



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



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ISSN: 2226-6348

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v5-i4/2321>

DOI: 10.6007/IJARPED/v5-i4/2321

Received: 16 October 2016, Revised: 18 November 2016, Accepted: 30 November 2016

Published Online: 20 December 2016

In-Text Citation: (Ogbiji et al., 2016)

To Cite this Article: Ogbiji, J. E., Ategwu, E. F., & Ogbiji, S. A. (2016). Nigerian Head Teachers Perception of the Quality of NCE Teachers Trained by National Teachers Institute (NTI). *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 5(4), 63–71.

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Vol. 5(4) 2016, Pg. 63 - 71

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Nigerian Head Teachers Perception of the Quality of NCE Teachers Trained by National Teachers Institute (NTI)

Joseph E. Ogbiji, (Ph.D)

Department of Educational Foundations & Administration Faculty of Education,
Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Nigeria
Email: joeogbiji@gmail.com

Emeka F. Ateguwu

Department of Educational Foundations & Administration, Faculty of Education
Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH), Calabar, Nigeria.

Sylvanus Achua Ogbiji

Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education
Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Nigeria

Abstract

This study samples the perception of Head Teachers On the quality of NCE teachers produced through National Teachers Institute (NTI) of Nigeria programme. The study was guided by three hypotheses and three research questions. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting a sample of 400 Head Teachers from two educational zones in Cross River State. Questionnaire containing twenty items was used to elicit information. The data collected was analyzed at .05 confidence level, using population t-test for hypotheses 1, 2, & 3. The findings were that NCE teachers produced through NTI programme are competent in the general studies aspect of education, competent in their area of specialization and in the professional aspect of teacher education. Some gray areas were identified in the professional education area and recommendations made on how to improve NTI programme generally and the gray areas in particular.

Introduction

Teachers are the bedrock of any educational programme. The success or failure of any educational programme equally depends on teachers' knowledge, understanding and commitment to its objectives. It is for this reason that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2008)

acknowledged in her National Policy on Education that “no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers”. This implies that no education system is better than the quality of its teachers. With expanded educational opportunities for Nigerians occasioned by the introduction of the Universal Primary Education in 1976 and the launching of the Universal Basic Education in 1999, Nigerians have free access to education from primary to junior secondary level. This leverage has had concomitant unprecedented increase in school enrolment which has necessitated the expansion in the teacher training programme of the country. To this effect the Federal Republic of Nigeria has in addition to the institution-based training of teachers like the faculties of education, institutes of education and colleges of education, introduced the distance learning programme for the production of teachers known as National Teachers Institute (NTI) of Nigeria (Alani, 2005).

National Teachers Institute (NTI): A Historical Purview

The National Teachers Institute popularly known as NTI is a distance learning programme established by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1974 in response to the long felt need to upgrade serving teachers and to improve the quality and standard of their education. This became necessary as Okeke (2004) puts it, that as at 1974 when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme was being conceived, 53% of the primary school teachers were untrained and 80% were deemed unqualified. Moreso, it was projected that with the launching of the UPE in 1976, there will be increase in school enrolment thereby necessitating increase in the number of teachers. There was need for increase also in the number of teacher-training institutions.

The NTI provided an opportunity for serving teachers to upgrade their teaching qualification and remain in service. It also provided school leavers and drop-outs the opportunity to become trained teachers outside the formal school setting. The NTI programme as well complemented teacher training programme carried out by Teacher Training Colleges, Colleges of Education, Institutes of Education and Faculties of Education.

Atton-Lee (2003); Alani (2005) have observed that NTI programme operates mostly on weekends and in centres not ideal for students, and that teachers/facilitators in the programme are subjected to the use of modules not prepared by themselves.

The learning is equally restricted to the modules which often times do not challenge the initiative and creativity of students. Also, that the concentration and dedication to the programme are lacking on the part of the students most of whom are workers. Alani concludes that the quality of the NTI graduates are affected by the above negative variables.

Before agreeing or disagreeing with the above observation, it is necessary to re-examine the objectives of teacher education, according to (the National Policy on Education, 2008; Uche and Onyemerekeya, 1998).

Objectives of Teacher Education

The objectives of teacher education in Nigeria are:

- i. to produce highly motivated, conscientious and effective classroom teachers for all levels of education;
- ii. to encourage further, the spirit of enquiry and creativity in the teachers;

- iii. to help teachers fit into the social life of the community and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
 - iv. to provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to any changing situations; and
 - v. to enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession
- To achieve the above objectives, the curriculum of teacher education aims at achieving competency in three areas, viz:
- a. Competency in the General Studies area;
 - b. Competency in subject-matter area of concentration;
 - c. Competency in the professional area of education.

It is expected that competency in the above areas will make teachers versatile in general knowledge, areas of specialization and the professional demands of teachers such as the pedagogy, child psychology, motivational techniques, classroom management, evaluation techniques and the general professional ethics.

Problem of the Study

There has been mixed feelings from a cross section of the society on the quality of education in general and that provided by NTI in particular (Maduewesi, 2005; Oko, 2016). The programme has been variously described as “late planting school”, “adult school”, “afternoon school” etc. The programme is seen by many as an emergency or crash programme (Alani, 2005, Okeke, 2004; Ogbiji, 2003). A great number of people tend to look at the programme with low esteem, while serving teachers tend to draw a dichotomy between teachers trained through regular school programme and those trained through NTI programme. Some head teachers tend to look at NTI products as not well-groomed. Beneficiaries of NTI programme talk glowingly of it and hold it in high esteem.

It is this mixed reaction from the society through personal contact with the researchers that generated the desire for this investigation. This study seeks to provide answer to the question “How competent are NCE teachers produced through NTI programme in general education, areas of specialization and the professional areas”? The perception of head teacher will be used to answer the question. This is so because head teachers are in the best position to evaluate performance of their staff as they work directly under their supervision (Arubayi, 1985; Esu, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

In general, this study evaluates the competence of NCE teachers produced through NTI programme using the perception of head teachers. In specific terms, the study will; using the perception of head teachers, determine the competence of NCE teachers produced by NTI in:

- a) The general studies area of education
- b) The areas of specialization and
- c) The professional areas

Research Questions

1. To what extent are the NCE teachers produced by NTI competent in the General Studies aspect of education?
2. How competent are the NCE teachers produced through NTI programme in their Areas of Specialization?
3. How competent are the NCE teachers produced by NTI in the Professional Areas of teacher education?

Hypotheses

1. Head teachers do not have significantly high opinion on the quality of NCE teachers produced by NTI in general studies aspect of education.
2. Head teachers do not have significantly high opinion on the quality of NCE teachers produced by NTI in their area of specialization.
3. Head teachers do not have significantly high perception of the quality of NCE teachers produced by NTI in the professional areas of teacher education.

Methodology

The design for the study was an expo facto survey approach in which the perception of 400 Head and Deputy Head Teachers of public primary schools in Calabar and Ikom Education Zones of Cross River State on the competence of NCE teachers produced through NTI distance learning programme was sampled.

Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting 100 primary school Heads and Deputy Heads in each of the two education zones used for the study. In each school visited, the perception of the head teacher and the deputy was received through a questionnaire tagged "Head Teachers Quality Perception of NTI Products (HTQPNTIP) that was administered. This resulted in 200 respondents being used from each education zone, thus making a total of 400 respondents.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire tagged "Head Teachers Quality Perception of NTI Products" (HTQPNTIP). It comprised of two sections. Section A sought information on personal data of respondents, example: name of school, location, status of respondents and years of experience. Section B contained twenty items generated from the three hypotheses and three research questions used for the study. The questionnaire was built on a 4-point modified Likert scale of very competent, quite competent, fairly competent, and incompetent, for the three hypotheses. The items elicited information on the competence of the teachers in the general studies area, areas of specialization and professional areas of teacher education. The instrument was validated by a research expert from the Faculty of Education of Cross River University of Technology, Calabar. The researchers used direct delivery technique in collecting the data.

The data collected was analyzed at 0.05 confidence level, using population t-test for hypotheses one, two and three.

Result of the Study

Hypothesis One: Head Teachers do not have significantly high perception of the quality of NCE teachers produced by NTI in their General Studies area. The perception of Head Teachers on the above hypotheses is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Population t-test analysis of NTI produced teachers in their General Studies area. N = 400

| S/N | Variables | N | \bar{x} | SD | df | t-cal | p-val |
|-----|---|-----|-----------|-------|-----|---------|-------|
| 1 | Hypothesized mean for NTI (μ) | 400 | 2.85 | | | | |
| 2 | Observed Means | | | | | | |
| | a. Classroom communication mean (x_2) | 400 | 5.16 | 2.202 | 399 | 20.960* | .000 |
| | b. Written communication skills (x_3) | 400 | 4.22 | 6.311 | 399 | 10.014* | .000 |

* Significant at $p < .05$, $df = 399$, critical $t = 1.968$ (2 – tailed)

Hypothesis two: Head Teachers do not have significantly high perception ($p=0.05$) of the competence of NCE teachers produced by NTI in their Areas of specialization. The perception of Head Teachers on the above hypotheses is presented below in Table 2.

Presentation of Results

Data was extracted from the data bank and summarized into frequencies from where percentages and population t-test analyzes were carried out according to each stated research question. The analyses were done under 0.05 alpha level of significance with 399 degree of freedom and then represented in Tables 1 to 3.

Table 2: Population t-test analysis of competence of NCE teachers produced by NTI in their areas of specialization N = 400

| S/N | Variables | N | \bar{x} | SD | df | t-cal | p-val |
|-----|---|-----|-----------|-------|-----|---------|-------|
| 1 | Hypothesized mean for NTI (μ) | 400 | 2.85 | | | | |
| 2 | Actual/Observed mean of respondents (x) | 400 | 6.01 | 2.217 | 399 | 38.489* | .000 |

* Significant at $p < .05$, $df = 399$, critical $t = 1.968$ (2 – tailed)

Hypothesis three: Head teachers do not have significantly high perception of the quality of NCE teachers produced by NTI in the professional areas of teacher education. The perception of Head Teachers on the above hypotheses is presented below in table 3.

Table 3: Population t-test analysis of NTI produced NCE teachers in their professional areas. N = 400

| S/N | Variables | N | \bar{x} | SD | df | t-cal | p-val |
|-----|---|-----|-----------|------|----|--------|-------|
| i. | Hypothesized mean for NTI (μ) | 400 | 8.75 | | | | |
| ii | General knowledge of principles of teaching & learning (observed mean) (x_1) | 400 | 16.17 | 6.42 | | 23.68* | .000 |
| iii | Sufficient awareness: class management, work/lesson plan & teaching methods (x_2) | 400 | 8.95 | 4.41 | | 0.91* | .113 |
| iv | Sense of professionalism (communication, relating with colleagues & relating with members of community) (x_3) | 400 | 8.78 | 5.32 | | 0.605 | .000 |

* Significant for 1 general group only at $p < .05$, $df = 399$, critical $t = 1.968$ (2 – tailed)

Data Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

From table 1, the calculated population t-value of 20.96 for classroom oral communication and 10.014 for written communication skills were found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.968, needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level, with 399 degree of freedom. With these results, the research question No.1 was statistically answered to the effect that NCE teachers produced by NTI are highly competent in their professional areas of possession of good oral communication skills within the classroom and with colleagues and as well highly competent in written skills, and also display good general knowledge outside their areas of specializations. The general studies aspects of NCE curriculum makes provision for the would-be teachers to be educated in oral and written communication in English Language and knowledge of the political, economic and historical aspects of the society. This is to enhance their oral and written communication skills and as well enhance their commitment to national goals.

Also from table 2, the calculated population t-value of 38.489* was found to be far greater than the critical t-value of 1.968 needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 399 degree of freedom. With this result, the research question was statistically answered to the effect that the NCE teachers produced by NTI are highly competent in their General Studies area of Education. By their training NCE trainee-teachers are expected to specialize in one or two of the subjects taught in the primary or secondary school. Those trainee-teachers who specialize in primary education do not have areas of specialization. They are expected to study all subjects taught at the primary school level. This finding shows that head teachers perceive NCE teachers produced by NTI to be competent in teaching subjects like Mathematics, English Language, Social studies, Basic Science at the Primary school level. This shows that even at the NTI programme the objectives of teacher education as stated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2008) in the National

Policy on Education are being achieved, especially in the area of competence in the teaching subjects. This also runs contrary to non-imperial speculators that NTI programme teachers are not competent.

From table 3, the calculated t-value of 23.676* for general knowledge of teaching and learning was higher than, the table value of 1.968, while the t-value of 0.91* for sufficient competence in classroom management and 0.605* for sense of professionalism in communicating with colleagues and members of the public were all found to be lower than the critical t-value of 1.968*, needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 399 degree of freedom. With these results, the research question 3 was answered as follows:

- i. NCE teachers produced by NTI are highly competent in the general knowledge of basic principles of teaching and learning and classroom management.
- ii. NCE teachers produced by the NTI are not significantly competent in respect of thorough knowledge of learners and factors of learners' response. Their emotional techniques and application in the teaching situation is also low.
- iii. On the aspect of adequate acquisition of a sense of professionalism in communication and relating with colleagues, schools administrators, parents and the general community, NCE teachers produced by NTI are also found to be statistically low in competence.

Table 3 reflects the professional competence of NTI products in the psychology of teaching, learning and classroom management to be adequate. They are however found to be lacking in professional communication with management, fellow staff and members of the public. This finding is in line with those who hold a low opinion about the NTI programme like Okeke (2004) and Alani (2005). It should however be noted that Nigerian education is generally fraught with inadequacies. Even regular educational programme at NCE and degree levels have their shortcomings which affect the quality of their products.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that NTI programme is fulfilling its set objective by producing teachers who are not only highly motivated, conscientious and efficient, but teachers who are also committed to the teaching profession and the national goals. There is however need for a more effective organization of the programme to make it more result-oriented as this research has revealed some areas of deficiencies from the opinion of teachers immediate supervisors, the head teachers.

Recommendations

To make the NTI programme more result-oriented, it is hereby recommended that the students should not be restricted to only the use of modules produced by NTI. Students should be introduced to other textual materials in addition to the ones that their facilitators may introduce. This is to broaden their academic scope and prepare them for higher academic and professional programme. Permanent meeting centres should be established so that their meeting with facilitators can be more regular to avert students missing classes on account of migration of colleagues with facilitators to unknown venue. To make the quality of NTI products to be at par with products of regular colleges of education, NTI programme should be moderated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). There is need for facilitators of NTI

programme to put more emphasis in the professional areas of teacher education as data analyzed has revealed some inadequacies in educational psychology and professional ethics.

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