession.
- 7 Accreditation teams should be selected based on their integrity and not “who you know”; integrity is the hallmark of a successful team. This will help in insisting on quality assurance and institutions will in turn comply with what is needful in order to be accredited.

References

- Agwu, S. N & Iduma, A. O. (2016). Meeting the objectives of teacher education for the improvement of instruction delivery in Nigerian schools. In Ivowi U.M.O (ed). A Book of Reading in Honour of Prof. Mrs. Victoria, Adaobi Obasi, Imo State University. Owerri. 39-55.
- Akuma, N. (2016). Meeting the objective of teacher education in Nigeria. In Ivowi U. M.O. (ed) A Book of Reading in Honour of Prof. Mrs. Victoria, Adaobi Obasi Imo State University. Owerri. 57-68.
- Amesi, J. (2017). Quality Assurance in business education programmes and skill acquisition among business education students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Conference Proceedings of Association of Business Educators of Nigeria. 4(1), 35-41.
- Eze, U. N. (nd). Quality Assurance in teacher preparation in Nigeria. Retrieved 16/08/19 from www.tcehamufa.edu.ng/assets/img/qua.Pdf.
- Eze U. N. (2001). Practical teaching programme for preservice student teachers in University of Nigeria, Nsukka; problems and strategies for improvement. In A. N. Akudure and D. Enyi, (ed.) Crisis and Challenges in Higher Education in Developing Countries. Ibadan Wisdom Publishers Ltd.
- Fafunwa, A. B (1989). National policy on education: A planner view point. In Tamuno, T. and J. A. Atanda (eds). Nigeria since independence – the first 25 years: Heineman Education Books Nigeria Ltd.
- F R N (2013). National Policy on Education Nigeria Education Research Council (NERDC).
- Imogie, A. I. (2010). A New Paradigm for teacher preparation in the 21st century Nigeria. In N. Onyegegbu and U. Eze (eds.). Teacher preparation and vision 20:20:20 in Nigeria. Enugu. Timex Publisher.
- Ipaye, B. (1996). Problems and Prospects of teacher education in Nigeria: In Ilasa, P. N (ed.). 58 - 64.
- Obanya, P. (2016). Acquiring a teaching personality in Ukozor, F. I., E. C Ekwuonye, & C. N. Ihekweba (eds.). Issues in Science Education, Curriculum Development Research and Evaluation. Owerri: Richgrip publishing House.
- Offorma, G. C. (2016). Purpose of teacher education. In Ivow. U. M.O (ed.) a book of reading in Honour of Prof. Mrs. Victoria Adaobi Obasi, Imo State University, Owerri; 211 – 226.
- Ogbonnaya, N. (2011). Concepts of education and teaching. In Onwuka, C. J. A. (ed.) Introduction to education: The Nigerian Perspective. Enugu; Chuka Educational Publishers.

- Okebukola, P. (2010). Fifty years of Higher Education in Nigeria; Trends in quality assurance. A paper presented at the International Conference on the Contributions of Nigerian Universities to the 50th Anniversary of Nigeria.
- Okeke, B.S. (2004). Teaching in Nigeria: The bureaucracy and Professionalism. Port Harcourt: Mercury International Publishing Nigeria.
- Okereke, E. C. (2014). Strategies for ensuring quality in business education programme of tertiary institutions in Anambra State: African Research review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal. Ethiopia. 8 (1) 321-336.
- Okoli, B. E. Utoware, J. D & Nwanbi A. (2017). Quality Assurance strategy for promoting skill acquisition in business education programmer in Universities in South –East for sustainable national development in Nigeria: Conference Proceedings of Association of Business Educator of Nig., 4 (1) , 80 – 87.
- Onyesom, M. & Ashibogwu, N. K (2013). Towards quality assurance in business education in Nigeria: Constraints and control. Asian Journal of Business Management, 5(3), 306 – 312.