Teachers' Perception on Quality Assurance in Teacher Education Programmes in Nigerian Universities: Challenges and Way Forward

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Abstract
Stakeholders in education sector are not satisfied with the quality of graduates produced by faculties of education in Nigeria universities. It is therefore imperative to assess the challenges of quality assurance in teacher education. This study sought assess the quality assurance in teacher education in Nigerian universities. The study is a descriptive survey. The population of the study was all university teachers in faculties of education in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 240 university teachers. A researcher-design questionnaire was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using means ranking and standard deviation. The findings of the study showed that the provision of teachers with adequate academic and professional formative experience for teaching and control of examination system with clear procedures and ethics of confidentiality and impartiality are the most needed qualities in teacher education. Poor classroom management from overcrowding, instability of academic calendar, outdated curriculum and inadequate exposure to practical teaching are the major challenges in the teacher education. As way out to the challenges, broadening the curriculum of research methodology to improve the student's project writing skills, emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge in the teaching subject pedagogy, entrepreneurial studies, and computer literacy for functional education need to be considered. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that internal quality assessment in teacher education should be strengthened in the faculties of education to allow for improved pre-service teacher quality products in teacher education in Nigerian universities.

Key Words: Teacher education, Quality Assurance, University teachers, Challenges and way forward

Introduction

The discipline of Education in Nigeria Universities is concern primarily with the training of graduate teachers. This training has had a fairly long history dating back to the early 60s at the first generation universities namely: University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and the University of Lagos (Okebukola, 2005). Graduates of education are assigned teaching responsibilities mainly in junior andsenior secondary schools as prescribed in National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). They teach subjects in the junior and senior secondary curriculum and for those with relevant specializations serve as guidance counsellors, school administrators, or teachers (Okebukola, 2005).

Teacher education is the programme, policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community (Sanyal, 2013). In the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) (2007), Faculty of Education should be able to produce prospective teachers with proper leadership qualities, to produce teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable them to contribute to the growth and development of their communities in particular and their nation in general. The faculty is also expected to produce teachers who have sound mastery of their subject areas and the ability to impart such knowledge to their students and to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.

To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national objectives and provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background are crucial objectives of the faculties of education. Adequacy for their alignment and making teacher undergraduates adaptable to any changing situation, not only in the life of their country but in the wide world as well as encouraging the spirit of enquiry, creativity and entrepreneurship in teachers are also parts of objectives of the faculty of education. The faculty is mandated to enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession and to enhance the skills of teacher's in the use of new technologies(FRN, 2007).

The Faculty of Education in Nigerian universities are expected to carry out the following functions according to Okebukola (2005).

a. produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education systems;

b. encourage or further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;

c. help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and enhanced their commitment to national objectives;

d. provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world; and

e. enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession.

University teachers are important actors in the implementation of quality assurance in Nigerian universities. The quality of education in a nation is determined by the quality of its teachers. It is very important that the lecturers have high levels of qualifications, experiences, skills, knowledge and expertise in their disciplines for effective content delivery. These will enable them to equip their products with adequate information, skills and experiences for them to contribute to their society positively and be ready to compete with other human resources in a globalized environment.

Quality assurance is process of improving the educational institutions to meet the need of the use of manpower in relation to the quality of skills acquired by their products in the labour market (Oyebade, Oladipo, &Adetoro, 2008). Quality assurance is designed to improve the quality of an institution's processes, methods, procedures, products and outcomes. The government expects the graduates of the Facultation of Education to be well equipped with subject matters of their respective areas of specialization, relevant skills and values as well as responsive to the needs of the society. This is not the case in the labour market. Studies have shown the poor quality of Nigerian university graduates as result of overpopulated schools, poor quality of resources, among others (Okebukola, 2005;Obiekezie, Ejemot-Nwadiaro, Timothy, & Essien, 2016; Okunloye & Obeng, 2013; Fashanu & Okunloye, 2017).

Quality assurance plays important role in teacher education. Teacher education occupies a strategic position due to its being the foundational caretaker of macro educational system. It is assigned the task of producing the teachers for primary and secondary education and also capacity building of all curriculum implementers at all levels of any educational system. Due to its role and significance, the teacher education have experienced rapid growth over the years. Education of teachers is not only responsible for improvement of school education but also for preparing competent, committed and professionally well qualified teachers who can meet the demands of labour market and compete with other human resources in global environment. A teacher's content knowledge, skills, ethics of teaching, and enthusiasm for learning necessarily constitute requisite benchmark for being a high quality, competent and effective teacher.

Research Questions
The following research questions were raised to guide the study.
1. What is the university teachers' perception of quality assurance in teacher education in Nigeria?

2. What are the teacher perceived challenges of maintenance of quality assurance in teacher education in Nigerian universities?

3. What are the way forward for improving quality assurance in Teacher Education Programmes in Nigerian universities?

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was employed in this study and a questionnaire titled "Quality Assurance in Teacher Education in Nigerian Universities Questionnaire" (QATENUQ) was administered. The population of the study comprised university teachers in Nigeria. The sample of the study were 240 selected lecturers in the faculties of education from federal, state and private universities in Kwara State using purposive sampling. The questionnaire consisted 30 structure response items. Three research questions were raised and answered using mean and standard deviation. The section A of the questionnaire sought information on demographic characteristic of the respondents. Section B of the questionnaire contained 30 items with three sub-headings. The first sub-heading was on Quality Assurance in Teacher Education with a modified 4 point Likert scale of High Priority (4), Moderate Priority (3), Fairly Priority (2), and Low Priority (1). Second sub-heading was on Challenges associated with Quality Assurance with a modified 4 point Likert scaling of Strongly Associated (4), Associated (3), Fairly Associated (2) and Not Associated (1) while the last sub-heading in section B was based on Way Forward with a modified 4Likert scaling of Very Important (4), Important (3), Fair Important (2) and Not Important (1).The instrument was face and content validated by experts judgement. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method and a reliability index of 0.76 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using mean ranking and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question 1:*What is the university teachers' perception of quality assurance in teacher education in Nigeria?*

Table 1: University teachers' perception of quality assurance in teacher education in Nigeria

S/N	Quality Assurance in Teacher Education	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1.	Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education systems	2.300	.902	5th
2.	Encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers education	2.433	.865	4th
3.	Help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large	2.066	.815	6th
4.	Provide teachers with the academic and professional formative experience adequate for	3.362	.885	1st

	practicing teaching			
5.	Enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession	1.716	1.036	8th
6.	Enhance their commitment to national objectives	3.116	.952	3rd
7.	Make teachers adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world	1.629	.877	9th
8.	Impact in teacher trainees knowledge and skills that the Nigerian labour market requires of them	1.929	1.018	7th
9.	Control the examination system with clear procedures couple with confidentiality and impartiality	3.308	.865	2nd
10.	Maintain a high quality of service provision and adequate technical and administrative support to staff	1.483	.807	10th

Results in table 1 revealed that out of 10 items that addressed university teachers' perception of quality assurance in teacher education in this study, item 4 which states that "Provide teachers with the academic and professional formative experience adequate for practicing teaching" was ranked first with mean score of 3.362 and the standard deviation of 0.885.Item9 which stated that "Control the examination system with clear procedures couple with absolute confidentiality and impartiality" was ranked 2nd with mean score of 3.308 and the standard deviation of 0.865. Item 6 which states that "Enhance their commitment to national objectives" was ranked 3rd with mean score of 3.116 and the standard deviation of 0.952.Item 2 which states that 'Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their daily assignment' was ranked 4th with mean score of 3.433 and standard deviation of 0.865.Item 1 which states that "Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education systems" was ranked 5th with mean score of 3.300 and the standard deviation of 0.901.

However, all other items follow with the least of them being "Maintain a high quality of service provision and adequate technical and administrative support to staff" ranked 10th with the mean score of 1.483 and the standard deviation of 0.807.

Research Question 2: *What are teacher-perceived challenges of maintenance of quality assurance in teacher education in Nigerian universities?*

Table 2: Challenges of maintenance of quality assurance in teacher education in Nigerian

universities

S/N	Challenges associated with Quality Assurance in Teacher Education	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1.	Inadequate exposure to practical teaching that ensure professionalism	2.583	1.214	3rd
2.	Deficiency in assuring a match between what the labour market requires and what graduate teachers bring to job	1.650	.973	9th
3.	Overcrowding that leads to poor lecture room management and control	2.679	1.378	1st
4.	Inability of teacher trainees to communicate effectively in using of English Language	2.470	1.247	4th
5.	Lack of self-reliant and entrepreneurial skills in some disciplines	1.445	.688	10th
6.	Poor role models of teacher trainers on the teacher trainees	1.929	1.066	7th
7.	Poor supervision that leads to shallow experience of teachers trainees on their field	1.758	.858	8th
8.	Dilapidated learning environment due to poor education funding	2.016	.905	6th
9.	Instability of academic calendar and adoption of dead curriculum	2.654	1.341	2nd
10.	Absence of evaluation models and designs that lead to invalid, unreliable and unfair assessment	2.170	1.050	5th

Results in table 2 revealed that out of 10 items that addressed the teacher perceived challenges of maintenance of quality assurance in teacher education in this study, item 3 which states that "Overcrowding that leads to poor lecture room management and control" was ranked first with mean score of 2.016 and the standard deviation of 0.905.Item9 which stated that "Instability of academic calendar and adoption of dead curriculum" was ranked 2nd with mean score of 2.654 and the standard deviation of 0.341. Item 1 which states that "Inadequate exposure to practical teaching that ensure professionalism" was ranked 3rd with mean score of 2.583 and the standard deviation of 1.214.Item 4 which states that 'Inability of teacher trainees to communicate effectively in using of English Language' was ranked 4th with mean score of 2.470 and standard deviation of 1.247.Item 10 which states that "Absence of evaluation models and designs

that lead to invalid, unreliable and unfair assessment" was ranked 5th with mean score of 2.170 and the standard deviation of 1.050.

However, all other items follow with the least of them to be "Lack of self-reliant and entrepreneurial skills in some disciplines" was ranked 10th with the mean score of 1.445 and the standard deviation of 0.688.

Research Question 3: *What are the way forward for improving quality assurance in Teacher Education Programmes in Nigerian universities?*

Table 3: Suggested ways of improving quality assurance in Teacher Education Programmes in Nigerian universities

S/N	Way forward on Challenges of Quality Assurance in Teacher Education	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1.	Increase in duration of practical teaching for effective preparation of graduate teachers	2.725	1.062	4th
2.	Periodic training in modern methods of teaching	2.275	.959	9th
3.	Broaden the curriculum of research methodology to improve the students' research project and writing skills	3.425	.814	1st
4.	Decrease in the course load of teacher trainers to ensure proper grounding of students on the subject matter	2.933	1.016	3rd
5.	Exemplary in dressing and conduct of teacher trainers for students to emulate	2.591	.872	6th
6.	Abstinence from examination malpractices, sexual harassment and cultism	1.787	.905	10th
7.	Periodic review of Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) to ensure the production of high quality teachers	2.358	1.008	7th
8.	Emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge in the teaching subject pedagogy, entrepreneurial studies, and computer literacy for functional education	3.416	.793	2nd
9.	Periodic invitation of experienced professionals in education to address, stimulate and motivate students to take more in teaching as a career	2.358	.903	7th
10.	Internal quality assurance mechanisms as a self-assessment that allow for thorough reflection on the status and progress of the institution	2.625	1.143	5th

Results in table 3 revealed that out of 10items that addressed way forward for sustaining quality assurance in teacher education in this study, item 3 which states that "Broaden the curriculum of research methodology to improve the students' research project and writing skills" was ranked first with mean score of 3.425 and the standard deviation of 0.814.Item 8 which stated that "Emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge in the teaching subject pedagogy, entrepreneurial studies, and computer literacy for functional education" was ranked 2nd with mean score of 3.416 and the standard deviation of 0.793. Item 4 which states that "Decrease in the course load of teacher trainers to ensure proper grounding of students on the subject matter" was ranked 3rd with mean score of 9.933 and the standard deviation of 0.016.Item1 which states that 'Increase in duration of practical teaching for effective preparation of graduate teachers' was ranked 4th with mean score of 2.725 and standard deviation of 1.062.Item10 which states that "Internal quality assurance mechanisms as a self-assessment that allow for thorough reflection on the status and progress of the institution" was ranked 5th with mean score of 2.625 and the standard deviation of 1.143.

However, all other items follow with the least of them to be "Internal quality assurance mechanisms as a self-assessment that allow for thorough reflection on the status and progress of the institution" ranked 10th with the mean score of 1.787 and the standard deviation of 0.905.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their daily assignment; control the examination system with clear procedures couple with absolute confidentiality and impartiality; enhance their commitment to national objectives; encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers education and encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers education are the prominent qualities that teacher education in universities assured. This finding of the study supported that of (Oyebade, Oladipo, &Adetoro, 2008) and Okebukola, (2005) who found out that educational background, proper coordination of examination and the spirit of research and creativity are high priority in quality assurance in teacher education.

Furthermore, the result of this study showed that overcrowding that leads to poor lecture room management and control; instability of academic calendar and adoption of dead curriculum; inadequate exposure to practical teaching that ensure professionalism; inability of teacher trainees to communicate effectively in using of English Language and absence of evaluation models and designs that lead to invalid, unreliable and unfair assessment are the major challenges of teacher education in the universities. This finding was in line with that of Kpolovie, (2013) who reported that overcrowding in the classroom, instability of academic calendar and adoption of dead curriculum affect practical teaching that ensure professionalism.

The study further revealed that broadening the curriculum of research methodology to improve the students' research project and writing skills; emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge in the teaching subject pedagogy, entrepreneurial studies, and computer literacy for functional education; decrease in the course load of teacher trainers to ensure proper grounding of students on the subject matter; increase in duration of practical teaching for effective preparation of graduate teachers and internal quality assurance mechanisms as a self-assessment that allow for thorough reflection on the status and progress of the institution are way out of the challenges of teacher education in Nigerian universities. This finding of the study concurs with finding of Akerele (2007) who discovered that broaden the curriculum to include entrepreneurial studies and computer literacy for functional education and improvement in the acquisition of knowledge in the teaching subject pedagogy are crucial way forward to assuring quality education in teacher education in Nigeria universities.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing discussions, it could be concluded that provision of teachers with adequate content and pedagogical formative experiences coupled with professional ethics are crucial qualities for quality assurance in Teacher Education Programmes in Faculties of Education in Nigeria. Overcrowding that leads to poor lecture room management and control; instability of academic calendar and adoption of dead curriculum and inadequate exposure to practical teaching that ensure professionalism are major challenges in the teacher education. As way out of the challenges, broadening the curriculum of research methodology to improve the students' research project and writing skills and emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge in the teaching subject pedagogy, entrepreneurial studies, and computer literacy in the implementation of teacher education curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made.

1. Internal quality assessment in teacher education should be introduced in the Faculties of Education that would allow for academic competition in among universities in Nigeria.

2. Consideration of feedback from education stakeholders should be given high priority in implementing the teacher education degree programmes.

3. Provision of physical resources and facilities appropriate for teacher education programmes being offered in the universities to make trainees learn more effectively in their respective areas of specialization.

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