

# ACCESS, QUALITY AND COST IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION



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### Employers' Rating and Preference of NCE and Graduate Teachers: Quality in Question

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#### Abstract

*This paper, employers rating and preference of NCE and graduate teachers: Quality in question is an empirical study. It examines quality and performance of NCE and graduate teachers, by judging them in the areas of mastery of subject matter, communication skill, record keeping, dedication to duty, teacher personality and participation in extra curricula activities. 50 employers were randomly selected to rate their newly employed teacher who belong to this category. The employer rating and preference of teacher scale (ERPTSS) was used for data collection. The results of this study show that graduate teachers were rated higher in mastery of subject matter, communication skill and record keeping. While the NCE teachers were rated high in dedication to duty and participation in extra curricula activities. Based on the above, this paper recommends that the formation of these teachers be re-examined in order to keep the education system alive.*

#### Introduction

The Nigeria educational system was actually from the British system of education. It is so because until 1960 Nigeria was a British colony. On account of this, the philosophy, curriculum, structure, administration and planning of education then were all after the similitude of the British. At the wake of independence, well meaning Nigerians started querying the relevance of that curriculum to the overall development of Nigeria. Consequently, the 1969 curriculum conference was held and the decision published in the 1977 policy on education. The policy



document at inception made provision for five categories of teachers. These are:-

- Grade II teachers for the pre-primary level
- NCE teachers for the primary and Junior Secondary level
- University Graduate teachers for the Junior and Senior Secondary levels
- University Graduates with professional qualification in their disciplines for the Polytechnics and
- University Graduates with postgraduate qualifications for the Colleges of Education and the Universities (NERDC 2002).

The bid to improve the quality of education has continued to be an issue of great concern to Government, individuals, the private sector and of course stakeholders in education. Ehusani (2002) observed that we destroyed education and teaching profession when the Government forcefully took over school from the missionaries and private owners in the 70s. According to him, since then:

*The quality of life and work in our public schools and colleges and the very environment in which teaching and learning take place have become a thing of shame and a source of embarrassment to many of us who have an idea of what educational institutions should look like (pp. 105).*

The resultant effect of the situation culminated in the much decried fall in academic standard, wide spread of indiscipline, examination malpractice etc. The situation according to Udeanna (2002) puts a question mark on the product of the school, such that employers of labour detest the quality of teachers produced by the colleges of education and the Universities. Udeanna noted that private schools are compelled to source for and retain qualified and experienced academic staff in all subjects they wish to offer. This they do through rigorous and painstaking interviews in order to get only the good few available. Where these may not be found they resort to rigorous re-training after employment. The Government is not unaware of this trend. As a matter of fact, the National Policy on Education (2004) states in strong terms

that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). But Abdulkadir (1988) opines that the issue of quality education does not stop on setting minimum academic standard and setting up high entry requirements and high cutoff points, but also on improving the conditions under which students both in and outside the classroom are made to learn. According to the report of UNESCO (1998), improving education in any nation depends heavily on two factors (1) the quality of teaching by the teacher educators (2) the professional output by the trainee teachers, when they are finally engaged.

This paper is necessitated by the worries of Nigerians about the quality of teachers produced by teacher training institutions in Nigeria in contemporary times. Like Dike (2001) asked, with the troubling revelation of shortage and "half-baked" teachers employed to teach in the primary schools, how are we sure the UBE Programme will be successful? Has the government trained the required number and the quality of teachers needed to successfully implement the programme? It is therefore the task of this study to assess the quality of the NCE and Graduate teachers engaged by the private school proprietors at the point of entry. It seeks to answer questions like which of these categories of teachers are efficient in the delivery of their professional task. How do the employers (Proprietors) rate newly qualified teachers? Which category of teachers is effective for the level of teaching they are prepared for?

### Research Questions

1. What is the difference in rating of the NCE and Graduate teachers by proprietors as regards their quality?
2. What is the difference in rating of the pedagogical competence of the NCE teachers and the Graduate teachers?
3. What is the difference in rating of the communication skills of the NCE teacher and the Graduate teacher?
4. Which category of teacher is preferred by proprietors?

### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the quality NCE teachers and the Graduate teachers at the point of qualification.



### Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all private schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. At the time of this study there were about 200 private schools in Akwa Ibom State. The choice of private schools for the study was necessitated by the fact that these are the places where newly qualified teachers go to while waiting for Government employment. This put the private school on better grounds to report on the quality of delivery by newly qualified NCE and graduate teachers.

The sample size for the study consists of 50 proprietors of schools randomly selected from the entire population.

### Instrumentation

The employer rating and preference of teacher scales (ERPTSS) was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was constructed using teaching practice score sheets for both Colleges of Education and Universities with appropriate modifications to suit the purpose of the study. This instrument was validated by experts in evaluation, test and measurement. Test-retest reliability measure, after an interval of 2 weeks showed a coefficient of 0.85. The researchers administered the instrument personally by visiting the sampled schools.

### Method of Data Analysis

The study made use of simple percentage to analyse the research questions. This is because it is the surest way of finding the difference between two variables without further manipulation. The study also used the chi-square statistics to analyse the research hypothesis as advanced in the study.

### Result and Discussion

The results of the study are presented in the tables shown below. Explanations are also given to clarify issues bordering on the rating and preference of the NCE and the Graduate teachers. This is done based on the research questions and the research hypothesis.

**Research Question :** What is the difference in rating of the NCE and Graduate teachers by proprietors?

Table 1  
Proprietors rating of the NCE teachers and percentages

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Excellent
Mastery of subject matter	12 (25%)	26 (54.17%)	10(20.83%)	-
Record keeping	4(8.33%)	15(31.25%)	20(41.67%)	9(18.75%)
Dedication to duty	-	-	29(60.42%)	13(27.08%)
Teachers Personality	-	-	9(18.75%)	28(58.33%)
Communication	28(58.33%)	11(22.92%)	9(18.75%)	-
Extra curricular activities (participation)	-	-	8(16.67%)	40(83.33%)

From the above presentation for mastery of subject matter 25% of the respondents rated the NCE teachers as poor. 54.17% rated them as below average while 20.83% rated the NCE teachers as average. In record keeping, only 8.33% rated the NCE teacher poor 31.25% of the respondents rated them below average while 18.75% rated them excellent in record keeping. The teachers' personality and dedication to duty, the rating for the NCE were really positive and encouraging. But for communication skill, it was disheartening that 58.33% and 22.92% rated NCE teachers poor and below average respectively. Only 18% of the respondents considered the NCE teachers to be average. This calls for a serious attention and a greater task on the teacher educators at the NCE level, if the teacher is poor in communication skill, what vehicle does he use to impart the knowledge he has (if at all) to his pupils?

Table 2: Proprietors rating of the Graduate teachers (GT)

Criteria	Poor	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
Mastery of subject matter	2(4.17%)	8(16.67%)	12(25%)	19(39.58%)	7(14.58%)
Record keeping	-	-	22(45.83%)	20(41.67%)	6(12.5%)
Dedication to duty	4(8.33%)	12(25%)	17(35.42%)	15(31.25%)	-
Personality	3(6.25%)	7(14.58%)	27(56.25%)	24(50%)	9(18.75%)
Extra curricular activities (participation)	14(29.17%)	15(31.25%)	10(20.83%)	9(18.75%)	-



The above table shows the rating of the graduate teachers by the employers (proprietors) of 48 private schools used in the study. In mastery of subject matter, 4.17% of the respondents rated the graduate teachers as poor while 14.58% rated them excellent 12.5% say graduate teachers are below average while 18.75%, 50% and 18.75% say they are average, good and excellent respectively.

### Research Question 2

What is the difference in rating of the pedagogical competence between NCE teachers and Graduate teachers?

The pedagogical competence of the teachers was rated differently for the NCE teachers and the Graduate teachers. For the NCE teachers the rating shows that 25%, 54.17% and 20.83% of the employers rated them as poor, below average and average respectively. (See table 1). On the other hand the graduate teachers were rated by 4.17%, 16.67%, 39.58% and 14.58% of the respondents as poor, below average, average, good and excellent respectively (see table 2). The difference then becomes obvious as 54.17% of the respondents say the NCE teachers are below average, while 39.58% and 14.58% say the graduate teachers are good and excellent respectively in their performance.

### Research Question 3

What is the difference in rating of the communication skills of the NCE teachers and the graduate teachers?

Graduate teachers were rated good and excellent by 50% and 18.75% of the respondents respectively. But the communication skills of the NCE teachers were rated poor by 58%, below average by 24% and average by 18% of the respondents. The difference therefore shows that graduate teachers are considered to have a relatively better command of English and use of tenses while the NCE teachers are said to have poor use of tenses and poor command of English language.

### Research Question 4

Which category of teachers is preferred by Proprietors?

The result of the study shows that, the proprietors prefer the graduate teachers to the NCE teachers. But due to the shortage of qualified graduate teachers they are left with no choice but to employ NCE teachers. This also accounts for the rigorous screening, interview and re-training exercise done by the employers after employing such teachers.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the quality of NCE teachers and the graduate teachers.

The chi-square statistics was used to test the hypothesis. The analysis is presented in tables as shown below.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of rating of NCE and Graduate teachers

Variables	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
NCE	44	52	85	90	18
GT	23	48	96	108	22

The table above shows the summation of the rating of the NCE and Graduate teachers on the five criteria already mentioned. The formula used here is.

$$\frac{CT \times RT}{GT \text{ and } GT} \text{ where } CT = \text{Column total, } RT = \text{Row total} \\ = \text{Grand total}$$

Table 4: A table showing the observed and expected frequencies for  $\chi^2$

NC	43	52	45	90	17	Calculated	d	Level of	Critical
P	(32.3)	(45.98)	(89.45)	(96.97)	(19.18)	d	f	significance	value
						$\chi^2$			
GT	24	48	96	108	22	8.32	4	0.05	9.49
	(34.19)	(51.02)	(92.06)	(101.03)	(19.90)				

In the table above the figure enclosed in brackets are the expected frequencies while those outside the brackets are the observed frequencies.



From the analysis in table 4 above, the calculated  $X^2$  value is 8.32, the critical  $X^2$  value is 9.49 at 4 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The calculated value is less than the critical value; therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the quality of the NCE and Graduate teachers.

### Discussion

The results of the study show that the graduate teachers were better rated in the areas of mastery of subject matter and communication skills than the NCE teachers. The NCE teachers were rated poor and below average. This does not make for a healthy educational system, especially as the NCE teacher is the category teacher recommended for the primary school level. Many more of them are employed to build the foundation of UBE. As foundation builders, it is expected that the teachers at that level be grounded in their subject areas so as to be able to groom the pupils properly for the secondary education level. Adedeji (2002) agreed that to have a healthy school system is to have teachers who know how to teach and can actually teach. The findings of the study are also in line with Lassa (2002) who opines that if teachers are ignorant and insensitive they would be invariably useless and dangerous.

The study also found that the NCE teachers are poor in their communication skills. They fall short in the use of language and appropriate tenses, while the graduate teachers are found to be better in their communication skills. It is not surprising that the employer prefers graduate teachers to NCE teachers. Generally, it is expected that after one has passed through the primary school, secondary school and higher institution, one should be well versed in communication skills. This is expected more of a teacher. On the contrary the study shows that NCE teachers have passed through primary, secondary and three years of teacher training still they fall short of this expectation. It is then not surprising that we have primary school leavers who cannot read, speak and write good English. UNESCO report on learning outcome in primary school shows that 75% of the primary school pupils can neither read nor speak English. (ESA 2005:201) communication is the vehicle by which the teacher imparts knowledge to the pupils but in a case where the teacher himself is deficient in communication skill, the

pupils will follow suit. Worse still, the result of the study revealed that 12.5% of graduate teachers are still deficient in communication skill. It is a sad situation because one would expect that the graduate teachers would be there to complement or make up for the deficiency of the NCE teachers. If we add the percentage of graduate teachers who are rated poor in communication skills to the NCE teachers this means a loss of hope for our school system. Hence there is need for urgent attention to remedy this situation.

It was also the finding of the study that graduate teachers are poor in dedication to duty. This is so because in the universities, most students who find themselves in the faculties of education cannot be said to be motivated to become professional teachers on graduation. On the contrary, many of them simply needed a degree which would enhance their chances of obtaining employment in sectors other than teaching (ESA 2005). They may have qualification for admission into faculties of education but they go on to seek admission in other disciplines and finally return to education when they are frustrated elsewhere. Shehu and Garba (2002) agreed that individuals take teaching as a last resort and as a place to be while seeking for a better job. Since they have no intrinsic motivation when they come into teaching they will not be committed to their job. Hence the constant decline in the quality of school leavers today.

### Conclusion

The study x-rayed the NCE and graduate teachers as it relates to qualification and quality. The NCE teachers were rated by proprietors of 50 schools selected from about 200 private schools in Akwa Ibom State. The proprietors' ratings show that the NCE teachers are poor in mastery of subject matter and communication skills. They were however rated better in dedication to duty and teacher personality and fairly good in record keeping and participation in extra curricular activities.

The graduate teachers were rated better in other areas except dedication to duty and participation in extra curricula activities games and sports. The results further show that the employers (Proprietors) prefer graduate teachers to NCE teachers. The chi-square test proves that there is a significant difference between the quality of NCE and graduate teachers.



### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered.

1. It is important to give attention to the formation process involved in teacher training, because ill-prepared teachers are counter productive to the educational system. The Government should be more proactive in pursuing its mandate of ensuring quality education through regular assessment and review of the teacher formation processes.
2. A virile quality control and assessment of educational materials nation-wide should be a government policy to be enforced by statutory government departments and parastatals like the NCCE, federal inspectorate etc.
3. Colleges of Education and other teacher training institutions should endeavour to admit only qualified candidates with genuine interest in training as teachers. Such interest is seen in making teaching their first choice not as a last resort. This will to a great extent enhance their performance and the quality of teaching after graduation.
4. Government, NGOs and the private sectors should endeavour to provide adequate and necessary teaching and learning facilities in colleges of education, faculties, institutes and schools of education as these will help in improving the training of teachers.
5. Rigorous interviews and tests should be employed in the selection process of teachers. This will ensure that even when one is not interested in becoming a teacher, he will be trained properly should the opportunity come for him to become a teacher or put in another way, this process will screen out all poorly trained and ill-motivated teachers. When these recommendations are put in place, the teachers at both NCE and graduate levels will be better prepared for our schools.

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