

# **Teacher Training Quality and Effectiveness in the Context of Basic Education: An Examination of Primary Education Studies (PES) Programme in Two Colleges of Education in Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

The need to ensure quality teachers that will implement basic education motivated this study. Teacher education in Nigeria is aimed at providing trainees with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situations in the country and the world. This goal remains a mere wish as most teachers do not exhibit the required competencies needed, especially to teach at the foundation level. This calls into question the quality of their training. The study therefore undertakes an examination of the Primary Education Studies (PES) curriculum used in training teachers for basic education. Two Colleges of Education were isolated as a case study, using the Integrated Curriculum evaluation model. It employed purposive and random sampling procedures to select subjects from teacher trainees, trainers, in-service teachers, headteachers of basic schools, and officials of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The findings showed, among other things, that the content of PES curriculum is adequate, but the teaching strategies need a lot of improvement. This has serious implications for the successful implementation of basic education in Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

The maxim that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers clearly demonstrates the role of teacher and teacher education programmes in national development. The realization enforces each country to make vigorous efforts to produce qualified persons to take up the teaching of her citizens as teaching is a versatile field that requires at all times the correct identification of indices of developments in the society. Its versatility makes it imperative that teachers be an embodiment of constant search for updated knowledge- latest information, skills and breakthroughs- in various fields of life.

Teacher education is that component of any educational system charged with the

education and training of teachers to acquire the competences and skills of teaching for the improvement in the quality of teachers for the school system (Afe 1995). It is often planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach particularly but not exclusively in primary and post-primary schools (Okafor 1988). The training of teachers in Nigeria began with the introduction of formal education by the missionaries. The efforts then were geared towards helping the individuals fulfill their roles as catechists, interpreters and teachers. Formalized teacher education however began in 1895 by the establishment of a training school in Abeokuta by the Church Missionary Society (Fafunwa 1974). The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Departments of Education in 1929 triggered the colonial government's interest in teacher education, and they concentrated on training teachers for primary schools. Trainees were exposed to both the content and pedagogy of teachings in different school subjects and awarded the Grade II Teacher's certificate at completion. This arrangement, which made the Grade II teachers specialists in all subjects of the primary school curriculum, was sustained for several decades.

As Nigeria geared towards independence, and based on the recommendations of Ashby Commission (1956), teacher education programmes for secondary schools was introduced. One of such was the Advanced Teachers Colleges, known today as Colleges of Education. These, under the supervision of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), award the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) to their graduates. Today, there are 72 such colleges in Nigeria. In addition to these are the Faculties of Education in almost all the universities in the nation, which produce graduate teachers with Bachelor of Education (B.ED) degree and Diploma in Education for graduates of other disciplines who desire to become professional teachers. There are also various institutes of education in universities that offer refresher and in-service training programmes for teachers.

In these institutions, students are trained to form habits that will help them become capable teachers who will shoulder responsibilities, be initiative and be of good conduct worthy of emulation to their future pupils/students. The curriculum lays emphasis on subject mastery and pedagogy. To be eligible for the award of NCE/B.ED, a student must earn required units (usually 128) to graduate. These cover education courses, research projects, general studies, teaching practice and a double major or two teaching subjects (NCCE 2002, p.2). Evaluation is by means of continuous assessment and an end of semester examination. The teacher is expected to be a specialist in whatever subjects he/she is trained in, while the education courses are to prepare him/her for competent classroom work. Despite these arrangements, Nigeria still has a staggeringly significant number of unqualified teachers as shown in the Table 1.

**Table 1. Number of Teachers by Gender & Qualification Primary Schools 2005**

<i>QUALIFICATION</i>	<i>MALE</i>	<i>FEMALE</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>%</i>
Graduate with Teaching Qualification	15,201	20,205	35,406	5.99
Graduate without Teaching Qualification	5,247	4,486	9,733	1.65
NCE	99,537	164,443	263,980	44.64
Diploma	22,147	11,317	33,464	5.66
Grade 2	87,676	71,735	159,411	26.96
Grade 1	80	46	126	0.02
HSC/GCE ALevel	335	102	447	0.08
Special Teachers	71	27	98	0.01
WASCE/GCE/SSCE O'level	3,890	2,491	6,381	1.08
Others	55,772	26,483	82,255	13.91
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>289,956</i>	<i>301,335</i>	<i>591,291</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: FME: Basic & Senior Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria, 2004 & 2005

Universal access to education has been a prime target for Nigeria since the middle of the 1970s when the Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) scheme was launched. Pupils' enrolment burgeoned rapidly from 6.2 million in the 1975/76 session to 14.8 million in 1992. However, this brought in its wake a plethora of changes, some positive, others mostly problematic. The major one was a severe dearth of quality of teachers. Trainees were rushed through short-term, often ineffective, training programmes. Predictably, the scheme collapsed. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme launched in September 1999 was designed as an improvement on the Universal Primary Education. Obanya (2000) summarizes Basic Education as that level, type and form of learning needed to build firm roots for literacy and numeracy, to inculcate basic life skills and more importantly to consolidate the skills of learning how to learn. An attempt to combat the problem of non- and under-qualified teachers as earlier experience led to the establishment of the Teachers' Registration Council in 1993 with the sole responsibility of determining the standards of knowledge and skill to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as teachers (TRCN Decree 31, 1993).

Its reform agenda include, among others:

- Compulsory registration of all professional teachers.
- Make the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) the minimum requirement qualification of teachers.
- Mandatory Continuing Professional Education Programme for in-service teachers.

These reforms created a number of challenges for teacher education and in effect basic education:

- The recognition of NCE as the minimum requirement of teachers had resulted in the phase-out of the Grade II teacher training colleges where the bulk of the Nation's primary school teachers are trained.

- With the inception of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 2000, the demand for teachers rose astronomically. A Pivotal Teacher Training Programme was introduced as an interim measure to meet the shortfall in teacher demands for the implementation of the UBE.
- All teachers with certificates below the NCE are required to upgrade such certificates through re-training within a limited time. Some of the affected teachers had made efforts to upgrade their qualification to that of NCE, while a significant number (about 49%) still possess qualifications below that of NCE.
- The NCE qualifies a teacher for professional work at the Primary and Junior Secondary School levels of education. To meet up with this challenge, the Colleges of Education are required to incorporate English, Mathematics and Primary Education Studies as compulsory courses for pre-service NCE teachers. This is to make them effective all-round teachers at the primary education level.

However, the general concern is the implication of TRCN's directive in ensuring quality basic education since the orientation of the curriculum content of the Colleges of Education is in specialized training in specific subject areas. This is against the general "all round" knowledge needed to teach in the primary schools. Therefore, providing the variety of general knowledge trainings and facilities needed for all the programmes has become a major barrier to effective teacher training and consequently implementing the Basic Education programme.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is often wide disparity between policy pronouncements and policy implementations in Nigeria. The crux of basic education in Nigeria is the quality of teachers to implement the policy as innovations in education often take a lot of inputs and preparations before implementation. Any innovation in education relies a lot on the preparedness of the teachers who are termed the curriculum implementers. The National Policy on Education (NPE 2007, section 63) stipulates that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession at any level in the Nigerian schools system should be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). However, the NCE teachers have limited subject specialization where the teacher-trainees are trained in two basic teaching subjects. This curriculum orientation seems inadequate for the primary school system. This study therefore examines the effectiveness of the NCE curriculum, specifically Primary Education Studies (PES) in preparing teachers to sufficiently take up the challenge of teaching at the primary school level.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of the study is to investigate the capacity of Nigerian pre-service

teachers in terms of quality of training as well as their understanding of basic education to implement basic education requirements. It therefore seeks to:

1. Examine the pre-service teachers' understanding of basic education.
2. Examine the pre-service training of the teachers in achieving the goals of basic education, especially at the lower basic (primary) schools.
3. Determine the adequacy of the existing teacher training curriculum of the Colleges of Education in implementing basic education.
4. Suggest innovations in teacher training curriculum needed for effective implementation of basic education.

The objectives are translated into the following research questions

1. What is the pre-service teachers' understanding of Basic Education?
2. What are the in-service teachers' understanding and perception of Primary Education Studies?
3. Of what relevance is Primary Education Studies to the successful implementation of Basic Education?
4. What curriculum innovations are needed for the pre-service training of teachers to implement Basic Education?

As a way of significance, the study will give indications of the general trend in teacher preparedness and readiness in implementing the basic education, especially at the primary school level and therefore give directions in the area of lapses and plan accordingly.

## **Research Methodology**

The study focused on two Colleges of Education in Nigeria, one in Lagos State and one in Kano State of Nigeria. The states were chosen because they are both cosmopolitan with relatively the same mixed, heterogenous population. Because of their large population, educational issues such as low enrolment, low academic achievement and low literacy level that affect Nigerian education system are manifested. This is of grave concern because these states are known to have had the most visible exposure to western education. There are three Colleges of Education within each of the states (federal, state and technical). One Federal and one state-owned Colleges of Education were purposively selected; the former because as an institution under the direct control of the federal government, it will be assumed to ensure that the standard of policy is met and also serve as pointer to what obtains in other Colleges of Education, and the later as state-owned, to determine if and what areas of variations in its programmes execution with the Federal College of Education.

The study focused on pre-service teacher training because of the need to provide a large scale of teaching staff to implement basic education. The Primary Education Studies

(PES) as a course within the college programmes was examined because it is the only course that deals directly with the training of teachers for the basic/primary level.

A case study approach which integrated both qualitative and quantitative data in the description of phenomenon was used for the study. Case study is used for examining contemporary events when the relevant behaviors cannot be reasonably manipulated for scientific research.

A multitude of curriculum evaluation models have been developed by educational researchers. However, the Integrated Curriculum Evaluation Model developed by Singla & Gupta (2007) was adopted for this study. It comprises:

- **Objective Evaluation**: involves determining and evaluating the objectives of the programme
- **System Evaluation**: Curriculum is implemented in a system which consists of inputs, process, and output.
- **Esoteric Evaluation** involves: co-curricular and extracurricular activities, research development efforts, updating faculty staff, promotion of self study and innovation in teaching-learning strategies, continuous updating of curriculum and community interactions.

The study employed both purposive sampling and random sampling procedures to select subjects from the following:

1. Pre-service teachers at the colleges of education: Years 2 and 3 students of PES programme of the colleges.
2. NCE trained in-service teachers; to determine their effectiveness/challenges in teaching at the primary school level.
3. Teacher trainers at the college (lecturers) - as the NPE curriculum implementers.
4. Officials of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE); as the policy makers and programme evaluators.
5. Head teachers of basic education schools, school administrators and school owners.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the instruments which include questionnaires on Perception of Primary Education Studies (PES) Content & Implementation for lecturers, teacher trainees, in-service teachers and school head-teachers; a belief/aptitude inventory questionnaire for teacher trainees which focused on exploring their perceptions of self in relation to the teaching profession, and a PES Policy Formulation Implementation and Monitoring Written Interview for Officials of NCCE. The reliability coefficient of each of the instrument varies between 0.76 and 0.84. Data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive & inferential statistics.

## Findings

### 1. Pre-service teachers' understanding of Basic Education.

This section takes care of the objective evaluation aspect of the OSE model. Data from PES teacher trainees of the two colleges were used. The respondents consisted of 170 PES teacher trainees, comprising 87 students from Federal College of Education, Kano, and 83 students of Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Lagos. 28.8% of them were males while 71.2% were females. 63.5% are within the age range 15-24 while 36.5% are above 25 years. 58.8% were in final year while 41.2% constitute year 2 students. Credits obtained at O'level varies- the minimum being 4 credits (29.4%) while 70.6% have the minimum requirement of five credits and above. 34.1% gained admission through the admission regulated body (PCE JAMB) while 65.9% entered through preliminary programmes. 52.2% chose the College of Education as the institution of first choice while 29.4% and 18.6% initially preferred University and polytechnic respectively

Students' understanding of basic education varied. While there was no well articulated understanding of Basic Education, there were evidences of relatively fair conception of the programme. Responses such as Basic Education being essential, fundamental and foundational, focuses on acquisition of basic knowledge, attitudes and skills, and creates learning opportunity for children of all ages and both sexes are given. However, there is no evidence of clear articulation of its goals and objectives. One can therefore conclude that the teacher trainees' understanding of Basic Education is shallow.

To further explore their understanding of Basic Education, the students were asked to state their relevance as teacher trainees to basic education. Only 24 (14.1%) could state some. Their responses include: encourage development of learning, impact knowledge to pupils, mould and construct lives of children at early stage to have solid background and be fit for further education. Others include understanding pupils, link pupils to instruction, ensuring effective instruction, building skills, ensuring cognitive, psychomotor and affective development of children, transferring skills needed for individual and societal development. Others also noted that laying sound foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, demonstrating leadership qualities, moulding character and developing sound judgment in children, acquiring necessary knowledge and skills to teach pupils effectively, and developing children's numerical and communication skills.

They were also asked to determine if the training as basic education teacher relevant to their personal development. While not many responded to this question (only 8 did), seven of the respondents had an affirmative answer. Some of the justification given include: they had always been interested in teaching at the lower levels, and one particularly said he loves counseling and moulding young people. One believed teaching is not suited to his personality. A critical look at this respondent's responses to other questions revealed that he had intended to go to the university to read geography. He however opted for College of Education because he had only two credits at O'level.

We need to examine if the goals of Basic Education realizable in the achieving of the

goals of teacher education, especially through the Colleges of Education. The philosophy, objectives and relevant curricula for the training of quality NCE teachers had been documented in the NCCE Minimum Standards, 1996:1. While the objectives are seen to be laudable, and are achievable if properly pursued, however, we need to determine how the objectives are being implemented in the curriculum. This leads us to the research questions 2 and 3.

## **2. In-service teachers' understanding and perception of Primary Education Studies**

Inputs from 85 PES trained in-service teachers were explored. 38 of them were from Kano and 47 from Lagos. 54 of these teach in government - owned primary schools, while 31 work in private schools. 46 are male, while 39 are female, with age ranges mostly between 25-40 years (71.8%), and teaching experience between 1-10 years.

The result shows that 30.2% of the respondents could not discuss what PES is all about, 28.6% confused PES with Basic Education by perceiving PES as the first educational step before basic education, or defined it as Primary Education Service, or the old system of primary education. However, 38.6% perceived PES as the foundation training received by intending primary school teachers. Others see PES as training of teachers for basic education. To this group, PES is aimed at developing and equipping basic teachers to enhance their teaching ability and relationship with pupils, and to give teachers all round development and training. When asked to establish the relationship between PES and Basic Education, the respondents noted that PES is directed towards achieving some educational goals, that is, promote the training of qualified pre-primary and primary school teachers, therefore PES trained teachers teach at the basic education level.

To further explore their understanding of PES, the teachers were asked to discuss how their training affected their professional practice in the areas of lesson preparation, use of proper teaching techniques, use of instructional materials, knowledge of primary school subjects, classroom management and organization skills, classroom discipline, teacher appearance/ethical issues, and understanding of learners. The responses showed that PES training had helped the teachers to; make adequate preparation for content development and good delivery of subject matter, communicate effectively, encourage understanding and make use of proper teaching techniques, etc.

## **3. Relevance and adequacy of Primary Education Studies to the successful implementation of basic education**

Data for this section were sourced from PES lecturers, PES students (teacher trainees), PES trained in-service teachers, head teachers of basic schools as well as NCCE officials. The PES lecturers consisted of 19 lecturers from Federal College of Education, Kano, and 10 from Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Lagos, totalled 29. There are 21 males and 8 females, with age range between 20 and 49. 11 had only first degree, 17 had Masters and only 1 had Ph.D. 17 of them are on permanent employment, 8 on

temporary and 2 on contract. 6 are Assistant lecturers, 9 are Lecturer II, and 3 are Lecturer III, 2 principal lecturers and one chief lecturer. 11 specialized in Science Education, 3 in Educational administration, 6 in English Language, 3 in Sociology of Education and 4 in Psychology. 8 have less than five years teaching experience, 8 have less than 10 years. 6 less than 15 years, and 5 of them have 16 years above. The evaluation of Primary Education Studies (PES) was done using extensively data from these respondents. The results are presented in Tables 2-7.

One way of determining the relevance is to examine the quality of the PES trainees. To ascertain this, questions were asked about the admission procedure, levels of motivation of students and teaching ability/skills and competencies possessed. 58.6% of the respondents disagreed that the admission requirement is low. According to some of the respondents, especially Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, minimum of 5 credits at O'level examinations is the admission requirement, which is the same as obtainable in university admission. However, it was noted that FCE Kano lecturers admitted taking candidates with 3 credits and 2 passes. However, same percentage of respondents agreed that the admission requirement is sometimes ignored by the school administration. This could probably explain the disparity in the two college's admission requirements. Though it is noted that general enrolment is poor, it was agreed that PES enrolment can favourably compete with other course combinations in the colleges.

On teaching ability and skills/competencies, the lecturers believe in students' ability to prepare adequately for lesson (86.2%), effective use of teaching techniques (86.2%), effective use of instructional materials (86.2%), classroom management and organizational skills (89.7%), and classroom discipline (86.2%). Notwithstanding these assertions, in Table 2, the students' different skills are rated below average: analytical skill was rated below 5 by 40.7% of the respondents. 63% rated problem solving skills below 5, while the leadership skill was rated below 2 by 58.2% of the respondents. However, students believe certain areas of their training need improvement as a fall out of their teaching practice experience: lesson preparation (61.8%), use of teaching techniques (68.3%), use of instructional materials (62.9%), knowledge of specialized subject matter (80%), classroom management and organizational skills (49.3%), classroom discipline (51.8%) and their physical appearance (51.2%). These areas form the core of their training.

**Table 2. Lecturers Ratings of Students' Exhibited Skills and Competencies**

SKILLS	Respodents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Communication and literacy	F	10		2	2	9	2	1	1		
	%	34.5		6.9	6.9	31.0	6.9	3.4	3.4		
Analytical skill	F	1		1	2	7	8	5	1	2	
	%	3.4		3.4	6.9	24.1	27.6	17.2	3.4	6.9	
Problem solving	F	1		1	3	12	4	3	2	1	
	%	3.4		3.4	10.3	41.4	13.8	10.3	6.9	3.4	
Critical thinking	F		1	2	2	7	3	8	1	2	1
	%		3.4	6.9	6.9	24.1	10.3	27.6	3.4	6.9	3.4
Creative ability	F			1	2	8	6	7			3
	%			3.4	6.9	27.6	20.7	24.1			10.3
Interpersonal skills	F				3	3	7	8	3		3
	%				10.3	10.3	24.1	27.8	10.3		10.3
Leadership traits	F	12	2				2	6			2
	%	41.4	6.9				6.9	20.7			6.9

On students' motivation, 65.5% of lecturers believe that majority of them are not interested in teaching as a profession, and that many opted for PES as a last resort, in fact, 92.9% felt they are not enthusiastic about the programme. There are self-confessed expressions from the students which supported the lecturers' view. Such expressions include: *I took to teacher training because I could not gain admission to other courses; Teaching job scares me; My training is needed for certification only; It is not necessary I teach when I finish my studies.* However, there are also expressions of firm interest in the teaching profession such as "I find my training very interesting". The lecturers (48.2%) also believed that the students are incapable of teaching at the primary school level. This is close to the number who felt they are. However, 65.25% noted they are capable of teaching at the Junior Secondary school level. This may be because of the specialist subject orientation at the JSS level which is similar to the college programme. From the perception of the students, 78.3% claimed to be interested in the teaching profession, 82.4% find their training interesting, they are not scared by teaching (54.1%) because they possess teaching ability (77.1%), and they need the training beyond certification purposes. They however believed that they need more consolidated exposure in their subject matter areas/disciplines. On staff competencies, 57% of students believed they have insufficient knowledge of subject matter, 60.5% make exclusive use of the lecture method and most do not use instructional materials (56.5%).

The curriculum content/quality of instruction was also examined. While the lecturers disagreed that the curriculum is overloaded, difficult and outdated, the students felt otherwise. However, 72.4% of the lecturers noted that the curriculum does not sufficiently cover the teaching of all primary school subjects, while the students complained of lack of time even to cover the existing curriculum. Subjects in the curriculum include:

- Pre-primary and primary curriculum
- Primary English Studies
- Basic Grammar

- Development of Writing Skills
- Introduction to Social Studies
- Physical and Health Education
- Primary Science
- Primary Mathematics
- Library Education
- Supervision & Management of Primary Schools
- Introduction to theory and Practice of Guidance & Counselling
- Comparative Education
- Nigeria as a Nation and other Culture

Further probing on the curriculum revealed that 49.7% feel the content courses were adequate, while only 41.4% agreed that they are relevant. The review of course content is also left at the discretion of individual lecturer. While 41.5% claimed to review their courses every semester, 34.5% claimed to review per three sessions while 24.1% do not update at all. Also, 51.7% of respondents believe they have sufficient professional training to handle PES. However, the question is, what constitutes the “sufficient training”? Is it in terms of qualification, whereas only 3.4% of the lecturers had a Ph.D, or in terms of areas of specialization, which cover almost all areas of education except the course itself? They also noted that they adopt new methods of teaching and vary their instructional techniques. Though they noted that they are give free hand in handling their courses, they are not consulted on the development of new course programmes (79.3%). Perspectives on curriculum content and quality of instruction are shown in Table 3 & 4.

**Table3. Perceptions of PES Curriculum Content and School Programmes**

PERCEPTIONS	SA+ A	SD+ D
PES curriculum is overloaded	31.0%	68.9%
PES curriculum is too difficult for most students	13.7%	86.2%
PES curriculum is outdated	48.2%	51.7%
There is insufficient coverage of primary school content or methods	72.4%	27.5%
The curriculum is overloaded	61.2%	38.8%
The curriculum is too difficult	52.1%	47.8%
The curriculum is too easy	42.9%	57.0%
The curriculum is outdated	48.2%	51.7%
There is insufficient time to cover the curriculum	59.5%	40.4%
Lecturers have sufficient professional training	51.7%	48.2%
Lecturers teach using old/archaic methods	27.5%	72.4%
Lecturers have sufficient instrumental methods	58.6%	41.3%
Lecturers are given free hands in handling their courses	51.7%	48.2%
Lecturers are consulted on development of course programmes	20.7%	79.3%

**Table 4. Students' Perception of Quality of Instruction Received**

	Very good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Academic (specialized) subjects	65.9%	26.5%	2.9%	4.1%	0.6%
Teaching methodology	51.7%	24.7%	9.4%	-	8.8%
Childhood development	54.1%	34.7%	4.7%	-	6.5%
Child centered instruction	50.0%	30%	9.4%	2.4%	8.2%
Classroom Management	54.1%	28.2%	2.9%	4.7%	10.0%
Using/making instructional materials	58.2%	20.6%	9.4%	3.5%	8.3%
Evaluating instruction	48.8%	30%	7.6%	4.1%	9.6%

They indicated that the quality of instruction is very good as evidenced in the percentage ratings of each specialist area within the programme. Despite the quality of curriculum content, they emphasized that their training has effectively prepared them to teach at the primary school as well as secondary school levels. It is interesting to note that the school calendar runs relatively smoothly. The time for school activities is relatively sufficient as each semester runs between 12-14 weeks and often there are no hitches like students' unrest and lecturers' strike. They also noted that teaching practice exercise also run often without hitch as the programme is well coordinated and takes off at certain periods of the year. Students of Colleges of Education are also known to be less restive than university undergraduates.

The analysis of infrastructure, school facilities and funding, the result is shown in Table 5. Greater percentage of the respondents agreed on the inadequacy of infrastructure and other learning facilities. Students' ratings of quality of facilities gave classroom space, furniture, library & books, instructional materials very good ratings (81.2%, 72.3%, 69.0%, and 60.6%, respectively). However, the quality of internet resources was less than average (34.2%). 64.3% of lecturers also noted that there is no sufficient fund for infrastructure, professional development and even student support services, especially in terms of accommodation and health. Though salaries are noted to be low, they are paid promptly and regularly.

**Table 5. Lecturer's Perception of PES Infrastructure, Facilities & Funding**

	SA+ A	SD+ D
Inadequate classrooms/lecture rooms	86.2%	13.7%
Inadequate furniture/dilapidated furniture	79.3%	20.7%
Lack of water supply	78.6%	21.3%
Lack of Electricity supply	65.5%	34.5%
Inadequate basic learning/instructional materials for lecturers' use, including media provision.	65.2%	34.7%
Laboratory/workshop/home-economic centers are grossly inadequate and ill-equipped.	75.9%	24.0%
The School buildings are obsolete and dilapidated.	63.6%	36.2%
There is insufficient fund for infrastructure required	64.3%	35.6%
There is insufficient fund for professional development of PES teachers	65.5%	34.5%
Salaries of PES teachers are low	59.3%	40.7%
There is insufficient fund for students' support services	82.8%	17.1%
Salaries and allowances are not promptly and regularly paid.	41.1%	58.8%

To determine the quality of graduates of PES programme, that is, the extent to which employers are satisfied with the performance of the products, data were collected from 34 school heads. They include 19 head teachers from Lagos and 15 from Kano. 91.2% work in government owned primary school, while the rest are head teachers of private schools. The group noted that the ratio of PES trained teachers in their schools are very small compared to specialist subject oriented teachers. This is summarised in table 6.

**Table 6. Ratio of PES Trained Teachers vs. Subject Oriented Teachers in Primary Schools.**

Ratio	Frequency	Percentage
1:9	6	17.6
2:8	16	47.0
3:7	6	17.6
4:6	5	14.7
1:2	1	2.9

The question is what could possibly account for this disparity? It should be noted that PES is a relatively new course within the Colleges of Education programmes; therefore, their products are yet to be fully integrated into the basic school system. However, to determine their effectiveness and productivity; the head teachers were asked to rate them on a performance scale. The results are shown in table 7.

**Table 7. Headteachers' Ratings of PES Trained Teachers' On-the-job Performance**

	LOW			AVERAGE			HIGH			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lesson preparation	12.7	15.0		10.5	17.6	23.5		20.6		
Use of proper teaching techniques		12.0				17.6	17.6	17.6	17.6	17.6
Use of instructional materials	13.2	39.1			29.4		17.6			
Knowledge of primary school subjects (content)	31.3		15.7	23.5				29.4		
Classroom management and organization skills	10.2	15.2		21.6		23.5	29.4			
Classroom discipline		27.4		11.0		14.7		46.9		
Teacher appearance/ethical issues	11.8		23.1	35.6				29.4		
Understanding of learners	9.6	11.0	8.3		12.2	20.6	38.2			

One can infer from the table that PES trained teachers are rated relatively high on use of instructional techniques (70.4%) and discipline (61.6%). They were scored as average on classroom management (52.9%), understanding of learners (53.2%), lesson

preparations (51.6%) and use of instructional materials (52.3%). They were however scored low on knowledge (mastery) of subject matter (47.0%) as well as their appearance (35.6%). Apart from the above ratings, 65% noticed they have good/cordial relationship with learners, colleagues and authority, while 25% noted that they employ good evaluation techniques. One Significant area of weakness noted was the unwillingness of PES teachers to attend workshops or seminars. This has serious implications as continual self-improvement is one hallmark of an effective teacher. The head teachers suggested that to ensure quality of training, PES should also be introduced to university courses, and that attendance at workshop should be made compulsory for licensing and promotion exercises.

To determine the programme supervision and monitoring mechanisms, 9 NCCE officials were administered with a written interview schedule. They include 6 principal programme officers, 2 chief programme officers, and 1 deputy director, with work experience within NCCE ranging from 8 to 20 years. The focus of their interview was to determine the operations of the NCCE in terms of programme design, implementation and supervision, especially as they relate to Primary Education Studies. Their responses showed that policy implementation decisions are made by the commission through outcomes of the NCCE meetings with relevant stakeholders in teacher education (Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), and the Federal Ministry of Education). and upon approval of recommendations made by academic and research committee to the National Council of Education, through the Joint Consultative Council on Education (JCCE). Final decisions are taken by the management committee headed by the Executive Secretary of the commission. Sometimes, responsibilities are assigned to various departments of the NCCE where experts in different fields of education meet and ruminate over issues before presentation to management committee. Also ad-hoc committees are sometimes set up to work on specialized areas. In the case of the development of PES programme, the education unit of the academic programmes department did most of the paper work.

The interview also revealed that specific policies guide certain part of every programme. For instance, in the establishment and development of course programmes , the NCCE guidelines on academic programmes serves as minimum standards concerning expected number of staff required for take-off, adequate books and journals, classrooms, laboratories, staff offices, and studios. Programme funding is done through budget allocations according to programme needs. On staffing, there is the NCCE scheme of service for federal and state colleges of education prepared through the personnel management department of the commission. Staff-students ratio is also stipulated in the minimum standards. Minimum qualification for staff is first degree with at least 2 years post-qualification experience. On programme content and instructional modes, the courses offered, the accreditation and monitoring pattern is spelt out in the minimum standards. PES content, according to the officials, is based on the curriculum of basic schools.

Strategic policies and monitoring and evaluation strategies developed by the commission to ensure uniform standard and quality control at the federal, state and private Colleges of Education include:

- NCCE accreditation mechanism including pre-accreditation visits as well as re-accreditation of programmes with interim and denied status. NCCE accreditation is done every five years.
- NCCE resource inspection visits to COE
- Special workshops on the review of minimum standards which is done every five years
- Governing council and expanded management committee of the Colleges of Education where NCCE representation is mandatory.
- Verification exercise to ensure the qualification of staff and students.
- Minimum standards that spell out the dos and don'ts of the college, irrespective of the ownership and to ensure harmonized curriculum
- Standardized measures for consideration of results before issuance of certificates.
- Considerations of feedback from external assessment.

Despite the above strategies, the officials noted the following shortcomings among others:

- Lack of the regular monitoring of the academic activities of the colleges to ensure that qualitative teacher education programme is obtained.
- Lack of adequate motivation by the federal government for teacher trainees, trainers and academic programme officers in charge of curriculum development at the various supervisory agencies such as NCCE.
- Inadequate funding
- Poor pedagogical skills on the part of the teacher trainers.
- Lack of teacher education policy
- Quarks in supervisory agencies that have hijacked the duties of the professionals and have been feeding the system with wrong information.
- Poor policy implementation and excessive greed often exhibited by top officials of NCCE.
- Lack of a harmonized regulatory body for teacher education at the tertiary level, i.e. Colleges of Education being regulated under NCCE and the Faculties and Institutes of Education of Universities regulated under the National Universities Commission (NUC).
- Influx of unqualified personnel into teaching and education. One official remarked that even acquiring a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) does not make a qualified teacher.

#### **4. Curriculum innovations needed to implement basic education**

The NCCE officials noted that policy decision and implementation processes can be

improved upon to enhance the quality of basic education output in the country through:

- Regular and rigorous monitoring of the various academic programmes and general activities of the NCE awarding institutions to ensure strict compliance with the commissions guidelines and regulations. Another official noted that the gap between accreditation time is too wide – 5 years, is enough to do a damage.
- Effective participation of all stakeholders in monitoring exercises among others.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The study revealed among others that though there was a fair conception of Basic Education by the teacher trainees, but such conceptions were not well articulated. Also, a significant number (61%) were confused about the concept of PES. This implies that the programme, which is designed to develop and equip basic teachers to enhance their professional ability and relationship with pupils, and to give teachers all round development and training has not achieve its purpose in this regard. However, Despite their inability to articulate basic education goals, they all believe that the PES has equipped them to make adequate preparation for basic education in terms of content development, good delivery of subject matter, effective classroom management, understand the nature of learners and their needs, as well as making appropriate selection of instructional materials. On achieving UBE goals, the trainees believed that they are relevant in encouraging the development of learning, particularly in ensuring cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of children. While most of them expressed satisfaction in the PES as enhancing their personal development, a few agreed that it was uncontrollable circumstances that led them to the teacher training programme. Thus, the training has not in anyway met their personal desire. This is also indicated in their lack of motivation in the programme as the study showed that majority of the students (92.2%) felt they were not enthusiastic about the programme. It implies that they opted for the course as a last resort. This, a noted earlier, affected enrolment into the programme, which is generally poor. Hence, there are variations in the admission policy into PES in the sample institutions as some institutions are forced to lower their admission requirements in order to attract students to the college and even certain courses. Since low quality entrees invariably results in low quality products/graduates, there are greater implications because the greatest challenge to the development of human capital in Nigeria today is the quality of graduates from Nigerian institutions.

All the respondents noted that PES has no special facilities other than what other programmes are using in terms of space, furniture and the library. But relevant books and instructional materials are still inadequate. Of increasing worry in Nigeria's education sector are the problems of dilapidated infrastructure, inadequate facilities as well as paucity of teaching and learning equipments. The lack of maintenance culture in our school system and poor funding has been responsible for the decayed state of facilities in most, if not all of our institutions today.

While the lecturers agreed that adequate preparation is always given to students before and during teaching practice exercise, the students on the contrary showed that there is the need for improvement in lesson preparation, use of instructional materials, and selection of instructional strategies, classroom organization and management, as well as discipline. When observed during teaching practice, students' performances and experiences certainly agreed that adequate skills in these areas will definitely enhance their service delivery.

On staff competence, the students felt that their teachers have insufficient knowledge of subject matter, because they make exclusive use of lecture method and do not use instructional materials either. Teachers can only be effective in teaching and improve students achievement if they themselves have strong academic skills (Hanushek, 1996), appropriate formal training in the field in which they teach (Ingersoll 1999), and several years of teaching experience (Murnane & Phillips 1981). Suffice to say, PES lecturers require further specialist trainings in core areas of basic education development apart from occasional attendance at conferences, workshops and seminars. On staff motivation, majority of the lecturers (96.6%) felt that their promotion was regular and based on merit and they also have the opportunity to attend staff development programmes, even though not regular.

In determining the extent to which employers are satisfied with the performance of PES graduates, most head teachers observed first that the ratio of PES trained teachers in their schools are very small compared to specialist subject-oriented teachers. This disparity could possibly be as a result of the newness of the course in the Colleges of Education programme; not all colleges offer the course, and notably there is poor enrolment in the programme. However, the head teachers noted that the PES graduates perform better than their counterparts in the use of instructional techniques, classroom management, maintaining discipline, cordial relationship with learners/colleagues/authority. This is line with the UNESCO/ILO recommendation concerning the status of teachers (1966) which noted that the purpose of teacher preparation programme is to develop students general education and personal culture; their ability to educate others; an awareness of principles which underlie good human relations, within and across national boundaries; and a sense of responsibility to contribute, both by teaching and by example, to social, cultural and economic progress.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study focused on determining the relevance and adequacy of Primary Education Studies (PES) curriculum to achieve the goals of basic education through quality teacher training. The findings showed that though the content and coverage of the curriculum is adequate, the teaching strategies need a lot of improvements. It was also revealed that the teacher trainees had no well articulated understanding of the concept of basic education or even Primary Education Studies, on which their training is based. Closely

tied to this is that majority of the students are not enthusiastic about the programme, therefore supporting that enrolment into the programme is generally poor. The programme also has no special facilities for training basic education teachers other than what other programmes are using in terms of space, furniture, library and other instructional facilities most of which are non-functioning, obsolete and dilapidated.

It can therefore be summarized that the programme needs a lot of re-organizations in terms of quality of admission, training pedagogy and instructional facilities and infrastructures. PES lecturers have a lot to do in the area of self improvement/professional development and their instructional capacities to ensure that their teacher trainees, who will eventually implement basic education policies and curriculum, actually have the proper knowledge of what is expected of them. The required training given to PES students should be such that imbue them with teacher competencies and skills needed to develop basic education, and which will make them contribute diligently to the development of the nation. Also, there is need for focused training for PES lecturers as Adeshina (2004) puts it, the UBE teacher education curriculum must reflect both the innovation intended in UBE as well as the content of the UBE curriculum. Besides, adequate instructional supervision within and outside the college system to ensure quality delivery of service is also imperative.

If the goal of teacher education must be achieved, which is “to provide teacher trainees with both intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation, not only in the life of their country but in the wider world” (NPE 2007), any effective professional training programme for teachers must rest on the foundation of truth and accurate thinking. Above all, scholarship and quality must be diligently pursued if UBE will be a real success.

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