

Innovations

Teacher Education in Nigeria in the 21st Century: Issues and Future Directions

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Abstract: *This article highlights the need for significant efforts to address the challenges and issues faced by teacher education in 21st century Nigeria. It emphasizes the importance of elevating the program to a level that can effectively measure up to and compete with similar high-quality programs in other locations. Therefore, the paper strongly asserts that in order for teacher education in Nigeria to serve as a foundation and catalyst for significant national progress and development in the 21st century, it is imperative to actively seek and pursue new strategies and investment approaches. The paper proposes that stakeholders and investors in education should prioritize and allocate resources to enhance teacher education in Nigeria in the 21st century. This should involve making the content and delivery of teacher education more appealing and of high quality. Additionally, efforts should be made to ensure that*

the products of teacher education are of high quality and possess diverse skills that contribute to national growth and increase the country's global competitiveness.

Keywords: *Direction of teacher education, Organization of teacher education, Nigerian Teacher education, Future of teacher education.*

Introduction

Globally, education is indispensable for the technological and economic development of every nation. This is because long-term development is contingent upon the quality and resilience of a nation's educational system (Aina, 2013). Education is an essential and fundamental requirement for the survival, progress, and competitiveness of every nation on a global scale (Ogunyinka, Okeke, & Adedoyin, 2015). In conclusion, for Nigeria to achieve growth and competitiveness in the global arena of the twenty-first century, it is imperative that the nation establish an education system that provides the essential knowledge and skills required for advancement and a competitive advantage on an international level. Teacher education is defined by Filani (2023) as that form of education which is properly planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach particularly but not exclusively in primary and post primary levels of schooling. In order to successfully pursue this legal course of action, it is essential that the instructor, who plays a crucial role in this matter, be not ignored or marginalized. Hence, the significance of teacher education cannot be disregarded, as it is specifically created and organized to equip and shape teachers in their role of cultivating knowledgeable and proficient learners who possess the necessary skills to contribute to the country's progress and competitive edge (Ogunyinka, Okeke, & Adedoyin, 2015).

It may be stated that the economic and technological progress of Nigeria is influenced by the quality of teacher education, with a clear correlation between the two. This proposition suggests that if the quality and nature of teacher education is flawed or inadequate, it is likely to hinder and significantly impede the economic and technological progress of a nation state, such as Nigeria (Eduwen and Osagie-Obazee, 2016). Teacher education is not only a crucial aspect of the broader endeavor to attain economic and technological excellence, but it is also fundamentally essential to the entire process and cannot be underestimated. The significance and extent of teacher education in Nigeria's pursuit of global recognition is plainly acknowledged in this context. However, how does this situation occur?

Teacher education is meticulously designed to serve the vital purpose of providing assistance to the teaching vocation (Ogunyinka, Okeke, & Adedoyin, 2015). Its objective is to foster, instruct, empower, and acquaint individuals with the

teaching vocation, thereby facilitating their development into proficient practitioners. The objective of this resource is to function as an exceptional and valuable instrument in the development of educators and scholars of superior caliber. These individuals will not only offer direction and leadership in the educational processes, but also diligently strive to guarantee that the policies and principles essential for successful engagement and execution of the learning endeavor are meticulously pursued and accurately implemented (Adedeji, 2018). The goals and objectives of education are accomplished in a competitive and efficient manner. The matter at hand holds considerable importance for Nigeria due to the fact that the nation's standing and competitiveness, in addition to its international reputation, are predominantly contingent upon the caliber and efficacy of its teacher education system. As a result, Nigeria must allocate resources towards the establishment and maintenance of suitable teacher education programs.

The global recession and decline in Nigeria's competitive index commenced only recently. The persistent decline in employability and the acquisition of essential problem-solving abilities among Nigerian school graduates is an indirect reflection of the condition of the country's teacher education systems. It is the responsibility of these systems to produce educators who produce these graduates (Okebukola, 2005). The Nigerian government, parents, proprietors of private enterprises, and even educators regarding this development has expressed concern. The efficacy of teachers' efforts in fostering proficient students within the educational institutions and schools where they operate appears to be woefully inadequate. It is apparent that the Nigerian government cannot maintain this trend. Consequently, it is imperative that the Nigerian government resolve both the systems that produce teachers, who hold a pivotal position in assessing the quality of Nigerian goods on the international market, and their competitive index level on the global stage. Significant modifications are required to these systems in order for them to serve their intended function.

For Nigeria to achieve substantial advancements in growth, development, and competitiveness, it is critical that the nation places emphasis on teacher education. Teacher education aims to develop instructors who possess the necessary skills and knowledge to proficiently facilitate the learning process, thereby encouraging the revelations that propel progress and development (Abdulrahman, 2013). The central argument posits that in the twenty-first century, Nigeria's teacher education system necessitates urgent and concentrated consideration in order to rectify and surmount the challenges that have impeded the delivery of superior teacher education within the nation. This calls for the implementation of a novel strategy and mode of engagement in order to recognize and address these challenges. The purpose of this comprehensive investigation was to assess the current condition of

teacher education in Nigeria, encompassing its implementation and methodology in the twenty-first century. The objective of this study was to ascertain the elements that have impeded the efficacy of teacher education as a driver of national progress. Furthermore, the research endeavor sought to put forth approaches that could enhance the quality of teacher education in Nigeria going forward.

To do this effectively, the following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. Describe the characteristics of teacher education in Nigeria.
2. What is the structure of teacher education in Nigeria?
3. What is the operational methodology of teacher education in Nigeria?
4. In what ways has teacher education in Nigeria facilitated the nation's enlightened and sustainable development and progress?
5. What obstacles plague the provision of quality teacher education in Nigeria?
6. In the twenty-first century, what solutions exist to reposition teacher education in Nigeria?

Methodology

In order to conduct this study in an appropriate manner, the researchers implemented a critical exploratory and expository strategy and approach (Are and Ekum, 2020). The researchers undertook a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of extant documents and literature concerning teacher education. Their attention was directed towards the publications that establish and offer direction for the functioning of teacher education institutions and faculties within the nation. To guarantee the accessibility and effective procurement of adequate resources from diverse sources, the researchers visited on purpose a number of teacher education institutions across the nation. However, the principal aim of these endeavors was to amass a considerable and diverse quantity of data that would serve as a solid basis for conducting significant critical analysis of particular noteworthy content within the recovered data.

The investigators deliberately queried a diverse range of online databases, including ERIC, Proquest, Google Scholar, and EbscoHost, with the intention of amassing a global database pertaining to teacher education. Additionally, significant endeavors were undertaken to visit multiple physical libraries housed within the institutions of higher education that confer teacher certification. After acquiring the necessary data through collection or retrieval, the researchers methodically arranged and classified the retrieved information. Once the initial assignment had been effectively completed, the researchers proceeded to perform data

triangulation. The researchers noted the discrepancies or disparities between the practical execution and the anticipated benchmark of teacher education in the nation. The researchers meticulously observed and evaluated the present condition and caliber of teacher education in Nigeria, in light of the emerging findings. Furthermore, they have identified critical strategies that can be applied to enhance the efficacy and influence of teacher education within the nation.

Organization of Teacher Education in Nigeria

The Nigerian school system reformed teacher education to meet the latest entry level, certification, and basic teaching competencies. Teacher training schools in Nigeria provided basic teacher education when TCII was the minimal requirement. Due to this shift, all Teacher Preparatory Institutions closed. Nigeria requires all teacher training to be tertiary. Currently, teacher education has three levels. Educational institutions include universities, institutes, and colleges (Ibukun and Aboduwodi, 2010). There is a desire to improve teacher quality at every level of preparation (FRN, 2014).

Colleges that provide the National Certificate of Education (NCE) aim to train highly skilled teachers who can effectively guide primary students. This involves teaching Primary 1 to JSS3, or Grade 1 Basics to Grade 9 Basics. The Nigerian education system's Basic level teacher education focuses on developing expertise in teaching specific topic domains or clusters. Three academic sessions are required to finish these universities' programs.

Curriculum and educational activities expose students to teaching, give them the pedagogical tools, methods, and abilities to teach their subject areas, and improve their knowledge and expertise in those areas. The practicum, or teaching practise activity, is essential to this level of teacher development (Imogie, 2010). For any Nigerian educational institution to grant a degree, students must actively participate for six months. Tutors or professionals in relevant fields must closely monitor this behavior. An assessment will measure how well the learner has used learning strategies and used learning materials (Imhangbe, 2017).

The Nigerian Institute of Education is the next stage of teacher education, distinguished by its differentiation. This tier of teacher education can award the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) within its unique framework and requirements due to its deliberate intention and legal backing. The Post Graduate Diploma in Education is open to professionals from many professions who have not studied education or have no academic background in it. This degree program is designed for those who want to teach. The Ministry of Education in Nigeria requires a certain degree of education and

certification for education applicants. This is a popular choice for those seeking a successful education career move (FRN, 2014).

In rare cases, this level of teacher education may also offer graduating students the National Certificate of Education in a particular field. This organization can operate within a university environment with the consent and supervision of the university administration or as an autonomous entity with its own surveillance and control mechanisms and administrative structure. Diplomas and certifications issued by the institute are university resources due to its status inside a university system.

Nigeria offers the highest quality of teacher education at universities. Teacher education has been located, provided, and conducted completely in the Faculty of Education since the university's organizational structure changed from colleges to faculties. Nigeria's system is identical. Teacher education in Nigeria is overseen by the Faculty of Education. Students can earn Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees with this setup. Nigerian teacher education programs follow the National Policy on Education. These programs award Bachelor of Philosophy in Education, Master of Education, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. In contrast to certain regions, Nigeria does not offer Ed.D. programs in teacher education.

The duration of these programs varies and is often set by the Nigeria Institutions Commission, the university's regulatory agency. The senates of the universities that provide these programs then successfully apply these conditions. Bachelor of Arts or Science in Education degrees, Nigeria's lowest teacher education degree, last three to six years. Students' difficulty and enrolling method affect the program's length. Most academic institutions allow students who cannot finish their studies in time to get a two-year extension. If they pass this deadline, they may not graduate or be helped to leave with the lowest passing grade.

Twelve to three years is usual for Master of Education programs. According to Nigeria Universities Commission regulations, students who fail to finish their programs on time will be offered help to finish or encouraged to reconsider their decision. The Doctor of Philosophy curriculum takes two to five years. Academically, this degree is the pinnacle of teacher education. This degree requires cognate certification, but teaching does not. This Nigerian teacher education degree ensures career advancement.

In Nigeria, teacher education emphasizes curriculum and specialization. Nigeria needs to broaden and adjust teacher education to technical, vocational, business, and special education and learning (FRN, 2014). These categories underpin Nigerian teacher education focus and specialization. Thus, teacher education students must specialize in one of the above areas. Although strongly recommended and required, the Nigerian teacher education program requires all students aspiring to become teachers, regardless of their chosen specialization, to

understand and know the prerequisites and subjects of the remaining three domains. This applies to non-specialty subjects.

In the Nigerian education system, ongoing training and improvement initiatives are essential to educators' professional development and advancement (Esu, 2006). The Nigerian National Policy on Education requires educators to participate in training programs, seminars, conferences, and refresher courses. These exercises aim to improve their teaching methods and skills while introducing new, more effective methods that may improve learning outcomes. According to the National Policy on Education, new teachers must complete a one-year probationary and practicum phase under an experienced administrator or teacher. This requirement exposes inexperienced teachers to seasoned instructors' knowledge and competence to improve their understanding and learning. The goal is to improve their understanding of teaching and learning methods and classroom administration. Like other professions, library and information science professionals sometimes start as unskilled instructors. At this stage, aspiring teachers must learn from experienced teachers to graduate as successful professionals and be ready for careers beyond teaching. Teachers must also obtain a license from the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria as part of their study.

The latest educational policy requires instructors to be licensed or registered by the Instructors Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) to work (FRN, 2014). These provisions appear to promote high-quality education and the development of skilled educators who inspire and inform sustainable national development, but initial obstacles and unmet urgent needs have hampered their implementation.

From the foregoing, the essence is to have a transformational teacher for Nigeria national development. Teacher according to Afolabi (2023) is an important variable in the teaching learning episode and thus, classroom interaction should be rebranded so as to improve the image with the necessary skills that can make the realisation of teacher education goal seamless. A transformational teacher is the one who is able to display proficiently some stipulated psychological, scholastic and pedagogical skills.

Obstacles to Teacher Education in Nigeria in the 21st Century

The caliber of a nation is contingent upon the caliber of its population. The caliber of its population is contingent not alone, but significantly, on the caliber of their education. Likewise, the quality of their education is contingent on other factors, with the quality of their teacher being a significant determinant. Despite the significant role of teacher education in the overall advancement of Nigeria, it continues to encounter numerous obstacles. Several of these challenges include:

Inadequate Instructional Facilities:

Our teacher training institutes lack adequate teaching facilities. Some lecture venues are outdated and lack interactive boards and projectors. According to Akinbuilo (2007), experts have identified resource constraints and lack of funding as major barriers to teacher education in Nigeria. According to Onyeachu (2007), accreditation reports have found crumbling facilities, outdated equipment, inadequate classrooms, broken walls, leaking roofs, and windows without wire gauze at most teacher training colleges. Essential chemicals are scarce at many teacher training institutions' labs. Many Nigerian teacher training schools struggle to acquire and maintain basic infrastructure, ancillary facilities, equipment, and ICT technologies due to low financing.

Despite the shift in the education system from school buildings, classrooms, teachers, and textbooks to infrastructure, ICT tools, e-teaching, individual learners, facilitators, and multimedia materials, many Nigerian teacher training institutions have not fully embraced or adapted to the new approach and engagement pattern (Njoku, 2006). The Nigeria Teachers' Registration Council selected 2006 as ICT skills training for teachers. To maximize its benefits, instructors were trained to use and integrate ICT in teaching and learning (Johnson, 2007). Teacher training institutions countrywide lack ICT facilities, as they have since 2006.

Poor Budgetary allocation to Education Sector:

Recently, the Federal Government's education budget has been much lower than UNESCO's benchmark. UNESCO advises poor nations to spend 26% of their budgets on education. The poor execution of teacher education legislation and the negative public view of teacher education have hurt teacher education in Nigeria. Ani (2007) confirmed that the government's unfavorable view of teachers and the teaching profession hurts the profession and lowers its prestige.

Problems of Practice Teaching:

Implementing the teaching practice plan complicates Nigerian teacher education. Teaching practise lets learners apply their theoretical and abstract knowledge (Kanno, 2004). Many universities fail to complete the 12-week practical teaching term. Ciwar (2005) states that the 12-week teaching method is widely known to be unproductive in many institutions. Teachers and institutions have insufficient control and assessment of practical work. This poor instructional method produces inadequate educators today. Closely related to this is the lack of provision for internship for teachers after schooling before entering into teaching. It is on this premise that Adeyemo, Adesope and Ajayi (2023) remarked that there is no period

of internship for newly trained teachers during which period they can benefit from the mentoring of knowledgeable and experience colleagues.

Students' Admission Policy:

Concerns exist over teacher education admissions. Most teacher education students lack the drive and academic background to become teachers. They enroll in a teacher education program after failing the entrance exam for their selected course. Due to low admission standards, most applicants are not smart. These applicants are mainly those who didn't get into other programs. Students always lack interest for school but eventually consider it. According to Baikie (2002), Nigerian instructors are recruited from unsuccessful people. Thus, failures will staff our schools.

Deficiency in Curriculum of the Teaching Subject:

Nationwide teacher education programs have been criticized for their curricula. Some educators say it doesn't satisfy modern Nigerian society's needs and lacks relevant material for teachers who must provide high-quality education. Some feel pre-service teachers experience teaching briefly. According to notable Nigerian teacher educators, B.Ed./B.Sc. programs prioritize education over teaching courses. They want to refocus on teaching..

Future Directions for Teacher Education in 21st Century Nigeria:

For teacher education to contribute effectively to the attainment and maintenance of high-quality education, as well as to bolster Nigeria's global competitiveness, growth, and technological progress, it is imperative to sustainably implement practical, significant, and visible measures in the country's teacher education development, implementation, and delivery. In order to accomplish this aim, the researchers put forth the subsequent suggestions as fundamental elements of teacher education in Nigeria during the twenty-first century:

Inclusion of computer- based instruction in teacher education

The incorporation of information technology (IT) into all teacher training is required by FRN (2014). This is intended to underscore the criticality of incorporating computer-based instruction into teacher preparation programs. Computer-based instruction pertains to the approach by which learners are provided with computer-related skills and knowledge. Given the dynamic nature of the international environment and current trends, it is critical that all individuals possess a high level of computer literacy. The integration of ICT into teacher

education programs will promote the growth of enhanced scientific and technical attitudes in addition to aiding students in the mastery of immediate concepts.

Integration of entrepreneurial skills

Entrepreneurial talents comprise the essential capabilities necessary to instigate, foster, obtain financial backing for, and attain triumph in an individual's own commercial undertaking. The integration of entrepreneurial competencies into teacher education is a critical prerequisite, as it aligns with one of the educational goals in Nigeria—the development of appropriate cognitive, physical, and social capabilities that empower individuals to flourish and contribute positively to society (FRN, 2014). Furthermore, these objectives are consistent with a key aim of teacher education, which is to cultivate in educators a disposition for inquisitiveness and ingenuity. As a result, the integration of entrepreneurial skills into teacher education programs is imperative to equip students with the superior and indispensable competencies required to thrive and operate effectively in the perpetually evolving labor market.

Recruitment of academically and professionally qualified teachers:

The employment of instructors who possess both academic and professional qualifications is imperative for the effective attainment of the objectives of teacher education. By recruiting proficient educators, one can ensure that teacher preparation is of the highest caliber. The attainment of high-quality education requires educators to undergo the requisite training and recertification in their specific areas of expertise. To uphold rigorous criteria in teacher education, it is imperative to employ educators who possess both academic and professional expertise. Such instructors should be capable of imparting pertinent knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to students, thereby empowering them to make meaningful contributions to society.

Organization of professional development programmes for teacher educators:

Professional development programs encompass the ongoing education and reeducation of educators with the aim of augmenting their expertise and understanding to align with the perpetually evolving landscape of education on a national and international scale. Organizing conferences, seminars, and workshops for teacher educators is vital. They will gain knowledge and insight into the most recent abilities, strategies, methods, and tactics in the field of education through the professional development program. Consistent structuring of the professional

development plan is imperative owing to the ever-changing nature of knowledge and the evolving demands and expectations of society.

Establishing a focus on improvisation in teacher education:

Improvisation is the educational strategy of employing alternative resources and materials to supplement instruction when specific primary teaching materials are scarce or unavailable. Emergency fabrication pertains to the process of conceiving or constructing a device in the midst of an urgent circumstance. The utilization of equipment sourced from the local environment or custom-designed by the teacher, student, or local personnel has the potential to enhance classroom instruction. Placing improvisation as a top priority in teacher education is of the utmost importance in order to foster students' capabilities and potential, thus effectively addressing the challenge of inadequate instructional materials.

Integration of mentorship technique

By incorporating mentorship techniques into teacher education courses, educational objectives can be effectively achieved. Mentoring is a professional relationship wherein an experienced person (mentor) provides guidance and support to a less experienced person (protégé) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will benefit the mentee's professional development and personal progress. Facilitating the transition of pre-service instructors into the teaching profession is an essential strategy. By integrating mentorship strategies into teacher education programs, one can ensure that students are equipped with the essential knowledge and skills required for a career in teaching. By doing so, these programs cultivate a constructive rapport between the mentees, who are the trainee-teachers, and the mentor-teachers (Onuoha-Chidiebere, 2016).

Library

A library comprises a curated assortment of books and supplementary materials that are accessible to patrons for the purposes of borrowing, research, or recreational engagements. It is critical to prioritize and uphold the provision of state-of-the-art libraries staffed with proficient librarians capable of locating and disseminating vital materials. This will contribute to the improvement of teacher education institutions and, among other significant benefits, set them apart as exceptional establishments. In order to pursue the critical objectives of teacher education and university education—namely, cultivating knowledge-based societies in the knowledge-driven contemporary era—dedicated and inventive instructors and lecturers are indispensable. Libraries, which function as the primary information centers of universities and other institutions of higher education, including those

dedicated to teacher education, should be allocated sufficient financial resources and attention to guarantee they adhere to the necessary operational criteria. Standards are critical and foundational criteria that are indispensable for the precise evaluation of library operations with the purpose of bolstering the parent institution's mission (Obinyan, Omigie, & Obinyan, 2019). A critical role that libraries must consistently fulfill is to furnish expeditious and effective access to information resources in diverse formats, with the intention of facilitating research, learning, and education of the highest quality.

Conclusion

This article emphasizes the necessity for substantial endeavors to tackle the obstacles and concerns encountered by teacher education in Nigeria in the twenty-first century. It underscores the significance of enhancing the program to a degree where it can competently rival and contend with comparable high-caliber programs situated in different regions. Hence, the paper contends unequivocally that for teacher education in Nigeria to function as a cornerstone and accelerant for substantial national advancements and progress in the twenty-first century, it is critical to proactively pursue novel investment approaches and strategies. This paper argues that in the twenty-first century, education stakeholders and investors should prioritize and allocate resources towards the improvement of teacher education in Nigeria. This should entail enhancing the appeal and caliber of the content and delivery of teacher education. In addition, endeavors ought to be directed towards guaranteeing that the outcomes of teacher education are characterized by exceptional quality and a wide array of competencies that enhance the nation's progress and global competitiveness.

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