

An Evaluation of the Untrained Teachers Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE) Programme in Ghana

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Abstract

Research has shown that a sufficient number of competent teachers are required in order to improve the quality of educational processes in any country. Thus, an education system that aims to offer quality education for all young people should be able to count on teachers who are well trained. The study seeks to evaluate the Untrained Teachers Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE) programme with respect to the performance of the untrained teachers who went through the programme. The study employs an ex-post-factor design to assess the facts after the implementation of the programme and the basic instrument used for the study was the questionnaire. It was revealed that majority of the untrained teachers who went through the programme had many benefits and that they held a good perception about the programme. One major recommendation of the study was that the Ministry of Education should ensure that teachers who are beneficial of the UTDBE programme are accorded the same recognition as those who went to the Colleges of Education in respect of promotion and upgrade of teachers.

Keywords: Ghana; institute of education; ministry of education; ghana education service; untrained teachers diploma in basic education; colleges of education.

Introduction

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato defined education as ‘the turning of the eye of the soul from darkness unto light’ (Opare, Quist, Anyagre & Frimpong, 2016). To the late former South African President, Nelson Mandela, “Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world”. In the same vein, Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations observed that: “Education is a human right with immense power to transform; on its foundation rests the cornerstone of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development”.

This means that education is a conversion or reconstruction of experiences that brings the individual from a state of ignorance and despondency. This reconstruction takes place in an instructional system. According to Koomson, Brown, Anyagre, Ahiatrogah and Dawson-Brew (2013), the instructional system is made up of the teacher, the search image and the learner. Although the components within the system are interrelated, the teacher plays the most important role.

Therefore, the quality of teachers is crucial in the success of education. An education system that aims to offer a quality education for all young people should be able to count on teachers who are well trained and adequately paid. The Ministers for Education, when they met together at UNESCO for its 32nd General Conference, also reaffirmed this: “We find indispensable the role of teachers as purveyors of knowledge and values and as community leaders responsible for the future of our young. We should do everything in our power to support them and to learn from them” (UNESCO, 2003).

Furthermore, the quality of teachers does not only benefit the pupils but it has national consequences as well. According to UNESCO, increasing the number and quality of teachers is an essential element in the pursuit of achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015 (UNESCO, 2006).

The problem of preparing, recruiting and deploying sufficient numbers of teachers to meet the demand in schools is not confined to Ghana. Many other countries are grappling with the problem. In 2004, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimated that 18 million new teachers would be needed globally by 2015 and almost 4 million of these would be needed in Africa (UIS 2006). The United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals Report 2013 states that more than half of the world’s out-of-school children live in sub-Saharan Africa (UN, 2013).

In 2003, Government of Ghana (GoG) was faced with the problem of having 40 % of teachers in primary schools in Ghana being untrained and that their number and share were likely to rise to 52% by 2010 (UNESCO, 2003). In addition, the successful implementation of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme required the services of a large number of qualified teachers who were well equipped in teaching, particularly, in primary methodology. Though the traditional Colleges of Education (CoEs) produced teachers annually, they were unable to meet the demand of the numerous basic schools in the country. Thus, in September 2003, the Ministry of Education through the Teacher Education Division (TED) of Ghana Education

Service (GES) developed strategies to upgrade all untrained teachers through a flexible ICT-enhanced open and distance learning programme to augment qualified teachers produced by the CoEs. A need assessment was conducted and it was revealed that there was demand for such a programme (MOE/TED, 2004). At the time, there were over 24,000 untrained teachers serving in Ghana's schools and the intention was to replace these with trained teachers.

The overall responsibility for administering the course was with TED which went ahead to develop a four-year in-service teacher development programme spanning the period 2003-2011. Designated Colleges of Education (CoEs) had a critical role to play in the area of provision of residential courses, oversight responsibility for practice teaching, and the marking of module assignments. In addition, it was agreed that the accrediting body would be the same as the accrediting body for the CoEs. This was the Institute of Education (IoE) of the University of Cape Coast (UCC) that Regional and District Education staff would have defined roles. The District staff advertised availability of places, interviewed potential trainees, and reported on these to the TED.

According to Sofo, Thompson and Kanton (2015) the programme designed was to assist all serving untrained teachers to have access to professional teacher training, improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially, in the disadvantaged communities and increase the number of trained teachers by training the untrained teachers. The most interesting thing was that the programme kept teachers teaching in their schools while simultaneously upgrading their skills. The pilot phase of the program started in 2004 in the three northern regions; Northern, Upper East, Upper West and the Afram Plains in the Eastern Region and Central Region. These were considered to be the most deprived areas in the country. In 2005, it was extended to the Brong-Ahafo and Ashanti regions. The Greater Accra and the Volta regions were the last to be covered. In all, over eighteen thousand untrained teachers successfully completed the programme with either a Diploma or Certificate 'A'.

The importance of trained teachers in quality education delivery in any country cannot be overemphasised and because of this, a lot of studies have been carried out since the inception of the UTDBE programme in Ghana. Thus, studies evaluating the UDTBE programme are not new. For example, in Ghana, while Ossei-Anto, Boakye, Bediako, Adu-Yeboah and Nti (2010) carried out a study on "training of the untrained teachers: challenges and solutions", Bondah, Ampomah and Osei-Owusu (2015) have also done a study on how these trainees manage their stress during the programme since most of them were adults.

However, no study has been carried out to evaluate the whole programme in respect to the challenges these trainees faced during the programme and how the programme has benefitted them. This study therefore contributes to literature on the evaluation of the Untrained Teachers in Diploma in Basic Education programme in Ghana, with specific focus on the perceptions of the trainees themselves.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the extent to which untrained teachers who went through the programme have benefited?
2. What challenges do teachers who went through the UTDBE face in the profession?
3. How do teachers who have gone through the UTDBE perceive the programme?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is a statistical significant difference between male and female with regards to the benefit they have delivered from the programme.
2. There is statistically significant difference in the benefits untrained teachers who have gone through the UTDBE programme have had with respect to their ages.

Methodology

The study employed an ex-post-facto design to the facts after the implementation of the programme. Sarantakos (2005) describes an ex-post-facto design as one which assesses an impact or effect of an intervention.

Population

The study comprised all teachers in Ghana who went through the programme totalling 18,702.

Sample and Sampling

Going by the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size, 376 was arrived at. According to them, a population of over eighteen thousand corresponds to a sample of 376. However, the population was stratified into three zones. The Northern zone comprised the Upper East, Upper West and the Northern regions. The central zone also comprised the Brong Ahafo, Ashanti and Eastern regions while the southern zone

comprised Central, Western, Volta and Greater Accra regions. The lottery method was used to select one region from each zone. The selected regions were Upper East, Brong Ahafo and Central regions. In Upper East, all the three districts were captured. The Brong-Ahafo region had 19 districts; out of which five were used for the study. Again, the central region had 17 districts but five out of them were included in the study through a lottery method technique. Quota was assigned to selected districts proportionately. After this, the respondents were selected purposively.

Instrumentation

The basic instrument used for this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in order to assess the impact of the UTDBE programme on the performance of teachers who have gone through it. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A contained a set of questions designed to measure the demographic characteristics of respondents; Section B had a set of questions designed to ascertain the benefits respondents have derived from the programme, while Section C contained questionnaire was designed to examine the challenges faced after the completion of the programme. The last section D dealt with the perceptions of the respondents on the programme.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

The face and content validity of the research instrument was ascertained by the researcher and an expert to ensure that items in the questionnaire were capable of eliciting the needed information. The instrument was pilot tested in the Volta Region and yielded a cronbach alpha of 0.87. According to Cohen and Cohen a cronbach alpha coefficient between 0.7 and 1.0 is seen to be good and reliable.

Results

The results are presented in terms of research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1

What is the extent to which untrained teachers who went through the programme have benefited from it?

Table 1: Benefits untrained teachers have delivered from UTDBE

Items	Not at all beneficial		Not beneficial		Beneficial		Very beneficial	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am able to prepare effectively and adequately for my lesson	6	1.60	8	2.13	238	63.30	124	32.97
I am better placed to write my lesson plan	3	0.80	1	0.27	294	78.19	78	20.74
I am able to state specific, relevant, measureable and achievable objectives which are linked to classroom activities	9	2.39	12	3.19	301	80.05	54	14.37
I am able to state core points for all activities which relate to and clarify main skills that are related to lesson objectives.	0	0	4	1.06	349	92.82	23	6.12
I am better placed to organize teaching and learning activities sequentially, logically, use varied pedagogical skill and maintain balance between teacher and student activities.	1	0.27	5	1.33	368	97.87	2	0.53
I have gained knowledge in how to use a variety of assessment techniques to determine understanding of pupils.	3	0.80	23	6.12	299	79.52	51	13.56
I now exhibit command of subject matter and exude confidence and foster critical thinking among pupils	0	0	2	0.53	371	98.67	3	0.80
I am able to establish powerful learning environment and encourage cooperative learning and monitor pupils' learning activities.	1	0.27	1	0.27	372	98.93	2	0.53

The first research question intended to find out the benefits that teachers who went through the UTDBE had received at the end of the programme. The results revealed that on all the items that measured the benefits respondents had derived, more than 60% indicated they had benefited from the programme. The results again revealed that, over 90% of the respondents on each of the items indicated that the programme was either beneficial or very beneficial This was interpreted as beneficiary. The finding of the study therefore is that the UTDBE programme was beneficial to the untrained teachers who went through the programme.

Research Question 2

What do teachers who went through the UTDBE face in the profession?

Table 2: Challenges untrained teachers are faced with after the completion of UTDBE

Items	Very challenging		Challenging		Not challenging		Not at all challenging	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
My upgrade took a lot of time.	52	13.83	297	78.99	23	6.12	4	1.06
There are not enough resources to practice some of the things we went through	58	15.43	301	80.05	16	4.25	1	0.27
Some of my colleagues still lack confidence in me to delivery effectively.	69	18.35	289	76.86	13	3.46	5	1.33
The programme was too packed and because of that I missed the understanding of some concepts and this reflect in my teaching	28	7.45	335	89.09	11	2.93	2	0.53
Tutors who taught us have made mention of child centered methods but they did not use the approach in teaching us.	24	6.38	254	67.56	81	21.54	17	4.52

The research question ascertained the challenges untrained teachers who went the UTDBE face after the completion of the programme. The results showed that more that 65% of the respondents indicated that they face challenges on all the items that measure they level of challenges. Again, more than 75% of the respondents indicated either challenging or very challenging on all the items that assessed the level of challenge they after the UTDBE programme. This revealed that untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme face challenges after their completion of the programme.

Research Question 3

How do teachers who have gone through the UTDBE perceive the programme?

Table 3: Perceptions of untrained teachers on UTDBE programme

Items	Very perception		Poor perception		Good Perception		Very Perception		Good
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
The programme must be maintained in to help several other untrained teachers	8	2.13	8	2.13	353	93.88	7	1.86	
There should be more government assistance in terms of funding and logistics	3	0.80	5	1.33	329	87.5	39	10.37	
The programme has been helpful	2	0.53	6	1.60	361	96.01	7	1.86	

The focus of this research question was to assess the perception held by the untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme. The results showed that more 87% of the respondents indicated they had good perceptions on all the items. More than 90% of the respondents indicated that they either good perception or very good perception on all the items. This implies that untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme hold a good perception of the programme.

Hypotheses

1. There is a statistical significant difference between male and female teachers with regards to the benefit they have derived from the programme.

Item	Sex	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
I am able to prepare effectively and adequately for my lesson	Male	113	2.99	.820	.825	.410
	Female	163	3.07	.807		
I am better placed to write my lesson plan	Male	113	2.90	.742	1.279	.202
	Female	163	3.01	.840		
I am able to state specific, relevant, measureable and achievable objectives which are linked to classroom activities	Male	113	2.62	.833	.671	.502
	Female	163	2.56	.865		
I am able to state core points for all activities which relate to and clarify main skills and are related to lesson objectives.	Male	113	2.75	.819	1.185	.237
	Female	163	2.86	.864		
I am better placed to organize teaching and learning activities sequentially, logically, uses varied pedagogical skill and maintain balance between teacher and student activities.	Male	113	2.59	.829	.566	.572
	Female	163	2.64	.868		
I have gained knowledge in how to use a variety of assessment techniques to determine understanding of pupils.	Male	113	3.13	.771	2.414	.016
	Female	163	2.91	.923		
I now exhibit command of subject matter and exude confidence and foster critical thinking among pupils	Male	113	3.02	.860	.195	.846
	Female	163	3.01	.940		
I am able to establish powerful learning environment and encourage cooperative learning and monitors pupils' learning activities.	Male	113	2.87	.876	.638	.524
	Female	163	2.81	.989		
Mean of Means	Male	113	2.79	.760	.891	.374
	female	163	2.86	.828		

The hypothesis was formulated to ascertain if difference exists between male and females teachers with regards to the benefit they have received from UTDBE programme. The hypothesis was tested at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the results showed that at $df = 374$, $p = 3.374$ which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, we reject the Hypothesis and indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme.

2. There is statistically significant difference in the benefits untrained teachers who have gone through the UTDBE programme have had with respect to their ages.

Item	Age	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
I am able to prepare effectively and adequately for my lesson	Young	84	2.90	.851	1.169	.243
	Old	192	2.78	.986		
I am better placed to write my lesson plan	Young	84	3.34	.796	.140	.014
	Old	192	3.06	.828		
I am able to state specific, relevant, measureable and achievable objectives which are linked to classroom activities	Young	84	2.44	.763	.729	.466
	Old	192	2.50	.786		
I am able to state core points for all activities which relate to and clarify main skills and are related to lesson objectives.	Young	84	3.07	.817	.476	.634
	Old	192	3.02	.937		
I am better placed to organize teaching and learning activities sequentially, logically, uses varied pedagogical skill and maintain balance between teacher and student activities.	Young	84	2.90	.886	1.434	.152
	Old	192	3.03	.819		
I have gained knowledge in how to use a variety of assessment techniques to determine understanding of pupils.	Young	84	3.52	.820	.172	.042
	Old	192	3.03	.774		
I now exhibit command of subject matter and exude confidence and foster critical thinking among pupils	Young	84	2.94	.734	1.223	.022
	Old	192	2.36	.777		
I am able to establish powerful learning environment and encourage cooperative learning and monitors pupils' learning activities.	Young	84	2.83	.798	1.583	.114
	Old	192	2.97	.823		
Mean of Means	Young	84	3.42	.870	1.375	.017
	Old	192	3.04	.822		

The hypothesis was formulated to ascertain if difference exists between young and old untrained teachers with regards to the benefit they have derived from the UTDBE programme. The hypothesis was tested at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the results showed that at $df = 374$, $p = .017$ which is less than 0.05. Therefore, we fail to reject the hypothesis which implies that there no is statistically significant difference in the benefits untrained teachers who have gone through the UTDBE programme have had with respect to their ages.

Discussion

It was revealed in the study that the respondents had benefited immensely from the UTDBE programme. This finding is consistent with the finding of Furgeson (2013) when he found that an in-service programme run for teachers in Zambia to improve their competencies yielded positive results. Furgeson (2013) contended that the teachers had improved in the pedagogical strategies than before when 83.6% agreed that their pedagogical strategies had improved tremendously.

Akoto (2015) also studied 'distance education for teacher education in Ghana: an investigation into untrained teachers' experiences' and revealed that the training of these untrained teachers had been beneficial to them and to their pupils.

In Ghana Education Service, the salary of workers commensurate with the level of qualification one has obtained. It, therefore, suggests that these teachers are better remunerated in terms of salaries than before. This will obviously improve their social standing, standard of living and life chance. They now earn more after the programme and are better placed to take care of themselves and their families.

In terms of professional development, these teachers have become much more grounded in the search image and the instructional processes. The results revealed that 98.7% indicated that the item "I now exhibit command of subject matter and exude confidence and foster critical thinking among pupils" was beneficial.

Behavioural psychologists are of the view that motivation is a necessary condition for learning. Nwunka (2016) posits that reinforcement will get the below average student to get over and above himself and sustains the above average pupils. The UTDBE programme exposed the untrained teachers to how to effectively manage their classes or lessons. To this end, the teachers' work become much easier as pupils cooperate and their interests sustained. This is manifested in the results of the study as 98.9% of the respondents had benefited on the item "I am able to establish powerful learning environment and encourage cooperative learning and monitors pupils' learning activities".

Emile Durkheim, a French philosopher and educator is attributed to the statement "an unexamined life is not worth living". This statement transcends all spheres of life. In education, evaluation is a critical component as it allows educators to find out whether or not the instructional objectives are achieved. It also helps teachers to measure their own performances and that of their pupils. Knowledge of how to carry out evaluation in the classroom is imperative to the success of the lesson (Tamaklo, Amedahe and Atta, 1996). Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the untrained teachers revealed that they had benefited on the item "I have gained knowledge in how to use a variety of assessment techniques to determine understanding of pupils".

In the second research question that set out to find the challenges untrained teachers face after the completion of the UTDBE programme, it was revealed that the untrained teachers face some challenges. According to Boadu (2016), one of the fundamental challenges of Ghanaian teachers has to do with issues of professional upgrade and promotions. He found in the Tachiman municipality that 79% out of the 160 teachers he studied in connection with the performance pupils in that municipality expressed concerns about the delays that had to go through in getting them upgrade to their desired levels after the completion of their various programmes of study. This finding is supported by the finding of the current study when 79% of the respondents indicated that their upgrade took a lot of time.

The time lag within which the programme run was a serious concern for the teachers because after the completion of the programme, the pupils still feel inadequate in some of the concepts and constructs they were taught in school. This challenge of the untrained teachers is well placed because the programme was structured as though they were regular pupils of the colleges of education who were spending three years for their programme of study. The question that readily comes to mind is whether the untrained teachers who went through UTDBE programme can match their colleagues who went through the Diploma in Education programme at the CoEs? According to Douglas (2013) the length of time of a training programme is not what really matters but what is of essence is the quality of time spent on the programme. If this assertion of Douglas is anything to go by then the teachers should not have encountered such a challenge. Associationists' perspective of learning holds that time is a factor in learning. If time is not taken to digest the information then assimilation and accommodation of the information become problematic. This is the case of the untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme. This was evident on the item "The programme was too packed and because of that I missed the understanding of some concepts and this reflect in my teaching" which had 89% of the respondents indicating that as a challenge.

The focus of the third research question was to assess the perception held by untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme. The study revealed that untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme hold a good perception of the programme. This finding is in line with the finding of Mensah (2014) who found that 91% out of 450 students on the University of Education who were on distance education programme held a good perception about the programme.

It is therefore in order to note that the untrained teachers held good perceptions about the programme they read. This will psychologically inure to their benefits since it will help them to develop positive self-image and

self-esteem. This will also translate in their teaching which will benefit their pupils and the nation at large. Nyarko-Sampson (2015) indicated that positive self-image and self-esteem are necessary for a successful career path.

The finding of the study is however inconsistent with the finding of Donkor (2012). He assessed the perception of a cross section of the Ghanaian public on the distance education programme of the University of Cape Coast and found out that 63% out of the 250 respondents had a poor perception of the programme. One of the reasons assigned was that a greater number of the pupils who access the programme are those who do not qualify for the university's mainstream admission.

The finding of the study also revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the benefits derived from the UTDBE programme by untrained teachers with respect to gender. The finding of the study is consistent with Amoako (2014) who found no statistically significant difference between male and female graduates of the department of business studies of College of Distance education with regard to how the programme had benefited them.

Amoako (2014), however, found statistically significant difference among the ages of graduates of the department of business studies of college of distance education in terms of how they have benefited from the programme. This finding is consistent with the finding of the current study. The finding revealed that there is statistically significant difference between young and old untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme with regards to the benefits they have derived from the programme. This finding could be attributed to the fact that the programme was packed in terms of content that had to be undertaken within a relatively shorter period of time. It required a lot of energy on the parts of the students. It therefore stands to reason that the young untrained teachers benefited more than their older counterparts.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the UTDBE programme has been beneficial not only to the untrained teachers who went through the programme but to the pupils and the country as a whole. According to a report submitted to the World Bank by Namit Kabira in 2017, the UTDBE-trained teachers showed skills and higher average scores comparable to teachers who had training before entering the classroom. Thus, the teachers have acquired skills and competencies that have improved their teaching. The programme is also more cost-effective than pre-service training. Furthermore, having more trained teachers means that Ghanaian children in disadvantaged areas now have the same educational opportunities as those in more developed areas.

The benefits notwithstanding, untrained teachers who went through the UTDBE programme faced some challenges and the major one has to do with issues of stigmatization of teachers who went through the programme, lack of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM), lack of internet connectivity at the rural areas, professional upgrading and payment of arrears and other allowances of teachers.

Implications for Management

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been put forward:

1. The University of Cape Coast, through the Institute of Education, should conduct a tracer study to find out how teachers who passed through the UTDBE programme are faring on the job.
2. The Institute of Education, in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service and National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) should organise refresher courses to compensate teachers' inadequacy.
3. The Ministry of Education should ensure clear-cut policies in the Education sector on the smooth management and implementation of promotion and upgrade of teachers.
4. The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service Ghana Education Service and the teachers' unions should educate members to help reduce or eradicate stigmatization of UTDBE graduates.
5. The Ministry of Education, through the Ghana Education Service, should ensure the availability of the teaching learning materials (TLMs) to enable the teachers to put to practice what they have learnt in school.
6. The Government and the Teacher Unions should provide social amenities in the rural areas so that trained teachers would accept postings to these so-called deprived areas.

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