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## Revamping Teacher Education Programme for Improved Students' Academic Achievement for Sustainable National Development at Tertiary Level of Education in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Education is very important for the development of any nation, especially teacher education. This paper examines the challenges facing teacher education in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the need for reform. It explains the steps needed to improve teacher education through a complete and well-planned reform so that students can perform better academically and the nation can develop sustainably. These steps include redesigning teacher education courses, setting proper standards, restructuring programmes, improving the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria, selecting qualified candidates, using information and communication technology (ICT), improving the evaluation system, and updating teachers' knowledge and skills. The study recommends that teacher training institutions should follow standard guidelines, produce competent teachers through proper training, and receive adequate funding from the government. Without proper funding, it will be difficult to improve teacher education to meet modern needs.*

**Keywords:** Teacher education, reform, academic achievement, national development

### Introduction

Education is seen as a veritable tool for sustainable development and as a vehicle for advancing the frontier of knowledge which is vast expanding rapidly. The potency in education is more evident in its globalization trends where teachers (Ojo, 2023). Education has been globally adopted as an agent of change and development; it serves as a weapon against ignorance and other social vices. It is also acknowledged to be the steppingstone for wealth creation and human resource development. Onwuka (2012) defined education as a powerful weapon of acquiring the strength of the society as it influences the installation of needed values and also help people to be equipped with ideas for the resolutions of the problems confronting them and reach the informed decisions on time. Ogunyinka, Okeke & Adedoyin (2015) opined that education unlocks the door to modernization and that the teachers are the custodians of the keys to the door. Education has also been described as a process by which an individual can gain knowledge or insight or develop attitudes and skills (Olorunyomi, 2014). Education can generally be defined as aggregation of processes that enhance positive value in a society, through the instilling of knowledge, abilities and attitudes within the auspices of school. It implies that education encourages a critical evaluation of attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, the importance of education must be the prerogative of the 21st century educators as reflected in the monumental role of the teacher, which necessitates the need for quality teacher education programme to train professionals to meet global expectations. Lewin (2009) supported the views that education is the instrument that bridges the gap between individuals with innovative minds, and the application of technology for social advancement in every society. It is imperative to note that global development is anchored on education, and it is a capable human resource to drive its effectiveness to achieve desirable changes especially in developing countries like Nigeria.

Teacher education refers to the process by which a person attains education or professional training in an institution of learning in order to become a teacher. Ogunyinka et al (2015) described teacher education as professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work, in accordance with the need of a given society at any point in time. Teacher education includes training and or education occurring before commencement of service (pre-service) and during service (in-service or on-the-job). Teacher Education in Nigeria encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. The effectiveness of any educational system depends greatly on the educational attainment of teachers because no system of education can be qualitatively higher than the quality and commitment of its teachers. Adewuyi and Ogunwuyi (2002) stressed that teacher education is the provision of professional education and specialized training within a specified period for the preparation of individuals who intend to develop and nurture the young ones into responsible and productive citizens. The concern of teacher education world over is to train and prepare would-be- teachers for effective functioning



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at the school. For teacher education to function there is the need to equip teachers with the wherewithal, both ethical, intellectual competencies and skills, dispositions, emotional and so forth that will enable them develop and impart in their students the requisite educational, societal dispositions, norms and values. The quality of any educational system therefore, solely depends on the quality of the teachers one finds in the school system. The National Policy on Education (2004) stated the goals of teacher education for effective and efficient performance of teachers as follows:

Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational systems; (i) Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers; (ii) Help teachers fit into social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals; (iii) Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations; (iv) Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

To achieve these, all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained. Teacher education is therefore structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. Since no education system may raise above the quality of its teachers, the policy pegged the minimum qualification for entry into teaching profession to be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Teachers are central to the success of any educational system, as their knowledge, skills, and motivation directly influence student learning outcomes. Without qualified and competent teachers, educational systems cannot achieve their objectives. The Nigerian National Policy on Education emphasizes that the quality of teachers determines the overall effectiveness of the education system, underscoring their pivotal role in national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

The influence of teachers on students' academic performance is well-documented. Teachers are responsible for implementing educational policies, delivering curriculum content, and creating an environment conducive to learning. Their ability to engage students, assess their progress, and adapt instruction accordingly directly impacts students' academic achievements. Consequently, teachers' effectiveness is a critical factor in determining educational success (Adedeji & Akinboye, 2020). Furthermore, teachers interpret and deliver the curriculum, which requires a thorough understanding of content, pedagogical skills, and classroom management strategies. Continuous professional development is essential for teachers to stay updated with new teaching methodologies, technological advancements, and curriculum reforms. Such ongoing training enhances their capacity to meet diverse student needs and improve learning outcomes (Adeyemi & Akinbobola, 2019).

In Nigeria, concerns about the declining quality of teachers and their performance have gained prominence. Research indicates that teachers' competence, motivation, and commitment significantly influence students' academic success. Challenges such as inadequate training, poor remuneration, and lack of resources hinder teachers' ability to perform effectively, thereby affecting the overall quality of education (Adewale & Olaniyan, 2021). Addressing these issues is crucial for improving educational standards nationwide. Despite numerous reforms aimed at improving teacher education, many initiatives in Nigeria have fallen short due to poor planning, implementation challenges, and political interference. These shortcomings have limited the impact of reforms on enhancing teacher quality. Experts argue that sustainable improvements require policies rooted in educational research and designed with thorough stakeholder engagement (Ogunrinola & Olaniyan, 2020). The persistent challenges facing Nigerian teacher education highlight the need for comprehensive reforms. Effective strategies should include upgrading teacher training institutions, providing incentives for professional development, and establishing continuous mentorship programs. Such measures will help improve teacher competence, motivation, and retention, thereby positively influencing student learning outcomes (Olatunji & Oludipe, 2022).

The quality of teachers remains a cornerstone for educational success in Nigeria. To improve learning outcomes, it is essential to implement well-structured, research-based reforms in teacher education and professional development. Strengthening teachers' capacity and motivation is vital for elevating the Nigerian education system and preparing students for the demands of the modern world (Akinbote & Akinbote, 2021).



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### **Problems Facing Teacher Education in Nigeria**

Reform is a long journey that starts with the identification of problems. It is evidently clear that there are problems associated with teacher education. This is evident in the academic performance of students in all levels of education and output of schools at all levels (Idakwoji, 2016). As noted by Okemakinde, Alabi and Adewuyi (2013) that there has been a decline in the quality of candidates admitted into the tertiary institutions as a result of the weak output of both the primary and the secondary levels. The following are the problems facing teacher education that necessitated urgent holistic reform in Nigeria as identified by different education experts (Aina 2020, Libman 2012, Aina 2015, Akinbote 2007, Darling-Hammond 2010).

**Non-Compliance Standard:** Nasser et al in Aina (2020), submits that standards based reform is the key to school reform principle, therefore, for a sustainable reform, there starting point is to set standards for teacher education. According to Libman (2012) most teacher education reforms have emphasize the importance of establishing national standards for students achievement for the quality of teaching and for the effectiveness of curricula for schools and teacher training institutions. But, most tertiary education that are involved in teacher education like colleges of education and faculties of education in the Universities have not been strictly complying with the set standard for teacher education.

**Incompetency of Teachers:** There are cries everywhere that the teachers in Nigerian schools are not competent. It is a justifiable cry as it occurred in different parts of the country as it is a well-established fact that the teachers is a social variable that influences students in various ways Darling-Hammond, 2010, Palardy & Rumberger, 2008). However, not many people focus on the process that produces these teachers many of our colleges of education and other teacher training institutions are not doing well ( Akinbote, 2007, Aina, 2015). Though there are specific standards for teacher education but lecturers do whatever they please (A manchukwu 2011). Before the start of any semester examination many lecturers in the teacher training institutions already have a list of students they must assists to pass the set of examination. Most of these students eventually fails the examination, but there scores are adjusted to pass marks due to powerful influences within and outside the colleges, Therefore, half backed teachers are produced and this will have consequential effect on their level of competency Some provosts and registrar are vital players of the academic failure of these educational institutions (Oluremi 2013).

**Irrelevant Curriculum:** Several research studies indicate that the curricular are no longer relevant to the teaching of the present century. It is typical for students to be learning in the bare floor without furniture and in some cases learning under the tree for lack of classroom building. (Sabitu and Nurudeen 2010, Odi and Omofonmwan 2007).The learning environment should form part of a school curriculum. The NESCO 2012 has it that the principles of good learning environment, working approaches as well as concept of learning should be in the core curriculum. The Nigeria curriculum is based on memorization. Education will not be able to solve the problem of a society where learning by memorization is practiced. Practical and comprehensive learning through activities and technological application must be incorporated into the curriculum. Thus, Sani (2012) had asserted that the tailoring of curricula content towards the critical needs of the society is essential.

### **Reasons for Teacher Education Reform**

In the face of a rapidly evolving global landscape, there is an urgent need to reform teacher education to equip educators with the skills necessary to meet contemporary challenges. Factors such as globalization, technological advancements, and innovative pedagogical approaches demand teachers who are adaptable, tech-savvy, and capable of fostering critical thinking. Recent studies emphasize that ongoing reforms are essential to prepare teachers for these dynamic environments and ensure they can effectively facilitate learning in diverse settings (Ogunrinola & Olaniyan, 2020). Furthermore, education should transcend the mere transmission of subject knowledge and aim to develop responsible citizens who can actively contribute to societal development. Teachers play a vital role in nurturing students' creativity, problem-solving abilities, and ethical values. Contemporary teacher training programs are increasingly focusing on developing these competencies, recognizing that education's broader goal is to produce well-rounded individuals capable of addressing complex societal issues (Adekola & Akinbola, 2020). Reform efforts must also ensure that education remains relevant by integrating both global knowledge and local cultural values. While exposure to international ideas and skills is crucial in the modern world, it is equally important to preserve and promote indigenous traditions and cultural identity. Recent discourse highlights that culturally responsive pedagogy enhances student engagement and fosters a sense of identity, thereby making education more meaningful and effective within local contexts (Akinbote & Akinbote, 2021).



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Reforming teacher education is essential to prepare educators who are skilled, culturally aware, and capable of guiding students in a complex, interconnected world. Effective strategies should involve updating curricula, promoting continuous professional development, and ensuring that local cultural values are integrated into teaching practices. Such comprehensive reforms will help build an education system that is both globally competitive and locally grounded (Adeyemi & Akinbobola, 2019). According to Onuma (2017). The institutions most especially universities that are providing high quality education for the globalize world, despite its focus in internationalization and cross cultural communication are still based on an individualistic model of teaching. Through globalization of education which is being knowledge transfer from the western countries into developing countries is intended to improve the skills and capacities of the people receiving it. Breneman (2014) argued that Western education has in fact replaced indigenous forms of education throughout the world and focuses on preparing students exclusively for an urban existence. He also claimed that through this process, people are losing their vernacular knowledge by which he meant the knowledge that people have their places, this is a loss of their cultural worth and he also believed that “our graduates of tomorrow will be trained above all, to keep the wheels of the global economy turning”. But the western style of education is inadequate as it focuses largely on the creation of money and paying no attention to the preserving of cultures. As opined by Okpaga (2016), Education should not become a means of westernizing the world. On the contrary, it should treat each unique culture and society with due respect, realizing that global education is not only learning about the west, but also studying different cultures of the world, using different approaches, ways of teaching and different media. Burmeister and Eilks (2013) submit that teacher education reform supports and networks can be brought into maximize the opportunities for teachers’ developments in teaching and research area for their contribution to students learning. They further opined that teachers can maximize the opportunities to enhance effectiveness of their teaching from local and global networking and exposure through internet, web-based teaching video-conferencing, cross-cultural sharing, and different types of interactive and multi-media materials. They retreated that teachers are grouped and networked locally and globally to develop and sustain a new professional culture and multiple their teacher effects through mutual sharing and inspiring. They became world class and networked teachers.

### **Steps Involves in Teacher Education Reform**

The teacher is crucial to the success of any education system. Barrow, and Sander (2007); Kuhn (2010), noted that the teacher is significant to the students’ academic achievement. The quality of education system of a nation depends to a great extent on the quality of teachers regarding academic and professional qualifications, experience, competency and their dedication to the primary functions (Oluremi, 2013). The success of any teaching and learning process which influence students’ academic performance depends on the effectiveness and how qualified the teachers are (Sabitu & Nurudeen, 2010). Teachers are the most critical variable in the effectiveness of schools and the quality of education of a child (Onuma, 2017).

1. **Robust Redesign of the Teacher Education Course Content:** There should be holistic teacher education course content reform in accordance with existing needs to judge the suitability and effectiveness of some new teacher-training strategies etc which will provide greater scope for development of sound knowledge on different areas. Such as content knowledge, knowledge of teaching-learning methodologies and knowledge in pedagogical of teaching learning among the trainee-teachers in content areas, development of skills of trainee-teachers to be competent enough regarding how to transact the content materials to the students meaningfully.
2. **Standardization of Teacher Education:** There should be standard for teacher education programme. The standard is to ensure that teacher education focus on high quality. Pre-service teachers must be trained for specific levels as it is in the industrialized world. In the USA and Finland, there are teachers trained for the kindergarten and other grades. These teachers teach only at these levels. The primary school teachers must be subjecting specific (Kola, 2007). In most of the primary schools in Nigeria, a teacher teaches all the subjects in his or her class. For instance, a teacher may be a classmate of two or three classes; the same teacher may be seen teaching mathematics, English languages, Agricultural science, Social studies, Religious knowledge, Physical and health education and Basic science. However, this teacher is a graduate of social studies yet he or she teaches all subjects. It should not be like this and it needs correction in the reform. There is also need to set up unifying standards for higher education that are producing teachers in the country. There should be standards for establishing a new institution students’ admission, the students’ management, financial management, the awards of degrees and many others. These measures should be strictly enforced and continually monitored.



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3. **Restructuring the Teacher Education Programmes:** There is need to keep in view the requirements of each stage of teacher education programmes. According to the paper prepared by NCERT four alternative models for the professionalization of secondary school teachers are; (a) one year professional and education teaching to B.Ed degree after graduation (b) 4-5 years integrated professional courses after higher secondary leading to B.Ed/M.Ed degrees (c) two years of professional education after graduation leading to M.Ed degree. (d) correspondence – cum-contact programme for graduate teachers in service leading to B.Ed degree. The course and programme may be structured so as to allow continuity and flexibility. The first course may lead to second course and so on. Like other professional courses there should be a provision of internship training and post internship training. Every graduate teacher should undergo an induction course for 3-6 months besides teaching practice and be certificated just as graduates in law attends law schools and medical students attends a year compulsory training.
4. **Upgrading Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria:** The establishment of the teacher registration council of Nigeria (TRCN) is good but needs improvement on evaluating teachers on pedagogy and the ethics of the teaching profession (Okonkwo and Udeze 2012). Before the award of TRCN, the body in charge of the issuance of the certificate should ensure that the prospective teacher must have pedagogical content knowledge, ability to read the body language of the learners and carrying out classroom management strategies.
5. **Careful Selection of Candidates for Teacher Education:** It is generally believed that there is need to carefully select candidates seeking admission into teacher educational institution. Teacher education institutions should make a proper selection of prospective teachers. The candidates should be selected for admissions on the basis of their academic qualifications, scores of written tests and interviews. The written tests should check other teaching aptitudes, knowledge of child psychology and reasoning power. It would generate confidence in teacher trainees that they are not inferior to the candidates who have been selected through entrance test for medical, engineering and other professional courses. Moreover, competent candidates will be selected by adopting this procedure.
6. **Incorporation of Information, Communication Technology to Teacher Education:** Today is the era of e-education, e-business and e-administration. The computer, T.V., Telephones, Mobile are the media of information. The world has become interdependent and is turning gradually into a global village, nowadays one has to think globally and act locally. There is a necessity of integrating technology in teacher education. ICT is a tool for communication and presentation, bringing teacher, students and teacher educators on a common bench which will results in effective exchange of views, presentation of ideas and feedback. (Itterington, Reeve and other 2010). They further opined that each teacher need to be proficient in the areas of technical competencies required for chats, websites, data bases, audio and video links, electronic conferences, e-mail etc. learning to use computers and internet is a relatively simple task; but mastering ICT use as an effective tool to improve teaching and learning is considered a difficult one. Teachers need training in computer literacy and how to use this in improving teaching and learning. Teacher education institutions must introduce information and communication technology in teacher education programme. ToLibman (2012). The students should experience innovative technology supported learning environments in their teacher education programmes. The school must fulfil the requirements of the availability of selected ICT. Moreover, well qualified and experience technical staff should be appointed to take care of the ICT labs.
7. **Re-Package Evaluation System of Teacher Education Programme:** The evaluation system for the assessment of teachers under training has many weak features. (Kuhn, 2010). He stressed further that we are not having a uniform system of evaluation for the whole country moreover the present evaluation system in teacher education lays emphasis on development of scholastic aspects at the cost of non-scholastic aspects. Moreover, it lacks reliability, objectivity and validity. Variation exists in the award of divisions and distinctions. Some of the agencies like NCERT & CASE (Baroda) have developed evaluation proforma. There is a teacher competence appraisal guide developed in the USA for the assessment of practice teaching. These can be used while assessing the performance of teacher trainees. According to UNESCO (2012). Teacher education programme has two-parts - theory and practical work including the student teaching. An equal weight age should be given to theory and practical aspects. We should also introduce an evaluation system which will have internal and external assessment for both the theory paper as well as practical paper. Moreover, the marks awarded should be shown for both the papers separately. Grading system should be adopted in which separate grades for each item should be assigned. The candidate should also be permitted to make an improvement in grade by tacking subsequent examination. Teacher evaluation system must have multiple perspectives.



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Multiple criteria should be set up. Multiple tools such as paper-pencil test, observation techniques, self-reporting develop and paper appraisal can be used. The process of evaluation should be continuous, comprehensive and participative. This will provide timely feedback to the students' teacher for improving their performance. Thus, providing an opportunity to them for self-evaluation and self-improvement.

8. **Knowledge and Skills Update:** The in-service programmes of teacher education will keep the teachers up-to-date in respect of their knowledge of their subjects, specialization subjects and the professional skills of teaching. This will keep the teachers to update their knowledge and skills according to scientific and technological advancements. Hence they will be able to meet the new challenges effectively. The in-service training programme includes periodic refresher courses. Professional enrichment courses, orientation in various emerging areas, like value education, special education, communication technology, human rights education environment education etc. active participation of teachers in workshops, conferences and seminars organized at National and International level should be encouraged.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers play a crucial role in driving national development, as they are instrumental in shaping the future workforce and fostering societal progress. Their effectiveness directly influences students' academic success and, consequently, the overall growth of a nation. Recognizing this, it is essential to prioritize the enhancement of teacher quality through comprehensive reforms in teacher education systems. In Nigeria, however, teacher education faces numerous challenges that undermine the quality of teaching and hinder students' academic achievements. Issues such as inadequate training programs, outdated curricula, and insufficient professional development opportunities contribute to these problems. Addressing these obstacles requires a thorough and strategic approach to reform, led by educational experts who understand the complexities of the system. Implementing well-planned reforms in teacher education can have far-reaching benefits. Improved training and professional development will result in better teaching practices, which in turn will elevate student performance. Ultimately, strengthening teacher education is a vital step toward achieving sustainable national development and ensuring that Nigeria's future generations are well-equipped to face global challenges.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were suggested for holistic reform to take place in teacher education programme:

1. Teacher training institutions should follow standard guidelines.
2. Only qualified and competent teachers should be produced.
3. Government should provide adequate funding for teacher education.
4. ICT should be fully integrated into teacher training.
5. Continuous professional development for teachers should be encouraged.

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