

**TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE
INFLUENCE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR COLLEGES OF
EDUCATION ACCREDITATION EXERCISE ON SOME QUALITY INDICATORS
IN NCE (TECHNICAL) TRAINING INSTITUTIONS**

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated the perceptions of NCE Vocational/technical teacher trainers on the influence of the NCCE accreditation exercise on some indicators or quality in the NCE Vocational/technical teacher training programmes. Five NCE Vocational/technical teacher training institutions and their 176 teachers took part in study. The research data was collected using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Mean score was used for analyzing the data. The results, among other things, showed that accreditation in the institutions led to the employment of staff with the relevant qualifications. It did not result to the employment of adequate number of staff, improved provision of adequate number of classrooms, departmental libraries, workshops and laboratories with relevant facilities as seats, books, journals and quality tools and equipment. The implication is that the programme should be taken very serious if quality will be assured in our tertiary institutions.*

KEYWORDS: TVE Teachers perception, NCCE, Accreditation Exercise, Quality indicators, NCE (Technical), Training Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Technical and vocational teacher education programme, which leads to the production of technology teachers, is offered in Universities, some polytechnics and some colleges of education in Nigeria (Inyiagu, 2009). A technical and vocational teacher is a professional in his chosen occupation, who possesses competent skills that enable him teach effectively. TVE teacher also emphasizes practical activities in the curriculum within the framework of technical and vocational education programme, which leads to the mastery of functional technical and vocational knowledge being imparted to the students.

Effort at delineating and ensuring national standards in the technical and vocational teacher education at the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) level is no longer a recent phenomenon in Nigeria education system. Before 1989 when the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) was established, no approved national standards existed (NCCE, 2013). There was also no unified curriculum for the training institutions. The institutions (mainly colleges of Education and Polytechnics) were affiliated to sister institutions/departments in universities that charged affiliation fees. Programmes of study were designed by the universities based on their different institutional philosophy and objectives and handed over to the affiliated institutions for implementation. Other curriculum elements as students' admission requirement, in instructional methods, facilities and personnel were also determined by the universities.

The near autonomous status of the universities and diverse philosophies made consideration for national standards and curriculum difficult, even when there was the need. As there were different universities, so there were different curricula and operational standards (Ukoha, 2002). Thus, programmes' quality varied from institution to institution. Lack of national standards for measuring quality, discriminatory admission policy and diverse curriculum to achieve the same national objective (of providing middle technical\vocational teachers for the JSS classes) made consideration for a unifying body and curriculum necessary (NCCE, 2013).

The Federal government in recognition of the haphazard manner the programmes were being implemented established the NCCE. According to the NCCE, the commission was established when it became evident that various institutions charged with NCE technical\vocational teacher education needed a unifying body (NCCE, 2013). The statutory function of the commission include among other things; laying down national minimum standards for all NCE programmes. Before now, the commission has harmonized all NCE technical\vocational programmes into a national minimum standard. The publishing of the minimum standards and its circulation to all NCE technical\vocational teacher training institutions marked the beginning of programme accreditation in NCE Technical\Vocational teacher education (NCCE, 2012).

Programme accreditation is the process whereby a professional group judges its educational programme against a set of consensually-derived norms, usually referred to as standards (Rice, 2007). Professionals are involved in programme accreditation. There must be generally accepted and previously set standards which are criteria for evaluation. In technical\vocational teacher education, the emphasis is on minimum standards. This is because there is a level of performance (knowledge, skills and attitudes) required of the graduates to secure jobs (Okoro, 2010). The minimum standards in NCE technical\vocational teacher education are derived from the occupational and professional areas of the discipline which trainees are expected to develop professional competencies (Ukocha, 2002). They include relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for effective performance on the job which the programme is designed for.

According to the NCCE accreditation guidelines, academic programme accreditation involves visitation to evaluate:

- the quality of academic programmes offered in colleges of education;
- the competency and number of teaching and administrative staff; and
- the quality of the curriculum that prepares the students to be competent in the chosen area of specialization.

The NCE technical\vocational education accreditation system was developed for many reasons. Foremost was the desire to achieve national standards in all institutions. Second, was the desire to ensure maintenance of standards and achieve comparable interpretation of NCE technical\vocational certificates awarded by institutions across the country. Besides, accreditation protects professionals, employers of labour, training institutions and students (Akande, 2002). To the professionals, accreditation guarantees that, training institutions implement the approved course of study designed to ensure that intending professionals in training acquire the needed specialized knowledge, skills and attitude essential for registration and practice (ILT, 2001). To the employers of labour, accreditation helps to ensure that employees possessed the level of skills needed for employment. It gives the students confidence on the quality of their certificates and relevance of their course of study. Both in

the labour market and among professionals, programme accreditation engenders a sense of quality and confidence on the graduates, training programmes and certificates.

In NCE technical\vocational teacher education programme, accreditation is the sole responsibility of the NCCE. The commission appoints members of the accreditation team. The team usually consists of staffs of the commission, who are professionals in the area and other professionals appointed by the commission from tertiary institutions (NCCE, 2012). The team works according to the commission's guidelines and reports back to it. The exercise involves visitation of the team to the institution/department to evaluate the academic programme offered in terms of curricula contents, intellectual atmosphere in the college, morale of the academic staff, students, standards of work, and physical facilities provided. In addition, the team carries out on the spot-assessment to authenticate the information already supplied by the institution/department on its personnel, teaching materials, library facilities (books and journals), quality of students' work, staff training, laboratory facilities and administration of departments (NCCE, 2012). These are the indicators of quality for granting any form of accreditation status. Depending on the extent to which a programme meets the described quality indicators during visitation, it could be granted any three of accreditation statuses. The statuses are: full accreditation, interim accreditation and denied accreditation.

Improved programme quality is the most significant gain of programme accreditation (NCCE, 2013). Quality in this context is used to mean those distinguishing parameters that exposes the worth or goodness associated with the programme. Olaitan, Nwachukwu, Igbo, Onyemachi and Ekong (2009) identified the parameters embodied in the curriculum as content, instructional methods, instructional facilities and resource personnel. These parameters where they exist are indicators of quality. Thus, any programme that is granted full accreditation is adjudged to possess those sterling quality indicators. However, a deficiency in the quality indicators, creates the need for improvement in the programme's quality or out-right phasing out.

With a focus on the quality indicators, administrators work hard to see that their programmes/departments are accredited. The efforts are usually through improved funding, provision of facilities, and proper programme implementation. Though without any empirical evidence, it is believed that administrators do employ unorthodox means of borrowing facilities, equipment, tools, and even personnel to ensure that their department/programmes are accredited. It is also speculated that, institutions do subtly pressurize the accreditation team through monetary gratification to write favourable reports for their programmes. These sharp practices cast doubt on the quality of programmes granted accreditation through these means.

Olaitan et al (2009) described the present effectiveness of technical\vocational teacher education as not being promising, because of inadequate modern facilities for learning and lack of in-service training programme for staff. They further observed remarkable evidence of poor programme organization, administration, supervision and implementation. These no doubt have resulted to downward trend in the quality, both in the process and product of technical\vocational teacher education (Aina, 2001 and Ulinfun, 2008). Also the NCCE in a memo to Provost of Federal Colleges of Education observes non-compliance of institutions with the minimum standards requirement on staff development.

The observations of NCCE and Olaitan et al (2009) questions the validity of the NCCE accreditation exercise, as there has been no publicized cases of loss of accreditation by any institution in recent times. Also, it raises the issue of quality in NCE technical\vocational teacher education which should be observable and measurable through proportionate provision

of physical facilities, laboratory equipment, library books and seats, adequate number of qualified teaching and non-teaching staff, proper administration of departments, among others. It is against these backgrounds that this study sought to examine the perceptions of NCE technical\vocational teacher on the extent the NCCE accreditation exercise has influenced some quality indicators in the NCE technical\vocational teacher training institutions.

This study answered the question, in the perceptions of NCE technical\vocational teacher trainers in College of Education and Polytechnics: What is the effect of the NCCE accreditation exercise on the academic programme quality indicators (in relation to personnel, facilities and administration of departments) in the NCE technical\vocational teacher training institutions?

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in five colleges of education and one polytechnic offering NCE technical\vocational education programmes. The institutions were Enugu State College of Education (Technical), Enugu; Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka; Federal College of Education, Obudu; Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze and the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu. One hundred and seventy six vocational education teachers in the departments of Agricultural Education (42); Business Education (50); Home Economics (40); and Technical Education (44) in the institutions constituted the study population. The entire population was involved in the study.

Questionnaire was the instrument for the study. It was made up of structured items developed based on the NCCE accreditation guidelines on personnel, facilities and administration of departments. The items utilized the Likert responses continuum of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree.

The questionnaire was validated by three experts in agriculture, business and technical education. Reliability of the instrument was established by the Cronbach Alpha method whereby it was administered to subjects of comparable characteristics. The calculated internal consistency estimates of the items was 0.89, indicating that the instrument was reliable

Data collection involved the use of the questionnaire. Research assistants were used to administer copies of the questionnaires in the institutions. One hundred and seventy-six copies of the instrument were distributed. All the copies were completely filled and returned for analysis.

The research question was answered by computing mean score of the respondents. The response scale was assigned weights of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, and their mean calculated. A mean score of 3.50 was used as a cut-off point for determining agreement on the influence of accreditation on the quality indicators under personnel, facilities and administration of departments.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3,

Table 1: Influence of NCCE Accreditation Exercise on Quality Indicators under Personnel

S/N	Quality Indicators	Departments (x)				\bar{x}_G
		Agric \bar{x}	BED \bar{x}	Home \bar{x}	Tech \bar{x}	
1.	Employment of adequate number of teaching staff.	4.00	3.20	2.90	3.15	3.31
2.	Employment of adequate number of support technical and administrative staff.	3.33	3.00	2.82	3.07	3.06
3.	Employment of staff with relevant Academic/professional qualification and experience.	4.19	3.58	3.90	3.53	3.80
4.	College financed staff development to enable staff acquire additional qualification/higher degrees.	2.50	2.50	2.27	2.92	2.55
5.	Industrial training (attachment) for staff to up-date their occupational skills and experience.	2.50	2.00	1.82	2.82	2.29
6.	General effectiveness of staff in the discharge of their duties.	2.67	3.70	3.00	2.23	3.15
7.	Provision of comfortable office for staff.	1.50	1.80	1.82	2.54	1.92
8.	Provision of living accommodation for staff.	1.50	1.80	1.63	2.00	1.73

\bar{x}_G - Group Mean

Table 2: Influence of NCCE Accreditation Exercise on Quality Indicators Under facilities

S/N	Quality Indicators	Departments (x)				\bar{x}_G
		Agric \bar{x}	BED \bar{x}	Home \bar{x}	Tech \bar{x}	
1.	Provision of adequate number of classrooms for lectures.	2.83	1.60	2.7	2.73	2.36
2.	Provision of adequate number of chairs and tables to sit the students in the classroom.	2.50	1.80	2.27	3.00	2.39
3.	Provision of adequate number of workshop/laboratory.	2.82	1.90	3.56	3.55	2.96
4.	Provision of adequate number of workshop/laboratory tools, machines and equipment.	2.67	1.90	3.45	3.33	2.84

5.	Provision of quality laboratory tools, equipment and machines adequate to meet the students population.	2.50	2.10	3.09	3.00	2.67
6.	Establishment of departmental library with relevant and recent books and journals.	2.83	2.10	2.27	2.17	2.34
7.	Provision of adequate number of reading chairs and tables in library to sit the students.	2.40	1.78	2.36	2.91	2.36
8.	Regular provision of materials (inputs) for practical.	2.33	2.60	2.54	2.91	2.60
9.	Adequate and regular maintenance of teaching/laboratory equipment to ensure safety of users.	2.83	2.50	2.30	3.08	2.68
10.	Fitting of laboratories/workshops with functional fire extinguishers, fire sand-buckets and water.	2.50	2.30	2.20	3.25	2.56

\bar{x}_G = Group Mean

Table 3: Influence of NCCE Accreditation Exercise on Quality Indicators Under administration of departments

S/N	Quality Indicators	Departments (\bar{x})				\bar{x}_G
		Age \bar{x}	BED \bar{x}	Home \bar{x}	Tech \bar{x}	
1.	Precise schedule of duties for staff (academic and non-academic).	2.83	4.13	2.64	2.67	3.07
2.	Supervision of facilities (Laboratory/classroom) utilization by staff and students.	2.80	3.22	2.63	2.58	2.81
3.	Proper management of staff and students' behaviour through well established channel of communication.	2.33	3.27	3.60	2.72	2.98
4.	Operation of standard procedure for dealing with staff and students behavior.	2.50	3.20	2.45	3.10	2.81
5.	Preservation of integrity of department examination.	3.50	3.56	3.54	3.52	3.53
6.	Adequate utilization of support administrative and technical staff in the department.	3.67	3.09	3.18	3.08	3.25
7.	Caring and sharing leadership responsibilities	2.17	3.70	2.90	3.15	2.98
8.	Provision of adequate fund (imprest) for the day-to-day running of the department.	2.83	3.00	2.72	1.80	2.59
9.	Regular provision of adequate fund to procure materials for practical and examination.	2.50	2.60	2.20	2.67	2.49

\bar{x} = Group Mean

Major Findings**The NCCE accreditation exercise in the institutions led to:**

1. Employment of staff (teaching and non teaching) with relevant academic and professional qualifications and experience.
2. Preservation of the integrity of department examination.

The accreditation exercise did not lead to:

1. Employment of adequate number of academic, support technical and administrative staff.
2. Institutions financed staff development programmes and industrial training to enable acquire higher degrees and up-date occupational requirements.
3. Provision of comfortable offices and living accommodation to staff.
4. Provision of adequate number of classrooms and chairs to sit the students
5. Provision of adequate laboratories and quality tools and equipment in the laboratories to meet students population
6. Establishment of departmental libraries with relevant books and journals
7. Adequate and regular provision of fund and materials for practical and examination
8. Proper schedule of duties for staff, supervision of staff and students behaviour through well establishment channel of communication
9. Provision of fund for day-to-day running of departments.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the NCCE accreditation exercise did not result to improvement in the quality of NCE technical\vocational teacher education programmes in relation to personnel, facilities and administration of departments in the institutions under investigation. This stem from the fact that 25 of the identified 27 indicators of quality for granting accreditation were rated disagree with mean scores less than 3.50.

The findings on personnel in Table I show that of all the eight standards prescribed for granting accreditation, the exercise only led to employment of staff with relevant professional qualification is well recognized in technical\vocational teacher education. Nevertheless, their number is also paramount as the staff-students ratio requirement must be met for efficient instruction in classrooms and laboratories. The none provision of staff development programme in the institutions corroborates with the NCCE executive secretary's memo to Provosts of Federal Colleges of Education urging them to provide study fellowships for their staff. These findings show that the institutions are yet to comply.

Further, the findings in Table 2 show that accreditation did not improve the quality indicators under facilities. The institutions still lack of classrooms, classroom chairs and tables,

workshops equipped with adequate number of quality tools and equipment, and departmental libraries with relevant books and journals. Absence of these facilities even after accreditation, questions the quality of academic work and occupational training going on in the institutions. Worst still, fund for the provision of materials for practical and examinations are not provided. How then were the departments accredited? Little wonder that Olaitan et al (2009) described the current effectiveness of technical\vocational teacher education as not promising.

Olaitan et al (2009) also observed remarkable evidence of poor programme supervision, administration and implementation as having led to downward trend in the quality of technical\vocational teacher education. The findings in Table 3 on the administration of departments confirm their observations. Table 3 shows poor supervision of facilities utilization by staff and students, poor management of staff and students behaviour, none precise schedule of duties for staff, and inadequate utilization of technical and support administrative staff. However, it is significant to note that accreditation resulted to the preservation of the integrity of departmental examination. This is despite the fact that the departments are not regularly provided with adequate fund to procure examination materials.

The state of the quality indicators under personnel, facilities and administration of departments is quite revealing and remarkable. For all practical purposes, accreditation is expected to result to improved programme quality (Andrew, 2006 and NCCE, 2013). By extension it should have resulted to improved provision of facilities, employment of adequate number of qualified staff and proper administration of departments. But all these results failed to manifest in the institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

Effort at delineating and ensuring national standards in the technical and vocational teacher education at the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) level is no longer a recent phenomenon in Nigeria education system. This because without accreditation programmes, the desired quality assurance in tertiary institutions cannot be achieved. However, it is significant to note that accreditation resulted to the preservation of the integrity of departmental examination.

This study therefore investigated the perceptions of NCE vocational/technical teacher trainers on the influence of the NCCE accreditation exercise on some indicators or quality in the NCE Vocational/technical teacher training programmes and found out that the accreditation programme is a welcome development. The implication is that the programme should be taken very serious if quality will be assured in our tertiary institutions.

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