VOL. 07 NO. 8,
AUGUST, 2025
E-ISSN 3026-8893
P-ISSN 3027-1061

African Scholar Publications & Research International
www.africanscholarpub.com

Journal of Education Research and Library Practice (JERLP)

Relevance of Teachers Profession to National Development

Dr (Mrs.) Akpadaka Ogheneruese Grace
Department of Educational Foundations/Administration, College of Education, Warri, Delta State
DOI: https://doi.org/10.70382/ajerlp.v7i8.022

Abstract

The study is aimed at evaluating the relevance of teaching profession to National Development. It is very obvious that qualified, competent, dedicated, and professional teachers are the major instrument for achieving educational goals and National Development. The researcher observed that inspite of the current changes in teachers' salary structure, teachers' salaries are not paid as at when due. They are often molested and abused by students, parents and the entire society. Nevertheless, through teacher education, teachers have contributed to national developments like election, census. They also participate in creating awareness among the citizens. Teachers are the real agents that help in the development of various skills and competencies. It should be noted that the more good teachers the nation has, the more the solid citizens and hence more development of the country. To attain the objective of the study the researcher adopted survey design approach through the use of questionnaire developed and validated by the researchers and two experts in measurement and evaluation course. The sample consisted of 118 respondents who are Cross River State indigenes. The data was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result indicates that there is a relationship between Nigerian teachers' professional roles and national development. It was recommended that the development of teachers, adequate rewards, good welfare packages, and incentive plans and motivation should be sustained.

Key words: Teacher education; Nigerian teachers, National development, Profession

Introduction

Education occupies a central position in our personal and national development. Education is the process by which the individual is helped to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and emotionally through the provision of suitable environment and teaching him new knowledge, attitudes and skills so that he may be useful to himself and the society in which he lives. Education should not, however, be confused with teaching which is only one aspect of the educational process. To teach is to instruct, to impart knowledge and to guide pupils to learn properly. Therefore, the teacher must have useful knowledge, professional skills and a thorough knowledge of the psychology of the child.

Teacher education is not reducible to the training of teachers, "training" and "educating" are not synonymous in our content. Teacher education is the complex and complete procedure of educating or preparing persons whose profession is teaching in order to play their roles as teachers towards contributing to national development. Training may merely provide basic performance skills such as swimming, running, writing, reading etc., education encompasses such mental and physical attributes as well as values.

In the words of Peretomode (1992), a teacher is a person recognized and employed to help learners in a classroom situation in order to achieve set educational goals. The onus is upon the teacher to practicalize the curriculum with a view to achieving educational objectives and national development. Judging from the various government policies, the Nigerian government is very much aware of the crucial role of teachers in the implementation of our educational policies that are required to promote national development. For instance, the National Policy on Education (2004) vividly states that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers and that the purpose of teacher education is to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers. The Nigerian educational system has witnessed a lot in the area of policy formulation, programmes and recommendations from different task forces, commissions, committees, workshops, seminars, symposia and meetings on how best to produce highly motivated teachers to enable them train and bring up good and competent children. But unfortunately a gap still exists in the actual implementation of these policies and idea, resulting in the production of grossly ill-motivated and frustrated teachers. Inspite of this condition, the importance of the Nigerian teachers to National development cannot be over emphasized as they are recognized for holding the key to the survival of any nation. Teachers occupy very strategic position in the educational system and are centres of national development and progress. That is why the government of Nigeria is convinced that the quality of teacher education should continually undergo improvement (reform) with a view to achieving good results for the education system through professional preparation of persons for the assignment of teaching and nation-building (Ikedingwu, 2005, p.3). Paramount to nation building, Harris in Achimugu (2000) said that teacher education

and teachers are looked upon as foundation and as the builders of the nation and standard bearer of the national conscience, people who are interested in the development and progress of our educational system and the society at large must think more seriously about teacher education, teachers and teaching profession if they want to realize their ambition to improve standards and make people feel better, healthier and happier. The moral foundation on which good citizenship is built is teacher education and teachers. Simply put, they are foremost architect in nation building. Most importantly is that they are charged with the responsibility of training and educating the younger ones so that they fit well into the society and contribute to nation building. In view of this, they are seen as real agents that operate the educational system to ensure that people gain socio-political, economic, cultural and technological awareness.

According to Majasan (1995), teacher educational institutions and teachers help in the development of various skills and competencies that will in turn help to equip the individuals in the society for the various roles. Thus, the teacher is the spring board for economic, social, political, cultural and scientific development. The supply of manpower such as doctors, engineers, accountants, scientists and teachers to the various sectors of the national economy. That is why teacher education and teachers are regarded as the mother of all professional institutions and professions that exist. The manpower produced by educational system service all sectors of the national development such as the production of more nutritious food, improved transport system, better and innovative health services, wide range of communication system that makes life worth living. In this wise, the educational system contributes to national development in no small measure. For our education system to be sustained, teacher education reform should produce highly motivated and efficient classroom teachers to fit into the social life of every community, enhance their commitment to national goals of development (Achimugu, 2000, p.14).

Education is given in formal education based on an approved curriculum, time-table and extra-curricular activities designed to secure the all-round development of the student. The teachers are trained as men and women to constitute the greatest human agents of social change.

Apart from this, teachers as graduates of teacher education often ensure good discipline and high moral for pupils as future leaders. The teachers also impart on them some basic vocational skills so that they can work on their own when they leave school. By so doing, the teacher mitigates the problem of unemployment and other social vices such as stealing, robbery, rape, prostitution, drug trafficking, secret cult activities among others that are obstacles to national development. In this way, the teacher is no doubt contributing to national development.

From the foregoing, it is not an overstatement to say that no aspect of national development; economic, social, political and moral, that can take place without teachers. Truly, in the words of Philip Wylet, quoted in Nwogho (2005), one good teacher in a life time may sometimes, change a development into a solid citizen. The more good teachers the nation has, the more

the solid citizens and hence more development of the country. Okebukola (1996, p.21) summaries the importance of the teacher when he said that the world without teachers is a world without hope; a world without teacher is a world without progress, and the world without teachers is a world that is doomed.

As a postscript, it is a pathetic situation to note that zeal and enthusiasm of the Nigerian teachers in performing their role has been damped by both role conflicts and intimidation by the parents, and government. This has forced teachers to renege in performing their legitimate roles and below expectation owing to the harsh economic situation in Nigeria, even though teachers conditions of service have been improved.

Statement of the Problem

In recent time in the history of Nigeria teacher education and teachers activities, there have been laudable ideas on the part of the government in its policies to reform the education system. Government policies and programmes have not been adequately matched with implementation process. A very close examination indicates that a gap still exist in the actual implementation of policies and ideas on teacher education resulting in the production of grossly ill- motivated and frustrated teachers in our society. Teachers are the producers of the future leaders with assurance of their own future. More often than not, teachers have carried their heartfelt frustration to the classroom where their revenge mission is visited on the society. This poor condition has affected the growth and development of the nation. Most teacher education graduates are not given the opportunity to serve, rather the government is busy employing quack, untrained, physically and psychological unfit persons in the teaching profession at all levels of the education system. The society holds trained teachers at very low ebb; worse still, teachers are sometimes harassed, molested, intimated and humiliated by shameless and heartless parents; and abused by callous and fraudulent government officials and have lost their collective prestige and interest of contributing to national development and transformation of the society. It is therefore logical to infer and qualification; Section B contained 6 items on a four point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree through strongly disagree. Face-to-face hand delivery method of administration of the questionnaire was used during the data collection procedure. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method which involved all registered teachers of the state. The reliability estimate for the research variables were 0.72 and 0.89 respectively.

Clarification of some Concept

Teacher Education: Teacher education or teaching refers to programs, policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviours, approaches, methodologies and skills they require to perform their task effectively (Wikipedia.com)

Nigerian Teachers: They are group of persons/body engaged in tutoring learners

National Development: the term national development refers to the improvement of a country in all areas including the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and material spheres. The capacity of a nation to enhance its citizens' standard of living is an indicator of the nation's level of development.

Methodology

In this study, survey design was adopted. Cross River State was used for the study. The respondents of the study comprise both male and female teachers of Cross River State indigene. The population of the study was made up of all the registered teachers in the state. The sample of the study was 198 males and 198 females who were randomly selected from teacher educational institutions through stratified random sampling technique. The total sample size for the study comprised 396 respondents. The analysis showed male teachers teaching role as 32.59 percent while contribution to national development was 2.02 percent. The result in table one above indicates that the r-coefficient of .05 which is the level of relationship between the teachers' role and national development was subject to test of significance. Since the calculated r-value of 0.854 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.164, it shows that there is a positive relationship between male teachers' role or contribution in the teaching profession that leads to national development. If the male teacher teaches well, it has influence on the nations development, in other words his teaching influences the pattern of the nations development. The null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternate one.

Instrumentation

The research instrument for the study titled: Teacher Education and Nigerian Teachers in National development questionnaire (TENTNDQ) was developed by the researcher. The instrument was divided into 2 sections: A sought demographic information such as sex, age r-value of 0.164 which means the rate of contribution to national development is very high. This analysis further showed a very positive correlation at 0.05 confidence interval. This reflect a positive relationship between female teachers role in their profession and national development, it follows that female teachers in their role, are very likely to contribute to the development of the nation.

Analysis of Data

The data which were generated were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The entire hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between male teachers'teaching role and national development.

Table 1

Pearson product correlation analysis of the relationship between male teachers' teaching role and national development (N = 396)

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Male teachers' teaching roles	9268	432896	399015	0.854
National development	8971	430119		

Note. p = 0.05, d*f* = 394, crit = 0.164.

The analysis showed male teachers teaching role as 32.59 percent while contribution to national development was 2.02 percent. The result in table one above indicates that the r-coefficient of .05 which is the level of relationship between the teachers' role and national development was subject to test of significance. Since the calculated r-value of 0.854 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.164, it shows that there is a positive relationship between male teachers' role or contribution in the teaching profession that leads to national development. If the male teacher teaches well, it has influence on the nations development, in other words his teaching influences the pattern of the nations development. The null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternate one.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between female teachers' role and national development.

Table 2

Pearson product correlation analysis of the relationship between female teachers' teaching role and national development (N = 396)

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Female teachers' teaching roles	5946	367322	208186	0.29
National development	8971	430119		

Note. p = 0.05, df = 394, crit. value = 0.164

The analysis in table 2 above showed that the calculated r-value of 0.29 is far greater than the critical r-value of 0.164 which means the rate of contribution to national development is very high. This analysis further showed a very positive correlation at 0.05 confidence interval. This reflect a positive relationship between female teachers role in their profession and national development, it follows that female teachers in their role, are very likely to contribute to the development of the nation.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between teacher's qualification and national development.

Table 3

Variables	$\sum X$ / $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ / $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Teachers' qualifications	5503	312518	200632	0.575
National development	4397	297814		

Note. p = 0.05, df = 394, critical r-value - 0.164

The result of the test addressing this hypothesis presented in table 3 above showed that the r-coefficient of .05 which is the level of relationship between male teachers role and female teachers role based on their qualifications was subjected to test significant it revealed a significant relationship between the qualification of teachers and national development. This means that there is significant relationship of male and female sex qualifications as determinant of the contribution of teachers to national development.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that there is a direct positive relationship between teachers' role and national development. This finding is in line with the views of Akata and Egbue (1996) who affirmed that teachers are real agents that help in the development of various skills and competencies, thereby enhancing self-employment, self-sufficiency and development. These teachers are in Urban, semi-urban and rural areas educating people on their civil rights and accepting leadership responsibilities towards nation building.

In hypothesis two the study revealed a significant influence of female teachers' role on national development. The rate of national development is relatively very high. This reflects a positive relationship between female teachers' role and the development of the nation. Stressing on the influence, Obara (2002) emphasized that it is mandatory for female teachers to improve on their profession so as to enhance their contribution to the growth the society. The result of the analysis of hypothesis 3 revealed there is a significant relationship between male and female sex qualification and national development.

Over the years, educational quantity has been mistaken for educational quality by seeing the latter in quantitative and statistical terms. Educational progress and quality have been measured by the number of teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, engineers and technicians without strict reference to their productive quality or creativity. This is why the fast social and technological changes are difficult to accommodate.

A committed and professional educator cannot help but shed tears because of the current low standard of education and the degrading status of teachers. These defects in our educational

system have subtly combined to turn out of school into society half-baked pupils with their problems of academic ignorance, immaturity and moral, social and intellectual underdevelopment. The effect of this dysfunctional education has begun to rebound at the compound interest to the society. This situation can only be removed through education of the right kind which will help to solve these problems from the grassroots. This redemptive, refreshing, developmental, technical and cultural type of education is what is described as qualitative education and is designed to make pupils use their knowledge and skills for the progress of the society.

Qualitative education is functional education aimed at positive transformation of man and his environment, whether it is a man as an individual, the society, the race or the nation.

At the moral and cultural levels, the goals of qualitative education are stated in the National Policy on Education to include:

1. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual.
2. Moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations.
3. Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions.
4. Shared responsibility for the common good of society.
5. Respect for dignity of labour, and
6. Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children.

In the context of this write-up, the researchers observed that qualification plays a vital role in preparing the teachers for the enormous responsibility of teaching. They must be properly trained to offer their service to the nation. In line with this contention, Fayose (2003) opined that poor quality of prospective teachers and poor access to what happens in teacher education results in poor qualification and performance. This is obvious as the success or otherwise of an education system rests to a large extent on teachers' qualification and effectiveness which also depends on the quality of their education. Teachers and teacher education are so important as the nation's development itself depends on education.

Conclusion

Teacher education and teachers are the major instrument for achieving educational goals and national development hence no nation can rise above the standard of its educational system. This write up observed that teachers are not given their respect in the society, they are molested, sometimes harassed, intimated and humiliated by shameless and heartless parents and government officials and have lost their collective prestige to the greedy and over ambitious society.

Notwithstanding, teachers contribute to the development of the nation in areas of, supply of manpower to the various sectors of national economy, they ensure good discipline and high moral plane of pupils who are future leaders of tomorrow. The teacher is the real agent that helps in the development of various skills and competencies thereby enhancing self-employment and self-efficiency.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the paper recommends that, the development of teachers, adequate rewards, good welfare packages and incentive plans and motivation should be sustained. These are very pertinent to national development and need to be looked into frequently if teachers have to perform their roles of contributing to national development as expected by the society.

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