

Attitude of Students towards Teaching Profession in Nigeria: Implications for Education Development

Dr. Sarah Oben Egwu

Department of Educational Foundations, Ebonyi State University, PMB 053 Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study was conducted to ascertain attitude of students towards teaching profession in Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. A sample of 300 students completed a 15 item questionnaire designed for the study the instrument was validated and the reliability calculated which was 0.92 using Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient indicating that the instrument was reliable to collect data for the study. Mean scores were used to answer the research questions. The results of the study showed that students have negative attitude towards teaching profession, that teaching is a difficult task, and teachers are not well paid compared to other professions. On the basis of the findings, it was recommended, among others, that Government should adequately fund education, there should be improvement in teacher's salary and regular payment of salary and parent should encourage their children to study education courses.

Keywords: Attitude, students, teaching profession

1. Introduction

The global claim that education is a major sure and potent instrument for the attainment of sustainable development in all human society today cannot be over-emphasized. Education is conceived as a powerful agency which is instrumental in bringing about the desired changes in the social and cultural life of a nation. Developing countries face barrage of extra-ordinary problems among which are abject poverty, ignorance etc. the solution of course, lies in proper education of the citizenry. Ogunna cited in Okemakido (2013) explained that education helps cushion high rate of literacy effect, emancipate the masses from the shackle of ignorance, equipping them with cognitive skills to induce development and make them aware politically economically, socially and enable them produce and develop teaming human resources, producing caliber of personnel imbued with skills for productivity.

Weje in Uwaifo (2009) opined that education unlocks the door of modernization and sustainable development and that, it is teachers that hold the key to the door. The whole process of education is shaped and mould by human personality called the teacher, who plays a pivotal role in any education system. Thus, the teacher has the responsibility of translating educational policies into practice and programmes into action. Okafor (1991) writing on the secret of American power pointed out that America built her greatness in the classroom. He enjoined developing countries to emulate America. It is clear from the fore going that the role of the teacher in sustainable development cannot be quantified, especially in the act of training personnel in various areas of workforce. However, there is need to be properly educated and trained for professional efficiency and inculcation of positive attitude that will enable one to go through the training properly and come out well equipped for the responsibility ahead. Many nations have solved many of their problems through education and the secret lies in the effective classroom activities, management and control (Nwanekezi, 2011).

The teacher is the pillar of educational development. Country's level of development among other things is hinged on the quality of education given to its citizenry by the teacher. On this premise, teachers' attitude, willingness, motivation and above all items or love for the teaching profession is the major focus of this work. It is important for the educational sector to have willful and talented teachers who will help to promote educational system which is almost at the dead point especially in Nigeria. Teachers constitute the most essential body of personnel within the educational system. They transmit accumulated knowledge of the present to generation upon generation and thus interpret this information with reference to the past with the view to modify the future. This responsibility is the professional role/duty of the teacher in the formal school setting.

Given the enormous responsibilities bestowed on the teacher by his calling and society, his condition of service remains pitiable. Infact, parents and indeed the society need to be educated to understand the realities about teacher and the teaching profession. It had never occurred to them that this negative and low rating of teachers have a boomerang effect on the educational system and the society at large. Lassa (1996), observed that inspite of the inevitability of teacher's role in espousing quality and standard performance of educational system, the sad truth remains that society almost all over the would have depicted a surprising hesitance in correlating the values and standard of teachers with the expected standard of education. In this regard, the maxim that to whom much is given much is expected is very apt.

Conversely, since very little is given to teachers in Nigeria, it is erroneous to expect so much from them. Notwithstanding the fact that teacher's remuneration is meager, it is not regular yet teachers like every other worker have their family and other dependents to cater for. Anikweze Ojo and Maiyanga (2002) observed

that no school leaver in Nigeria wants to be a teacher in view of the fact that teacher in Nigeria have been terribly and economically pauperized and emasculated. All these present the teacher as a poor, pitiable and helpless fellow in the society. Teaching has often been regarded, and generally referred as a profession. Profession, according to Enyi (2014), has to do with an occupation that has exclusive body of knowledge which are relevant to the society, and which members possess special skills and competencies acquired from training. The question is not only whether teaching is a profession but also does it enjoy the prestige of professionalism as is seen in medicine, law, Engineering Accountancy and other professional field (Nwite, 2012). Ascribing a perfect professionalism to teaching will help boost the moral of the serving teachers as well as of the prospective teachers in that there would not be a bias mind to whether teaching is a profession or not. Lawyers, Engineers medical practitioners etc were made by teachers. In spite of the good work of teachers in the society, there is still a wide spread misconceptions towards teaching profession. The public look down on teachers and his profession. The word teacher and its related terms to the public signify abject poverty inferiority and social misfit (Okemakinde 2013). Teaching, according to Okemakinde (2013) is unskilled job meant for women, the old and the poor. Teachers on their own believed on this as they regard themselves as less privileged compared to other profession concluding that their reward is in heaven. This believe about teachers might contributes to some extent the negative attitude of students towards teaching profession.

Federal Government of Nigeria (2014) in the National Policy on Education stated the cardinal objectives of education which are achievable by the teachers to include:

1. The inculcation of the national consciousness and National Unity.
2. The inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian Society.
3. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around the acquisition of appropriate skills abilities, competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. In line with the national educational objectives the policy outlined educational objectives for the primary, post primary and Higher education. Among all these objectives, the teacher is directly involved to the fulfillment of each goal.

Consequently, the attitude of students towards teaching profession however might be connected to the government attitude towards teaching profession government lay much emphasis on other sectors such as health, agriculture commerce and industry, politics etc by allocating huge amount of annual allocation to them with just little given to education sector. Teachers are not properly paid; salary is meager compared to other workers. This demoralizes would be teacher resulting to show negative attitudes towards the profession. Talk of the dilapidated structures in the school, lack of offices, over crowded classroom and over loaded teaching schedule. All these menace does not attract the attention of government. The situation is such that teachers find it difficult and shameful to appear before any social gathering and introduce themselves as teachers. Such a situation has resulted in most students' negatives attitude towards teaching profession.

Parent seeing that teaching profession does not accord any respect followed by poor salary, do not advice their children to go into it despite that they are the nation builders. Anikweze, Ojo and Mayanya (2002) assert that teachers should be the carrier of the culture of the society, the agent for its propagation, perpetuation and renewal, as well as the architect for its change for the better. Considering the above, a person who performs this role should be counted first before others in the society without him the society may remain in the dark.

In the 50s and 60s, teaching was an esteemed profession even though some of the practitioner was not highly educated, receives little or no pays (Eze 2004). The respect accorded to doctors, lawyers and other prestigious professions were given to teachers. Teachers were happier then and the dream of most parents at that time was for their children to become teachers because they were highly regarded in the society. No wonder, a renowned Nigerian, chief Obafemi Awolowo explained that the time he grew up, the elite of the society were pastors, catechists, teachers and clerks who were highly respected, admired and adored and his father wanted him to be so respected, so enjoined him to read well so as to take place in the elite group (Eze, 2004).

Surprisingly, a great deal have assumed, speculated and generalized about teachers in Nigeria and the status of teaching profession. This has attracted people's attention as expressed in articles, journals, newspapers, debates in media even in National and State House of Assemblies. The reason for this outcry is teachers' welfare which includes poor condition of service, poor and inadequate salary, and poor state of Nigerian schools among others. This ugly scenario tends to frustrate teachers' interest and effort toward teaching profession and has resulted to frequent strike actions and demonstration experienced in the educational sector. This actions are measures teachers use to show their grievances and dissatisfaction with their employers (Nwite, 2012). Ejiogu (1990) pointed out that yesterday's good teachers are not automatically today's good teachers. Today teacher are disheartened and humiliated. Teachers are not given their rightfully place in the country and these affect the desire to take to be a teacher. No teacher nowadays advices his child to take to teaching as a profession in fact, some teachers by word or deed discourage interested people from taking up teaching as a vocation. Worse still, the serving teacher if asked or given an option on whether to continue in his field or change to another area will

quickly choose to serve in another field simply because he is burnout and is paid too little. This in other words might discourage students coming into the profession. The question is since the serving teachers are dissatisfied with the profession why are larger numbers of students get enrolled in tertiary institutions where teachers are trained. To answer this question, there is need for empirical inquiry into attitude of students towards teaching profession as perceived by students of Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

Three research questions were formulated for the study thus.

1. How do students feel about teaching profession?
2. How does parental influence affect attitude of students towards teaching profession?
3. How does poor salary affect students' attitudes towards teaching profession?

2. Methods

In 2011/2012 session a descriptive survey was carried out among 3rd year (300 Level) to 4th year (400 Level) with a total population of 465 students. Using random sampling 300 respondents were selected as sample for the study. A self structured questionnaire titled attitude of students towards teaching profession (ASTOP) contained 15 items to be scored on the four point rating scale as Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (D) = 3, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2, and Disagree (D) = 1 were used to collect data.

Three experts in measurement and Evaluation and Educational Administration from Ebonyi state university were used for validating the instrument. Three hundred (300) students of Enugu State University, Enugu State were used for test of reliability using Pearson product moment correlating co-efficient. The data yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.98 indicating that the instrument was reliable for use. The researcher administered the 300 copies of the questionnaire on the respondent with the help of the course leader of each level. The respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire and return same to the researcher on the spot. This method ensured a 100% return rate of the questionnaire and the elimination of unnecessary influence.

Data were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) scores. A criterion mean of 2.50 was set for the study. In this case a mean score of 2.50 agree and a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as disagree.

3. Results

Table 1: Mean rating of students attitude towards teaching profession

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	SD	D	N	\bar{x}	Decision
1.	Students see teaching as a noble profession	120	100	15	65	300	3.0	Agree
2.	Students prefer teaching to other profession	10	75	115	100	300	1.9	Disagree
3.	Students feel like joining teaching profession so as to be popular in the society	10	30	20	250	300	2.1	Disagree
4.	Students see teaching a feminist work	100	100	45	55	300	2.8	Agree
5.	Students see workload in teaching as a difficult task	200	70	10	20	300	2.5	Agree

Table 1 shows that each items 1, 4 and 5 on students attitude towards teaching profession obtained a mean score of 3.0, 2.8 and 3.5 above 2.50, item 2 and 3 however, obtained mean score below 2.50 The above results shows that respondent rated items 1, 4 and 5 as agree while items 2 and 3 was rated disagree. This implies that most students do not like taking teaching as a profession because of its difficult nature, poor condition of service and poor salary as a result should be reserved for women.

Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on parent influence towards teaching profession

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	SD	D	N	\bar{x}	Decision
6.	Parents believe that teachers are poor and that is why the discourage their children from taken teaching as a profession	100	150	20	30	300	3.1	Agree
7.	Parents feel that teachers are neglected unlike medical doctors Lawyer Engineers among others	175	95	20	10	300	3.4	Agree
8.	Parents feel that teachers are not adequately remunerated	100	105	45	50	300	2.8	Agree
9.	Parents detest to teaching because teachers' welfare are always over looked by government	100	150	20	30	300	3.1	Agree
10.	Parent feel that any body can teach even without professional qualification	80	150	50	20	300	2.8	Agree

Table 2 shows that each of the items 6 to 10 on parent influence toward teaching profession obtained a mean scores of 3.1, 3.4, 2.8, 3.10 2.8 above criterion of 2.50. The result implies that the respondents rated all the items agree which shows that parents considers some factors before choosing or allowing their children to choose a career for themselves thus parents have a role to play in order to re-address the attitude of students towards teaching profession.

Table 3: Mean rating of respond remuneration and teaching profession

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	SD	D	N	\bar{x}	Decision
11.	Students run away from teaching because teachers are not well paid	100	150	20	30	300	3.1	Agree
12.	Students feels that the tedious nature of teaching job is not equivalent to the salary and incentives receivable by teacher	175	95	20	10	300	3.4	Disagree
13.	Students feel that teachers are strictly monitored by school supervisors and inspectors	100	105	45	50	300	2.8	Disagree
14.	Students feel that teachers are too economical due to the poor nature of their salary	100	150	20	30	300	3.1	Agree
15.	Students feel that teachers do not have time to enjoy themselves like others	80	150	50	20	300	2.8	Agree

Table 3 shows that each of the items 11 to 15 on remuneration and teaching profession obtained a mean scores of 3.1, 3.4, 2.8, 3.1, and 2.8 respectively above 2.50 showing agree. This results implies that students negative attitude towards teaching profession is as result of poor salary, salary and incentive receivable not equivalent to the tedious nature of job and lack of time to enjoy themselves like others in other profession.

4. Discussion

The study ascertained attitude of students toward teaching profession. Results of the study showed that thirteen (13) out of the fifteen (15) obtained a mean score above the criterion of 2.50 (see Table 1, 2 & 3). These results could imply that attitude of students towards teaching profession was negative. This was evident from the respective scores obtained which is above 2.50. These was as a result of the tedious nature of the teaching profession, poor remuneration of teachers, parents negative attitudes, poor condition of service, and poor educational materials among others. This has contributed to the low standard and control in the educational system. The findings were in line with those of Smitters and Robbison (2003) who reported that teaching is a difficult task when compared to other profession. Although salary is often mentioned as a possible inducement for teachers to stay into teaching profession salary is rarely given as the primary reason for leaving. Supporting this Kane and Mallon (2006) also reported that all the beginning teachers interviewed mentioned that the amount of paper work and administration they had encountered was the major down side to the job and returning teachers and head of departments both mentioned workload as aspect of the job they do not like. Hall and Langton (2006) in agreement with the results explained that parents have a great influence in their children choice of teaching as a profession. They observed that parents prefer to sponsor their children education in a more renowned field like medicine, law, engineering not education courses. Parents tend to see to their children's career choice as a decision into which they have some input. Eze (2004) supported the findings when he remarked that while the Doctor, physician, lawyers created an image of gentlemen and the best in the society, the name teacher elicited a feeling of insignificance and disrespect even vulgarity. The result is also in consonance with the Opinion, of Spear, Gould and Lee (2002) when they explained that poor salary was a primary reason for those intending to leave the profession and increase in salary was a way of improving teachers' morale. Additionally, Maheed (2004) stated that salary has been cited as a dissatisfied and an increase in salary as a starting point for increase in status. The foregoing tends to paint the picture that teaching is regarded by society as a lonely occupation whose practitioners desires only poor remuneration and little respect in the society. Furthermore, the finding reveals that teachers salary should be improved, most importantly paid regularly. Teaching should be professionalized and enjoy professional prestige. Moreover teachers should have passion for their profession while parents should encourage their children/ward to study education courses as a way of improving, attracting, recruiting and retraining teacher into teaching profession

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

It is evident that students have negative attitude towards teaching profession. A lot of factors have contributed to the negative attitude of students towards teaching profession among them are the meager nature of salary, irregular payment of salaries and fringe benefit, lack of promotion, excess work load, poor environment, parent negative influence and poor financing of education etc. To improve teaching profession and the education sector is to remedy this ugly situation recorded in the school system. Teachers are the pillars of educational development. The maxim that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers and that no nation can rise above the level of its teaching staff shows the essential role of the teacher is national development. Based on these, it was recommended that:

1. Government should ensure that teachers' salaries are placed high considering their role in nation building
2. Their condition of service should be improved being away that attractive salaries and fridge benefits

- will attractive and retain the best qualified and most efficient teacher
3. Teachers Registration Council (TRC) and other educational organization bodies such NUT, NTI, NCCE etc should help project teachers image and fight for their course by paying attention to development of their profession through capacity building programmes.
4. Parent should be educated on the need to encourage their children to study education courses and to avoid depriving the child his right for choice of course
5. Admission into teachers training institutions should be on merits and on first choice option
6. Government should organize capacity building programmes for serving teachers to improve on their skills attitudes and abilities for better performances of their roles.
7. The proliferation of teaching association should be discouraged. Teachers should maintain one umbrella that could pilot their affairs.

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