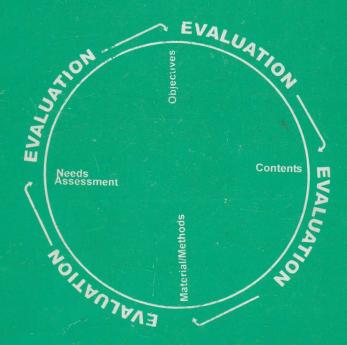
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Quality Assurance In Teacher Production: The Case Of Akwa Ibom State College Of Education, Nigeria

Iniobong E. Nkang

Abstract

The study aimed at investigating quality assurance in teacher production in the Akwa Ibom State College of Education. It focused on the internal measurement of the quality of N. C. E. programmes of the institutions of higher learning. Two null hypotheses were used. The population comprised lecturers and students of Akwa Ibom State College of Education. A sample of 250 respondents was drawn using simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire, "Quality Teacher Production Questionnaire" (QTPQ), and tested at 0.05 alpha level using the t-test. The analysis revealed no significant difference in perceptions of respondents as to adequacy and utilization of existing quality assurance mechanisms in Akwa Ibom State College of Education. Consequently, it was recommended that the college should improve upon its quality assurance mechanisms by providing necessary educational facilities, motivating the lecturers adequately towards effective teaching, and putting in place adequate mechanism for monitoring of students' attitude towards learning and examinations.

Introduction

Teacher education is very paramount to national development since the quality of teachers determines the quality of human resources in all other sectors of the labour market. It is the pivot of all levels of education and the hub upon which a nation's economy is based. As rightly asserted by the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers. Based on this assertion the policy provides, among other things, that teacher education should produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the Nigerian educational system; and provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing edu-social situations (FRN, 2004: section 71(a) and (d)). The policy seeks to make the nation's educational system functional and relevant to the needs of learners and the society through quality assurance in teacher production.

Quality assurance in education should be the concern of all. The World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 did not only emphasis the need to achieve education for all, but did also notice the need to improve the quality of teacher education. The forum recommended the improvement of all aspects of the quality of teacher education to achieve recognised and measurable learning

Dr. (Mrs.) Iniobong E. Nkang is a Lecturer in the School of Education College of Education, Afaha Nsit outcomes for all especially in literacy and essential life skills. (Dakar Framework for Action, Article 7, World Education Forum, 2000).

Quality assurance in teacher production remains a panacea for the successful implementation of the recently introduced Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. Speaking at the First International Conference on Teacher Education hosted by the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, in July 2004. to brainstorm on how to tackle the numerous problems confronting the teaching profession, the University of Lagos Vice Chancellor, Professor Tolu Odugbemi. described the conference theme: "Innovation and best practices in teacher education" as relevant to the ongoing reforms in Nigeria and the Nigerian education sector in particular. In his address, the Dean, Faculty of Education. Professor Duro Ajeyalemi, said government's interest in the future of innovations and teacher education can contribute to making education relevant and responsive to the needs of the society, stressing that Nigeria's "present education programme cannot serve adequately the demands of the 21st century classroom. He added: The teacher is the key factor in curriculum implementation and the main agent for translating society's educational intentions into realities. The teacher in school interprets the objectives and content in the curriculum plan and manages the learning situation. Teacher education must respond to and reflect changes that occur in education and society" (pg 11). According to Professor Odugbemi, innovations and best practices in teacher education demand that the practitioners embrace new educational function in order to meet contemporary societal needs, challenges, aspirations, visions and intended learning outcomes. Afe (1995), describes teacher education "as that component of any educational system charged with the education and training of teachers to acquire the competences and skills of teaching for the improvement in the quality of teachers for the school system" (pg 117).

The training of teachers in Nigeria began with the introduction of formal education by the missionaries Ohannado and Olabode, 1999). The desire to train teachers by the missionaries was geared towards helping the individuals fulfill their roles as catechists and teachers. These two roles were merged into one. Formal teacher education however began in 1895 by the establishment of a training school in Abeokuta by the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) (Fafunwa, 1974). Later, other missions established their schools for training their own teachers. These teachers in training were taught theology and teaching methodology. The typical curriculum consisted of New Testament Catechism Christian faith, School Method and Management, Preaching, Theology, Hygiche, Geography, History, English, Geometry, Arithmetic, Local Language, Carpentry, and Masonry (Fafunwa, 1974:197). At this time, the Government's interest teacher education was very minimal. It only provided conditions of service for teachers and organized short evening classes and vacation courses as in-service, training programmes for practicing teachers. When the interest of the Colonial

Government arose, it was towards training teachers for the primary schools. This was owing to the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Departments of Education in 1929, and the bulk of beneficiaries at this stage were primary schools. Students that were trained were awarded the Teachers' Grade II certificate, which was the basic minimum qualification then for teaching.

As Nigeria began to warm up for independence, there arose the need to plan for education over the next twenty years and Ashby commission was set up which was headed by Sir Eric Ashby in 1958. (Fafunwa, 1974). The recommendation of this commission led to the introduction of various teacher education programmes for teachers in the Secondary Schools. Advanced Teachers Colleges were established which today have become Colleges of Education under the Control and Supervision of the National Commission for the teacher occupies of Education (NCCE). There is dire need for quality in teacher the control in the country since the teacher occupies the center stage of educative process. What he knows makes a whole lot of difference and what he does not allow and cannot do becomes an irreparable loss not only to the children but also the nation and indeed posterity. Thus, the teacher becomes the factory that manufactures the modern people and status of society.

Given the laudable objectives of teacher education as spelt out in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), it would be expected that only the intellectually promising and qualified persons should be trained as teachers. It would also be expected that the products from teacher education demonstrate academic competence as they carry out their teachings. Unfortunately, the contrary remains the case. Most of the students admitted into teacher education institutions in Nigeria are usually the worst, academically. Better-qualified vouths prefer to seek admission into other courses and not education. Many NCE teachers who are teaching in the Secondary and even primary schools today are rarely competent. Many of them can not make simple correct sentences and can hardly make good lesson plans in their areas of specialization. Obviously they cannot give what they do not have. Obara (2001) opined that teaching is the most vital and strategic profession for national development. No doubt, the teacher is a crucial component of the education system, because the quality of education depends on the quality of teachers trained. Poorly trained teachers are most likely to produce poor engineers, medical doctors, lawyers, architects, nurses and teachers. A nation without quality teachers is doomed. According to Neada (2003), the cumulative effect of incompetent teachers would be nondevelopment than development and at times national retrogression instead of progress and advancement. Indeed the importance of qualitative teachers and teacher education cannot be over emphasized. All arms of the development of a nation depend on the nature of its teachers. Madueke (1997) said that since national development has a direct link with education and the teacher translates educational policies, it requires that the education of the teacher be the priority of any country wishing to develop in all fields of human endeavour. Since it is accepted that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers and that education is the catalyst for all spheres of human development, it then follows that a country that operates poor quality of teacher education will purposely remain undeveloped and thus suffer the consequences associated with under development.

The following areas of deficiencies have been identified in teacher education in Nigeria; these are:

Admission Policy

This is one of the most serious problems plaguing teacher education programmes in the nation. The NCE programmes in Colleges of Education draw their intakes from less bright secondary school leavers who would in no way get admission into other tertiary institutions because of poor academic performance. The few above average students found in teacher training institutions are there because they had no admission some where else, not because they considered education as their first choice. It is worse with the universities. It is after other degrees had satisfied their quota that faculties of education will draw their own students, from those who had no better options. With a collection of academically weak students, training is made quite difficult especially when one considers the fact that many of such students cannot communicate clearly in the official language of instruction.

Lack of Funds

This manifests itself in inadequate provision of facilities and equipment. Funding is a pre-requisite to all activities and to the success of teacher education in Nigeria. Meaningful projects cannot be executed. Infrastructures and materials continue to be inadequate. There is lack of facilities for micro-teaching, demonstration and peer teaching. Ngada (2001) identified lecture halls classrooms, laboratories, hostels, staff quarters, generating plants, office equipment as being inadequate in most teacher producing institution more pronounced in state owned colleges. It is not better have a in federal institutions where the ratio of students to materials is always but more pronounced among students of science, technical, and Brainess educ-According to Ngada (2001), it is common to have over 100 study ...g only 30 – 40 typewriters or 30 to 40 computers. A classroom capacity mean more than 50 students will be jammed with over 200 students. West scient laboratories are not provided with chemicals as a result practicals are far fer sed. Most science graduates of Colleges of Education can neither titrate nor identify salts and these are graduated to teach sciences in the primary and lower Basic Education. Science and technology today have produced new devices in teaching methodology. Modern technology teaches the use of computer through internet, video conferencing and teleconferencing and even the over head projector in teaching (NUC: VIHEP). These devices are not employed to teach teacher trainees, because of lack of funds. How can these teachers cope up with these devices on graduation? The funniest aspect of this predicament is the borrowing of facilities during accreditation. This practice fools assessors. The borrowed materials are returned as the accreditation team turns it back and the institutions become once more empty. Who is fooling who?

Haphazard Conduct of Teaching Practice Exercise

Teaching practice is a cardinal and indispensable aspect in the preparation of teachers. It attracts a six-credit hour load. According to Ololobou (2003), it is through it that teacher trainees operationalise all the theoretical knowledge they have been exposed to in the lecture halls. Consequently, every student teacher is expected to spend at least twelve weeks on teaching practice before graduation. As important as this programme is, it is becoming increasingly difficult for training institutions to find places of practice for practicing students. This is owing to the population of trainees which cannot easily be absorbed by schools in the locality of their training institutions and the tendency for principals to pick only the number that can fill the vacancies in the school from among those sent to them while others are rejected. The practicing period is too short for students to be adequately prepared before being released into the school system. The coordination of this programme is another area of madequacy. Lack of commitment on the part of supervisors calls for concern. Some students are supervised only once and some twice, while others are not supervised at all but are requested to see the lecturers in their offices with their eason notes for scores. Hardly has there been a situation where a student is held 11 poor performance in teaching practice.

Large Class size and Heavy work load

Practical experience and evidence abound that the heavy work load of the teacher is detrimental to his health. The number of period he has to such on a daily basis and the large class size constitute the heavy workload. Where a teacher has to without public address system face about five hundred students in a stuffy classroom, most of whom are standing is not encouraging at all. The National Policy on Education stipulates the range of 35 to 40 students per class. Apparently no meaningful teaching and learning can take place under this kind of atmosphere. The teacher -student ratio is outrageous.

Poor Evaluation Devices

Anikweze (1995) decrying the poor conduct of continuous assessment practices in teacher education in Nigeria, observed that during the teacher training programme teachers in training are only assessed on the cognitive domain, ignoring the psychomotor and effective domains. Consequently, the assessment of their students is often incomplete and below minimum standards. Hence, these are results of ineffectiveness in the handling of continuous assessment found among school teachers today.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) declares education an instrument par excellence in achieving national development. For any educational system to be qualitative enough to serve national development purposes, the quality of teacher education must be very high. Currently, instead of excellence in its output, there is poverty, unemployment, moral decadence and a collection of individuals who have no positive self-concepts, self-realization and actualization. These remain traceable to poor quality teacher education in the country. Therefore, this study examines teacher production and the availability and utilization of quality assurance mechanisms in the Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The future of any nation depends on the quality of its educational system, which in turn depends on the quality of teachers. The maxim that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers and that no nation can rise above the level of its teaching staff shows the role of the teacher and teacher education programmes in national development. With the Federal Government of Nigeria being so determined to provide education as a service to the nation and as a right for every citizen and with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE), only well trained teachers can successfully translate the objectives of the Universal Basic Education programme to reality. Lassa (1996) opined that education is the key to national development and only teachers hold the has can turn it for national development. The teacher is therefore the pivot on which every national and educational development hangs. Supporting the above assertion, Ukeje (2000) stated that education is so powerful that it can heal or kill; it can build up or tear apart; it can lift up or impoverish. He however adduced that much depended on the type provided and particularly on the teacher who is the hub of the education process. It is therefore expected that only the intellectually promising and qualified persons are trained to engage in the teaching industry.

Teacher education programmes are structured to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills for effective performance of their duties. Unfortunately, much lapses and inadequacies have plagued the process of teacher education in the nation so that the desired qualified teachers are not

produced. The present crop of teachers can no longer create the desirable changes in the behaviour of learners. Students are no longer brought to terms with the demands of culture and prevailing changes in society. Instead of producing pupils and students who are creative, pro-active and full of positive thinking, their products are rebellious, cultic, immoral, with unquenchable appetite for examination malpractice. The desired national development is far fetched. This study therefore examines the existence and utilization of quality assurance mechanisms in teacher production in the Akwa Ibom State College of Education.

Purpose of the study

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The study was undertaken to investigate the quality assurance mechanisms in the Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit, vis-à-vis teacher production. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the:

- Existing mechanisms for quality assurance in teacher production by the College.
- Utilization of available quality assurance mechanisms in the institution and teacher production.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- 1. What are the existing mechanisms for quality assurance in teacher production by the Akwa Ibom State College of Education?
- How often does the institution (lecturers and students) utilize the available mechanisms for quality assurance in teacher production?

Research Hypotheses

ion following null hypotheses were formulated to direct the study.

- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers and students on the adequacy of existing mechanisms for quality assurance in teacher production by the Akwa Ibom State College of Education.
- 2. There is no significant difference in the mean score of lecturers and students on the utilization of available mechanisms for quality assurance in teacher production by the Akwa Ibom State College of Education.

Method

The study population comprised two groups of respondents: students and lecturers of Akwa Ibom State College of Education. These stood at 2858 and 218 respectively. The study had a sample of 250 respondents: 200 students sampled

across the different departments of the College and 50 lecturers sampled from all the departments. In both cases, the simple random sampling technique was used for the selection.

Instrument

A structured questionnaire tagged "Quality Assurance in Teacher Production Questionnaire" (QATPQ) was developed and used in the study. It was validated by two experts in quality assurance and two experts in measurement and evaluation. A trial test was conducted and analysed to determine the reliability level of the instrument, and that stood at 0.76 and 0.71 for lecturers and students respectively.

Results

The data collected were analysed using t-test. This is summarized in the tables below.

The findings of the study are presented below:

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers and students on the adequacy of existing mechanisms for quality assurance in teacher production by the Akwa Ibom State College of Education

Table 1: T-test results on Adequacy of existing mechanisms for quality assurance in the College

S/n	Mechanisms	Respondents	<u></u>	SD	t-cal	Dec.
1.	Admission policy	Lecturers	2.1	.11	.91	NS
		students	2.0	.13		
2.	Sufficient classroom	Lecturers	1.8	.81	.86	NS
		students	1.9	.76		
3.	Sufficient desks for students	Lecturers	2.0	.56	.72	NS
	•	students	2.2	.64		
4.	Instructional materials	Lecturers	2.6	.67	.63	NS
		students	2.3	.81		
5.	Good library	Lecturers	3.1	.82	.99	NS
	-	students	3.5	.78		
6.	Good laboratories	Lecturers	3.3	.96	1.14	NS
		students	3.3	.94		
7.	Sufficient lecturers	Lecturers	1.9	.14	1.31	NS
		students	1.8	.13		
8.	Office accommodation for	Lecturers	1.7	.34	1.51	NS
	lecturers	students	1.5	.42	-10-	

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9.	Proper conduct	of	Lecturers	1.4	.42	.89	NS
	examinations		students	1.3	.41		
10.	Discipline		Lecturers	2.4	.39	1.22	NS
			students	2.1	.44		
11.	Class size		Lecturers	2.3	.57	1.51	NS
			students	2.4	.62		
12.	Lecturers' motivation		Lecturers	1.2	.28	1.89	NS
			students	1.4	.37		
13.	Hostel accommodation		Lecturers	1.8	.66	1.05	NS
			students	2.0	.62		
14.	Electricity		Lecturers	1.3	.51	1.37	NS
	,		students	1.6	.55		
15.	Portable water		Lecturers	1.6	.52	.48	NS
			students	1.8	.59		
16.	Teaching practice		Lecturers	1.7	.62	1.77	NS
	31		students	1.9	.73		

N = 250; df = 248; t - cri = 1.96

S = significant; NS = not significant; Dec = Decision

Analysis of data on hypothesis one revealed no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers and students on the adequacy of existing mechanisms for quality assurance in the college. All the sixteen identified quality assurance indicators have each of their calculated t-values less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level and 248 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated t-values were less than the critical t-value the null hypothesis in respect of adequacy of existing quality assurance mechanisms was retained. The cumulative t also showed no significant difference in the mean perceptions of the lecturers and students.

Hypothesis 2

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There is no significant difference in the mean rating of lecturers and students on the utilization of available mechanisms for quality assurance in teacher production by the Akwa Ibom State College of Education

Table 2: T-test results on Utilization of available quality assurance mechanisms in the College

S/n	Mechanisms	Respondents	Ŧ	SD	t-cal	Dec.
1.	Instructional materials	Lecturers	2.6	.67	1.62	NS
		students	2.4	.66		
2.	Library	Lecturers	3.1	.82	1.45	NS
	,	students	3.2	.87		

3.	Laboratories	Lecturers	2.9	.96	1.56	NS
		students	3.2	.89		
4.	Class attendance by lecturers	Lecturers	2.5	.56	2.67	S
		students	2.3	.58		
5.	Students' evaluation by	Lecturers	1.6	.62	2.89	S
	lecturers	students	1.4	.59		
6.	Prompt release of exams'	Lecturers	1.1	.34	1.03	NS
	results	students	1.3	.37		
7.	Prompt attention to students'	Lecturers	1.4	.29	2.99	S
	problems	students	1.5	.31		
8.	Exams' rules and regulations	Lecturers	1.6	.77	3.01	S
	-	students	1.8	74		
9.	Disciplinary measures	Lecturers	1.4	.66	1.11	NS
	8	students	1.8	.61		
10.	Adherence to admission	Lecturers	1.2	.11	1.28	NS
	policy	students	1.4	.13		

N = 250; df = 248; t - cri = 1.96

Data analysis on hypothesis two revealed no significant difference in the mean scores of lecturers and students on the utilization of existing mechanisms for quality assurance in the college. Six of the ten identified quality assurance indicators have each of their calculated t-values less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level and 248 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the null hypothesis in respect of utilization of existing quality assurance mechanisms was retained. However, there was a significant difference in the mean rating of lecturers and students on class attendance by lecturers, students' evaluation by lecturers, attention to students' problems and adherence to examinations' rules and regulations.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study revealed that most of the quality assurance mechanisms are not available in sufficient quantity and quality in the College for utilization by both the lecturers and students. Although these facilities are not totally absent, their quantity and quality cannot enhance qualitative production of NCE teachers by the college for successful implementation of the UBE programme. Admission policy in the institution is not strictly adhered to, classrooms, desks and instructional materials are lacking; the library and laboratories are not equipped with necessary facilities, books and equipments; and office accommodation is in short supply. The institution suffers from large class size, poor electricity and water supply, and lack of hostel accommodation for students. Worst still, the lecturers are poorly motivated. All these impede the

production of quality NCE teachers in the institution which in turn affects the successful implementation of the UBE programme. This finding is supported by Ngada (2001) who identified lecture halls, classrooms, laboratories, hostels, staff quarters, generating plants, office equipment as being inadequate in most teacher producing institutions in the country. The cumulative effect of these inadequacies is poor quality production of teachers from this institution. This can be blamed on lack of adequate quality assurance mechanism in the institution, poor utilization of the available ones, lack of commitment of lecturers to teaching, uncontrollable class size, and poor handling of examinations. As decried by Anikweze (1995), poor conduct of continuous assessments and examination malpractices in teacher education has been a bane in qualitative teacher production in the country. Education is so powerful that it can heal or kill, build up or tear apart, lift up or impoverish, much depended on the type provided and particularly on the teacher who is the hub of the education process (Ukeje, 2000).

Conclusion

Teacher education in Nigeria has suffered from a number of problems which have adversely affected the quality of teachers produced. These include admission policy, insufficient classroom, insufficient desks for students, lack of instructional materials, poor library, poor laboratories, insufficient lecturers, poor office accommodation for lecturers, examination malpractice, indiscipline, class size, lecturers' motivation, hostel accommodation, electricity, portable water, and teaching practice. The challenges confronting teacher education in Nigeria are daunting but with adequate plan, purposeful implementation and belief in the Nigeria project, it is achievable. No doubt, the time for teacher reform is now.

Quality assurance in teacher production is indispensable to national development. It is a known fact that teacher education is the corner stone for national development. The present over-whelming cry from employers, administrators, parents and general public concerning uncooked products of school system will cease if the inadequacies in the teacher education institutions are addressed. The paper therefore calls for adequate attention to be given to quality assurance in teacher production in the state through adequate funding, stepping up of the mode of entry into teacher education programme and minimum entry into the teaching profession if the UBE programme is not to go the way of its sister programme — Universal Primary Education (UPE).

Recommendations

The following suggestions may not be the total panacea but if followed, will go a long way in enhancing the quality of teachers produced by the college and allied institutions.

S = significant; NS = not significant

- Adequate funds should be made available to the institution for adequate 1. facilities and equipment. This will also enable them carry out the necessary practicals so that the schools will no longer produce theoretical teachers who cannot apply their knowledge to any novel situation.
- There is the need to review the mode of entry into the institution. The 2. same requirements for entrance into other disciplines should be upheld in selecting entrants into teacher education programmes. Credits in Mathematics and English should be made compulsory. Apart from using Poly-Jamb Scores for the admission, there should also be oral-interview to actually drop unqualified candidates.
- The teaching practice exercise of all training programmes should be 3. intensified, properly organized and supervised. A uniform period of one full year of the experience like all other professional disciplines could be introduced. A stipend should be paid to these teacher - trainees while in practice. There should be a legislation making it mandatory for schools to be made available at anytime for teaching practice and the staff made to be involved as co-operating teachers in the exercise.
- There should be strategies to incorporate global dimensions in education 4. from other countries. Globalisation is built on knowledge and information. Rebuilding an effective knowledge base in Nigeria should be a priority. Colleges of Education and faculties of Education in the Universities should be revitalized. The nation's abundant resource should be utilized to provide adequate infrastructures, computers internet and other technologies so that new ideas and methodologies across nations in teacher education can easily be assessed. There is the need to put Nigerian Teacher Education on the path of competitiveness and strengthen it to participate favourably within the global system.

Teacher competence and preparation are fundamental issues that should be addressed if the education system must be transformed from the present level of decay to standard that member nations would respect. There should be a review of teacher education curriculum, establishment of performance benchmark, and quality assurance mechanisms strengthened by government to ensure that the institution produces teachers that can stand the test of time.

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