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QUALITY EDUCATION: EXAMINING TEACHER- EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN THE LIGHT OF THE 21st CENTURY MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the extent to which a quality and standard teacher education can enhance teachers' productivity and the attainment of the millennium development goals. To this end, the descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Four research questions and two hypotheses were postulated for the study. Of the six education districts in the state, five were randomly selected with five secondary schools and twenty respondents (comprising teachers and students) sampled from each district. This made a total of a hundred respondents sampled from each district and five hundred from the five districts. The questionnaire and the interview were used as instruments for data collection. The contents of these instruments were face validated by five education specialists of the University of Lagos while a reliability of 0.75 was recorded using the test-retest method. The data collected were analyzed using the simple percentile and chi square statistical tool. Results showed that a great significance exists between standard quality education and teacher performance on the one hand and quality standard teacher education and teacher productivity on the other hand. The study concluded by recommending that more inputs on entrepreneurship and life-skills acquisition be injected into the teacher education curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the concept of standard and quality in all aspects of human endeavour has dominated the pages of newspapers in every country. Nigeria is not left out of this pursuit. Notable among such cries are that for economic standard, social standard, political standard etc and in this case, it is the standard and quality of teacher education. To ensure this standard and quality, the Nigeria government since 2002 has embarked on a series of reforms which include educational reforms (FME, 2005). These educational reforms are such that would help realize the dictates or demands of article 26 of the Universal Declaration of human rights which states that education is expected to develop the human personality and to restore the respect for human rights and freedom.

The professionally trained teacher necessarily remains a product of teacher-education. The quality and standard of a teacher and his teaching equally stand as

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bi-products of the teacher-education curriculum. It becomes imperative therefore, that without teacher-education curriculum, no professional teacher would be borne and that the type and quality of teachers displayed by a nation reflects the level and standard of the nation's teacher-education curriculum (Igwe, 2007). This therefore means that the quality and standard of teacher education in any nation should be of great significance since it is its products that eventually come to train and nurture the future leaders of that nation. This corroborates Oyediji's assertion that no educational system can rise above the level of education of its teacher. Thus the claim of Adams (1978) that whoever controls the nation's education, particularly of teaching its young ones handles the future of that nation as the minds of millions of leaders in diverse facets of that society lie in his hands.

Myers and Myers (2000) describe standard and quality in respect of the teaching profession as competencies, intelligent discussion, insight and futuristic dispositions, technical skills and organizing ability which a teacher maintains both within and outside the classroom. Oladele (1985) on the other hand sees teacher productivity as teacher effectiveness. To him teacher's productivity means the ability of the teacher to produce desired results in the course of his duties.

It becomes pertinent therefore to ask how standard and quality is guaranteed in the teacher-education curriculum in Nigeria. Does it produce teachers who really reflect the quality and standard of the teacher education curriculum in Nigeria? Are teachers produced able to equip learners with the essentials necessary to face real life situations which provide solutions to the challenges of life? Ideally, a worthwhile teacher education curriculum should be able to address these fundamental and pertinent questions. Surprisingly, the performance of teachers in recent times seems to be on the downward trend. This is reflected in the performance of students at the secondary level of education in Nigeria. As observed by Igwe (2002), any curriculum that is designed in line with the aspirations and demands of its people (Nigeria) would enhance job creativity, innovation, increase in productivity, self reliance and overall national development. The undergraduate curriculum must therefore be redesigned in such a way as to make our graduates flexible, self reliant, innovative, resourceful and job oriented. This surely is the reality of our time and the reoccurrences of our society to which teachers need to brace up and prepare learners far ahead.

Statement of the problem

Teacher education remains the only gateway for the production of qualified professional teachers while the teachers remain the bedrock to the attainment of the educational goals for any nation. This shows that the teacher's role vis-à-vis his training (through a teacher education programme) remains the gateway to National development. Against this background, this paper examines the extent to which the present teacher education curriculum in Nigeria can enhance teacher productivity and prepare teachers adequately for the attainment of the millennium development goals (MDGs).

Purpose of the study

The paper examines how the present teacher education curriculum can enhance teacher productivity and equip teachers with the essentials for attaining the millennium development goals. It further:

1. assesses the contents of the present teacher education in line with the demands of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG);
2. examines ways through which teacher productivity can be enhanced to meet the 21st century demands;

3. highlights the benefits of a standard and qualitative teacher education programme; and
4. examines the problems that might hinder adequate teacher training or teacher education and teacher productivity.

Significance of the study

This study will be of immense benefit to the various stakeholders in education. It does not only centre on ensuring qualitative teacher education and teacher productivity but also of the beneficiaries from all the activities of the teacher. In addition it would equally provide an update study into teacher productivity for others who wish to further research into this area of knowledge.

Research questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the criteria for measuring standard and quality teacher education and teacher productivity?
2. To what extent has the present teacher education curriculum contributed adequately to standard and quality teacher education and teacher productivity?
3. How can teacher productivity be enhanced to meet the 21st century demands?
4. What are the problems that can hinder the training of teachers for adequate productivity?

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were postulated for this study thus:

1. There is no significant relationship between standard and quality of teacher education and teacher performance.
2. There is no significant relationship between standard and quality teacher education and teacher productivity.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was used for this study. Five hundred respondents comprising teachers and students of public and private secondary schools in five (out of the existing six) educational districts in Lagos state were randomly sampled for the study. Five schools were sampled from each district and 20 respondents from each school. This made a total of 100 respondents from each district and a grand total of five hundred respondents from across the five districts. A three-point scale of (very much, much and not in any way) and a two-point scale (yes or no) structured questionnaire were used to collect data. Further more, interview and documentary analysis were also employed to probe deeper into the questionnaire. The contents of these instruments were face validated by five education specialists in the University of Lagos. A test re-test method was adopted for the reliability and the coefficient was 0.75 which is high enough for a study of this nature. The simple percentile and the chi-square statistical techniques were used to analyse the data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis of data collected was done using the research questions as guide thus:

Research question 1: What are the criteria for measuring standard and quality teacher education and teacher productivity?

Table 1: Criteria for measuring standard and quality teacher education/productivity

	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL %	
1 Teacher's academic qualification	468	93.6	32	6.4	500	100
2. Responsiveness of learning to social needs (problem solving).	471	94.2	29	5.8	500	100
3. Utility of the products of teaching -learning to teacher trainees and the society.	477	95.4	23	4.6	500	100
4. Entrepreneurship and life skill acquisition by products of the programme.	381	76.2	119	23.8	500	100

Table 1 shows that notable among the factors for measuring the standard and quality of teacher education and productivity in our society are the level of the academic qualification of the teachers who dominate teaching at the various levels of education (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary), the responsiveness of what is being learnt in school to the social needs, the usefulness of the learners who are turned out as products of the programme and the inculcation of skill acquisition in the learners. From table 1, it is glaring that the majority of the respondents opine that when any educational system produces these features, then the teachers quality and standard is not in doubt neither is the productivity level of the teachers.

Research question 2: To what extent has the present teacher education curriculum contributed adequately to standard and quality teacher education and teacher productivity.

Table 2: Extent of present teacher education curriculum on standard and quality

n = 500

Items	Very much	Fairly OK	Not in any way	100%
1. The present teacher education curriculum contributes to teacher standard and quality education	100 (20%)	168 (33.6%)	232 (46.4%)	100
2. The curriculum as it is promotes effectiveness of teacher education	99 (19.8%)	100 (20%)	301 (60.2%)	100
3. The curriculum of teacher education in Nigeria is beneficial to the teacher trainees and society	106 (21.2%)	170 (34%)	224 (44.8%)	100

Table 2 above shows that the present teacher-education curriculum is adjudged to an extent to have contributed to the standard and quality of teacher education and productivity in Nigeria. The "not too high" score margin given by respondents show that much still remains to be desired of this same curriculum thus the need for a review.

Research question 3: How can teacher productivity be enhanced to meet the 21st century demands?

Table 3: Enhancing teacher productivity for the 21st century

	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL	%
Review the teacher-education curriculum	467	93.4	33	6.6	500	100
Provide adequate facilities	488	97.6	12	2.4	500	100
Improve condition of service.	333	66.6	167	33.4	500	100

Table 3 shows that the review of the teacher-education curriculum, 467 (93.4%), provision of adequate facilities 488 (97.6%) and improved conditions of service for teachers 333 (66.6%) are some of the means of enhancing teacher productivity. Through this, standard and qualitative teacher-education can be ensured. Well over two-third of the respondents are in support this view as shown in each column of the table.

Research question 4. What are the problems that can hinder the training of teachers for adequate productivity?

Table 4: Problems that can hinder training of teachers

	YES	%	NO	%	TOTAL	%
Non-reviewed teacher-education curriculum.	369	73.8	131	26.2	500	100
Inadequate facilities/infrastructure	394	78.8	106	21.2	500	100
Continuous rise in the cost of education for self improvement.	479	95.8	21	4.2	500	100
Poor working conditions of teachers at all levels.	389	77.8	111	22.2	500	100

Table 4 shows that the non-review of the teacher-education curriculum 369(73.8%) inadequate facilities and infrastructure in schools 394 (78.8%), the continuous rise in the cost of education 479 (95.8%) and the poor working conditions for teachers at various levels 389 (77.8%) are notable problems that can hinder an improved standard and quality of teacher-education and teacher productivity. This becomes tenable as well over two-third of the total respondents sampled agreed with this.

Test of hypotheses

Two hypotheses were postulated for this study; these were analyzed using the chi square statistical tool thus:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between standard and quality of teacher education and teacher performance.

Table 5: Relationship between Quality Teacher education and teacher performance

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
50	12.5	37.5	1406.25	112.5
0	12.5	-12.5	156.25	12.5
0	12.5	-12.5	156.25	12.5
0	12.5	-12.5	156.25	12.5

Cal $X^2 = 618.41237$, Crit X^2 at level df 6 and 0.05 level of significance = 12.50

This shows that the t-calculated (618.41237) is greater than the t-critical (12.50). This necessarily demands that the null hypothesis be rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. Thus, a significant relationship exists between the standard and quality of teacher education and the teaching activities in general.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between standard and quality teacher education and teacher productivity

Table 6: Relationship between Quality teacher education and teachers' productivity

O	E	O - E	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
75	93.8	-18.75	351.563	3.75
50	93.8	-43.75	1914.06	20.41667
250	93.8	156.3	24414.1	260.4167
0	93.8	-93.75	8789.06	93.75

Cal $X^2 = 253.103$, Df = 6, $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance, Crit = 12.50 at 6 df and 0.05 level of significance

Analysis in table 6 shows that the value of t-calculated (253.103) is higher than the value of t-critical (12.50). This again shows that the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, a significant relationship exists between the quality and standard of teacher education and the productivity of teachers.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The result of the chi-square analysis of the 1st hypothesis postulated for the study can be said to be quite reliable because it is logical that every professional would act or perform professionally according to the professional training received. Such performance would be quite obvious and accessible if it is in line with the ethics of the profession and it is geared towards adequate productivity. This can also be said of a teacher who in the discharge of his duties follows the norms and demands of the teaching profession.

Needless to state that the role of the teacher in the teaching-learning process remains indispensable as nothing would function without him. He as the last user of the curriculum remains a formator and guide of the students as they grow to face the world of reality. As such, there is need to ensure that the teacher is thoroughly equipped not in theories of theoretical knowledge that have no bearing or relationship with the realities and culture of the land but rather with such knowledge that makes him a good analyst, judge and provider of solution to problems that confront the society such that he blends the real world of society with that of the school.

The maxim "Nemo dat quod non habet" Nobody gives what he does not have is a popular saying today. It must be noted that unless the teacher education curriculum is prepared in such way that equips our teachers with the skills essential for ideal situational analysis, problem identification and problem solving, they in turn would not be able to inculcate this in learners. This explains why many today seem to see the teachers and education as non-productive because the bi-products do not seem to be of any use to themselves and the nation at large. Hence the need for undergraduate curriculum to be redesigned in such a way as to make the country's graduates flexible, self reliant, innovative, resourceful and job oriented. In the case of the second hypothesis teachers performance rests much on the teachers-education curriculum, so does the teachers productivity rest on teachers performance. This is so because it is the cumulative performance that results in the productivity. Thus measuring or assessing the teachers productivity comes over time.

The above view is buttressed by Oladele (1985) and Adedena (2001) who see that a measure of teachers productivity can be found in the products that emanate from the teacher and in the image he has in his society. If truly the performance of the teacher arises or emanates from his professional training, it becomes imperative to state that the teacher's productivity equally rests much on his professional training. This is the assertion that results from the analysis of the second hypothesis for this study.

Given that the products of the teacher over time determines the teachers productivity alongside the image of the society on the teacher, can it be said then that the teachers productivity in Nigeria is high? The answer to this would surely be in the negative. This is because the products of the teachers are today redundant and do not seem useful to themselves nor the society yet they are to be reckoned as educated.

It is a fact that any worthwhile education given in any society must be made highly relevant to the needs of that society. It must be able to attend to the needs, yearnings and aspirations of that society. This was found in the traditional education system in Nigeria and remained till the later part of the 1980s. Since then, the products from Nigerian institutions seem to have found themselves acquiring education for its fun such that it is now a routine. The needs, yearnings and aspirations of the society have since changed from being purely a theoretical and one hierarchy-based form of knowledge to that of multi-dimensional, pragmatic and innovative form of knowledge and demands. Can the teachers provide this? Are they equipped to do so? How then can they inculcate this in those they teach? A cursory look at and evaluation of the teacher-education programme reveals that much remains to be desired in the training of teachers to make them measure up to this standard. How then can the millennium development goals be attained? This therefore calls for a review of the teacher-education curriculum in such a way that would equip teachers with skills essential for productivity. This productivity would be measured by the ability of the products of these teachers to be entrepreneurship, fend for them and make themselves useful to themselves and the society at large.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that there exists very close relationship between the teacher quality and his/her productive ability. It is obvious that for effective teacher performance and productivity to be realised, there is urgent need to revisit the

programme of teacher education in Nigeria to meet with the millennium development goals.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the findings of this study, it is recommended that an adequate review of the present teacher-education curriculum be urgently carried out if the millennium development goals are to be met. It is equally recommended that much inputs on entrepreneurship and life-skills acquisition be injected into the teacher education curriculum such that through this, their products from secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria would become self reliant, autonomous and resourceful enough to face the realities of life after school.

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