PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING QUALITY EDUCATION IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper discusses the importance of teachers, who constitute the teaching manpower and took a look at how effective management of teaching manpower can bring about quality education in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. It also examines the problems associated with the management of teachers in these Colleges which include: inadequate teaching staff, under funding, inadequate supervision and inspection of teachers. The article emphasizes the strategies for the promotion of quality education in the institutions which includes: professionalization of teaching, provision of adequate funds, provision of conducive academic environment, appointment of qualified teaching staff among others. The paper concludes that since the teacher is the king-pin of quality in education, it is believed that by the adoption of these strategies, quality education could be achieved in the Colleges of Education in Nigeria. It recommends, among others that college management should harness other sources of revenue like produce from school farms and cyber cafe’ (computer center) among others, undermine mediocrity during employment, and provide standard accommodation for the teaching manpower.

Key words: Quality assurance, Quality teachers, Teacher education, teaching manpower, Quality education
Introduction

Teachers are the pivot on which education wheels revolve and the quality of any educational system depends greatly on the educational attainment of teachers as no system of education can be more qualitatively higher than the quality and commitment of its teachers.

Quality assurance is one of the key concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM means a system of running the affair of an organization or institution such that all aspects of the organization and appropriate resources are provided and utilized towards actualizing the goals of the organization. It is a management technique that adopts a holistic approach in the work process. TQM equally means a quest for quality at all times. In education, it emphasizes teacher competence, creativity and commitment, and how educational managers organize and lead in order to realize the full potentials of all personnel in an educational organization (Okorie and Uche, 2004).

Ukeje (1996) supported this idea when he stated that education unlocks the door to modernization, and added that it is the teacher who holds the key to that door. The school is a complicated social organization with enormous human and material resources, thus the school administrators is saddled with the responsibility of directing, guiding and coordinating teachers appropriately to ensure good quality education.

The purpose of this study is to identify the problems that have hindered/hampered the effective management of teaching manpower in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The examination is done in the context of:

(a) Mission of Colleges of Education in Nigeria.
(b) Problems encountered by colleges of education in Nigeria.
(c) Strategies for effective management of teaching manpower for quality education.

In this paper, the authors’ view is that if these strategies are religiously followed, the quality of education in Colleges of Education in Nigeria will be achieved.

Mission of Colleges of Education in Nigeria

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (2002) stated that the teacher is the king-pin of quality in education. Since
education has become the primary tool for the overall development of society, teacher education has to occupy a position of pre-eminence in the planning and organization of the modern society. This in turn demands that the Nigerian people and government should make both teaching and teacher education a very attractive professional pursuit.

Nwaham, Chukwuma, Ajudeonu (2007) categorically stated that Education in Nigeria should among other things include:

- Production of well-motivated teachers with high personal and professional discipline, integrity and competence for all the levels of the educational system.
- Preparation of teachers with appreciable expertise in curriculum planning, development and delivery, as well as competence in research, guidance and counseling.
- Production of professionals who can combine use of conventional teaching strategies and the world unfolding Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the generation and imparting of knowledge, attitude and skills.

They further stated that "continuous preparation and upgrading of teachers who can stand out for their professional competence, sense of social responsibility and commitment, to function effectively as constructive socio-economic, moral and spiritual change agents needed to promote goodwill, peace and progress not only in the country, but also in the world of the 21st century is an obvious imperative."

Problems Encountered in Managing Colleges of Education in Nigeria

Madueke (1997) noted that for quality education to be achieved, there is need for effective management of teaching manpower. It is important to note that the college administrator is faced with numerous problems in a bid to achieve quality education.

Nwaham, Chukwuma, and Ajudeonu (2007) also buttressed the numerous problems encountered by the colleges to include:

i. Inadequacy of Teaching Manpower: The colleges do not have enough teaching manpower. This is in terms of quality and quantity of teaching manpower, because the students are not getting the best as in teaching and learning. This
Problems and Strategies for...

inadequacy negates positive achievement of the education objectives.

ii. **Incompetent Teachers**: Examination malpractices have led to the production of half-baked teachers who through godfatherism, found themselves in the teaching field. Many students with bright academic potentials have failed to actualize their life ambitions because incompetent and ineffective teachers teach them in the school.

iii. **Admission Requirements into the College of Education**: The admission requirements into the college tend to create the impression that only the rejected candidates of other tertiary institutions are easily admitted into the NCE programme of the institution. This problem is coupled with the problem of 3 credits and 2 passes minimum requirement for admission into the College of Education. What then is the future of our children that these crops of teachers will teach?

iv. **Inadequate Facilities**: There is, gross inadequacy of infrastructural facilities in most Nigerian Colleges of Education. This is noticeable during lectures and examination periods. During lectures in some courses like education, half of the class is found standing and during examination period, the examination halls do not accommodate students more especially when education courses are taken simultaneously with departmental courses. All these will lead to ineffectiveness on the part of the lecturer.

v. **Dissatisfied Teachers**: Ojo (1995) in Nwaham, Chukwuma and Ajudeonu (2007) succinctly said that there is hardly any profession in this country where the practitioners are so dissatisfied as the teaching profession, and hardly is there any profession in this country that loses its members to other professions or trades as teaching. The teachers from time to time leave their job for a greener pasture somewhere.

vi. **Under Funding**: The money available in the colleges is inadequate to finance all their activities. Internally generated revenue and/or subventions from either the state or federal government are grossly inadequate, depending on weather the institution is owned by state or federal government.
vii. Private Practice: It is very clear that some lecturers have turned their offices into commercial centers—engaging in buying and selling. Some also engage in commercial business outside the school to the detriment of their academic calling and purposes.

Strategies for Improving Quality Education in Colleges of Education
According to Nwaham, Chukwuma, and Ajudeonu (2007), education is a very crucial industry for the production of attitudes, skills, knowledge and personalities upon which modern technology, industrialization and organized development and production depend. In order to achieve the aims and objectives of education, human resources are involved. So there is need to look into the strategies and proper solutions that could bring about good management of the teaching manpower in Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Some of these strategies include:
1. Supervision: Reliability in the educational system can only be enhanced through supervision. Supervision of instruction is necessary for the provision of qualitative education in these colleges. Maduewesi (1990) opined that supervision is conducted in schools for the purposes of improvement of teaching and learning. Supervision of instruction in the college will bring about (a) maintenance of standard (b) availability of material resources for teaching (c) a meaningful exchange of ideas between teacher and administrator as to identify areas of problems in the pursuit of teaching and learning (d) that the minimum standard is being covered (e) that the policies of Ministry of Education regarding the administration of the Colleges of Education in Nigeria are being implemented.

2. Staff Development: Odor (1995) saw staff development as the process of training and retraining of staff members in an organization for the purpose of acquiring more academic or professional qualifications, knowledge, skills and competences for increased efficiency in their primary function for professional growth. The management of Colleges of Education in Nigeria should from time to time organize or sponsor its teachers for conferences. In fact, the research
carried out by Nwaham (2006) on the relevance of in-service training revealed that on-the-job training, workshops, conferences and seminars have influence on a teacher's competence.

3. **Provision of Conducive Academic Environment**: Maduewisi (1990) opined that for effective teaching and learning to take place, the learning environment has to be conducive. The learning environments include the classroom, surroundings, and physical facilities in the classroom as well as student-teacher relationship. The college management should provide conducive academic environment. Note that poor condition of service, large classes and inadequate teaching facilities strongly lead to teacher dissatisfaction and stress, making them less efficient and lack commitment to work.

4. **Funding**: Education is a money-consuming industry. There have been poor budgetary allocation to education. It is important to note that the colleges could harness the following sources of revenue viz:

   (a) **External Sources.** These include: (i) state and federal government overhead cost/subvention, and (ii) Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

   (b) **Internal Sources:** These include: (i) students fee (ii) produce from school farm (iii) consultancy services, and (iv) cyber cafe (computer center). It is hoped that when all financial resources available are well utilized, it will enhance the achievement of quality education in Colleges of Education in Nigeria

5. **Guidance and Counseling Services for Teachers**: The National Policy on Education recognized the relevance of guidance and counseling as one of the educational services to be put in place to facilitate the education of young children and youths (FRN, 2004). The provision of guidance and counseling services in the colleges will help to reform deviants and truants among teachers. The counselor can also organize seminars, conferences and workshops for teachers, guiding them against misconducts like involvement in examination malpractices and extortion among others.

6. **Staff Discipline**: Whawo (1999) saw discipline as the ability to respect constituted authority and established rules and regulations. The Provosts, as the Chief Executive of the
Colleges of Education in Nigeria should have power to exercise general authority over staff and shall have responsibility for discipline in the college. The following disciplinary actions may be taken against any teaching staff for any of the offences and shortcomings defined as misconduct in the regulations; (i) verbal warning/reprimanding (ii) query and written warning (iii) withholding/deferring increment (iv) reduction in grade/rank (v) interdiction (vi) suspension (vii) termination (viii) dismissal (ix) compulsory retirement. When there is an allegation of professional misconduct about any teacher, he should be given a fair hearing. If the principle of fair hearing is not adhered to in the proceedings, the court may declare such punishment resulting thereof as against the principles of natural justice and therefore null and void.

Conclusion
It is very clear that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Therefore, the teacher is the king-pin of quality in education anywhere in the world. Some of the identified problems that have hampered the achievement of quality education in Colleges of Education in Nigeria were identified as: inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate supervision of instruction and inspection of teachers, incompetent teachers, lack of dedication among teaching staff. It is hoped that through the adoption of the following strategies, quality education could be achieved in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. These strategies include: (i) adequate supervision of instruction, (ii) discipline of teaching staff, (iii) provision of guidance and counseling services (iv) provision of adequate and competent teaching staff, (v) provision of adequate funds, (vi) provision of conducive academic environment and (vii) professionalization of teaching.

Recommendations
The researcher recommends that for quality assurance in education to be achieved in Colleges of Education in Nigeria; the following must be taken into consideration:

1. The college management should harness the following sources of revenue viz-
   (a) Internal sources: These include: (i) students fee (ii) produce from school farm (iii) consultancy services, and (iv) cyber cafe (computer center),
(b) External sources. These include: (i) improved state/federal government overhead cost/subvention, and (ii) TETFund-Tertiary Education Trust Fund. When these financial resources are improved/harnessed and made available, the teaching manpower will certainly be enriched through sponsored further education, conferences, seminars and workshops. Where funding is improved, it will bring about the procurement of instructional materials, textbooks, ICT facilities and library services, which is a pivot to quality teaching manpower. It is hoped that when all financial resources available are well utilized, it will contribute to the achievement of quality education in the Colleges of Education.

2. Most of the lecturers were employed at the bane of quality of manpower. Further employment of teaching staff should be done on merit. Mediocrity should be seriously undermined.

3. The training and retraining of teaching manpower in colleges of education should be handled with greater vigor.

4. The teaching manpower of the colleges should be provided with accommodation within the institution's environment. This will enhance the handling of after school tutorial, monitoring and supervision of projects and micro-teaching among others. This will go a long way to enhance quality output of the teaching manpower.

References


