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An evaluation of the National Teachers' Institute's manpower training program for teaching personnel in mid-western Nigeria

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This study evaluated the manpower-training program for teaching personnel in mid-western Nigeria by the National Teachers' Institute. Overall, 240 participants involved in the training program who were randomly selected from the area constituted the sample for the study. A questionnaire designed by the authors was the major instrument used for data gathering. Analyses of the results showed that the programs are fairly effective in upgrading the skills and knowledge of the participants. It was also discovered that the programs have impacted on the level of performance of the participants in the area. It was recommended, inter alia, that the institute be adequately funded to enable it achieve its mandate to the fullest. Since the programs are considered relevant to the training needs of the participants, it would be proper to do everything humanly possible to consolidate on the gains of the programs.

Introduction

Every educational system in any known human society requires highly skilled teaching personnel to sustain it. This explains why teachers are regarded as the most important element in the school system. It is generally believed that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Hence training is often organised for teachers to upgrade and update their knowledge and skills. In Nigeria, the need for well qualified teachers has gained pre-eminence because it is considered as a means of not only providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to help educate those who cannot gain admission into regular programs but also assisting those who are unwilling to leave their jobs for full-time education and training programs.

Training is conceived as an organised procedure by which people learn and acquire knowledge and skills for a definite purpose (Oyitso 1997). Nwanchukwu (1990) sees training as the process of increasing human efficiency through which people are offered the opportunity to acquire new skills and current knowledge required in carrying out various specialised tasks in their place of work. Training and retraining are necessary if efficiency and profits are to be attained. When people are offered training, they acquire new and improved skills and knowledge that will enable them to perform better, thereby enhancing their level of productivity. Training and retraining for teachers, therefore, is capable of enhancing their level of performance and also enabling them to cope with the ever-increasing challenges of educating the mass of the people in the country.

Since the early 1980s, the Nigerian education system has witnessed an unprecedented increase in population. The major challenge that has continued to agitate the minds of educational planners, administrators and the government is how best to cope with the increasing population of students as well as provide well-qualified teaching personnel who could help empower individual student

through the acquisition of knowledge and skills that would enable them to participate fully and actively in nation building. It was in response to this challenge that the Federal Government in April 1976, via Act No. 7, established the National Teachers' Institute. The enabling Act mandated the institute, *inter alia*, to:

- provide refresher and upgrading courses for teaching personnel
- organise workshops, seminars and conferences
- conduct examinations
- carryout research, and
- formulate policies and initiate programs that would lead to improvement in the quality and content of education in the country.

The overall goal of the Institute, therefore, was to uplift the quality and quantity of teaching personnel in Nigeria through training and retraining programs. The institution was thus expected to provide courses of instruction leading to the development, upgrading and certification of teachers as specified in the relevant syllabus using distance education. The Institute's distance learning program covers the entire country and is managed through field centres located in each of the 36 states, including the federal capital territory. The headquarters are located in Kaduna. The policies and guidelines of operation are issued from these headquarters.

In pursuance of its mandate, the Institute has initiated a training program for helping unqualified primary school teachers and also refreshers in the teacher training colleges. Recently, the Institute also embarked on the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) program through the distance learning system (DLS). The Institute also provides training for the Pivotal Teachers' Training Program (PTTP) by the distance learning system. The Pivotal Teachers' Training Program was introduced in 2002 as a means of producing teachers to fill the gap in teacher supply for the newly introduced Universal Basic Education program of the Federal Government.

In mid-western Nigeria, the Institute has study centres located in some secondary schools in the area. The schemes have been in operation in the area since 1987, apart from the Pivotal Teachers' Training Program which commenced in 2002. Many teachers have been encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Institute to upgrade and update their skills. In spite of this, it has been observed that many teachers in mid-western Nigeria are yet to benefit from those programs provided by the National Teachers' Institute.

This study was therefore inspired by the desire to determine how effective the training program has been in helping to uplift the quality and quantity of teaching personnel in mid-western Nigeria. In view of the above, this study was designed to find out the following:

- determine if the activities of the institution or training programs are relevant to the teaching manpower needs of the area
- identify if the Institute encounters any constraints in seeking to realise its objectives
- ascertain if the programs are effective
- ascertain if the programs have impacted on the performance of teachers in the area.

Based on the focus of the study, the following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- are the NTI training programs relevant to the teaching manpower needs of mid-western Nigeria?
- what are the major constraints to the Institute's efforts in seeking to realise its mandate?
- how effective are the Institute's programs?
- is there any relationship between the training programs provided by the Institute and the teachers' level of performance?

Methodology

The population for this study comprised participants in the National Teachers' Institute manpower training programs in mid-western Nigeria.

The sample for the study was 240 participants selected from the Institute's Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), the Teacher Training Grade Two Certificate (TCII) and the Pivotal Teacher Training Program (PTTP). The breakdown shows that 80 participants were in the final year of their training across each of the three programs. The sample size was selected using simple random sampling procedure. The choice of this group of participants was based on the fact that they have spent some time in the program and so are in a position to assess the program as well as ascertain its impact on them as teachers.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researchers. Some colleagues in the Faculty of Education who were experienced in the construction of research instruments helped in validating the questionnaire. As a result of the input of experts, some items were added, while a few others were restructured. The respondents were required in some cases to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items, while some other items required a dichotomous response, that is, stating either 'yes' or 'no'. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was established using test-retest procedure with three weeks interval. A coefficient of 0.65 was obtained using the Pearson product movement correlation statistical formula to analyse the responses obtained. Data collected were analysed using simple percentage, mean score and chi-square statistics.

Results

Table 1: Data on the relevance of the NTI programs

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Highly relevant	40	16.67
Relevant	200	83.33
Not Relevant	0	—
Total	240	100

Table 1 indicates that 40 respondents (16.67%) stated that the programs are highly relevant to the training needs of their states, while 200 respondents (83.33%) agreed that the programs are relevant to the training needs of their states. Thus, all respondents considered that the training programs offered by the Institute are relevant to the needs of the area under study.

*Table 2: Mean score distribution on the constraints of the programs
(N = 250)
(Criterion mean score 2.50)*

Variables	Mean score	Rank	Remark
Inadequate finance	3.85	1 st	Accepted
Problem of accommodation	2.00	6 th	Not accepted
Inadequate teaching/learning materials	3.50	4 th	Accepted
Lack of laboratory equipment	3.05	5 th	Accepted
Lack of library facilities	3.60	3 rd	Accepted
Unconducive learning environment	3.80	2 nd	Accepted

The analysis presented in Table 2 reveals that all the variables analysed, except one, met the mean score standard of 2.50. They were therefore considered as major constraints on the Institute's training programs. The ranking of the responses shows that inadequate finance is considered a very crucial constraint as it ranked 1st. This is closely followed by unconducive learning environment, which ranked 2nd. Next is lack of library facilities, ranked 3rd. This is followed by inadequate teaching/learning materials, ranking 4th, lack of laboratory equipment, ranking 5th and problem of accommodation ranking 6th. Only the issue of accommodation was not considered a problem of the Institute's training program.

Table 3: Data on the level of effectiveness of the programs

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Highly effective	20	8.33
Moderately effective	30	12.50
Fairly effective	150	62.50
Not effective	40	16.67
Total	240	100

The results in Table 3 show that 20 respondents (8.33%) indicated that the programs are highly effective. Another 30 respondents (12.50%) are of the view that the programs are moderately effective. One hundred and fifty respondents (62.50%) were of the opinion that the programs are fairly effective, and only 40 (16.67%) agreed that the programs are not effective. It is clear that the programs are considered 'fairly effective' in meeting their mandate to the people within the area under focus.

Table 4: Chi-square distribution of the relationship between training and teacher performance

Options	TCII	NCE	PTTP	Total	Cal.X ²	Crit.X ²
Yes	40 (53.33)	70 (53.33)	50 (53.33)	160	52.2	5.99
No	40 (26.7)	10 (26.67)	30 (26.67)	80		
Total	80	80	80	240		

Significant at $p < 0.05$

From Table 4, it can be seen that the chi-square value of 52.5 is greater than the table value of 5.99 at 0.05 alpha level with two degrees of freedom. This implies that there is a relationship between the training provided and the level of performance of the beneficiaries. In other words, those sampled from the various programs agreed that the programs had impacted on their level of performances as teachers.

Discussion of results

Analysis of the results shows that the training programs provided by the National Teachers' Institute are considered relevant to the needs of the area under investigation. This is not surprising, since the training programs are based on the existing curricula designed for the training of the teaching personnel in mid-western states in particular and the country at large. Besides, the Institute provides programs within the confines of the mandate given to it. However, it was also found that the Institute is faced with a number of constraints which have limited its operations and made it difficult for it to achieve fully its objectives. Little wonder, therefore, that the respondents indicated that it is yet to effectively achieve its goals. The Institute over the year has had to depend entirely on existing secondary school structures

and facilities for its various programs. The state of these structures and facilities are better imagined than described, for many are in a state of disrepair. This clearly explains why the people consider the environment quite unconducive for learning. The greatest problem faced by the Institute is inadequate funding, coupled with lack of library facilities and inadequate teaching/learning materials. This probably accounts for the limitations on the effectiveness of the Institute's training programs.

The results of the analysis obtained on the relationship between training programs and the level of performance of the teachers or beneficiaries show that the programs have impacted on the level of performance of the teachers. This may be responsible for the high interest of teachers in these programs. The level of participation has continued to appreciate over the years. Another reason may be the fact that the Institute adopts a distance learning approach, which enables it to reach out to the many teachers irrespective of where they reside.

Conclusion and recommendation

In the light of the above discussion, it is clear that the National Teachers' Institute has performed fairly well in pursuing the mandate given to it. The level of performance has undoubtedly been hampered by a number of problems, chief among which are inadequate funding and an unconducive learning environment.

On the basis of these findings, it is recommended that the Institute should be adequately funded. In other words, more funds should be made available to the Institute to enable it to purchase the needed learning/teaching materials and other facilities that would make for more effective teaching and learning.

Efforts should be made to consolidate on the success achieved so far. More teachers should be encouraged to enlist in the program as a means of raising the revenue base of the Institute for its programs.

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The continuing education needs of country-based solicitors

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The study reported here on the continuing education needs of country-based solicitors was intended to build on the foundations laid by earlier researchers and to be the first examination of the continuing education needs of such solicitors ever undertaken.

In earlier research into the attitudes of professionals to continuing professional education (CPE), four factors have stood out as occurring in virtually all results – professional improvement and development, professional service, collegial learning and interaction, and personal benefits and job security. Two other factors emerged once only in different studies – professional reflection and professional role clarification. Grotelueschen (1985), in analysing results from nine groups of professionals previously surveyed, came to the conclusion that five groups of reasons emerged to account for the participation of