

## **THE ROLE OF NATIONAL TEACHERS' INSTITUTE IN IMPROVING THE CAPACITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

The quality of teaching and learning is of great concern to government and people of any community. The teacher is an important factor in creating an environment that will facilitate high quality learning achievement in schools. According to the National Policy on Education (2007), in recognition of the pivotal role of quality teachers in the provisions of quality education at all levels, teachers' education shall continue to be emphasized in all educational planning and resources development. The National Teachers' Institute (NTI), as a government parastatal, was not only set up to accomplish government's vision of up grading the quality of her teachers, but has also pushed with vigour, various strategies and programmes for improving the quality of teachers through Continuing Professional Development. This paper seeks to describe the role of NTI in improving the capacity of teacher educators in Nigeria. The study adopted the use of two research questions, tested using mean, and two hypotheses also tested using Pearson Correlation and t-test statistics. A questionnaire designed with an internal consistency of 0.89 coefficient using Cronbach Alpha was administered to course tutors and students from six geopolitical zones of the country with a sample size of 120. The findings revealed that NTI contributes to quality education in the Nigeria. It was established that quality teacher professional development is the only channel for achieving educational goals (quality education) of Nigeria. The researchers recommends that a feedback mechanism be put in place by the government, policymakers and educational stakeholders to actualize implementation of educational policies on teacher education programmes.

## **Introduction**

The National Teachers Institute popularly known as NTI is a distance learning programme established by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1976 in response to the long felt need to upgrade serving teachers and to improve the quality and standard of their education. It is the national agency charged with the responsibility of upgrading teachers' skills in Nigeria, especially at primary and secondary levels.

The mandate of NTI is to provide courses of instruction leading to the upgrade, development and certification of Nigerian teachers as specified in the relevant syllabuses using the distant learning systems. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the role of NTI in improving the capacity of teacher education in Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

### **Teacher Education and Quality**

Education has been recognized as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners. The effectiveness of any educational system depends greatly on the educational attainment of teachers because no system of education can be qualitatively higher than the quality and commitment of its teachers. Thus, teachers have important role to play to adequately prepare the young for their roles in the society in order to achieve the set national objectives also the teacher is a critical factor in any educational reform that is aimed at improving the quality of education. Investing in quality teacher education is crucial for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication, equity and inclusiveness (UNESCO, 2008).

Adeyanju 2012 reports that research had shown that "high-quality teachers, using proven teaching methodologies, produced high achieving students". Tahir (2012) states that "competent and dynamic teaching workforce would ultimately produce efficient and effective human resources for individual and national progress". The Nigerian educational system is without a doubt relies heavily on teachers as its functional components. Mukhtari (2007) points out that one of the essential truths in education is that the standard of education depends to a great extent on the quality of the teacher.

Osuji (2009) explained that teacher education includes "training/education of service (pre-service) and education/training during service (in-service or on the job)". Nakpodia and Urien (2011) added that it is "the process which nurtures prospective teachers and updates qualified teachers' knowledge and skills in the form of continuous professional development".

Okafor and Obienyen (1996) decried, teacher education in Nigeria is already losing its quality as identified in the non-productivity of those products that acquire certificates. Qualitative and functional education is the only viable tool for sustained national development. In this regard, there is a need for proactive partnership between the public and private investors to ensure meaningful and steady investment in every aspect of teacher education. No meaningful development can be attained through teacher education without regular and massive investment. If Nigeria is to be classified as a developed nation, then the already ailing teacher education institutions are to be salvaged through improved and constructive investment.

### **A Brief History of NTI**

The National Teachers' Institute is a single-mode distance education institution dedicated to teacher training. It was initially established in 1976 as a strategic means of providing the badly needed teachers for the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Scheme. With the launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999, the Federal Government mandated the Institute to produce qualified teachers for basic education.

The vision of the Institute is to “enhance the professional skills of serving teachers for high quality education delivery at primary and secondary education levels with a view to uplifting the standard of the education system of the country”. Its mission is to “upgrade and update teachers’ knowledge and skills in curriculum implementation while instilling in them the virtue of dedication, loyalty, commitment, discipline and resourcefulness”.

In pursuance of its vision, mission and mandate, the Institute has provided ‘courses of instruction leading to the development, upgrading and certification of teachers as specified in the relevant syllabus using Distance Education Techniques’ while bearing in mind the Education For All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since inception, therefore, the Institute has undertaken various training programmes including:

1. Teachers Certificate Grade II (TC II)
2. Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE)
3. Pivotal Teacher Training Programme (PTTP)
4. Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)
5. Advanced Diploma in (i) Guidance and Counselling (ii) School Supervision and Instruction, and (iii) Early Childhood Education(iv)Green Teacher Nigeria programme.
6. Special Teacher Upgrading Programme.

The role of NTI in the development of the nation educational system can never be over emphasized, considering its contribution to nation-building through teachers' advancement of knowledge and skill acquisition. In a study conducted by Ekpiken and Edet (2014) they state that quality education cannot be achieved without the contribution of qualified and dedicated teachers while acknowledging NTI as a source of educational reference and a custodian of knowledge.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A very close examination of the formulation of policies with regards to education shows that the federal government of Nigeria acknowledges teachers as individuals who implement educational policies, and as such promote the quality education for the development of the nation. Unfortunately, there appears to be a gap in the smooth running of these policies and indeed, resulting in the production of a great deal of unmotivated and frustrated teachers. The functionality of education in Nigeria connotes the use of education to solve social problems, emanating from illiteracy, unemployment, teachers' inefficiency and infrastructural deficit (Ikeotuonye, 2003). Inferring logically, therefore, that there is a neglect of teacher education towards the development of the nation. The question therefore is to what extent can NTI improve the capacity of teacher education in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study to find out the:

- i. contribution of NTI in improving the capacity of teachers in Nigeria;
- ii. difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing quality teachers in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

- i. Does NTI contribute to improvement of teachers' capacity in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the quality of teachers in Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

Ho1: There is no significant connection between the role NTI and improvement of teachers' capacity in Nigeria;

Ho2: There is no significant difference in difficulties encountered by NTI in improving the capacity of male and female teachers in Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

The survey design was used with a target population consisting of all course tutors and students from the six geopolitical zones of the nation. A systematic random sampling technique was used with a sample size of 120. Mean, Pearson Correlation and t-test were used to analyze the data at a significant level of 0.05. The instrument was therefore adjudged reliable at a 0.89 coefficient as its internal consistency at a significance level of 0.05.

## Analysis and Discussion

Research Question 1: Does NTI contribute to improvement of teachers' capacity in Nigeria?

The research question one was answered using mean;

Table 1: Showing mean of respondents

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	X=Mean	Remark
the job of NTI is to train teachers who will in turn develop students for the upcoming workforce of the nation	72	28	12	8	3.27	Agree
acknowledging NTI as a source of educational reference and a custodian of knowledge	81	19	5	15	3.29	Agree
NTI being source of improving teacher education for national development	92	10	10	8	3.15	Agree
Improved classroom delivery through exposure to NTI training and retraining programmes	101	12	5	2	3.38	Agree
Upgraded my certificate through NTI programmes	69	45	5	1	3.21	Agree
Exposure to series of NTI CPDs improved my students' academic achievements	79	30	8	3	3.23	Agree
<b>Group Mean</b>					<b>3.84</b>	Agree

The mean rating of respondents on the question; Does NTI contribute to improvement of teachers' capacity in Nigeria was answered using mean as shown in Table 1, and based on its mean score the question was answered remarking that the respondents accepted the issues raised in areas NTI can contribute to improvement of teachers' capacity in Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the quality of teachers in Nigeria?

The research question two was answered using mean;

Table 2: Showing mean of respondents

<b>Items</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>X=Mean</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Inconsistency in the actual execution of governmental policies on teacher education	65	32	13	10	2.89	Agree
Government policies do not match the needs of society	58	27	17	18	3.08	Agree
Inaccessibility of governmental officials for feedback processes on CPDs	68	34	10	8	2.68	Agree
Society accords low regard to teachers and is often intimidated and humiliated by rich and wealthy politicians	83	20	12	5	2.75	Agree
					2.87	Agree

The above table shows the mean rating of respondents on the difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the quality of teachers Nigeria was answered using mean. Based on the mean score and the remark it is clear that all the issues highlighted are difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the quality of teachers in Nigeria.

## Test of Hypotheses

Ho<sub>1</sub>

There is no significant connection between the role of NTI and improvement of teachers' capacity in Nigeria; Hypothesis one was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient at a 0.05 level of significance

Table 3: Showing the relationship between the role NTI in improving the capacity of teachers in Nigeria.

		The Role of NTI in improving teacher education	Capacity of teacher improved
The role of NTI	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) 0.050 N	1 120	0.811 0.050
Improving of capacity teacher education	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) 0.050 N	0.811 0.050 120	1 120

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The table reveals the Person Correlation for the connection between the role NTI in improving quality the capacity of teachers in Nigeria, with a 2-tailed correlation value of 0.811 which implies that as the role of NTI in improving teacher education increases, the level of teachers' capability in improves by approximately 81.1%. Confirming this also is its Sig value of 0.050 indicating that there is a statistically significant correlation between the role NTI in improving the capacity of teachers in Nigeria, being that the p-value  $0.050 = 0.05$  significant level, thus rejecting the hypotheses 1 and accepting the alternative hypotheses.

Ho<sub>2</sub>

There is no significant difference in difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the capacity of male and female teachers in Nigeria: Hypothesis two employed the use of t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4: Showing difference in difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the capacity of male and female teachers in Nigeria.

<b>variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>t- calculated</b>	<b>t- critical</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Enhancement of female teachers' capacity	71	3.043	0.177	0.1108	1.960	Accepted
Enhancement of male teachers' capacity	49	2.973	0.128			

The t-test for the difference in difficulties between the enhancement of male teachers and female teachers' capacity shows a calculated t-value of 0.1108 and t-table value of 1.960 at 0.05 level as shown in table 4. It, therefore, implies that the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference difficulties between the role of NTI in enhancement of the male teachers and female teachers' capacity being that the t-table (1.96) value is greater than t-calculated (0.1108) at a 0.05 significance level.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The role of the NTI in improving teachers' capacity in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized as observed from the results of the study. The findings show the job of NTI is to train teachers who will in turn develop students for the upcoming workforce of the nation, this claim was supported by Tahir (2012) where he reiterated that "competent and dynamic teaching workforce would ultimately produce efficient and effective human resources for individual and national progress. The finding went further to acknowledge NTI as a source of educational reference and a custodian of knowledge. Ekpiken and Edet (2014) support this stating that quality education cannot be achieved without the contribution of qualified and dedicated teachers while acknowledging NTI as a source of educational reference and a custodian of knowledge.

The findings also revealed that Inconsistency in the actual execution of governmental policies on teacher education and the fact that Government policies do not match the needs of the society and inaccessible governmental officials for feedback processes were difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the quality of teachers in Nigeria. As the researchers highlighted that these difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the quality of teachers in Nigeria could result in the production unmotivated and frustrated teachers in the society. In an ideal situation, teachers are supposed to be the producers of future leaders, thereby guaranteeing the future, but sadly, teachers have over the years transferred this frustration into



demeaning mediocre character portrayed in the classroom leaving society as the victim of the circumstance.

The study also found out that there is a statistically significant correlation between the role of NTI and improvement of teachers' capacity in Nigeria. This is supported NTI vision statement that the Institute is to "enhance the professional skills of serving teachers for high quality education delivery at primary and secondary education levels with a view to uplifting the standard of the education system of the country". Its mission is to "upgrade and update teachers' knowledge and skills in curriculum implementation while instilling in them the virtue of dedication, loyalty, commitment, discipline and resourcefulness. Therefore, the role NTI plays in improving teachers' is simply immeasurable.

Finally, on gender disparities, the findings revealed that there is no significant difference in difficulties encountered by NTI in enhancing the quality of teachers in Nigeria. Shuaibu (2017), in a similar study, discovered that there is no notable difference in difficulties encountered in sex while training and upgrading teachers' knowledge and skills.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the role of NTI in improving the capacity of teachers in Nigeria, as no individual or nation can achieve an objective it is currently unaware of. The experience of the Institute shows that continuing professional development of teachers improve teacher's capacity. NTI will continue to strive towards accelerating teacher education and development at all levels.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the above, the researcher recommends that a feedback mechanism should be put in place by the government, policymakers and educational stakeholders to actualize implementation of educational policies on teacher education. Teachers' development should be followed by an adequate motivational package.

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