

Re-Engineering Teaching Profession for Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Perspectives of Education Stakeholders

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Abstract

The issue of re-structuring teaching profession for sustainable development in Nigeria has often been a matter of serious concern to educationists, academics and the government. The study focused on what the stakeholders in education should do to re-engineer teaching profession to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria. It adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 40 respondents which was made up of 20 Senior Officers in the Ministry of Education and 20 Senior Officers in the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, Awka respectively. Out of this population, a sample of 20 respondents was used for the study. Their views were randomly sampled, using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured 10- item questionnaire designed by the researchers and validated by experts in the Ministry of Education and Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). A 4 - point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree(SD) was used to measure the responses of the respondents, to ascertain their degree of approval or disapproval to the questionnaire items, which consisted of various statements on the topic under study. The data generated through the questionnaire were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation. The findings of the study showed that efforts are now being made to re-position teaching profession in Nigeria. For instance, there is a recent memo from (TRCN) that mandates teachers to write qualifying examination, before being registered as teachers, among others. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended for a robust policy and due recognition of teaching profession in Nigeria.

Keywords: Re-engineering, Sustainable development, Teaching Profession

Introduction

The perception of teaching profession in Nigeria has been a matter of great concern to the well-meaning Nigerians. Some people regard teaching as a profession that requires skills and competences, while some view it as an occupation which anyone, both skilled and unskilled can delve into and make a living. In Nigeria, teaching cannot be likened to any other profession in terms of respect, prestige, economic status, autonomy and authority of its members. They are the wretch of the world and inheritance in heaven; as their rewards as the saying goes, are in celestial world, and not in the physical world. The Nigerian populace seems to be confused regarding the place of teaching. Observably, becoming a teacher in Nigeria, doesn't exactly align with the prayers of most young Nigerians who seek God's direction in their search for glamorous future occupation. This can be confirmed when you suggest teaching profession to an intending "JAMBITE", you would almost certainly be rebuked for your unreasonable statement, with a fervent "God forbid" to ensure such absurd wishes never come to pass (Nimi, 2017).

According to Chukwuma (2016), teaching profession is that business of those involved in the act of changing human behaviour and transforming the society for better through impacting knowledge, skills, ideas and information to a learner. Teaching happens to be the oldest profession in Nigeria, but unfortunately, the least developed in terms of standard of training and practice. On the other hand, Odoand Amera, (2015) viewed sustainable development as the process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental factors and their interactions. Several scholars have reviewed related literature on teaching profession in Nigeria and there seems to be consensus in most of their studies regarding

people's perception of teaching profession. Ajayi, in Akinduyo, (2014) posited that teaching profession since the ages, has been an occupation that enjoys the unpleasant nickname of an "ungrateful trade" a profession for the "never-do-well or an occupation for the down-trodden

Still commenting on the profession, Majasan in Akinduyo stated that Other members of the society regard teaching profession with contempt, feeling that it is a refuse camp for mediocre; people who are industrious but unimaginative and uncreative; people with average drive for power, average ambition and escapism.

Fundamentally, education remains a great instrument for socio-economic and technological development. There is therefore an urgent need to build a solid foundation for teaching profession through effective and efficient professional teachers (Edoka & Onyema, 2013). Teaching is the specialized application of knowledge, skills and attributes designed to provide unique service to meet the educational needs of the individual and the society at large. The choice of learning activities whereby the goals of education are realized in the school is the responsibility of the teaching profession (Ayodele, 2016).

Development on the other hand has several definitions from local to global perspectives. It can be viewed as a set of activities that are carried out early in the systems engineering life cycle to collect and prioritize operational needs and challenges, develop alternative concepts to meet the needs of the masses (Ebereonwu, 2014). Development, according to Ibegbu(2014) means 'improvement in a country's economic and social conditions through proper management and utilization of both

In the same vein, Ogundele (2001) opined that development refers to human resources growth, economic resources, improved skills and productivity of labour. Ayoka (2013) asserted that it is a catalytic process for social change that seeks to foster thorough education, training and public awareness on moral values, behavior and lifestyles, among others.

There is no doubt that teaching profession seems to be the only profession that hardly discriminates its forms of membership. This is evidenced as all sorts of people without professional training including school drop-outs are found in the classroom (Nwoke, . 2014). In fact, Ayodele (2016) posited that most teachers take the profession as a last resort without any genuine interest in the profession. Unlike during the advent of the missionaries when only the intelligent scholars were recruited and trained as teachers.

The defect of teaching profession is traced back to the colonial period; where credence was not given to qualification, but just the ability to work with directives without much demand for incentives and motivation (Adewumi, 2014). To the Colonial masters, teachers' rewards are in heaven, notwithstanding that their roles in the society cannot be over-emphasized. Teachers have roles to play in the development of a nation especially, in raising leaders and intellects of tomorrow, who will sustain the nation's economy (Nwoke, 2014). If the assertion that education of a nation cannot rise above the quality of its teachers, then the professional development of teachers becomes imperative for a sustainable national economic, scientific and technological development.

According to Edoka and Onyema (2013) many teachers in Nigeria have not measured up to the minimum international standard. This is because a large number of trained and half-baked personnel are still retained in the system, leading to a scenario in which career in teaching is not yet professionalized. Unfortunately, these crops of teachers cannot make any reasonable impact on both the character and skill development of their subjects; as one cannot give out what one does not have (Odo & Amera 2015).

Due to the fact that teaching profession is given less attention, many of the teachers engaged in business and other activities not relevant to their profession in the quest to meet up with the societal challenges. Some teachers are never prepared to update their knowledge of subject matter or pedagogy. Hence, teaching appears to have lost its grandeur and honour, and there is urgent need to invigorate and rejuvenate the teaching profession to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria (Edoka & Onyema 2013). However, there has been serious move to repositioning teaching profession in Nigeria. Recently, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) released a memo that mandates teachers to write qualifying examination before being registered as teachers.

According to Onyeukwu (2015), the nature of teaching if left as it is now, cannot contribute effectively to the development of the nation. Teaching profession in Nigeria seems not to have been given its proper position, hence its role towards development may be a nightmare (Nwoke, 2014). Edoka and Onyema (2013) opined that the fundamental factors that account

for inability of teaching to be regarded as a profession in Nigeria include negligence on the part of the government, lack of committed and qualified teachers, corruption, poor funding and remuneration of teachers, politicization of teaching profession among others.

There is hardly any profession in Nigeria that loses its members to other professions as teaching profession (Ibegbu, 2014). The societal value system which is materialistic tendency, 'get-rich-quick' has its own weight to bear upon the profession. This made teachers much prone to temptation to any life of opulence as they want to escape from the viscous circle of want (Ayodele, 2016).

Statement of the problem.

Teaching profession which is essentially service-oriented, is supposed to enjoy high status, but is denied the privileges, regard and respect. There are considerable debates about the causes, consequences and solutions to the inability of teaching profession contributing effectively to the development of the nation. Over the years, the governments have adopted some recommendable policies that would re-engineer teaching profession to make it a veritable tool of development. It is pathetic to note that the policies have not yielded positively, neither have they met the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians towards development. This has become a socio-political, economic and educational discourse among scholars and academics.

This pathetic situation has raised serious issues on the anomalies in Nigerian socio-economic system that is inhibiting the contributions of teaching profession to achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. The present study therefore focused on what the stakeholders in education should do to re-engineer teaching profession for a sustainable development in the country.

One research question was formulated to guide the study. What are the steps to be taken by the stakeholders in education in Anambra State to re-engineer teaching profession to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria?

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of 40 respondents which was made up of 20 Senior Officers in the Ministry of Education and 20 Senior Officers in the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, Awka respectively. A sample of 20 respondents was used for the study using simple random technique of balloting with replacement. This ensured that the respondents have equal chances of being selected. The instrument for data collection was a structured 10-item questionnaire designed by the researchers and face-validated by three experts from the Ministry of Education and TRCN respectively. Parallel reliability of the instrument was established by administering the validated instruments on 10 Senior Officers in the Ministry of Education and Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) respectively, in Enugu State. The values obtained were highly similar, showing the correlation of the test instrument. The researchers used two trained research assistants and employed face-to-face administration in the collection of data for the study. This gave the researchers and their team the opportunity to explain to the respondents the instruments and challenges that might arise in completing the questionnaire items. Consequently, 100% collection was recorded by the researchers.

The data collected was organized and completed in line the research question, using summative rating scale, otherwise called, 'weighted mean.' The mean values of the four responses were determined by dividing the summation of the frequency of responses with the summation of the scale used.

Mean value (\bar{X}) = $\frac{\sum fx}{\sum X}$

Where $\sum fx$ = total sum of scores

$\sum X$ = total number of rating scales

$\sum X = 4+3+2+1 = 10$

$\bar{X} = 10/4 = 2.50$.

Analysis of data was done using frequencies, mean and standard deviation. The cut-off point for decisions was 2.50 based on a 4-point rating scale. This means that any item with mean of 2.50 and above attracted positive response, while items with mean below 2.50 were regarded as having attracted negative responses.

Results

Table 1

Mean scores of Senior Officers of Ministry of Education and Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) Awka, Anambra State.

SNR OFFICERS IN MOE & SNR OFFICERS IN TRCN							
S/N	ITEM	X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
1.	Recognition of teaching profession and addressing the poor and deteriorated condition of service of teachers	3.70	0.70	Agree	3.68	0.69	Agree
2.	Equipping teachers in the knowledge and skills through training, conferences, seminars, short term courses in professional programmes and teaching practice	3.67	0.59	Agree	3.54	0.66	Agree
3.	Inculcating the patriotic spirit, respect and regard for social order, culture of human dignity, human right and value system	2.91		Agree	3.37	0.90	Agree
4.	Identifying and managing stress among Teachers	2.61	0.90	Agree	2.72	0.86	Agree
5.	Ensuring quality, effective and efficient service in education system	2.73	0.87	Agree	2.88	0.89	Agree
6.	Strengthening the entry qualification of teaching profession and licensing by appropriate professional bodies	3.37	0.93	Agree	3.56	0.40	Agree
7.	Non-involvement of teachers in corrupt practices through proper sensitization and supervision to maintain ethical standard	3.94	0.22	Agree	3.73	0.59	Agree
8.	Integration of teachers in decision making, economic planning and education matters that can foster development.	3.55	0.36	Agree	3.54	0.35	Agree
9.	Inculcating discipline, dedication and hard work through entrepreneurial and skill acquisition among teachers	3.38	0.95	Agree	3.43	0.82	Agree
10.	Teaching profession should be well funded and remunerated.	3.95	0.93	Agree	3.81	0.51	Agree

Results in table 1 above show that all the item listed, recorded mean scores well above the decision rule of 2.50 This shows that the respondents agreed to all the items as being the measures to be taken in order to re-engineer teaching profession for sustainable development in Anambra State and Nigeria in general.

Discussion

The results in table 1 indicate that, in the opinions of the respondents, all the listed factors are such that could help to re-engineer teaching profession to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria. These findings are in line with the observations made by Chukwuma (2016), Ayodele (2016), Onyeukwu (2015), that the recognition of teaching profession and addressing the poor and deteriorated condition of service of teachers, equipping teachers in knowledge and skills through training, conferences, seminars, short term courses in professional programmes and teaching practice,

inculcating the patriotic spirit, respect and regard for social order, culture of human dignity, human right and value system, were identified as various ways of re-engineering teaching profession .

Furthermore, the findings, ensuring quality, effective and efficient service in education system, strengthening the entry qualification of teaching qualification and licensing by appropriate professional bodies, support the opinions of Onyeukwu (2015), Odo and Amara, (2015) who opined that if the nature of teaching is left as it is now, it cannot contribute effectively to the development of the nation. Nwoke, (2014) further maintained that if teaching profession in Nigeria is not given its proper position, its role towards sustainable development maybe a nightmare.

The findings, on non-involvement of teachers in corrupt practices through proper sensitization and supervision to maintain ethical standard, integration of teachers in decision making, economic planning and education matters that can foster development, inculcating discipline, dedication and hard work through entrepreneurial and skill acquisition and finally proper funding and remuneration of teaching profession are in line with Edoaka and Onyema (2013) who posit that the fundamental factors that account for inability of teaching to be regarded as a profession in Nigeria include negligence on the part of the government, lack of committed and qualified teachers, corruption, poor funding and remuneration of teachers, politicization of teaching profession among others.

Conclusion

This study examined the state of teaching profession in the country and how the profession can be re-engineered, for a sustainable development in the country. Since education brings a positive change in the life of individuals and the nation at large, it should therefore not be taken for granted. Hence, stakeholders in the education sector and the government should ensure that teaching profession is accorded its rightful position in the society, just like other professions. It is believed that this will help to re-engineer and re-invigorate teaching profession to enhance sustainable development in the country.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should address the poor condition of service of the teaching profession and ensure the right calibre of people are absorbed in the profession.
2. The government should enforce Teachers' Code of Conducts and ensure that erring teachers are disciplined, while dedicated ones are appreciated /rewarded
3. The Teacher's Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should be strict with the qualifying examinations for teachers as a pre-requisite for entry into teaching profession, in order not to give room for unbaked and un-communicated teachers, who see the profession as a stepping stool.
4. The government through the Ministry of Education should organize capacity-building workshop/training for teachers to enhance their professional development.
5. The government and other stakeholders in education should accord respect and regard to teaching profession as done in other professions / counterparts. This will build confidence in teachers and ensure maximum input.
6. Government should integrate teachers in decision-making and economic building plan as they are seen as epitome of knowledge, skills and wisdom and also involve them in all educational matters at various levels.
7. Only those trained as teachers should be allowed to teach, in order to protect the sanity and pedagogical demands of teaching profession.
8. Government should ensure prompt payment of teachers' salary, promotions and other remunerations.

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