

DESCRIPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS' OPINIONS IN IMO STATE ON THE EFFECTIVE TEACHER PREPARATORY PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIAN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study finds out the opinions of stakeholders in Teacher Education (TE) on effectiveness of and justifications for using instructional coursework, mentoring and practical teaching programmes in Nigerian Teacher Education. It also finds out the variance in the opinion of the stakeholders on the basis of their statuses. The population for the study comprised three categories of stakeholders including administrators (lecturer and secondary school heads) and students undergoing teacher education programmes within Owerri metropolis, Imo state, Nigeria. From the population, simple random sampling technique was used to sample a total of 550 respondents comprising 300 students and 250 administrators of TE from randomly selected two Teacher Education institutions and four secondary schools within the metropolis. A researcher-made instrument titled Effective Teacher Preparation Programme Questionnaire (ETPPQ) was used to elicit needed data. Collected data were analyzed using percentages and chi-square statistics. Finding revealed that mentoring topped, (78%), as the most adjudged effective Teacher Preparatory Programmes (TPP). Following this is Classroom Coursework Programme (59%). Invariably, teaching practice was identified as the least, (37%), effective TPP in Nigerian Teacher Education. Among the indicated determinants of effective TPP are long-time exposure to practical experience indicated by 86.9% of the sample and rich source of theoretical knowledge indicated by 67.2% of the sample. However, at the level of hypothesis testing, these opinions of the stakeholders were found to significantly vary on the basis of their statuses. Based on these findings, it was recommended that enhancing mentoring practices and rich theoretical knowledge of teaching in Nigerian Teacher Education could ensure effective teacher preparation and teaching productivity.

Keywords: Stakeholder, Preparatory programme, Mentoring, Coursework, Teaching practice

Introduction

In any society, teachers play significant role in educational development. They are the hub of educational input, process and output through which school achieve its goals. Through teachers' activities, educational programmes go beyond the levels of theories and policy to become practice and products that are needed for individual and societal development. Societal awareness of the roles of teacher has been a major reason for series of teacher preparatory programmes. Many of which are designed to train teachers for all levels of education (Micheal & Lian, 1995). Teacher Preparatory Programmes, as used in this study, means all forms of academic and practical programmes designed and administered on trainee or serving teachers to equip them with knowledge and skills needed to function as professional teachers. They are programmes designed to impact professional skills on teachers.

In Nigerian system of education, teacher preparatory programmes are built into the core curriculum of tertiary education. They are programmes designed as regular or in-service coursework and practical and are offered at Colleges of Education, Institutes of Education, and Faculties of Education in Universities. They are also programmes that are anchored in the activities of the Nigerian Teacher Institute (NTI).

Teacher Preparatory Programmes are also designed as seminars, conferences, workshops and practicum that are either organized by non-governmental organizations or by Government. An example of this is the annual Teacher Training Workshop that is anchored by Nigerian Institutes as an aspect of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG). Most of these available Teacher Preparatory Programmes in the country are regulated for standard by any of the National Commissions for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National University Commission (NUC), and National Teacher Institute (NTI) and sometimes by State or Federal Ministries of Education.

In the history of the development of teacher education, Teaching Practice (TP) has been a major aspect of Teacher Preparatory Programme (TPP). It has been a programme that teacher training schools expose trainee teachers to, to compliment the Classroom Coursework Programme (CCP). Adesina (2005) identified Teaching Practice as one of the first innovation in teacher education. Today, TP is compulsory in all Teacher Preparatory Programmes. In Imo State, particularly at the Imo State University (IMSU) and at Alvan-Ikoku Federal University of Education, (AIFUE) Owerri that are used in this study, Teaching Practice is a core aspect of Teacher Education. It is designed to train and tests the mastery of teaching techniques by trainee teachers. At Imo State University (IMSU) and Alvan-Ikoku Federal University of Education (AIFUE), TP programmes are offered in two phases to students without NCE experience and in one phase to students with NCE experience. Through the programme, trainee teachers are posted to observe and learn teaching skills for six weeks and are thereby subjected to be observed by their host school heads and by assigned supervisors from their institutions. Ahead of this, the trainee teachers are prepared in micro teaching laboratories before they are posted to either primary schools for practical teaching – if they are undergoing programmes leading to award of Nigerian Certificate in Education, (NCE) or to secondary schools if they are education-based degree students (IMSU, 2012, ALVAN, 2010).

As expressed in a document titled the *Seven Principles of Good Teaching Practice* Published in 1987 by the American Association of higher Education (AAHE), a good TP should encourage interaction between students and faculty and between trainee teacher and the students they teach. Teaching Practice should also involve the use of active learning techniques; it should give prompt feedback, emphasizes time on task and should communicate high expectation. Above all, a good Teaching Practice should motivate trainee teachers to love teaching as a profession and thereby be ready to teach with sense of commitment (AAHE, 1987). However, with increased complexities in teaching profession and content of learning at various levels of education, dependence on TP in teacher preparation has dwindled (Fasoranti & Babalola, 2010). Subsequently, scholars and teacher trainers began to suggest the need for more programmes of experience in teacher preparation (Micheal & Lian, 2014).

Definitely, inadequacies in students' academic achievement and the global advancement in technological orientation and application have initiated series of reforms in education which led to further reforms in teacher education. Many of the reforms in teacher education are designed to complement the traditional classroom coursework of instructions. Today, there are policies agitating for proper enactment and implementations of new approaches such as mentoring, substitute teaching and team teaching in Nigerian Teacher Education programmes (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006). Mentoring in Teacher Education is all about attaching trainee teacher to seasoned teachers and giving them the professional avenue where the seasoned teachers teach and the trainee teacher observe and learn the skill. Specifically, mentoring involves giving the *fresh teacher* the opportunity to follow the seasoned teacher in all school activities, for example, follow him/her to class, watch him/her teach, and thereafter adapt or adopt his/her teaching skills/methods for use when the trainee teacher begin independent teaching activities. The belief is that the attached mentee could be more motivated to love teaching and there by teach conscientiously if given the opportunity to learn from experienced teachers or mentor who has rich teaching skills (Mpka, 2000).

The New Zealand Teachers Council, NZTC, described mentoring as a practice-focused professional learning programme designed for *fresh teachers*. It is said to be an active support and commitment booster delivered by professional mentors to *fresh teacher* (NZTC, 2011). In Nigerian Teacher Education, mentoring is packaged as part of a scheme called Federal Teachers' Scheme (FTS). This scheme was designed for NCE graduates. It enables NCE graduates to teach for two years after graduation in any part of the country. Generally, at all levels of teaching in Nigerian schools, there are elements of mentoring. The practice is all about guided exposure. It is implemented through peering senior teachers or lecturers with junior ones and assigning classes or coursework to them to teach, jointly. The objective of this is that the scheme will socialize and inspire fresh teachers for effectiveness in the profession. However, mentorship is a post-appointment experience. It is possible only after being appointed as teacher. It is also a programme that requires availability of committed seasoned teachers upon which the fresh teacher can mentor.

No doubt Classroom Coursework Programme, (CCP), Teaching Practice (TP) and Mentoring Programme (MP) are in practice in Nigerian institutions for teacher education. Students undergoing training in Teacher Education are exposed to series of coursework leading to acquisition of knowledge and skill in teaching profession. Also, students are posted on TP and when employed as teachers, they are assigned to mentor experienced and better qualified teachers (Fariogun & Babalola, 2010). The main motive behind all these training is to improve education productivity across levels of schools. Unfortunately however, much has not been done to appraise the effectiveness of these programmes in teacher education.

There have not been adequate known research efforts to weigh the strengths and weakness of CI, TP and MP in Nigerian teacher training programmes or specifically to inquire into the opinions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of the programmes for teacher preparation in Nigeria. No doubt, it is important to seek such opinions so as to further improve the programme for optimum training of teachers in the country. In the scheme of Nigerian teacher education, the main stakeholders are the trainers of the trainee teachers. They are lecturers in teacher education and the school heads who engage trainee teachers when they are posted for teaching practice or who saw to their assignment for mentoring when in full practice. On the other hand, the trainee teachers are themselves stakeholders. This is because they are at the receiving end of the various programme of training. These categories of stakeholders are in the best position to know the programme that could have positive effects in teacher preparation.

In this study, therefore, the researchers sought the opinions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of the described programmes for teacher preparation (CCP, TP and MP). The findings of this study are believed to be useful in sustaining different teacher preparation programmes and in advancing the most effective ones as the nation strives to develop crops of efficient and effective teachers.

Theoretical Framework

This work is framed on Albert Bandura's *Social Learning Theory*, (1973). The theory posits that all forms of behaviour are learnt. It maintains that human behaviours which comprises human's disposition, interest and actions are mainly elements of what they see, interact with and acquire in their daily encounters and not necessarily what they acquire from their biological disposition. According to Bandura (1973), human actions are best learnt through (1) direct reinforcements and punishments that one gets through engagements in activities and (2) observation of other people actions. Definitely, teaching is a behaviour which could as well be developed through these afore-said means i.e. through (1) getting reinforced and punished in conventional classroom coursework programmes and (2) having the opportunities to observe and initiate teaching skills through teacher education's programmes such as in Teaching Practice and in Mentoring. Teaching skill is acquired as behaviour and is manifested or expressed by the acquirer as behaviour. For example, the teacher trainer (lecturer) in the classroom presents a body of teaching knowledge and skills to trainee teachers in words and in actions and the trainee teachers are expected to manifest the acquired knowledge and skill in behavioral terms.

Therefore, because teaching skill is behaviour, teacher preparation scheme should be one that will encourage learning through observation. As implied in the *Social Learning Theory*, teachers could be adequately prepared and inspired for effectiveness if the programmes they are exposed to are packaged as engagements and observations. In this study, it is hypothesized that Teacher preparation programmes that are activity-based rather than theoretical would be more effective in developing crop of efficient teachers for different levels of education in the country.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the researchers raised and answered the following research questions:

- RQ1:** What are the Teacher Preparation Programmes identified by stakeholders as being in use within Owerri metropolis?
- RQ2:** Which of the Teacher Preparation Programmes is adjudged by stakeholders as one that could be very effective in preparing teachers for effective job delivery?
- RQ3:** What, in the opinion of stakeholders, determines an effective Teacher Preparatory Programmes?
- RQ4:** Do the opinions of stakeholders on the effective Teacher Preparatory Programmes vary on the basis of their status?

Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis below is tested in the study:

- H0:** The opinions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of Teacher Preparation Programmes will not significantly vary on the basis of their status.

Methodology

The study was designed as a descriptive survey. The population for the study comprised every administrators of teacher education which include lecturers and secondary school heads and every students of teacher education in tertiary institutions located within Owerri metropolis of Imo State. From the population of secondary schools heads and teacher education staff and students of tertiary institutions in the metropolis, random sampling technique was used to sample a total of 550 respondents. The samples were further classified as *administrators* of teacher education (this include lecturers and heads of secondary schools) and as *students* (students of teacher education). Parts of the respondents were drawn from two purposively selected institutions that run teacher education programmes in the metropolis. The selected institutions were: Imo State University (IMSU) and Alvan-Ikoku Federal University of Education (AIFUE). The other parts of respondents were drawn from four randomly selected secondary schools within Owerri metropolis. Invariably, student respondents from IMSU were drawn only from its faculty of education while student respondents from AIFUE were drawn from all the six faculties of the college. A researcher-made instrument titled Effective Teacher Preparation Practice Questionnaire (ETTPQ) was used to elicit needed data. The instrument has two sections: Section A and B. The Section 'A' elicited respondents' biographical data such as the status of the respondents (lecturing, school headship or studentship), gender, course of study (in the case of students) and faculty of lecturing (in the case of lecturers). A part of the Section 'A' also contains brief notes on each of the Teacher Preparatory Programmes i.e. CCL, TP and MP under study. The notes describe briefly to the respondents what is operationally meant by each of these programmes. The Section 'B' has three items. Its item 'A' requires respondents to list the TPPs that they were aware of as being in use in preparing or training teacher. The item 'B' in the Section 'B' asks respondents to indicate the TPP they perceived as most effective for productive teacher training among the TPPs provided. Item 'C' of this Section asks them to provide reasons for their choice of the most effective TPP.

The validity of the instrument was determined through face-validity approach. To achieve this, the researchers gave the instrument to two lecturers and two heads of secondary schools in schools/institutions other than those used in the actual study. They were asked to judge the accuracy and relevance of the items

in the instrument in seeking the needed data for the study. Their responses were incorporated into the final copy of the instrument. On the other hand, the reliability of the instrument was determined using the test re-test method. That is, the instrument was administered on selected set of lecturers and students of Federal College of Education Technical, Asaba, and the data generated from the administrations were correlated using Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient. This yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.68 for the instrument. Percentages and Chi-square statistics were used in the subsequent analysis of data in relation to the raised research questions and hypothesis.

Result

RQ1: What are the Teacher Preparatory Programmes identified by stakeholders as being in use within Owerri metropolis?

Table 1: Teacher Preparatory Programmes in use within Owerri metropolis, Imo State

Programmes %	Administrators		Students		TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n
Classroom Coursework Programme 100	250	100	300	100	550
Teaching Practice 100	250	100	300	100	550
Mentoring Programme 350 63.6		158 63.2		192	64

Research question one was raised purposely to test respondents' awareness of the presence of the three Teacher Preparatory Programmes (i.e. CCP, TP and MP) in Nigerian system of education. Findings on Table 1 indicate that all the sampled respondents were aware of Classroom Coursework Programmes, Teaching Practice and Mentoring Programme as core aspects of teacher education procedures in Nigeria. However, while 100% of sampled respondents indicated being aware of programmes such as CCP and TP, only 63.2% of the sampled lecturers and school heads (administrators) and 64% of the sampled students were aware of Mentoring Programme as part of Teacher Education policy in Nigeria.

RQ2: Which of the Teacher Preparatory Programmes is adjudged by stakeholders as one that could be very effective in preparing teachers for effective job delivery?

Table 2: Perceived Effective of Teacher Preparatory Programmes

Programmes %	Administrators		Students		TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n
Classroom Coursework Programme 18.3	67	26.8	34	11.3	101
Teaching Practice 16.5	65	26	102	34.1	91
Mentoring Programme 282 51.2		118 47.2		164	54.6

As shown on Table 2, out of the sampled 550 administrators and students, 18.3% identified Classroom Coursework Programme (CCP) as one that can be very effective in teacher preparation, 16.5% of the sample believed that exposing trainee teachers to Teaching Practice could be the most effective teacher preparatory practice and 51.2% of the sample believed that Mentoring Programme could be a very effective programme in preparing teachers for productive job delivery in teaching profession. A specific look at the data show that the belief in TP as most effective is higher among students (34.1%) than among administrators (26%). On the other hand, the belief that Classroom Coursework Programme could be very effective is lesser among students (11.3%) than among administrators (26.8%).

RQ3: What in the opinion of stakeholders determines an effective Teacher Preparatory Programmes?

Table 3: Determinants of effective Teacher Preparatory Programmes

Programmes %	Administrators		Students		TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n
Policy back-ups	34	13.6	148	49.3	182
	33.1				
Cost effective	19	7.6	36	12	55
	10				
Rich theoretical knowledge	159	63.6	211	70.3	370
	67.2				
Professional motivation	153	61.2	149	49.66	302
	54.9				
Long-term practical experience	231	92.4	247	82.3	478
	86.9				

As shown on Table 3, long-term exposure to practical experience was indicated by 86.9% of the sampled stakeholders as what determines effectiveness in Teacher Preparatory Programme. Other determinants are: provision of rich theoretical knowledge (67.2%), opportunity for professional motivation (54.9%) and enactment of policies that promote TTP (33.1%). On the other hand, only 10% of the respondents agreed that the cost of Teacher Preparatory Programmes can determine whether the programmes would be effective or not.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀ The opinions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of Teacher Preparatory Programme did not significantly vary on the basis of their status.

Table 4: Chi-square test of stakeholders' opinions on effective teacher preparatory programmes

Status	Programmes			Total	df	X ² cal.v	X ² tab.v
Administrators	CCP 67(64)	TP 65(66)	MP 118(120)	250	2	11.05	
Students	34(34)	102(100)	164(166)	300			

Keys

CCP= Classroom Coursework Programme

TP= Teaching Practice

MP= Mentoring programme

As shown on Table 3, the Chi-square calculated value, 11.05 is higher than the Chi-square tabulated value, hence, hypothesis 1 was rejected and it was concluded that the opinions of stakeholders on the effectiveness of Teacher Preparatory Programme Significantly varied on the basis of their status.

Discussion

Preparing teachers for professional practices is an investment. It is an educational effort that many nations embark upon so as to achieve productive educational activities and to attain substantial development in other sectors of the society. Nations have reasons for investing in teacher education. As in any investment, financial and professional efforts are put into making sure that Nigerian teachers are adequately trained and motivated so that at the end they can make proficient returns to the nation in terms of the quality and quantity of school graduates they turn to the nation. Thus, inclusion of programmes such as Coursework in Education, Teaching Practice, and Mentoring and other job motivation and reward systems such as Federal Teachers' Scheme (FTS) And Teachers' Salary Scale (TSS) In Nigerian teacher education and teaching profession are expected to be effective. They are expected to yield the objective for which they are created or enacted.

No doubt, knowing how effective some of these programmes are could be sought in the opinions of persons directly or indirectly related to issues and practices in teacher education. For example, in this study, the researchers identified lecturers in teacher education, secondary school heads and students of teacher education as potential stakeholders in teaching activities or profession and thereby sought their opinions. It was found out that substantial percentage of these stakeholders (51.2%) were of the opinions that mentoring could be very effective in teacher preparation. This opinion was very prominent among lecturers and head of secondary schools (47.2%) and among students of teacher education (54.6%). No doubt, mentoring could be very useful in exposing teachers to practical experience. Adegbola and Rasaq (2010) described mentoring as an organizational practice that allows transition of good organizational behaviours across generations of organizational staff. It is one practice that can ensure that behaviours such as commitment to duty, skill proficiency and collaborative job delivery system that may have been established in an institution of learning did not fade out as staffs move or retire on their job. Mentoring also has advantage of learning-on-job. Thus it can ensure long-time training opportunity. Mentoring is quite different from Teaching Practice which often gives short-time training. Emphasizing the importance of mentoring in education, George (2010) likened it to the Peer in- Service Approach (PISA) which he said is a self-help in-service approach that can drastically reduce the cost of financing training programme for teachers. Thus, with mentoring, schools and government could save resources by engaging available expertise of good/experienced teachers to update the knowledge and skills of other teachers within their school or neighboring schools. This could prevent wastage of manpower that is said to be one of the disadvantages of in-service training that is derivable through sandwich or part time studies (Parakoyi, 2009).

In this study, the sampled stakeholders identified opportunity to be exposed to long-time practical experience and opportunity to acquire adequate theoretical knowledge of teaching as major determinants of an effective Teacher Preparatory Programme (TPP). Substantial percentage of sampled respondents (86.9%) supported the opinion that only a TPP that gives a long-time practical experience could be very effective. Only 10% of sampled respondents share the opinion that an effective TPP will have to be cost effective and not expensive. This implies that effective TPP are not necessarily to be cheap for government; being the sponsor, or to be cheap for trainee teacher being the beneficiary. Invariably, government or any other sponsor of TPP will not have to consider cost when embarking on TPP if they expect such programme to yield positive result. As once expressed by Peter and Gregory (2008), mentoring could come with worthwhile expenses such as hiring experts, making them consultants and motivating them to promote organizational growth. Luthans (2005) opines that no cheap input can yield growth in any organization. Applicably, getting good result from using mentoring in Nigerian Teacher Education will require engaging seasoned teachers- i.e. persons with substantial years of experience,

commitment and qualification that can inspire the young and fresh teachers to also become committed to teaching.

Conclusion

Exposure to practical experience is one Teacher Preparatory Programme that stakeholders in teacher education in Imo State believed could be very effective in Nigeria's bid to raise crop of committed and productive teachers. It is specifically expressed that a programme such as mentoring could ensure such exposure to practical experiences mainly because it gives opportunity for long-time training and transition of teaching and professional skills from trained, experienced and committed teachers to fresh and young teachers. It is assumed that mentoring as a Teacher Preparatory Programme could be productive for training teachers for all levels of education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following were recommended among other things:

- Nigerian government should promote mentoring as a core aspect of its Teacher Preparatory Programme.
- Cost should not be a barrier in promoting mentoring either as a policy or practice by sponsors and beneficiaries of the programme.
- In addition to mentoring, stakeholders should promote substantial Classroom Coursework Programmes that will provide trainee teachers with needed theoretical knowledge of teaching skills.

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