

# Improvement of Pre-Service Training of Student-Teachers for Quality Assurance in Secondary School Curriculum Implementation in Enugu state, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined the strategies for improving pre-service training of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation in Enugu State, Nigeria. Two research questions which used public opinion design guided the study. Using accidental and purposive sampling techniques, the study sampled three hundred (300) education students in two teachers' training institutions in Enugu State. A questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed among other things, that pre-service training need of student-teachers include: teaching methodology, curriculum implementation, use of information communication technology (ICT), classroom management and organization, etc.; that pre-service training could be improved upon through increased period of teaching practice and constant monitoring of student-teachers by school administrators, etc. The study gave recommendation based on the findings.

**Keywords:** Pre-service training, teacher's quality, quality assurance and curriculum implementation.

## 1. Introduction

Education is the bedrock and vehicle for any nation's development. It is the fulcrum of any societal change that will ever occur. It involves the transmission of society's cultural heritage, societal values and norms, indigenous knowledge and technology from one generation to another in order to enhance expected future change (Osokaya, 2010). But it should be borne in mind that in as much as education is the key to development, as Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) observed, it is also a key to quality manpower development, wealth creation, a realistic route to successful life and services to humanity. The quality of education of any nation determines the kind of citizens it produces. However, such educational quality is further influenced by the teacher's quality.

A teacher is one that helps to impart knowledge to a lesser knowledgeable person. The quality of a teacher greatly replicates the quality of a nation's educational system. No educational system can rise above its teachers' quality because the outcome of school-based learning is the by-product of the quality of the teachers. It has been generally accepted that teacher's quality has strong link and influence on the student's learning outcome (Puhan, Malla & Behera, 2014; Reina & Suleman, 2010; Oparah, Nwoke & Ikwuanusi, 2017). This is why Ogunyinka, et al (2015) further maintained that every nation's educational system can at best attain the same quality as that of its teachers. This is because, as major curriculum implementers, teachers, according to Alabi and Ige (2014) and Ogunyinka, et al (2015) translate theoretical policies into actions of which only these actions of theirs help to spur societal change. Thus, teachers are the greatest tool for development in a nation (Puhan, et al, 2014) like Nigeria and as such the quality of her teachers is too expedient for promoting quality assurance in her school curriculum implementation. It should be noted here therefore, that curriculum implementation is the final stage as well as the practical aspect of curriculum planning and development. According to Chaudhary (2015), it involves the act of practical execution of the school syllabuses and putting educational programmes into practical effect. Due to their unprecedented and crucial roles in curriculum implementation and the society, teachers stand therefore, as the soul of every educational system (Puhan, et al., 2014; Ogunyinka, et al, 2015) and without them the nation will be in disarray.

However, in this period of rapid technological development and innovation, growth and spread of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), globalization and economic development, pre-service training of teachers in Nigeria needs to correspond with such emerging global issues. This will make Nigeria to be able to compete confidently in the global community (Oyetola, Kayode & Okunuga, 2012). Hence, teachers' training institutions in Nigeria are saddled with the responsibility of producing quality teachers for quality assurance in her educational system. This is to enable the nation's educational system to be engulfed with these global changes and present her students with the opportunity of accessing various educational gains that will improve their contributions to the nation's development. To achieve this, Northcote and Lim (2009) maintained that nations are faced with challenges of producing teachers that will enhance quality delivery through their openness and adaptation to change. This need is however occasioned by global population explosion which has however accentuated incommensurate development in infrastructure (Odukoya, Chinedu, George, Olowookere, Agbude, 2015), supply and distribution of food and intensified unemployment. Thus it has left nations with the

role of producing self reliant, creative and innovative citizens through quality education. Under this clime, teaching and learning in Nigeria need to be improved upon through improved pre-service training of teachers so as to produce quality citizens that can at best compete globally and spur societal development. Therefore, quest for quality assurance in curriculum implementation as argued by Odukoya, et al (2015) seems to be more justified and acceptable.

Similarly, Ogunyinka, et al (2015) submitted that the Nigerian education system needs to embrace change in order to meet up with the social, economic and technological needs of the society through responsive education. However, the basic problem of such educational system as observed by Okobia (2013) is thus the need to improve the quality of its teachers who could easily adapt to change for international best practice in its education system. This however, is to produce resourceful persons that will be needed in her economic and industrial spheres. Based on this, it is believed therefore that improved pre-service training of student-teachers can at best help to produce resourceful, efficient and effective teachers that will ensure quality assurance in school curriculum implementation for national development.

According to Ogunyinka, et al, (2015) pre-service training of student-teachers is the professional education given to student-teachers in order to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge that will allow them become effective and efficient classroom teachers that will ensure quality assurance in the implementation of the school curriculum. Also, pre-service training of teachers can be seen as the professional training given to student-teachers that requires both theoretical and practical aspects. Thus, it is the singular act done in order to produce prospective teachers who are professionals and can at best compete with international best practices through their effective and efficient implementation of the school curriculum. The theoretical training is the course work done by the student-teachers while in the school. The practical training encompasses teaching practice exercise. Oparah, et al (2017) stressed that good teaching practice (TP) is the determining factor to success and quality of the teaching profession. This is because TP equips the student-teachers with the needed competence and experience in teaching profession. Hence, Oparah, et al (2017) and Nakpodia (2011) maintained that this is largely due to the fact that TP gives the student-teachers the opportunity to practice their learnt theories in schools.

According to Osokaya (2010), teacher education (pre-service training) is seen as the root for quality and relevance in education. This is because the level of training given to teachers are what they translate in the classroom. This is why Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012) argued that the success of every educational system depends largely on the quality and adequacy in the supply of teachers. In addition, Muller as cited in Fordham (2012) asserts that teachers are the authoritative agents of pedagogy who champion the cause of social change. Therefore, if Nigerian education system must promote development, pre-service training of teachers must have to be taken very serious. There is therefore a vital need to improve the quality of training given to student-teachers who are expected to translate into action the educational policies intended to develop Nigeria. To buttress this, Adewuyi (2012) and Alabi and Ige (2014) retained that a good pre-service training of teachers can at best help to spur self-reliance, good economy and provide lucrative citizens that will help champion the cause of Nigerian national development. This, however, will also help to ensure quality assurance in the secondary school curriculum implementation in Nigeria.

According to Ayeni (2011), quality assurance in education is a systematic way of managing, monitoring and evaluating the performance of school administrators, teachers and students with the aim of assessing their concordance with educational goals. Similarly, Ayeni (2012) saw quality assurance in education as proper evaluation of educational input strategies with the aim of meeting to standard quality. It is a means of making sure that the best and the required actions are taken in educational system for improved social change (Obadara & Alaka, 2013). However, quality assurance in education can be seen as a systematic way of ensuring that teachers effectively translate educational theories, goals and objectives into action while retaining the stipulated standard that can allow learners to fully apply them in their daily lives. There is great need, therefore, to ensure quality assurance in Nigerian education system as this will help maintain standard in her education system.

However, need for quality assurance and the strategies for improving it in Nigeria education system have been widely documented in various literatures (Ifedili, 2015; Fasasi & Oyeniran, 2014; Okoro, 2015; Obadara & Alaka, 2013; Ayeni, 2011). However, Ayeni, (2011) stressed that the need for quality assurance in Nigerian education system has attracted the attention of many educational stakeholder so as to improve the individuals that can help develop the society. Thus ensuring quality assurance in curriculum implementation is a task that Nigerian education system is saddled with. For this reason, Oparah, et al (2017) averred that such task extends to teachers' training institutions in Nigeria who are expected to produce quality teachers through improved quality of pre-service training for quality assurance in curriculum implementation.

However, the falling standard of Nigerian education system calls for evaluation of the training given to student-teachers so as to enhance quality assurance in curriculum implementation. This is because, as a weapon against ignorance, disease and conflict, education needs to be sound; hence improved pre-service training of teachers could help achieve this through quality assurance of individual productivity (Ogunyinka, et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, Okobia (2013) argued that as many as teachers' training institutions in Nigeria, yet they have been cajoled for their inability to produce efficient and qualitative teachers that can promote quality assurance in the school curriculum implementation.

Many factors however, have been attributed to be the cause of this falling standard in the Nigerian education system. Basic among them is low quality of teachers as a result of inadequate training of student-teachers. However, lack of incentives to student-teachers and resultant ineffective teaching (Alabi & Ige, 2014), limited supervisors and supervision and non-involvement of subject-area teachers in supervision of student-teachers during teaching practice exercise have exacerbated the cases of truancy by student-teachers during TP (Nakpodia, 2011). These have constituted greater problems in pre-service training of student-teachers in Nigeria. Poor policy implementation and funding as well as mismanagement, poor service condition of teachers as well as brain drain, ignorance of how to use ICT by student-teachers also form parts of the problems facing pre-service training of student-teachers in Nigeria (Ogunyinka, et al, 2015). Consequently, as lamented by Fasasi and Oyeniran (2014), teachers have fallen below standard in curriculum implementation in Nigeria. It is based on this problematic background that the need for improving the pre-service training of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation is called for.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The expectation of all educational stakeholders is that teachers should do well to help achieve quality assurance in school curriculum implementation for national development. However, their performance after graduation as well as that of their students shows that they need improved training in different areas of teaching profession. It thus becomes a problem that this study seeks to solve by investigating on how to improve pre-service training needs of student-teachers for quality assurance in curriculum implementation.

## 3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the pre-service training needs of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation?
2. What are the strategies for improving pre-service training of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation?

## 4. Methods

### 4.1 Design of the Study

The study adopted a public opinion survey design. Nworgu (2015) maintained that public opinion design is used when the study seeks to find out people's opinion about a given issue or event that is of public interest in a given location – country, state, town, university campus, etc. Furthermore Nworgu (2015) maintained that the design uses a cross-section of the people to gather information about such public event. Their opinions, however, are generalized to represent what the entire population believes. This design is very much apt for this study because a cross-section of education students in University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu were used to gather the opinions of the general public (education students) about the improvement strategies for pre-service training of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation.

### 4.2 Area and Population of the Study

The area of the study is Enugu State. The population of the study comprised of all education students that have gone for or are still doing their Teaching Practice (TP) in government-owned teachers' training institutions (Universities and Colleges of Education) in Enugu State. There are four government-owned teacher's training institutions in Enugu state – two Federal-owned and two state-owned institutions. They were used because as government institutions, they are believed to engage in both practical and theoretical pre-service training regularly.

### 4.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampled comprised of three hundred (300) students that have gone for teaching practice from University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu using purposive and accidental sampling techniques.

### 4.4 Instrument for Data Collection and Method of Data Collection

Questionnaire was used to gather the data. The questionnaire comprised of two clusters. Cluster one had 6 items which were used to gather student-teachers' opinion about the pre-service training needs of student-teachers. Cluster two comprised of 8 items that were used to gather their opinions about the suggested strategies for

improving pre-service training of student teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation. The researchers administered the instrument by themselves to the respondents who responded to them and returned them back to the researchers immediately.

#### *4.5 Validation of the Instrument*

Three experts validated the instrument. One from measurement and evaluation, another from educational administration and planning and the other was from classroom management. The reason was for them to evaluate the extent at which the items measured what they were intended to.

#### *4.6 Method of Data Analysis*

Descriptive statistics – mean and standard deviation – were used to analyse the collected data. The data was graded on a four point scale: SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2 and SD = 1. Decision was made based on these points: 0.50 – 1.49 = SD; 1.5 – 2.49 = D; 2.50 – 3.49 = A; 3.50 – 4.00 = SA. However, any response that is below 2.5 was rejected and any from 2.5 and above was accepted for significance.

### **5. Results**

Results in table 1 reveal that the respondents agreed that pre-service student-teachers need improved training in areas like: curriculum implementation for quality assurance, innovative teaching methods, how to effectively use ICT in teaching as well as training on the ethics of teaching profession. However, the respondents strongly agreed that student-teachers need improved training on effective classroom management and organization as well as how to effectively use instructional materials in teaching and learning. The grand mean suggests that the respondents agreed that student-teachers need improved pre-service training on several areas of their professional preparation in order to ensure quality delivery in secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. The results in table 1 indicate that even student-teachers are aware that the quality of pre-service training given to them is not quantifiable to the required standard needed in order to ensure education for national development in Nigeria. Thus, they agreed that there is need for improvement in such trainings.

The results in table 2 reveal that the respondents agreed that as part of strategies for improving the quality of pre-service training of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation, three terms teaching practice will suffice. Also, they agreed that regular monitoring of student-teachers and constructive criticism by subject area teachers; as well as appropriate rating of student-teachers by school administrators (principal) as part of their assessment will help improve the quality of training given to them.

Furthermore, the respondents strongly agreed that a better-equipped micro-teaching laboratory, financial reinforcement of student-teachers during teaching practice, effective supervision by their supervisors and regular feed-back on their performance can be used as part of strategies of improving the quality of pre-service training given to student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation. The grand mean shows that the respondents agreed that the suggested strategies for improving pre-service training of student-teachers are in order. Therefore, the result indicates that the above suggested strategies could help revamp the quality of pre-service training of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation.

### **6. Discussion**

The quality of pre-service training given to student-teachers replicates their quality delivery in secondary school curriculum implementation in the classroom. However, in recent years, their poor training quality that have had negative effect on their professional practice as teachers has become a worrisome reoccurring issue to the educational stakeholders in Nigeria. Such worry, nevertheless informed this study which sought to proffer solutions on how to ensure quality assurance in the pre-service training of student-teachers. The result of the study revealed that even the student-teachers themselves are worried over the poor pre-service training they are being given. Thus, they also shared their own views about the areas of training they need improvement on. The result suggested that student-teachers need more training on classroom management and organisation and on how to appropriately use instructional materials in teaching more than any other training need. However, they also need to be trained on how to effectively implement the school curriculum, observe teaching professional ethics and norms as well as use innovative teaching methods and ICT in teaching so as to ensure quality delivery of the curriculum contents. Moreover, the findings of this study responded to the problem of ignorance of the use of ICT in pre-service training of student-teachers as lamented by (Osokoya, 2010 and Ogunyinka, et al., 2015). Also, they are in line with Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012) who maintained that as part of the pre-service training given to student-teachers, the knowledge of the use of ICT in teaching and learning should also be incorporated in it especially in a current technology-driven world of ours. Therefore, the findings of this study suggested that student-teachers are aware that ICT has become a very important aspect of technology that enhances teaching and learning; thus, its usage system should be incorporated into the pre-service training given to them.



In furtherance, National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) recommended that the minimum period of teaching practice (TP) should be twelve weeks (12wks) (Okobia, 2013; Oparah, et al., 2017). However, this standard does not encourage quality assurance in student-teachers' pre-service training. This is because the duration is too short for them to fully put into practice their learnt theories in schools as classroom teachers. This, however, is even exacerbated by some teachers' training institutions that do not send their student-teachers for teaching practice for one complete term. Rather, as Oparah, et al., (2017) retained, it is split into six weeks in third year and six weeks in final year. Such regrettable ugly situation caused Nakpodia (2011) to lament that most student-teachers as a matter of fact, most times, see TP as an exercise used to complete their course requirement in school as well as a period they engage in practical examination outside their school environment. Consequently, they do not put much interest in the exercise especially once they have been supervised. Therefore, they leave their practicing schools for their own schools after the exercise as "half-baked teachers" as lamented by Nakpodia (2011, p. 37).

However, the findings of this study revealed that as a strategy for improving quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation, there is need then therefore, to extend the period of teaching practice to at least one full academic year. According to Nakpodia (2011), such act will be culminated in full professionalization of teaching profession thereby making it to last for five years at Degree level and four years at NCE level. Thus, in the penultimate years of the two programmes, student-teachers can use that one year for their teaching practice or internship education. This, however, will equip student-teachers with the required practical professional skills needed in carrying out their professional task of teaching in future (Akindutire & Ekundayo, 2012).

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that a better equipped micro-teaching laboratory will in a large extent help improve the pre-service training given to student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation. Also, adequate feedback on student-teachers' performance will be useful. In furtherance, the study revealed that financial reinforcement of student-teachers during their teaching practice, active involvement of subject area teachers in student-teachers' assessment and the collaborative regular supervision of the student-teachers by supervisors and school administrators, will be appropriate measures to be used in improving the quality of pre-service training given to student-teachers. Moreover, these findings are in agreement with Nakpodia (2011) and Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012) whose findings revealed that financial remuneration should be used to encourage student-teachers to be committed so as to become future professional teachers that will spur national development in Nigeria.

## 7. Conclusion

Teachers have been generally accepted to be the soul of every nation's educational system and their quality determines the quality of the educational system of every nation. Thus, adequate care needs to be taken as regards their pre-service training. In Nigeria, pre-service training of student-teachers has been engulfed by myriad of challenges; hence, low quality output in her educational system. This study however, through the opinions of student-teachers in Enugu State found out that student-teachers need improved training in different areas of teaching profession for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation. Moreover, strategies like extension of teaching practice duration, financial reinforcement of student-teachers during TP, regular supervision by their supervisors as well as school administrators' involvement in their assessment, etc. some found to be widely believed by the respondents to be the measures to be used to revamp the quality of pre-service training of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation.

## 8. Recommendations

- Lecturers in teachers' training institutions in Nigeria should do well to effectively teach students-teachers how to use ICT, instructional materials and various innovative teaching methods while teaching so as to ensure quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation in Nigeria.
- Also, government and other educational stakeholders (Non-governmental organizations and private individuals) should give more financial support to faculties of education across the federation so that well-equipped micro-teaching laboratories could be provided for teaching the student-teachers the art and science of teaching for quality assurance in her educational system.
- Administrators of faculties of education across Nigeria should cooperate with secondary school administrators in assessing student-teachers during their teaching practice. This will help to ensure more qualitative and accurate assessment of student-teachers and enhance their quality curriculum content delivery.
- Education administrators and curriculum planners are advised to make teaching practice to last for one full academic year. This will make the student-teachers to fully master the art of teaching before graduating from the school. It will also be a stepping stone towards the full professionalization of the teaching profession in Nigeria.

- Educational stakeholders (government, non-governmental organizations and private individuals) and the hosting schools should financially reinforce the student-teachers across the federation for them to be motivated to fully learn the practical aspect of teaching.

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**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-Service Training Needs of Student-Teachers for Quality Assurance in Secondary School Curriculum Implementation?**

S/N	ITEMS STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	N.R.	Sum	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Classroom management training for effective organization of the classroom.	200	100	-	-	300	1100.00	3.66	.47	SA
2.	Curriculum implementation training for effective interpretation of the content.	124	142	8	26	300	964.00	3.21	.86	A
3.	Innovative teaching methods training for appropriate use of methodologies in the classroom.	153	130	-	17	300	1019.00	3.39	.76	A
4.	Training on how to use Information and Communication Technology in teaching.	162	122	4	10	300	1040.00	3.46	.69	A
5.	Training on how to use instructional materials in teaching and learning.	192	100	4	4	300	1080.00	3.60	.58	SA
6.	Training on the ethics and norms of teaching profession for teachers to be disciplined and be able to discipline the students.	137	145	10	8	300	1011.00	3.37	.67	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>								3.44	.16	A

**NB:** N.R. = Number of Respondents. SD= Standard Deviation;  $\bar{X}$ = Mean

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the suggested strategies for improving pre-service training of student-teachers for quality assurance in secondary school curriculum implementation?**

S/N	Items Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N.R.	Sum	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Equipped micro-teaching laboratory.	200	78	18	4	300	1074.00	3.58	.66	SA
2	Three terms elongation of teaching practice.	78	130	70	22	300	864.00	2.88	.88	A
3	Constant monitoring of student-teachers by subject-area teachers.	136	136	20	8	300	1000.00	3.33	.71	A
4	Appropriate rating of student-teachers by school principals.	102	130	56	12	300	922.00	3.07	.82	A
5	Constructive criticism of student-teachers by subject-area teachers during teaching practice.	108	120	60	12	300	924.00	3.08	.84	A
6	Reinforcing of student-teachers during teaching practice.	160	130	10	-	300	1050.00	3.50	.56	SA
7	Effective supervision of student-teachers by their supervisors during teaching practice.	210	78	8	4	300	1094.00	3.64	.60	SA
8.	Feedback on performance of student-teachers.	162	121	14	-	300	1051.00	3.50	.58	SA
<b>Grand Mean</b>								3.32	.27	A

**NB:** N.R. = Number of Respondents. SD= Standard Deviation;  $\bar{X}$ = Mean