

Assessment of the Training Needs of Primary School Teachers for Enhancing Primary Education Programme in Awka South Local Education Authority of Anambra State

Igwe Comfort Ebele and Ugwu Doris Ifeoma (Ph.D)

Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Abstract

The purpose of the study therefore is to assess the training needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education programme in Awka South L.E.A of Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of 665 teachers from the 45 public primary schools in Awka South L.E.A. Simple random sampling techniques was used to sample 20 schools and 120 teacher respondents. Data were collected using a 35 item questionnaire developed by the researchers and titled: "Teacher Training Need Assessment Questionnaire-(TTNAQ)", duly validated by 3 experts, 2 from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and 1 from Educational Foundations Department (Measurement and Evaluation) all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha Formula was used and a reliability of 0.87 was obtained for the entire instrument. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study reveals that the competency needs of primary school teachers are skills on variety of teaching methods and skills for managing inclusive classroom among others. Findings also revealed that teachers in Awka South have urgent need for training on ICT tools and content pedagogy among others. Again, Findings reveals that appropriate training methods for teachers includes, in-service training and mentoring among others. It was recommended among others that Government should encourage the primary school teachers and school head teachers to attend comprehensive training programmes.

Keywords: Education, Training, Teachers Training, Primary Education, Assessment

INTRODUCTION

The general objective of education is to equip an individual with appropriate skills, values and knowledge to function effectively and contribute meaningfully to their dynamic society. Nweze in [1], defines education as a fulcrum on which all other developmental facets are hinged. According to [2], education is a developmental process initiated in the individual which collectively influences the societal values. In this study, education can be regarded as a process through which a society inculcates its values, skills, beliefs, customs, and culture to its members. Education cannot be separated from human's life. [3], affirmed that education is the only bridge that leads people to their better futures. Education is essential as it plays the role of developing a nation. The difference between a developing nation and a developed nation is simply their level of commitment to education. In order to achieve this, the individual is exposed to different learning experiences ranging from the individual's culture, knowledge management, partnership negotiation, communication and information technology skills. The places where the learning experience will take place is the school.

The school serves as one of the agents for achieving the above worthwhile aim. Hence, it is expected that

the early years in life which are the most important foundation laying periods for a child's intelligence, personality and social behavior are well taken care of through school. This is the core essence of the primary education. [4] in her National Policy on Education (NPE), defines primary education as the education given to children aged 6-12 years. Thus, the primary education is established for these purposes in order to promote the general aim of the Universal Basic Education among children. [5], noted that most children do not have access to quality pre-primary and primary education. Some were denied access to education and for such children, the development of human resources is a mirage. For the children who are already in school, the right to education would be a reality if school provides them with quality education.

According to [6], quality education is the education of high standard; the education that completely addresses the needs, hopes and aspiration of the individual recipients and the society; the education that stabilizes the economy of a nation, stems the tide of political permutation in any given society; opens the mind, enriches the head and equips the hand for useful living in the society; empowers one to attain heights and make positive exploits, and nevertheless the education that restores the unrealized or lost

dignity of man. Yet this is far from the reality in some parts of the world and particularly in many primary schools in Awka South Local Education Authority (LEA).

The gap in quality education is huge, it exists because of lack of highly trained teachers and bridging this gap is very essential in fulfilling the universal right to education and enhancing the early childhood and primary education programme.[5], observed that most early childhood teachers lack knowledge and skills in early childhood education and primary education, their pedagogy do not enhance human resource development as they do not use instructional materials and a lot of children are left behind. The authors also state that teachers do not give room for democratic principles because of their large class sizes, they do not use uniform syllabus but teach the children only what they feel they should know. Workshops and conferences for trainings are not regularly organized for these teachers and many of them are not turned up to new methods and skills in handling children. Most of them are not abreast with innovations and recent research approaches to early childhood and primary education.

Nobody supervises these programmes and as a result some proprietors use garages or any type of accommodation for primary school thereby undermining children's ability and their potentials not properly harnessed. These skills and knowledge are the components of training needs assessment which should be ascertained before any teacher training programme is carried out.

The Global Campaign for Education-(GCE) report [7] in collaboration with Education for All (EFA) and Education International-EI believe that a fundamental reason for this gap in quality education is the severe lack of well-trained, well-supported teachers. According to [8], stated that the importance of training in equipping teachers with knowledge and skills to perform specific tasks need not be over-emphasized. Parish in [9], found that teachers who have been specifically trained as teachers greatly improve in their classroom behavior and that all things being equal teachers trained and retrained have been found to perform better than untrained teachers. [10], posits that teacher training with appropriate method is important for the purpose of helping them understand new ways of facilitating learning and equipping teachers with new knowledge and skills to enable them face the challenges and reformation in education. In every educational system, teachers are seen as those who determine the quality of education. It is the presence of quality teachers that determines how much and how well children learn. [11], indicates that investing in teachers is important for all students' learning and for their well-being. Well-trained and retrained teachers can better manage

diversity in a classroom, for example, they can reduce violence and manage discipline in a positive way.

This lack of constant training and retraining for teachers has led to a wide gap in education and must be checked before it eats deep into the fabric of our educational system. In order to close this gap, it is important for all stakeholders in education to know and understand that the professional development of teachers is central and fundamental to improving the quality of education in Anambra State schools. In this study, teacher training is highly emphasized. According to [12], teachers' training is the process which nurtures prospective teachers and updates qualified teachers' knowledge and skills in the form of continuous professional development. Teachers' training revolves around the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective and serving teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour and skills required in the performance of effective duties in the classrooms and in other social gatherings. This is the base on which educational administrators play several roles in teacher training programmes in Nigeria. Nigerian teacher training institutions are those mandated by the National Policy on Education to train those that would later belong to the teaching profession [13].

The author further states that they offer both pre-service and in-service training for teachers. The policy has the expectation that teaching in Nigeria shall attain the highest standard possible. The policy further states that all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained, Teacher education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties Information Technology (IT) training shall be incorporated into all teacher-training programmes, Teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in curriculum, Teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in the profession and In-service training shall be an integral part of continuing teacher education.

Primary school teachers need special training in education to enable them perform better in their roles as teachers and before that training, their training needs must be ascertained. Richard et al [8], described training needs assessment as an empirical process of making specific in some intelligible manner, what schooling should be about and how it can be assessed. It is a process for determining the validity of behavioural objectives. It is the process of determining whether an innovation is necessary and are desirable and hence a problem-solving tool which identifies gaps between current outcomes and required results and prioritizes these gaps into action.

An assessment of teachers' training needs depicts an appraisal of their present competencies and areas of

improvement for effectiveness and efficiency in handling the primary education. According to Allen cited in [14], assessment involves the use of empirical data on student learning to refine programs and improve student learning. However, [9], opined that it is essential that before any training programme is undertaken, it is required that a needs assessment be done to clearly determine the specific competencies that one needs to be equipped with. The authors further states that training need assessment is a pre-requisite for training programmes. The determination of teacher training needs includes the appraisal of their knowledge, skills and attitudes towards effective instructional delivery. A needs assessment is therefore a pre-requisite to every training even that of teachers and it is in this light that this study sought to establish the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes that primary school teachers require in order to effectively help the government to achieve the set out goals of the primary education.

Maranya [15] believes that to keep the curriculum in tune with the needs of the learners and of the times, and to help determine which objective to stress, it is necessary that needs assessment be continuously done. The necessity for needs assessment is very clear in that it will help to address the gaps in teacher educational and professional competencies and thereby striking a balance between intended outcome and the actual situation. In this study, the needs assessment was utilized to carry out an assessment of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that primary school teachers require in order to effectively carry out their teaching roles in the primary education. All these competencies can only be maintained by training because without constant training, teacher incompetency may result. Similarly, [16], posits that where there are little or no in-service training programmes and other opportunities for teachers to broaden their knowledge, it is apparent that they will become incompetent. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the current training needs of teachers in primary schools in Anambra State with a specific emphasis on Awka South Local Education Authority (LEA) in order to bridge the foregoing gaps with a view to enhancing the primary education programmes in the state.

This study which is on the assessment of the training needs of primary school teachers for enhancing primary education programme in Awka South Local Education Authority of Anambra State is significant in that its findings will be of immense benefit to educational policy and decision makers, school head teachers, teachers, parents, pupils and the society in general. The research will enable policy and decision makers like Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB), to ensure that teacher education or training is guided by policies and

decisions geared towards promotion of the foundational aspects of the Nigerian educational programme; the Early Childhood Education (ECE) and primary education. Thus, they can use the recommendations of this study to make proposals to the government on teachers' training, seminars, conferences, workshops etc. This will enable the teachers to be better equipped with the necessary skills they need in the 21st century in order to meet the international standards of teaching and learning in primary education.

The study will also benefit the head teachers who are seen as teachers' immediate supervisors by helping them to provide enabling environment for teachers through seeking the help of the government towards the training of the teachers, suggesting the specific areas of training and encouraging teachers through conferences, seminars and workshops to learn new methods and innovations in teaching. Thus, it will enable them perform better in their supervisory and administrative roles. It will equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills which will enable them to adjust their instructional approaches in the way they teach children thereby helping to solidify the early childhood foundation of the children.

Finally, parents and the general society will benefit from this research since learning brings about change. It is believed that if the teachers are trained, the implementation of the result of the training in the classrooms will bring positive changes in the learning outcomes of the young children in the primary education through attending seminars, workshops and conferences.

The earlier work done on teachers training showed that training of teachers will help to improve their quality and skills in the primary education but none has taken pains to identify their training needs which will help them to be trained based on the areas where they are lagging behind in this 21st century. Therefore, this study aims at filling the gap by finding out the training needs of these teachers towards the enhancement of primary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Primary education is a right to every child, and has a huge and lasting impact, but it cannot be delivered without a massive expansion in well-trained and retrained quality teachers. The federal government through the educational policy guidelines has stipulated that teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in the methods and curriculum and teachers be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession. The researchers observed from various classrooms that most teachers lack cordial parent-teacher relationships, encourage the use of rote learning and discussion methods which do not promote human resource development

in children. The 21st century skills and competencies needed by teachers to meet up with societal changes and innovations in educational, technology, teaching methods, leadership styles, usage of syllabus and instructional materials are mostly lacking among primary school teachers and can only be acquired through high-quality teacher training and retraining.

Presently, it is perturbing that empirical studies on the training needs of serving teachers for the purpose of enhancing the primary education are mostly lacking in Anambra State. This shows that decisions and policies on such training needs of teachers are also lacking in research data. Therefore, the researchers observed that it is expedient to carry out a study to assess the training needs of primary school teachers in order to find out the quality of these teachers in terms of competencies, content area knowledge, classroom management, use of instructional materials, teaching and training methods.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the training needs of primary school teachers for enhancing primary education programme in Awka South Local Education Authority of Anambra State. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Identify the competency needs of primary school teachers towards enhancing the primary education in Awka South LEA.
2. Identify the training needs of primary school teachers for enhancing primary education in Awka South LEA.
3. Identify the appropriate training methods for teachers towards the enhancement of the primary education in Awka South LEA.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the competency needs of primary school teachers towards enhancing the primary education in Awka South LEA?

2. What are the training needs of primary school teachers towards enhancing primary education in Awka South LEA?
3. What are the appropriate training methods for primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA?

METHOD

The purpose of the study is to assess the training needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education programme in Awka South L.E.A of Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of 665 teachers from the 45 public primary schools in Awka South L.G.A. Simple random sampling techniques was used to sample 20 schools and 120 teacher respondents. Data were collected using a 35 item questionnaire developed by the researchers and titled: “Teacher Training Need Assessment Questionnaire-(TTNAQ)”, duly validated by 3 experts, 2 from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and 1 from Educational Foundations Department (Measurement and Evaluation) all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha Formula was used and a reliability of 0.87 was obtained for the entire instrument. A four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighed 4, 3, 2 and 1 was used to answer the research questions. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions. Mean response of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreed while those below 2.50 were regarded as disagreed.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the competency needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation ratings of the respondents’ opinions on the competency needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA

S/N	Competency needs of primary school teachers	X	SD	DECISION
1.	Skills on variety of teaching method	3.31	0.72	Agree
2	Information and Communication Technology skills (ICT)	3.40	0.71	Agree
3.	Individual differences identification skill	3.15	0.76	Agree
4.	Skills for managing inclusive classroom	3.19	0.84	Agree
5,	Relational skills with parents towards pupils’ achievement	3.48	0.70	Agree
6.	Lesson Plan development skill	3.34	0.78	Agree
7.	Skills in the use of experiential method	3.14	0.72	Agree
8.	Skills for improvisation of instructional materials	2.46	0.52	Disagree
9.	Skills for pupils’ assessment	3.46	0.64	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.21	0.71	Agree

Table 1 above shows the mean scores of the respondents. All the items except item number 8 were agreed as the competency needs of primary school teachers. This shows that the respondents agreed to these items as the competency needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA. This can be

attested to the cluster mean of 3.21 which is above the bench mark of 2.50.

Research Question 2: What are the training needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation ratings of the respondents' opinions on the training needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA

S/N	Training needs of primary school teachers includes:	X	SD	DECISION
10.	Various types of assessment	3.28	0.75	Agree
11.	Usage of appropriate assessment tools	3.18	0.92	Agree
12.	Variety of teaching methods	3.21	0.88	Agree
13.	Usage of contemporary instructional materials	3.20	0.89	Agree
14.	Effective communication with parents towards pupils' achievement	3.19	0.84	Agree
15.	Use of Information and Communication Technology tools	3.38	0.78	Agree
16.	Inclusive education for special needs children	3.34	0.79	Agree
17.	Curriculum implementation and integration	3.24	0.69	Agree
18.	Professional ethics and conduct	3.25	0.88	Agree
19.	Content pedagogy	3.38	0.85	Agree
20.	Grammatical Concord	3.29	0.87	Agree
21.	Climatic changes for example global warming	2.48	0.66	Disagree
22.	Overall child development	3.33	0.96	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.21	0.82	Agree

Table 2 above shows that the respondents agreed to all the items except item number 21 which was disagreed with a mean score of 2.48 which is below the bench mark of 2.50. This indicated that the respondents agreed to all the items except item number 21 as the training needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary

education in Awka South LEA. The cluster mean of 3.21 attested to it.

Research Question 3: What are the appropriate training methods for primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation ratings of the respondents' opinions on the appropriate training methods for primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA

S/N	Appropriate training methods for teachers includes:	X	SD	DECISION
23.	Sandwich Programme	3.28	0.98	Agree
24.	Conferences	3.24	0.85	Agree
25.	Workshops	3.29	0.87	Agree
26.	In-Service Training	3.37	0.94	Agree
27.	Peer Coaching	3.14	0.91	Agree
28.	In-Guest-Lecturer	3.16	1.00	Agree
29.	Training with pupils in classroom (demonstration)	3.11	0.97	Agree
30.	Mentoring	3.24	0.69	Agree
31.	Private Study	2.48	0.66	Disagree
32.	Telephone Conversation	2.45	0.60	Disagree
33.	Radio/open air Programme	2.47	0.57	Disagree
34.	National Open University Programme	3.16	0.96	Agree
35.	N. T. I. Programme with demonstration method	3.33	0.96	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.05	0.84	Agree

Table 3 above shows that items 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34 and 35 with mean scores of 3.28, 3.24, 3.29, 3.37, 3.14, 3.16, 3.11, 3.24, 3.16 and 3.33 with standard deviation of .98, .85, .87, .94, .91, 1.00, .97, .69, .96, and .96 were agreed by the respondents as the appropriate training methods for

primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LEA. However, items 31, 32 and 33 with mean ratings of 2.48, 2.45 and 2.47 were disagreed. The mean scores are below 2.50 which is the bench mark for agreement. The majority of the items were agreed.

The cluster mean of 3.05 attested to it which is above the bench mark.

DISCUSSION

Findings in table 1 revealed that the competency needs of primary school teachers towards the enhancement of primary education in Awka South LGA are skills on variety of teaching methods, identification of individual difference among pupils and relating with parents towards pupils' achievement among others. However, most of the teachers in Awka South L.G.A. lack competency in the use of Information and Communication and Technology (ICT) tools, experiential method of teaching and improvisation of instructional materials, which are among the most relevant teacher competency indicators in the primary education. Due to lack of this and other competencies, teachers in Awka South need training on ICT, pedagogical and other skills, in order to meet up with the 21st century teaching skills and boost their competency. Inadequate training must have been the cause of incompetency on the part of teachers.

Thus, the knowledge of teacher competency needs is important in order to help address the problem of teacher incompetency and the gap in the quality of teachers through effective training towards the enhancement of the primary education. The findings are also in agreement with [16], who posits that where there are little or no in-service training programmes and other opportunities for teachers to broaden their knowledge, it is apparent that they will become incompetent. The study further concurred that many public primary school children with special needs in Awka South are not benefiting from regular classrooms due to lack of teachers' training and preparedness in the management of inclusive classroom. A competent teacher should be equipped with the skills of managing both physically and non-physically challenged pupils in the public primary school using variety of teaching methods and instructional materials.

Findings in table 2 revealed that teachers in Awka South have urgent need for training on usage of contemporary instructional materials, ICT tools, varieties of teaching methods, how to effectively partner with parents, inclusive education to help special needs children, and content pedagogy among others in order to increase their skills and knowledge and to keep them fully equipped. This is in agreement with [9], who posits that training need assessment is a pre-requisite for training programmes. The determination of teacher training needs includes the appraisal of their knowledge, skills and attitudes towards effective instructional delivery. The findings are also in line with that of [5], who posits that most teachers lack knowledge

and skills in early childhood education, their pedagogy does not enhance human resource development as they do not use instructional materials, therefore, a lot of children are left behind. These skills and knowledge are the components of training needs assessment which should be ascertained before any teacher training programme is carried out. However, findings based on respondents' opinion also revealed that training teachers on climatic changes may not help teachers in enhancing the primary education.

Findings in table 3 revealed that appropriate training methods for teachers include sandwich programme, conferences, workshops, in-service training, peer coaching, and mentoring among others. Findings further revealed that private study, the use of telephone conversation and open/air programme are not considered as effective methods of training teachers. Past trainings may not have had much impact on teachers' attitudes because of the method of training employed. Thus for any teacher training programme to be effective, appropriate methods should be employed in order to achieve the purpose of training. This is in agreement with [10], who posits that teacher training with appropriate method is important for the purpose of helping them understand new ways of facilitating learning and equipping teachers with new knowledge and skills to enable them face the challenges and reformation in education.

CONCLUSION

The study sought to assess the training needs of teachers in Awka South L.G.A. of Anambra State for the enhancement of the primary education. The determination of the training needs and choice of appropriate training method is very relevant before any training for teachers in order to have positive training outcomes. Ascertaining teachers' training need will help the government find out the needs and aspirations of teachers and the appropriate methods for the training. Teachers in Awka South need training on variety of teaching methods, usage of experiential teaching methods, assessment and ICT tools, improvisation of instructional materials, content pedagogy among others which are not adequately examined. Teachers are of the opinion that the appropriate teachers' training method should include Sandwich programme depending on teacher's level of entry qualification, conferences, workshop, and mentoring, peer coaching, training of teachers with pupils in the classroom, N.T.I. programmes among others are selected as appropriate training methods for teachers. The study implies that teachers' inadequacies might be as a result of inadequate training and that to enhance their competency and get them equipped, teacher training programmes should be continuously assessed and training methods reviewed before training them in

order to ensure that the primary education will not continue to suffer but flourish and succeed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. Government should encourage the primary school teachers and school head teachers to attend comprehensive training programmes in order to bridge the gaps identified by this study according to their training needs.
2. The government should re-establish the teacher training colleges which served as foundational training grounds for teachers at the primary school level. This will enable teachers to always keep abreast with the basics of teaching and be equipped with relevant pedagogical skills.
3. government through Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) should carry out regular research studies to evaluate teacher training programmes in order to ensure that the objectives are achieved. By so doing, they will be opportune to know other areas of teachers' training needs in order to get them well equipped in enhancing the primary education.
4. Government should plan and implement the training needs of primary school teachers through in-service training strategy to developed and define the key competences needed by teachers.

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