

THE ROLE OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND NIGERIAN TEACHERS: IMPLICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the role of teacher education and Nigerian teachers as a catalyst for sustainable national development. The study adopted a correlation survey design. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population comprised all the 3,507 registered teachers in Abakaliki education zone of the state. A total 400 registered teachers constituted the sample using proportionate stratified random sampling technique to select 200 male and 200 female register teachers. A researcher developed instrument entitled “Role of Teacher Education and Nigerian Teachers for Sustainable National Development questionnaire (RTENTSdq)” was used for data collection. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) while the null hypotheses were tested at the probability value of 0.05 alpha level of significance the results indicates that there is a positive relationship between Nigerian teachers’ professional roles and sustainable national development. The study recommends that Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria should be empowered financially and legally to control and regulate entrance into teaching profession to avoid employment of non-professionals into the system for the purpose of sustainability of the system.

KEYWORDS: Development, Education, National, Sustainable and Teacher Education

INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria has been acknowledged by all and sundry as the key that unlocks national development and sustenance of difference educational programmes, teacher education inclusive. The acknowledgement of education as the means for upward social mobility and development has increased the demand for teacher education. In the same vein, the role of teacher education in national development has also received considerable attention from the government, stakeholders, private sector organizations and individuals (Omenyi, Nwankwo and Nwite, 2015). Okemakinde, Adewuyi and Alabi (2013) affirm that developing countries face barrage of extra-ordinary problem among which are abject mass poverty, ignorance. The global claim that education is a major and potent instrument for the attainment of sustainable national development in all human society cannot be overemphasized.

The solution to this barrage problem in this context lies on proper education of the masses. Functional and effective education through teacher education cushion high rate of illiteracy, emancipate the masses from shackles of ignorance. Adewuyi (2012) argued that such precarious situation in any nation can be resolved through effective and functional teachers education with the tendency of reducing illiteracy, ignorance, and alleviation of poverty. This type of education is made possible through effective teaching and learning facilitated through professional teachers.

Sustainable National Development or national Development in the words of Binta (2006) is the growth of nation in terms of unity, education, economic wellbeing and mass participation in government. From this definition one could infer that national development is a total experience in advancement and establishment of maintenance culture in areas of social, economic, and political life of citizens of a given society. Put differently, it's all about how a nation's resources and education inclusive are harnessed for the development and betterment of the citizenry. This implies a link between education and sustainable national development.

Suffice it to state that the heartbeat of manpower development and training for prudent use and sustenance of resources in a nation's sustainable development is teacher education. Teacher education according to Adewuyi and Ogunwuyi (2002) cited in Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) is the provision of professional education and specialized training within a specified period for the preparation of individuals who intend to develop and nurture the young ones into responsible and productive citizens. Put differently, teacher education in this context refers to professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitude, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work, in accordance with the need of a given society.

The bid to ensure adequate supply of teachers or manpower in Nigerian schools in conformity with the goals of teacher education as specified in section 5 (b) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013:43); highlights the trust and aim of teacher education to:

- Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers
- Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession and
- Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situation among others

The foregoing aims of the National policy on education (NPE) and National Action Plan (NAP 2006) through 10 year strategic plan appear significant and noteworthy that the approaches should contribute immensely towards addressing teacher education challenges in areas of training and retraining, instructional material development, periodic renewal of teacher licenses by Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), capacity building of supervisors and inspectors of education among others. Furthermore, the National Policy Education (NPE) recognizes the statutory responsibility for teacher education is vested in Colleges of Education, Institute of Education in Universities, School of Education in Polytechnics, Open University of Nigeria (NOU), Faculty of Education in Nigerian Universities for trainings and retraining of teachers. Colleges of education are expected to expand education programmes to accommodate technical, vocational business and special education. Teacher Registration Council on the other hand is to register teachers and regulate teaching profession and practice. Put differently, only professionally qualified and registered ones (teachers) should be allowed to practice at all levels of education just like medicine and law professions among others. To achieve these, Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN, 2008) objectives revolve around:

- Evolving instructional strategies to improve effectiveness and efficiency of instructional process.
- Restructuring the existing curriculum of teacher education programme completely,

- Facilitating the realization of the constitutional goals and emergences of the social order,
- Preparing professionally competent teachers to perform their roles effectively as per needs of the society,
- Upgrading the standard of education and status of teachers and develop amongst them a sense of commitment.

To achieve these laudable goals, serving and prospective teachers should be equip with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour and skills required to perform their classroom tasks effectively with greater sense of commitment. Secondly, what is structurally important in achieving the above goals and upgrade the standard of education in Nigeria is to put in place a functional and comprehensive teacher education. Ogunwuyi (2010) contends that teacher education should be nationally adopted as an agent of change and stability to promote probity, equity and quality and a launching pad for sustainable human development.

The importance of teacher education and the role of teacher's in the implementation of educational policies required to promote sustainable national development cannot be over emphasized. For instance, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) states in her National Policy on Education that "no education system can raise above the quality of its teachers". Secondly, the purpose of teacher education is to "produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers" (Achimugu, 2000:14). Ekpiken and Edet (2014) affirms that Nigerian educational system has also witnessed a lot in the areas of policy formulation, programmes and recommendations from different taskforce, committees, seminars and workshops on how best to produce highly motivated teacher who will inturn train and bring up good and competent children. According to them, teachers are charged with the responsibilities of training and educating the young ones to fit into the society and contribute to nation building.

Inspite of the above roles, teacher education has some challenges to address. Such challenges according to Adewuyi, (2012) and Ibidapo (2007) revolve around quality of the graduates produced by tertiary institutions and institute of education in the country. Some of the undergraduate from these institutions involves themselves in such arts as examination malpractices, cultism. Again assess to teacher education, quality of training and instruction and cost of education are also serious challenges. Other challenges of teacher education include lack of promotion opportunities that hinder professional growth, quality education offered at all levels and appointment of non-professionally qualified teachers into teaching profession.

Adewuyi (2012) observed that there has been a decline in the quality of candidates admitted into tertiary institutions as a result of the combination of poor quality output from secondary level inherited from the primary level of education. To reduce incidence of examination malpractices, Ibidapo (2007) suggests effective operation of the education system that requires available quality teachers in sufficient quality at all levels to enhance quality of inputs into higher levels and impact positively on the output of the higher level. Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008) in Okemakinde, Adewuyi and Alabi (2013) advocates better funding of teacher education for increased research and publication components and effective classroom management.

Sustainable growth or development of teacher education and the role of the teacher hinge on the standards by which the programme can be judged. Observations show that there has been public outcry that the programme run short of goals and are considered inadequate in quality. Can we say that the programme (teacher education) has met the national aspiration as stipulated in the National Policy on Education considering the process at that lead to the production of

teachers? Secondly, as postscript, it is a pathetic situation to state that the zeal and enthusiasm of Nigeria teachers at all levels in performing their legitimate role has been trampled upon by both role conflict and intimidation by parents and government.

Government still recruits National Youth Corp Members who do not possess professional teaching qualification into the teaching field (Nwideduh and Adieme, 2016). One may wonder whether TRCN charged with the responsibility of controlling and regulating teaching profession is aware of the anomalies in the teaching profession. It is not overstatement to state that there are some dichotomies between what is on paper and policy implementation. This has forced greater number of teachers to renege in performing their assigned roles and expectations even when their condition of services seems to have been improved. This has necessitated the researcher to undertake the study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent time, teacher education and teachers' pedagogical activities have advanced in philosophy, content, quality and practice with a view to meeting the demands of the nation and the challenges of the global world. Public opinions or observations indicate that government policy on teacher education programmes have not been adequately matched with full implementation process. A cross examination of the policy and programmes indicates that a gap still exist in actual implementation of teacher education resulting in the production of ill-equipped, ill-motivated and frustrated teachers in the society. In most cases teachers have carried their heartfelt and aggression to the classroom where their revenge mission is visited on the learners. Government in their quest to fulfill the political campaign promises choose to employ untrained, physically and psychologically unfit loyalists in teaching profession as against teacher education policy. On other hand, the society holds professional teachers at low ebb. Government is accused of poor funding and paying lip services to education sector. These challenges have affected the growth and sustainable development of teacher education of the nation. It is against this backdrop that the researcher infers that there is a neglect of teacher education and teachers' classroom effort towards the development of the nation. This is the reason why the researcher decides to undertake this study.

Purpose of the Study

- To identify the role of teachers in teacher education programme
- To examine the roles of male and female teachers in teacher education programme
- To examine the role of teachers' professional qualification in teaching and learning.

Research Questions

- What are the expected roles of teachers in teacher education programme?
- What are roles of gender in teacher education programmes?
- To what extent do teachers' professional qualification enhance teaching and learning in schools?

Hypotheses

- There is no significant relationship between male teachers' teaching role and national development.

- There is no significant relationship between female teachers' teaching role and national development.
- There is no significant relationship between teachers' professional qualification to teach and national development.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlation survey design. The population comprised all the 3,507 registered teachers in the three (Abakaliki, Afikpo and Onueke) Education zone of Ebonyi state (Secondary Education Board (SEB, 2015). A total sample of 400 registered teachers was sampled using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The strata considered male and female teachers in Abakaliki Education. Thus 200 male and 200 female totaling 400 registered teachers constituted the sample of the study. The research instrument used for the study was a researcher developed instrument entitled "The Role of Teacher Education and Nigerian Teachers for Sustainable Development Questionnaire (RTENTSdq). The questionnaire contained two sections, A and B. Section A contained teachers' bio-data while section B contained items on the variable of the study. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Administration, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki and the reliability was determined by a pilot study which yielded a coefficient index of 0.85. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) while the null hypotheses were tested at the probability value of 0.05 alpha level of significance.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between male teachers' teaching role and sustainable national development.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Statistics Analysis of Relationship between Male Teachers' Teaching Role and National Sustainable Development

Variables	N	Df	Σx Σy	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	R	Sig
Male teachers' teaching roles			9269	432897			
	400	398			39901	0.853	NS
Sustainable National Development			8970	430118			

Significant at $p < 0.05$, crit r-value 0.164

Table 1 shows that calculated r-value of 0.853 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.164 at 389 degree of freedom and at $P < 0.05$. The null hypothesis was rejected since the calculated r-value of 0.853 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.164. This shows that there is a positive relationship between male teachers' role/contribution in teaching profession and sustainable national development.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between female teachers' role and sustainable national development.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Female Teachers' Teaching Role and Sustainable National Development

Variables	N	Df	Σx Σy	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r	Sig
Male teachers teaching roles			5947	36732			
	400	398			208185	0.28	NS
Sustainable National Development			8970	430110			

Significant at $p < 0.05$, critical r-value 0.164

Table 2 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.28 is greater than the critical t-value of 0.164 at 398 degree of freedom. This implies that female teachers' contribution to national development is high. Further, this reflects a positive relationship between female teachers' role and sustainable national development. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative one.

Hypothesis 3

H₀: There is no significant relationship between teacher's qualification and sustainable national development

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis Between Teachers' Qualification and Sustainable National Development

Variables	N	Df	Σx Σy	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r	Sig
Male teachers teaching roles			5504	312519			
	400	398			200631	0.574	
Sustainable National Development			4396	297814			

Significant at $p < 0.05$, critical r-value 0.164

Table 3 shows that with a degree of freedom of 398, the calculated r-value of 0.574 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.164 which is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which says there is no significant relationship between teachers' qualification and sustainable national development in teacher education in Ebonyi State is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship of teachers (males and females) qualification as determinant to the contribution of teachers to sustainable national development in Ebonyi state.

DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 and 2 sought to identify relationship between male and female teachers teaching roles and sustainable national development. The results showed a positive relationship between Nigerian teachers' (male and female) professional roles and sustainable national development in the state. The findings is in congruence with Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015); Ekpiken and Edet (2014), Wanekezi, Okolo and Mezieobi (2011) and Akata & Egbue (1996) who affirmed that education unlocks the door to modernization and sustainable development but that, it is the teacher that holds key to the door (Ogunyinka et al, (2015) and Wanekezi et al (2011). This implies that teachers have the responsibility of translating educational policies into practices and programmes into action. Therefore the present study sees the role of the professional teachers in sustainable national development cannot be qualified, especially in training individuals in various area of discipline and human endeavour (industrial, social and economic sectors) to meet the needs of the society.

For Kpiken and Edet (2014) their finding is in agreement with the present study when they stated that male or female teacher's professional roles influence national development through active teaching and learning. They also found that only committed and professional teachers can improve low standard of education and the degrading status of the teacher. Put differently, the defects of our educational system have subtly combined to turn out half-baked pupils or students with their problem of academic ignorance, immaturity and low morale. The situation can only be improved through teachers who are committed to their duty and also with functional instructional supervision by internal and external supervisors.

Table 3 revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers (males and female) qualification and sustainable national development. In other words, the finding points out that teachers' possession of right type of qualification shows a road map in preparing pupils and student-teachers for the enormous responsibility of teaching. The finding is in accord with Nnachi (2006) who reported that with quality assurance in teacher education, there will be certainty for social development and human civilization. Quality performance in teacher education will no doubt lead to the realization of the goals of education at all levels, therefore, it is only when the goals of nation building capacity is realized that teacher education in Nigeria will be achieved.

CONCLUSIONS

Teacher education and professional trained teachers are major instrument for achieving desirable educational goals and sustainable national development. The role of teacher education programme in various institutions and faculties of education in the society are crucial to the development of our nation. In Nigeria, like other many other developing countries of the world, teaching is the most ritual and strategic profession for national development with regard to acquisition of knowledge and skills that bring about the mark of an educated and useful citizen in the society.

Conclusively, teacher education in Nigeria still face some challenges that affect one sub-system to another such as poor quality output, examination malpractices, availability of quality teachers, access to teacher education, teachers with low qualification and underfunding of education. Again, various Nigerian governments have in various way attempted a lot to improve teacher education programmes at all levels of education, yet the institutions are lacking in quality neither do they conform to international standards. Excellence in teacher education should be pursued with vigor by the government to keep pace with global trends of the 21st century.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made;

- The Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should be empowered financially and legally to regulate entrance into the teaching profession to avoid employment of non-professionals into the system.
- Society especially parents should be reoriented to see teaching profession as a prestigious job with higher social status. The implication is that if good conducive services are put in place for teachers, there is bound to enhance productivity.
- Minimum qualification into teaching profession should be a degree programme in education. This means an intending prospective applicants should obtain a degree in education in his/her area of specialization

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