

CHALLENGES TO QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE WAYS FORWARD IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education is the key to the development of any nation therefore, to make teacher education in Nigeria to be qualitative like the developed nations, there was the need to eliminate the challenges that threatened Quality Teacher Education so that educational goals and objectives could be achieved. Poor quality teaching resulted mostly from untrained teachers that passed on their ignorance to the students. No nation education can rise above the quality of its teachers. Historical methods of research were used to examine the concept of Quality Assurance (QA) and Teacher Education (TA), challenges to quality teacher education, and ways to end the challenges so that desired quality teacher education in Nigeria could be achieved. These challenges included inadequate funding, inadequate education statistics, the politicization of educational matters, the proliferation of mushroom schools, the problem of insecurity, and poor salary and welfare package for teachers. Suggested ways to overcome these challenges were adequate fund should be allocated to education in the annual budget preparation and cash-backed, employment of professional qualified teachers and prepared the teachers to become expert practitioners, by transforming and overhauling of teachers' preparation such as mandatory induction programme for new teachers, mentorship, training and retraining of teachers and so on. Teaching and learning environments are made conducive and end to all forms of insecurity in the land, regular payment of teachers' salaries in addition to special welfare package to attract brains to the profession. conclusively, the government at all levels should give their total support and commitment to teacher education that the nation's education could be among the best in the committee of developed nations. Conclusively, despite all the challenges to teacher education in Nigeria, graduates at all levels of education were able to compete favourably with their counterparts all over the world.

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of any society and instrument for nation-building. It remains a veritable tool used by many countries all over the world to enhance national development. For quality education to be achieved in any nation, the principal actors of learning that is, the teacher, learners, and environment must be cooperatively organized. Teachers must be adequate in quantity and quality so that students will be well-trained through the provision of adequate education facilities (Adegbesan, 2011).

In order to make the products of the education system remain vibrant and standard, there is a need for Quality Assurance (QA). Quality Assurance creates values about the service for the receiver. It is a means by which service providers make their

products to be unique from other competitors (Bada & Oludare 2014). Quality assurance in education can be seen as a programme, a whole education system in such a case, it involved systemic monitoring and evaluating of attitudes, projects, objectives, activities and procedures and other quality control activities, through their existence and use would ensure that appropriate academic standards are maintained and enhanced in each programme of an institution (Fadokun, 2015). Federal Ministry of Education (2010) submitted that QA involves the process of monitoring, assessing, and evaluating as objectively as possible all aspects of school life and communicating the outcome to all concerned with the aim of improving the standard of education.

However, the success of any education enterprises in terms of good quality education depends to a high degree on the regular supply of teachers in adequate quantity and quality. National Policy on Education (2013) stated that no nation can achieve economic, political, social, and technological progress and self-reliance without a good system of education to sustain its achievement. Jekayinfa (2018) affirmed that the training and production of manpower required for the attainment of national objectives of education depend on the quality and quantity of teachers. This is why it is necessary to have it in mind that, poor teachers fabricate excuses and refused to take responsibility for poor teaching outcome, they not only sponsored a poor performance of their students but also affected leadership and the quality of teaching within their school and finally passed on their poor quality teaching with ignorance to their students. It is based on this background that historical research method was used to carry out the study to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine the development of teacher education;
2. Examine the concept of quality assurance in education;
3. Highlight challenges to quality assurance in teacher education;
4. Suggest way forward to quality assurance in teacher education.

Development of Teacher Education

Teacher education (TE) or Teacher Training (TT) refers to the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and skills they required to perform their tasks effectively at the relevant level; be it in the classroom, school, and in a wider community (Akanbi, 2019). Similarly, teacher education was the process that nurtures prospective teachers and updates qualified teachers' knowledge and skills in the form of continuous professional development. Teacher education revolved around policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviours, and skills required in the performance of effective duties in the classroom, and other social gatherings. It was when a person was certified to engage in interactions with learners to assist a change in their behavior.; he may be described as an educator, an instructor, a tutor, a lecturer, or a professor (Okoli, et al, 2009). Teaching is meant to stimulate the development of mental, physical, and emotional development of students. Teacher education is the provision of professionals in education and specialized training within a specified period for the

preparation of individuals who intended to develop and nurture the young ones into responsible and productive citizenry (Oyekan, 2000). Some of the questions that may come to ones' mind are, when and where does teacher education start? How could enough professionally trained teachers could be gotten?

When and Where Does Teacher Education Started

Special training for teacher education originated from France in 1685 by John Baptist de la Salle. This is to say, at the beginning of education, there were no trained persons that could be called teachers in many parts of the world. Those that were called teachers were all literate persons who were interested to teach children. The example of John Baptist de la Salle of France was followed by many European countries. This was done by the establishment of what was known as the Normal schools in 1823 by Samuel R. Hall, United State. The institution provided 2 years training course for who would-be teachers. In 1839, the State of Massachusetts, and in 1887 New York University began to run a 4-year graduate programme in education (Akanbi, 2019).

The history of western education in Nigeria began in 1842 when the first primary school was established. To get teachers to teach in these early schools, Adeyinka 1971 in Jakayinfa (2018) asserted that the missionaries trained their teachers through the pupil-teacher system. Each of the missions kept the school teachers in its premises and pupils also lived with him as part of his family. Pupils whose ages were about 14 years had to have passed the standard V examination were qualified to teach and they were the only teachers available to be employed by the missions to teach. The production of teachers at the early time was based only on an hour instruction received daily from the headteachers on how to teach. This was the crude process a person was to undergo and automatically became a qualified teacher to teach. This poor quality of teacher production led to the establishment of "the training institution" in Abeokuta in 1856. The products from this institution were grossly inadequate and could not handle teaching more efficiently and effectively expected from professional teachers.

Due to the reasons enumerated above, many scholars and researchers like Afigbo (1968), Fafunwa (1974), Osokoya (2016), and Akanbi (2019) submitted that "very many of the teachers in the schools in the protectorate had any teaching certificate nor have any training that could qualify them as teachers. They were mission agents of whose duties of teaching in the mission school forms only a part and no educational qualification...required for them. When grants-in-aid were even provided by the government to raise the minimum level of learning attainment by the children, untrained personnel were recruited to fill some vacancies despite the establishment of a Teacher Training Institution in Abeokuta. This brief historical background on teacher education in Nigeria indicated that when western education was introduced to Nigeria by missionaries, education came along with the bad behavior of using all available "literate" persons willing to teach as teachers in the early development of western education in Nigeria. The faulty foundation of Professional Teacher Education in the whole world which the developed nations have overcome many years ago, developing nations like Nigeria are

currently battling with how to rectify the faulty background of teacher education. To ensure quality in teacher education and for teaching to be handled by trained teachers, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) has given all unqualified teachers teaching in public schools to get qualified on or before 31st of December, 2019 or considered themselves sacked from teaching job (Jekayinfa, 2018; Akanbi, 2019). One of the efforts made by the Federal Government of Nigeria was by setting an agenda for ideal Teacher Education in Nigeria via its National Policy on Education (2013) thus:

- a. to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system;
- b. to encourage further the spirit of inquiry creativity in teachers;
- c. to help teachers to fit into the social life of community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
- d. to provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignments and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the world;
- e. to enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Concept of Quality Assurance in Education

Quality assurance was used to describe fitness for a purpose either in the area of personnel, curriculum, space, equipment, a methodology that were ideas, and other best practice that may be employed. It is related to speed, timelines completeness, effectiveness, and efficiency (Adam,2010). Lawal(2019) saw quality assurance as being related to accountability which concerns itself with maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of educational systems and services concerning their contexts, missions as well as stated objectives. It was about an ongoing process that ensured everybody keys into perfect delivery of agreed standards. Akogun I (2014) asserted that quality was about achieving more at a lower unit cost and for quality to be effective, it must be teamwork rather than a sole effort from an individual.

Lawal (2019) submitted that the concept of quality assurance varied in interpretation from one person to another and from one place to another place. Quality assurance stood for “meeting or conforming” to generally accepted standards in line with the laid down rules or policies by the quality assurance bodies or appropriate academic and professional committees. It was conformity to the predetermined specifications or standards. For any level of education to have quality assurance the following must be present:

- a. External evaluation and
- b. Accreditation of its programmes.

Lawal (2019) viewed quality assurance as a systematic process of ensuring that a product or service being developed to meets specific requirements. When quality assurance was applied to the field of education it simply meant that all components of a school system

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were working maximally and were producing products or services that met the predetermined specification.

Characteristics of (QA) Quality Assurance in Education

Obayan (2002) viewed the following as the characteristic of quality:

- a. It can be seen clearly and its effects can be felt;
- b. It is built into all stages of education developmental programme and not something one has to wait till the end compared to others;
- c. It is tripartite affairs right from the input, process, and output and not one-directional construct;
- d. In education, quality is specifically targeted and achieved;
- e. The process of educational development is systemic and prepared for quality.

In education sub sector, before education can be regarded has qualitative the following features must be met:

- (i) A good teacher – student ratio;
- (ii) Adequate qualified teachers;
- (iii) Adequate funding;
- (iv) Excellent academic performance;
- (v) Satisfaction of the education services received;
- (vi) School organization or administration;
- (vii) Conducive classrooms/ lecture theaters;
- (viii) Environmental factors: free from noise, posed no dangers to the pupils, students and teachers;
- (ix) Appropriate instructional materials; and
- (x) availability of social or other very important infrastructures.

Importance of Quality Assurance (QA) in Education

1. It helps in the reduction of poor education.
2. It helps in the provision of satisfaction for the consumers.
3. It improves the morale of workers.
4. It brings about time efficiency.
5. It helps to discover deficiencies in the education service.
6. It assures the quality of academics in the area of teaching, curriculum, building, environment, or other infrastructures, teachers, students, academic programmes, research, staffing, and equipment.
7. It helps in the monitoring and evaluation of education services.
8. It gives an assurance that the standards of education quality or services are being met.

Challenges to Quality Teacher Education

Education suffers from several systemic deficiencies because it continues to produce unemployable graduates, despite increasing shortages of skilled manpower in an increasing number of sectors as a result of the following challenges.

1. Inadequate professionally qualified teachers at all levels of education: Fafunwa's (2004) submission was that untrained personnel were recruited to fill vacancies to teach in schools. The situation as at present, most English Language, Mathematics, and other Science teachers in secondary school were not professionally trained teachers despite the establishment of Teacher Training Institutions. This was a direct result of degrading teacher education by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board's (JAMB) policy of admitting the "dregs" into colleges of education. Candidates have to choose one University, polytechnic, and College of Education in that order, making the colleges of education the last choice for almost all the candidates with excellent grades. The point one is making is that most talented candidates were encouraged to choose school-based in order of importance. This is to say brains that were offered admission to study in other fields, after graduation, no employment for them in their chosen field except they were ready to take the offer of appointment to teach in schools without prerequisite qualification. These types of teachers were not interested and uncommitted in the teaching job because they were only using teaching as a stepping stone before they get a better-paid job. Although many teachers in the primary school system were dedicated to some "dregs" that graduated from colleges of education, their deficiencies were academic background and professional competence set a limitation to their performance and the children's achievement (Akanbi 2019).

2. Poor funding of education: Nigeria's education sector received very low than 26% of the national annual budget as recommended by the United Nations and UNESCO. Akogun (2019) submitted that the Federal Government of Nigeria's annual budgetary allocation to education has been fluctuating between five, six, and seven percent from 2017 to 2020. The most pitiful aspect of the situation is that the inadequate annual budgetary allocation to education is usually not cash-backed or released to the ministry of education for onward transmission to every unit of educational departments. For instance, in 2017 Nigeria's total annual budget was 7.30 trillion nairas, 6% of 7.30 trillion which is #438,000,000,000 billion was the annual budget to education for that year. The low annual budgetary to education resulted in poor infrastructural facilities for teaching and learning, poor research funding, low quality of teachers, and the learning environment was uncondusive. Teaching or lecturing is no longer lucrative and attractive to the best brains or qualified people. People only take teaching /lecturing jobs because of mass unemployment situations but later resign if they find a better job. Very committed professional qualified teachers teaching in the field were few because they were poorly remunerated consequently had negative effects on education, this is to say whenever qualified teachers were poorly paid and inadequate in number, the quality of students produced will be low coupled with poor infrastructural facilities, poorly equipped laboratories, libraries and workshops (OLajire, 2019; Olaleye 2020).

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3. Another challenge affecting the quality of teacher education in Nigeria is insecurity in the country: Insecurity has led to many children not attending school because of the fear of Boko Haram, Kidnapped, and another insurgency. When children enroll in schools, many do not complete the primary cycle. The current data indicates that 30% of pupils drop out of primary school and it was only 50% that were in their final year in primary transit to junior secondary school (Guardian 2019). This is most common in the North East and North West of Nigeria. For instance, on April 14, 2014, about 277 were abducted from Government Secondary School, Chibok in Borno State, on February 29, 2016, three (3) schoolgirls were abducted in Macaulay Junior Secondary School, outskirts of Lagos, on October 6, 2016, a Vice Principal, a teacher, and four (4) pupils, in Igbonla Model College, Epe, Lagos State were abducted. Also, on February 19, 2018, about 105 girls were abducted at Dapchi, Government Science Technical School, Yobe State. The government made efforts to seek their release although, most of the abductees have regained their freedom, Leah Sharibu, a Christian girl who refused to embrace Islam is still under captivity. Aside kidnapping of pupils and students, many school buildings and facilities were destroyed and burnt down by insurgency (Sanni, 2015; Lawal, 2018).

4. Inadequate education statistics at all levels of education in Nigeria: Education statistics may be quantitative or qualitative, irrespective of the type of education data, it is very relevant to education planning and implementation of teacher education programme but its inadequacy has impeded the implementation of teacher education programme. Accurate statistics on the number of qualified teachers to be engaged at all levels of education, numbers of unqualified teachers, numbers of qualified teachers required at each level of education, several classrooms/lecture theaters, laboratories, libraries, and other education resources either needed or inadequate. When accurate data are known government and other stakeholders would be able to plan well for teacher education.

5. Other challenges of quality assurance in Nigerian education include the politicization of education, the government paid lip service to education,

6. The proliferation of mushroom schools at all levels of education, some of the schools were not government approved and some that were approved were not properly accredited because accreditors were deceived to approve to run courses that they ought not to run. This was done through the installation of borrowed equipment, later after the accreditation exercise, returned the equipment to where they were borrowed. In Kwara State alone, there are three (3) public Colleges of Education and more than 14 private Colleges of Education (Oguntunde 2020). In many of these colleges, more than 50% of the teachers or lecturers employed to teach were poorly paid, some not qualified those that were qualified they are adjunct. The problem associated with these categories of staffers are, they were overworked, poorly remunerated made them not to be committed and dedicated enough to their duties. Akanbi (2019) submits that in poor, average, and rich countries alike, it is very essential to focus on ensuring that qualified, professionally trained, well-motivated, and well-supported teachers were not only available but also employed to teach all learners.

7. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an important tool to share best practices across partnerships and to facilitate on-going professional learning. ICT could add a new dimension to lessons either in the area of preparation and delivery so also it can improve the effectiveness of presentation to the pupils, students, and other audiences in the classroom laboratories, and at the conference. It allows a teacher from distance to reach larger numbers of his students or trainee more effectively. It may be amazing to know that up to this present time some teachers could not even send text messages through mobile phones not to talk of using the ICT facilities to acquire, process and disseminate information to learners (Akanbi,2019)

Suggestions and the Ways Forward

There is a need for quality assurance in teacher education in Nigeria and the likely ways to enhance and achieve quality in teacher education are as follow:

1. The federal and States government should as a matter of urgency increase their annual budgetary allocation to Education from five or seven percent to 13% which is half of 26%, UNESCO's recommendation annual budgetary allocation to education worldwide. The 13% allocation to education must be cash-backed or released to education every year without delay. It is when the government allocated more funds to the teacher education sector that there will be improved in the standard of infrastructure in educational institutions. There will be a stable electricity supply and able to make available necessary ICT equipment. Regular seminars, conferences, and workshops for subject/ course teachers and lecturers would go a long way to keep them abreast of the latest happenings in their chosen careers. When all these were provided teachers would not only used current information to illustrate their lessons/lectures but make their lessons more interesting and delivered them more efficiently.
2. (i) Academically and Professionally qualified teachers should be employed by the government: It is not only employing professionally qualified teacher but the government needs to go beyond that, that is, teachers must be made to prepare and become expert practitioners and know how to use the knowledge of his profession to improve pupil/ student learning. This could be achieved by transforming and overhauling of the teacher profession. This requires redesigning the focus of teacher education to move from academic preparation and pedagogy. This is by including partnership and teamwork, that is, all teachers meet to discuss and make decisions on common matters in their work. For instance, planning of lessons, the welfare of pupils/ students and curriculum development and evaluation, teacher- to- teacher training with efforts focusing on instructional practices in subjects, courses, it can be a partnership between schools and university to develop and deliver a new form of teacher education for the future. Teachers of other schools can be made to learn from the university teachers and give new insight as they robed minds, an adage says, two or more good heads were far better than one head. The question that comes to mind was that, could the Nigerian universities partner with secondary

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school teachers like it was done in Wales? The Federal government of Nigeria could formulate policy, the policy that would allow partnership and teamwork between teachers at all levels of education in Nigeria as part of a continuous training programme for teachers. The moment it was done, in the opinion of these researchers, all children, young people, and teachers that were involved would greatly benefit from the excellent interaction and teaching that originated from the partnership and teamwork between schools and the university.

- (ii) Induction programme for new teachers: All over the world, the induction programme is not strange because it serves as the beginning of a full journey into any profession like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers and Accountant and so on. Induction is a mandatory activity that tends to build a strong professional relationship among beginning and Veteran teachers and the development of teaching practice. In some of the developed world, both new and experienced teachers involve in wide peer observation, preparation of lesson and teaching research groups, newly employed teachers work in practice groups of about six teachers from a different school and jointly involve in peer observation of more experienced colleagues and self/peer evaluation within the practice groups. In others, new teachers are inducted into teaching profession beginning with investiture ceremony in attendance is the Minister for Education, followed by four core in-service courses that that is, classroom management, basic counseling, working with parents, the reflective practice was made compulsory for all newly recruited teachers for two years. Here in Nigeria, there is no specific standard qualification for teachers. Graduates without teaching qualifications are still teaching in schools. To move on with the developed nations. Teacher education in Nigeria needs to adopt partnership and teamwork induction programmes for new teachers like in the developed nations and TRCN should go beyond conducting examination and issuance of a certificate to new teachers. It is only by doing this that new teachers could have a better understanding of their new job and know what they need to do at the appropriate time (Akanbi, 2019).
- (iv) Training and retraining of teachers: Knowledge increases through constant searching and knowledge decreases by stagnation. Akanbi (2019) submitted that... a teacher who ceased to take part in the work of exploration, discovery, and restatement is very unlikely to remain a useful instructor. Training and retraining of teachers are important for all teachers, especially for the untrained and under-trained teachers. Teachers need training and retraining to be kept abreast of new teaching and learning techniques. The consequences of none training and retraining of professional teachers manifested on teachers' academic performance. For instance, when professional teachers were asked to write examination meant for primary four pupils in Kwara State, more than 50% of the teachers that sat for the examination failed (This Day News March 3, 2009). In the same vein, 33,220 primary school teachers sat for Competency Test, the examination meant for

primary four pupils, 75% of the teachers (22,000) failed the examination while only 25% (11,220) passed the examination in Kaduna State (The Punch 2017)

Other ways by which quality assurance could be achieved at any level of education as submitted by Fadokun (2005)&Lawal (2019) are:

- i. Adequate school inspectors must be employed and always visit schools for inspection. Inspectors must do their job without fear or favour. Quality assurance officials should at all the time stand on the neck of the school administrators and right all the wrongs so that they will live up to the expected standard.
- ii. There must be regular internal and external evaluations and all courses must be accredited before allowed to be offered by students.
- iii. Best and the brightest students should be the only candidates that would be allowed to be teachers and there should be no more “dregs”
- iv. All assessments must not only be real or valid but it must include all domains.
3. Data is an administrative life wire for adequate planning and implementation in any organization so education statistics should be adequately collected by the bureau saddled with the responsibilities, be properly kept, and be accessible to all users when it is needed.
4. Government at all levels should be more committed and stop paying lip service and politics when decisions are to be made on issues of education.
5. Federal and the States government should double their efforts and end Kidnapping, ritual killings Boko Haram and any form of insurgency.
6. Schools that have not been approved to open must not be allowed to operate. The government should set up a body that will regularly visit schools to inspect all equipment or facilities presented during accreditation to be sure that are used to teach the students in the school. States government should stop approved private individuals to establish teachers’ training colleges because it is more than enough now.
7. Teachers at all levels of education should be paid their salary regularly and be given their promotion as at when due. Special welfare packages should be attached to teaching to make it more attractive to best brains and also makes those who were already in the profession to be more dedicated and committed to their job. In a situation where teachers were not paid their salaries for months, their commitment and dedication to teach their pupils and student drastically reduce. This situation usually led the teachers to embark on strike for months and when their salaries were paid and returned to their academic activities, it is likely that the lost grounds may not be properly covered and negatively affected the students’ academic performance.
8. All teachers must be ICT literate and it must go beyond a mere showing of certificates of computer literate. The government must not give room for excuses by teachers, this is can be done by investing and providing ICT facilities for schools and all the teachers.

Conclusion

It is clear from all the discussion made above that, there are many challenges to quality assurance in teacher education in Nigeria but despite these challenges, the quality of students that graduated in these schools either as Teachers, Medical Doctors or Lawyers and so on were able to compete comfortably with their counterparts in any part of the world. It is on record that the quality of Nigeria education has not gone worse to the extent of not able to compete with graduates of other schools outside Nigeria but if all the challenges to quality education are removed and all the needful were done as suggested in the ways forward, education in Nigeria would have one if not the best qualitative education in the world

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Interview

Interview with Dr.Oguntunde David, Director of Continuing Education, Kwara State Ministry of Tertiary Education, Fate, Ilorin, on 5th March 2020