



Impact of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) Programme in Achieving Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Level in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper was designed to examine the impact of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) programme in achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Four research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study. A Survey research design was adopted for the study where samples of 240 respondents were randomly selected from Federal College of Education, Yola, Adamawa State College of Education, Hong, Local Education Authorities and ADSUBEB. Data for the study were collected using questionnaire method of data collection. The instrument was tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha and it yield a coefficient of 0.78. The data collected for this study were analyzed using the mean score method of data analysis to answer the research questions. The paper revealed that: even though the NCE programme is effective in the training of teachers for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education, it is obvious that the process is facing a lot of challenges like: Inadequate funding, Lack of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment. Based on the above findings, this paper recommends that: college authorities should organize workshops and seminars to acquaint the lecturers with the modalities necessary for the implementation of the curriculum and there is the need for government to improve on the funding of the colleges of education and ensure that the funds are used judiciously.

KEYWORDS: Nigerian Certificate in Education, Universal Basic Education, Excellence, Teaching and Learning.

Introduction

Although education is as old as man himself, it is important to note that modern education as it is practiced today derives its legality from the universal declaration of human rights 1948 (Lawson, 2015). This declaration asserted that everyone has a right to education without any form of discrimination. In Nigeria, the provisions of section 18 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution which enjoins the government to direct its policy towards ensuring there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1999), concurred with the provision of the universal declaration of human rights 1948 and the various international conventions and protocols aimed at developing education and making education free and universal.

Education is one of the vital instruments in development. According to the National Policy on Education (2004) "Education in Nigeria is considered as an instrument "per excellence" for effecting national development. Certainly, what Nigeria needs in this 21st century to turn her economy around is a Universal Basic Education programme that will ensure that every Nigerian youth on graduation is sufficiently equipped with knowledge, skills, and experiences required for initial entry into one occupation in the world of work, whether college bound or not (Anyabolu, 2000).

The Federal Government of Nigeria launched the UBE programme with the main objectives of providing free, universal and compulsory basic education for every Nigerian child aged 6-15 years. This can be achieved through reducing the incidence of drop-out from school, catering for learning needs of young person's etc as part of its objectives (Obanya, 2012). In spite of these laudable objectives of UBE programme, the big question that readily comes to mind is how these objectives can be achieved.

Even though there are various factors that can contribute to effective implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria, it is important to note that the strength for the effective implementation and survival of the Universal Basic Education like any educational programme lies on the quality and quantity of teachers employed to take-up teaching appointments under the scheme. The Nigeria government realizing this fact stated in section 8 sub-section 70 of the National Policy on Education (2004 edition) that the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) shall be the minimum qualification for teachers in the country. By and large, the set date (1998) is over and there is convincing evidence to show that many teachers at the basic schools are still Grade II holders, diploma holders or graduates without teaching qualification (Adesina, 2019).

It is obvious that the availability of professional teachers in our schools is low (Ngada, 2008) because teaching is seen as a dumping ground for any unemployed school leavers, irrespective of their area of specialization. Despite the above it is undisputable that the Nigerian Certificate of Education programme has a role to perform in the implementation of the UBE programme in Nigeria.

It is in line with the above that this paper is designed to examine the impact of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) programme in achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Four research questions were raised to guide the conduct of this research work, the research question are:

- To what extent is the NCE programme effective for developing subject mastery for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
- How effective is the NCE programme in developing teachers' resourcefulness for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
- How effective is the NCE programme in developing teacher's instructional practices for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria?
- What are the challenges facing NCE programme in achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

Literature Review

According to Otunuyi (2013) the NCE curriculum is designed in such a way that student teachers are expected to specialize in different levels of the Universal Basic Education. The curriculum has a new structure and courses for the NCE programmes which include: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Primary Education, primary education (Nomadic), Junior Secondary School (JSS) programmes, Adult and Non-formal Education, and Special Education (Minimum Standard for NCE, 2012 and Curriculum Implementation Framework for NCE, 2012 and effectiveness of NCE programme).

Teacher resourcefulness is operationally conceptualized in terms of the teacher to utilize the appropriate language, method, and available instructional materials to bring the best results from the learners (Banj, 1999 as cited in Asiegbu & Okpala, 2019). Teachers are said to be resourceful if they are able to apply all the requisite skills, competences and abilities to maximize learning outcomes and achievements, such that the results are observable in practical terms through the behavior and performance of the learner. The NCE programme helps in developing teachers' resourcefulness by exposing them to the various elements and courses in their area of specialization, in addition to the above they are to take courses in general education which focuses on philosophy, sociology and psychology of education, curriculum and instructions, methods of teaching, instructional materials lesson planning and teaching practice among others (NCCE, 2012).

NCE programmes in Colleges of Education where teachers are produced occupy important positions in any educational system. This is because as has often been noted, the quality of teachers mirrors the quality of education in a nation (Onuekwusi, Onyeka and Dara, 2021). In addition to the above, it is helpful in developing teacher's instructional practices. In agreement with this view, Kanu (2011) posits that teacher education is considered to be the foundation of quality and relevance in education at all levels. Teaching practice exercise is considered an essential component of teacher preparation programmes. Teacher education institutions insist that successful completion of teaching practice is a pre-requisite for graduation as is stipulated by the Colleges of Education Minimum Academic standards of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) for students in colleges of Education (NCCE, 2015) is one of the various ways in developing teacher's instructional practices.

There are various challenges facing NCE programme in achieving excellence in teaching and learning especially at the basic education level. Some of these challenges include: inadequate funding of the education sector in general and the colleges of education in particular, lack of interest on the part of the secondary school leavers in the teaching profession, poor image associated with the status of teachers in the society, Lack of motivation, Lack of information and communication technology (ICT) equipments and knowledge, inadequate use of audio-visual materials / equipments (Aina, 2002, Durosaro, 2006, Amadi, 2007 and Balogun, 2010).

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey research design was chosen because it has the advantage of producing good responses from a wide range of people. It is a method that is usually adopted when handling a large population.

The population for this study is made up of all Lecturers in Colleges of Education, school heads, Supervisors, SUBEB Staff and NCE teachers of basic schools in the central Senatorial District of Adamawa state.

Due to the large number of Lecturers in Colleges of Education, school heads, Supervisors, SUBEB Staff and NCE teachers of basic schools in the central Senatorial District of Adamawa state, the researchers selected and used a sample of 240 respondents comprising of 20 Lecturers in Colleges of Education,

35 school heads, 35 Supervisors, 10 SUBEB Staff and 140 NCE teachers of basic schools in the central Senatorial District of Adamawa state. The stratified Random sampling method was used to select the sample population.

The questionnaire method of data collection was used as instrument for the collection of data for the study. The choice of questionnaire for this study was because it is easy to administer, scored and interpreted. More so, it was considered one of the most suitable research instruments for obtaining the relevant data for this magnitude of study. The questionnaire consisted of two sections namely. Section A was made up of four (4) items used to obtain information relevant to each respondent's personal data. Section B elicited respondents' opinion to answer the research questions raised in the study. The questionnaire was developed using the modified 4-point Likert scale of Very effective (VE), Effective (E), slightly effective (SE) and Not effective (NE). Points allotted are as follows: Very effective = 4, Effective = 3, slightly effective = 2 and Not effective = 1 point respectively for research question 1-4 and Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) was used for research question 5.

The questionnaire was face validated by two experts in General Education from Federal College of education Yola. To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was trial tested with 10 staff of UBEB, 10 supervisors, 10 school head and 10 lecturers in COE Zing in Taraba State. Taraba State was selected for the Pilot Study because of the fact that both Taraba and Adamawa State were carved out of the defunct Gongola State for that; they share a lot of similarities especially in terms of educational development. The reliability of internal consistency was established using the split-half method and computed using the Pearson product moment method of correlation. The reliability estimate yielded 0.78 which indicated that the instrument is reliable.

The data collected for this study was analyzed using the mean score and standard deviation method of data analysis.

Results

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent is the NCE programme effective for developing subject mastery for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

The data for answering the research question one was analyzed using mean score and standard deviation and the summary is presented in table one below

Table 1: effectiveness of NCE programme for developing subject mastery

SN	ITEM	Mean	Decision
1.	NCE Programmes covers all subject taught in primary schools	2.63	Accepted
2.	NCE Programmes covers all subject taught in Junior secondary schools	2.58	Accepted
3.	NCE Programmes take cares of special target groups	2.72	Accepted
4	NCE Programmes take cares of Adult and Non –formal education	2.67	Accepted
5	NCE Programmes provides opportunity for a student teacher to master one subject (Double major) or two subjects related to pre-primary, primary and junior education level	2.91	Accepted

The analysis in `table one above revealed that: NCE Programmes covers all subject taught in primary schools, Junior secondary schools, special target groups and Adult and Non –formal education. NCE Programmes also provides opportunity for a student teacher to mater one subject (Double major) or two subjects related to pre-primary, primary and junior education level. This assertion is supported with calculated mean scores of 2.63, 2.58, 2.72, 2.67 and 2.91 respectively. This finding agreed with the provisions of National Commission for Colleges of education (2012) that the teacher education programmes comprises of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Primary Education, Junior Secondary School (JSS), Adult and Non-formal Education and Special Education.

Research Question Two: How effective is the NCE programme in developing teachers' resourcefulness for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

The data for answering the research question two was analyzed using mean score and standard deviation and the summary is presented in table two below

Table 2: effectiveness of NCE programme in developing teachers' resourcefulness

SN	ITEM	Mean	Decision
1.	NCE Programmes help the teacher to acquire subject mastery for effective teaching	3.09	Accepted
2.	NCE Programmes covers the area of teaching pedagogy to help the teachers to be resourceful	2.79	Accepted
3.	NCE Programmes Develops the skills in lesson planning	2.69	Accepted
4	NCE Programmes Develops the skills in lesson delivery	2.76	Accepted

The data analysed in Table two indicates that the respondents agreed with all the items that: NCE Programmes help the teacher to acquire subject mastery for effective teaching, it covers the area of teaching pedagogy to help the teachers to be resourceful and develops the skills in lesson planning and delivery. This supported with calculated mean scores of 3.09, 2.79, 2.69 and 2.76 respectively. This finding agreed with the provisions of National Commission for Colleges of education (2015) and Otunuyi (2013), who believe that the quality of teaching is not governed by the qualification, knowledge and skill competencies of teachers alone but also their enthusiasm, knowledge of subject matter, teacher morale and commitment to teaching.

Research Question three: How effective is the NCE programme in developing teacher's instructional practices for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

The data for answering the research question four was analyzed using mean score and standard deviation and the summary is presented in table three below:

Table 3: effectiveness of NCE programme in developing teacher's instructional practices

SN	ITEM	Mean	Decision
1.	NCE Programmes help the teacher to develop the skills of identifying instructional materials for effective teaching of a particular topic	2.80	Accepted
2.	NCE Programmes help the teacher to develop the skills of selecting instructional materials for effective teaching of a particular topic	2.82	Accepted
3.	NCE Programmes help the teacher to develop the skills of utilizing instructional materials for effective teaching of a particular topic	2.70	Accepted
4.	NCE Programmes help the teacher to develop the skills of identifying instructional methods for effective teaching of a particular topic	2.73	Accepted
5.	NCE Programmes help the teacher to develop the skills of selecting instructional methods for effective teaching of a particular topic	2.72	Accepted
6.	NCE Programmes help the teacher to develop the skills of utilizing instructional methods for effective teaching of a particular topic	2.77	Accepted
7.	NCE Programme help the teacher to develop the skills of classroom sitting arrangement	2.67	Accepted
8.	NCE Programme help the teacher to develop the skills of classroom control using punishment and reward respectively	2.98	Accepted
9.	NCE Programme help the teacher to develop the skills of managing the classroom excellence in teaching and learning	2.68	Accepted

The analysis in table three above indicated that: NCE programme is effective in developing teacher's instructional practices for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Nigeria. This is because NCE programme develops the skills of selecting and using instructional materials, selecting and using instructional methods and classroom management for effective teaching and learning. This is supported with calculated mean scores ranging from 2.67 and 2.98. This finding is in line with the findings of Banj, 1999 as cited in Asiegbu & Okpala, (2019) and the provisions of NCE, (2012) that the effect of teacher training programme is to ensure the use of evidence-based instructional practices through further spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers (FGN, 2004)

Research Question Four: What are the challenges facing NCE programme in achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Adamawa State, Nigeria?

The data for answering the research question five was analyzed using mean score and standard deviation and the summary is presented in table four below

Table 4: the challenges facing NCE programme in achieving excellence in teaching and learning

SN	ITEM	Mean	Decision
1.	Inadequate funding	2.80	Accepted
2.	Lack of information and communication technology (ICT) equipments	2.82	Accepted
3.	inadequate use of audiovisual materials/equipment	2.70	Accepted
4.	Students dependence on teachers' notes and handouts	2.73	Accepted
5.	Improper and ineffective administration, planning, accountability and unplanned activities	2.72	Accepted

From the above table, it is clear that as supported with calculated mean scores of 2.80, 2.82, 2.70, 2.73 and 2.72, the challenges facing NCE programme in achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education (UBE) level in Nigeria are: Inadequate funding, Lack of information and communication technology (ICT) equipments, inadequate use of audiovisual materials/equipment, Students dependence on teachers' notes and handouts and Improper and ineffective administration, planning, accountability and unplanned activities. This finding agreed with the findings of **Onuekwusi, onyeka and Dara, 2021**), Kanu (2011) and the provisions of NCCE (2015)

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the paper revealed that: even though the NCE programme is effective in the training of teachers for achieving excellence in teaching and learning at the Universal basic Education, it is obvious that the process is facing a lot of challenges like: Inadequate funding, Lack of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, inadequate use of audiovisual materials/equipment, Students dependence on teachers' notes and handouts and Improper and ineffective administration, planning, accountability and unplanned activities. Based on the above conclusion, the paper recommends the following:

1. The college authorities should organize workshops and seminars at various levels in all the colleges to acquaint the lecturers with the modalities necessary for the implementation of the curriculum.

2. The government should review the admission requirements to capture the best brains in the society. If the standard of the college entrants is poor, they will not be able to sequence knowledge and provide learning experiences.
3. The libraries should be stocked with current publications and books; so that students can have access to materials that will aid learning.
4. There is the need for government to improve on the funding of the colleges of education and ensure that the funds are used judiciously.

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