

Quality Assurance in Teacher Education for Teacher Productivity in
Anambra State

Dr. S. C. Ugwoke
&
Chinyere Anulika Ofoegbu
&
F. N. Ugwuanyi

Abstract

Educationists, policymakers, and parents believed that good teachers will produce good teachers. The study examined the quality assurance in teacher education for teacher productivity in Anambra state, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. The research design adopted for the study was the descriptive survey design; the population is 183 subjects made up of all male and female academic staff of Nwafor Orizu College of education Nsugbe, Anambra state. A 24-item questionnaire built in 3 clusters addressing the three research questions was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results showed that factors such as proper application of pedagogical skills by teachers, managerial competence among teachers, and teachers' professional development, are indicators of quality assurance in Anambra state. The study further revealed that the poor state is caused by such factors as poor staff development programmes, unavailability of ICT facilities and inadequate infrastructures. Some strategies that could be adopted to improve quality assurance in teacher education were also revealed. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended the need for government to provide enough funds for the procurement of basic infrastructural facilities for both students and teacher educators in the school. This is to ensure effective teaching and learning process. Also establishment of education resource

centres for professional development of teacher educators in the state.

Key Concepts: Quality Assurance, Quality Indicators, Teacher, Teacher Education

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of human enlightenment and empowerment, for the achievement of better and higher quality life of a nation. The process of education is shaped and moulded by the teacher, who plays a pivotal role in any educational system. According to the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education, (2009), teacher education is defined as – a programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level.

Teacher education is the training that essentially improves job related knowledge, skills and attitudes in an individual and is concerned with working life of human being. It is meant to prepare prospective teachers and acquaint them with the knowledge, skills and ability which will help them in discharging their professional duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. Thus, competency and professional skills are the very heart of the teacher education programme. In other words, teacher education is one of the important linkages between the education and society where there is a greater responsibility on teacher educators.

In Nigeria, the belief that teachers play a very central part in producing quality education has been adopted not only by educationists, but also by governments as well as community members (Abdul, 2011). The preparation of such important function of teachers ought to get the highest priority, which is training of the trainees. Unfortunately, the professional education of teachers has been completely neglected in the post independence period. Educationists, policymakers, and parents in Nigeria also hold the view that good teachers produce good students. Dozier (2000), believed that —the victory is in the classroom. Dozier understood that the highest standards, the strongest accountability measures, the latest technology, and the most beautiful facilities will do little good without talented, dedicated, and well-prepared and educated

teachers .Teacher education therefore is of paramount importance in reforming and strengthening the education system of any country. It is essential for elementary and secondary school teachers for the proper application of new methods of teaching and essential pedagogical processes.

In Nigeria, colleges of education and university departments of education are major institutions that impart teacher education through various academic programmes. As far as teacher education is concerned, a good number of institutions with teacher educators are operating in Nigeria. Teacher education institutions equip future teachers with latest methods of teaching techniques and strategies for imparting instructional materials. This includes use of media devices and information and communication technology (ICT). But unfortunately, it is observed that most of the institutions either do not have such facilities or do not have adequately trained human resources to use them for the benefit of teacher trainees. The teacher education programmes available in the state are hardly adequate to turn a trainee into professional. Professionalism for a global society demands teachers to be innovative in their attitude, flexible in their approach and reflective and inquisitive in their mind always refreshing themselves with day-to-day increase of knowledge in their subject area (Mahender, 2006).Professionalism here therefore implies professional preparation of teachers and their professional development through the process of quality training thus, quality teacher education implies adequate teacher preparation and teacher development.

In the view of Shaukat(2004), teacher education is needed for developing a purpose and for the formulation of a positive attitude among prospective teachers for the profession. In order words, a quality programme of professional education of teachers is very crucial for quality assurance in teacher education. Quality is something good, ideal, or high standard. Quality according to Middlehurst (2007) is perceived as grade of achievement, a standard against which to judge others. It is the total of the features of a process, product or service on its performance, in ‘customers’ or ‘clients’ perception of that performance. Quality in education relates to the quality of work undertaken by teacher, which has significant effects upon his or her students. Thus, quality of a teacher is one of key determinants of the students’ achievement .In order words, quality of education is defined and judged by students learning achievements, in terms of traditional curriculum and standards. Thus, quality pertains to the relevance of what is taught and learned and how

well it fits the present and future needs of the particular learner. The quality of teacher education is directly related to the quality of instruction in particular and some other factors like curriculum and environment (Shaukat, 2004).

In order to bring qualitative reform in teacher education at present a number of initiatives are being taken by various bodies including Quality Assurance Division and National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. To make these measures more focused and cost effective, there is a dire need to identify the significant areas/aspects of quality improvement. Thus, in the context of teacher education, there is certain important quality indicators required. Such include: managerial competence among teachers, adherence with new methods of teaching and positive attitudes towards their teaching profession. This is in line with the views of Yackulic and Noonan (2001) which holds that indicators in teacher education reflect the important components of teacher education programme. Indicators may perform several roles such as describing current situation, quantifying pre-determined objectives, providing continuous feedback about advancement towards achievement of objectives, and identifying factors that contributed to results achievement (European Commission, 2001). These quality indicators ensure quality assurance in any educational system.

Quality assurance in education is the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the resource inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce a quality output (students) that meets set standards and expectations of the society (Ayeni,2012). Quality assurance in order words is seen as the process of ensuring effective resource input, control, refining the process and raising the standard of output in order to meet the set goals and satisfy public accountability. Furthermore, quality assurance in education aims at preventing quality problems and ensures that the products of the system conform to the expected standards. Thus, the quality of teacher education is the degree of excellence of the input by teachers which is basically achieved through effective funding and provision of in-service training of teachers for quality assurance to be ascertained in teacher education.

Barber and Mourshed, (2007) reported that the ‘quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers’. Obviously, the quality of teacher education is among the most important factors

shaping the learning and growth of students (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2006; Goodwin, 2008). The demand for high-quality teachers cannot be met without high-quality teacher education. The inadequate preparation of teachers has an impact on student achievement outcomes, teaching effectiveness, teacher attrition rate and school collegiality. Owing to these observations by the researcher, Quality Assurance (QA) in teacher education is highly recommended. There is a need for teacher education institutions to seek ways to continually improve its academic staff, programme design and delivery, administrative procedures and support services (Mok, 2005). This provides a systematic approach to assess the academic quality of the teacher preparation programmes to inform decisions made in relation to achieving desired beginning teacher outcomes.

Quality assurance no doubt is vital to ensure the continuous improvement of the content, delivery and development of initial teacher preparation in National Institute of Education (NIE). The key initial teacher preparation programmes are the Bachelor of Arts/Science (Education), Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and Diploma in Education (Dip Ed). The objective of these programmes is to prepare and develop student teachers with values, skills and knowledge required to teach competently in the primary and secondary schools. Stamoulas (2006) states that the basic objective of quality assurance is to safeguard and uphold the standards of higher education by publicly providing verified qualitative and quantitative information on the programmes.

The failure of teachers to arouse the delight interest of students in an educational system has been attributed to low quality in teachers' education. This is because teacher education for decades has been criticized for low quality. Dilshad (2010: 88), identified the commonly related problems to teacher education to include: "lack of funding and resources, poorly equipped training institutions, short training period, undue emphasis on quantitative expansion, narrow scope of curriculum, imbalance between general and professional courses, over-emphasis on theory as opposed to practice, little/no coordination between education departments and training institutions, deficient quality of instruction, lack of in-service training of teacher educators, failure in implementing useful reforms, vague objectives, poor quality of textbooks, defective examination system, lack of supervision and accountability, and lack of research and evaluation of teacher training programmes".

Thus, the teacher education has been continuously the object of dissatisfaction as the program has received marginal attention resulting in mass production of teachers with shallow understanding of both the content and methodology of teaching (education). Based on this background, this research work sets out to identify the relevance of quality assurance in teacher education, challenges and prospects.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Quality assurance in teacher education simply means those things that ought to be done to ensure teachers productivity in any educational system. For teachers to be productive, quality has to be assured in their preparation. Unfortunately, quality of some teachers are so poor, low and substandard this is as a result of poor preparation of teachers program which invariably affects the performance of students in both internal and external examination emanating to low productivity of quality graduates.

Teaching today holds a very low status in the society and as a result, teacher education is highly neglected and undoubtedly faced with numerous challenges which hinder its effective functioning. Teacher education has recently taken a slow course of development and improvement in Anambra state due to poor quality and standard of education today. There is a high record of poor facilities, inadequate personnel, poor personnel management, outdated curriculum, inadequate teaching and learning aids, uncondusive learning environment, inadequate payment of teachers, inadequate availability and poor application of ICT in teaching and learning as well as poor students outcome. This has greater adverse effect on the level of productivity in all levels of education because of high production of shallow rooted teachers with poor teaching attitude.

Having in mind that quality assurance is quest for the best, high and sustained standard this paper seeks to identify the relevance of quality assurance in teacher education thus, the problem of this study put in question form is: Of what relevance is quality assurance in teacher education in Anambra state?

This study attempted to determine the relevance of quality assurance in teacher education in Anambra state. Specifically, it seeks to

1. Identify the indicators of quality assurance in teacher education programme in Anambra state.

2. Find out the quality assurance challenges of teacher education in Anambra state.
3. Ascertain ways of improving quality assurance in teacher education programme for teacher qualitative productivity.

The study is limited to Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe, Anambra state. The study focused on the indicators of quality assurance in teacher education programme, challenges of teacher education and ways of improving quality assurance in teacher education in Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe, Anambra state.

Three research questions guided the study:

1. What are the indicators of quality assurance in teacher education programme?
2. What are the quality assurance challenges of teacher education programme in Anambra state?
3. In what ways can quality assurance in teacher education be improved in Anambra state?

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Nworgu (2006) noted that it is a design approach which aims at collecting data and describing them in a systematic manner, the characteristics features or facts about a given population.

The study was carried out in Anambra State. The choice of this area was to contribute to the improvement of teacher education in the state college of education so that they could produce quality graduates.

The population comprise of 183 academic staff of the school. The choice of the academic staff was based on the fact that they are concerned with the training of teachers for secondary schools. Thus, they are knowledgeable about the variables under study and could supply useful information on the research instrument. The entire population was used so there was no need for sampling.

The instrument for data collection was a researcher's structured questionnaire titled "Quality Assurance in Teacher Education Questionnaire (QATEQ)". The questionnaire has two parts; A and B. Part A contains personal data of the respondents while the part B contains twenty one items built in three clusters, A, B, and C. Cluster A handles the indicators of quality assurance in teacher education, Cluster B handles the quality assurance challenges of teacher education in Anambra state, and while Cluster C handles the ways quality assurance

can be improved in teacher education in Anambah state. A four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was provided for the respondents to make their responses in all the clusters. The respondents indicated their level of agreement by ticking (√) on the rating scale based on 4- point rating scale. The scale is weighted 4,3,2,1 respectively.

The face validity of the instrument was ascertained by giving the draft copies of the instrument to three experts, two in Educational Administration and Planning and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their corrections and comments shaped the focus of the study.

To determine the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the instruments, the questionnaire was administered to 30 academic staff of Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu in Enugu state. The Crombach Alpha procedure was used to compute the estimate of internal consistency of the instruments. The reliability co-efficient of .81, .72, and .80 for clusters A, B, and C were obtained respectively and an overall reliability co-efficient of .83. This indicates that the instrument is reliable to be employed in data collection.

The researcher administered the instrument directly to the respondents in the college with the help of two academic staff who were instructed on what is required. The instrument was collected immediately on completion.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. A mean of 2.50 and above was accepted while any mean less than 2.50 were rejected.

RESULTS

The results of the study were obtained from research questions answered. They are presented in table 1-3

Table 1: Mean responses of males and females lectures on the indicators of quality assurance in teacher education

S/N	Questionnaire items	Male			Female		
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec	\bar{X}	SD	Dec
1	Proper application of pedagogical skills by Teachers	2.64	0.98	A	2.68	1.04	A
2	Managerial competence among teachers	2.74	0.74	A	2.78	1.00	A
3	Teachers professional development	2.56	0.92	A	2.66	1.06	A
4	Maintenance of available facilities	2.84	0.94	A	3.21	0.62	SA
5	Positive learners outcome	3.01	0.74	SA	3.43	0.69	SA
6	Promotion of teachers for encouragement on the job	2.78	1.02	A	2.81	1.08	A
7	Students adherence to school policies	2.76	0.98	A	1.04	2.83	A
8	Availability of instructional materials	2.75	0.75	A	0.68	3.11	SA
9	Proper conduction of examinations	2.64	0.93	A	0.94	3.01	SA
10	Recruitment of qualified teaching personnel's	3.16	0.79	SA	0.64	3.19	SA
	Cluster Mean	2.79	0.88	A	0.88	2.98	A

Table 1 above revealed that all the items have been rated positively by the respondents this indicate that the males and females lecturers shares the view that these factors are the real indicators of quality assurance in teacher education in Anambra state. All the items in the table show that these factors such as proper application of pedagogical skills by teachers, managerial competence among teachers, teachers professional development, maintenance of facilities, positive outcomes, promotion of teachers, adherence to school policies, availability of facilities, proper

conduction of examinations and recruitment of qualified teaching personnel indicates quality assurance in teacher education for high productivity in Anambra state. The findings were based on the attainment of cluster mean score of 2.79 for males and 2.98 for females which were above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Table 2: Mean responses of male and female lectures on the quality assurance challenges of teacher education in Anambra state

S/N	Questionnaire items	MALE			FEMALE		
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec.	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
11	Poorly equipped training institutions	2.64	1.08	A	2.71	0.83	A
12	Lack of professional development training	2.72	1.03	A	2.85	0.89	A
13	Short period of teachers training	2.60	1.16	A	2.86	0.99	A
14	Lack of incentives	2.72	0.84	A	3.17	0.76	A
15	Production of teachers with shallow rooted understanding of teaching methods	2.86	1.01	A	2.86	1.02	A
16	Unavailability of ICT facilities	2.86	1.06	A	2.88	1.06	A
17	Inadequate infrastructures in the school system	2.75	0.77	A	2.81	0.78	
	Cluster Mean	2.71	0.99	A	2.88	0.90	A

From the analysis in table 2, the results revealed that all the items on the quality assurance challenges of teacher education in Anambra state have been rated positive. All the items have high mean score of 2.60 and above which shows that poorly equipped training institutions, lack of professional development training of teachers, short period of teacher training, lack of incentives, production of shallow rooted teachers, unavailability of ICT facilities and inadequate infrastructures constitutes the quality assurance challenges of teacher education which results to low and poor standard of teacher education in Anambra state. The cluster means are 2.71 for males and 2.88 for females on a four-point rating scale which indicate that they agree that these factors actually hinders quality teacher education.

Table 3: Mean responses of male and female lectures on the ways quality assurance in teacher education can be improved

S/N	Questionnaire items	MALE			FEMALE		
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec	\bar{X}	SD	Dec
18	Establishment of more teacher education	3.32	0.72	SA	3.55	0.74	SA
19	Expansion of training period for production of quality teachers	3.11	0.80	SA	3.33	0.84	SA
20	Provision of teacher development programmes like: Seminars	3.12	0.68	SA	3.22	0.77	SA
21	Organization of Conferences	3.24	0.72	SA	3.61	0.62	SA
22	Organization of ICT workshops	3.12	0.79	SA	3.31	0.62	SA
23	Recruitment of qualified and skilled teachers	2.84	0.94	SA	3.25	0.79	SA
24	Adequate provision of ICT facilities	3.06	1.09	SA	3.27	0.72	SA
	Cluster Mean	3.12	0.82	SA	3.36	0.74	SA

Table 3 indicates that majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the suggested ways in which quality assurance can be assured in teacher education. Among these ways are; establishment of more teacher education centres, expansion of training period, provision of teacher development programmes, recruitment of qualified and skilled teachers and adequate provision of ICT facilities. The cluster means are 3.12 for males and 3.36 for females on a four-point rating scale.

DISCUSSION

The research question that guided the study focused on the indicators of quality assurance in teacher education programme, quality assurance challenges of teacher education programme in Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe, Anambra state and ways in which quality assurance in teacher education be improved in Anambra state so as to ensure high and quality teacher productivity. The result of the research questions show that proper application of pedagogical skills by teachers, managerial competence among teachers, and teacher’s professional

development are the proper indicators of quality assurance in teacher education. The result also show that quality assurance challenges such as short period of teacher training, lack of incentives, production of shallow rooted teachers, unavailability of ICT facilities and inadequate infrastructures contributes to low quality and poor standard of teacher education which has adverse effect in pupils performances at all levels of education. Also, the result reveals that strategies for improving quality assurance in teacher education to enhance high productivity include; establishment of more teacher education centres, expansion of training period, provision of teacher development programmes, adequate provision of ICT facilities and infrastructures.

The present findings supports the earlier study of Yackulic and Noonan (2001), they noted that indicator in teacher education reflect the important component of teacher education programmes. Furthermore, European Commission (2001) indicated that indicator factors perform roles of describing current situations providing continuous feedback about advancement towards achievement of objectives and identifying factors that contributed to results achievement. In view of Dilshad (2010), lack of fund and resources, poor equipped training institutes, imbalance between general and professional courses, and lack of in-service training of teacher educators contributes greatly to hindering factors of quality assurance in teacher education and without doubt contributes to low quality and standard of teacher education.

Adding to this, Igbuzor (2006), maintained that provision of social and developmental services for teachers as well as infrastructural facilities in schools will boast the standard and quality of education which will help in acquisition of potential skills and knowledge for teachers development. The findings also agreed with Mok, 2005 that there is need for teacher education institution to seek ways to continually improve its academic staff, program design and delivery, administrative procedures and support services.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher education programme available in Anambra state is inadequate to turn a trainee into professional. This is because little is known about its relevance's thus it is faced with a lot of challenging factors like inadequate facilities, poor professional development programme for teacher educators. This call for teacher education reforms through

infrastructural and social services reforms which will help improve the quality and standard of teacher education in Anambra state.

The implication of the findings of this study is that without adequate provision of infrastructural facilities as well as social and developmental services in colleges of educations, the low quality and standard of teacher education will persist. This low standard of teacher education will lead to low productivity of skilled individuals who will in turn contribute positively to societal and national development.

The present study was limited by the fact that the study focused only in one state, this may have affected the results of the study and generalization. Thus, the researcher suggests for further research a replication of the study in two different states.

Finally, the study recommends the need for government to provide enough funds for the procurement of basic infrastructural facilities for both students and teacher educators in the school. This is to ensure effective teaching and learning process. Also that education resource centres should be established in all schools to ensure that seminars and workshops are encouraged among teacher educators to improve their knowledge. This will help in teacher's professional development in the state for a sustainable quality and all-round development in teacher educational institutions.

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