

INVESTING IN TEACHER EDUCATION TO CHECK GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE
21st CENTURY: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

This article is a theoretical paper aimed to investigate the investing in teacher education to check graduate unemployment in the 21st century: implication for counselling. Unemployment is continuously referred to as a cankerworm to the development and sustainability of the country's economy. It is alarming that this epidemic does not only occur with uneducated people or school dropouts but is now evident among graduates of tertiary institutions. This paper discusses the importance of committing more financial resources to the education of teachers for the purpose of training them to be more effective in the production of graduates with appropriately developed skills. Other areas of concern in this paper include the challenges to effective teacher education, the role of teachers in the quality of tertiary education graduates, and the cost implication of producing teachers with skills that will impact positively on the quality of graduates in the labour market. The paper concludes that teacher education is a major factor in resolving the problem of graduate unemployment. The paper therefore suggests that government should invest more funds on teacher education so as to provide opportunities for teachers to be continually and properly trained to meet up with globally trained teachers so as to equip them with requirements that are required in the teaching profession to produce school graduates who are employable and relevant in the 21st century economy.

Keywords: *Investing, Teacher education, Graduate unemployment, Teacher effectiveness, Counselling.*

Introduction

Education is often described as a prerequisite for manpower development and a necessity for socio-economic, political and cultural development. It is the brain box that drives man into the realization of his potentials for self fulfillment, service to humanity and wealth creation. This is made possible because education paves the way for learners to use acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes in character changes to be productive to the society where they belong. It is in view of the role of education that it is accepted and recognized as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes to learners that will in turn bring about national development. Onuoha (2020) describes education as an activity that has no boundaries, and is available and beneficial to all classes of people, ages,

gender, tribes, religion, and most especially the teachers.

The government has the responsibility of formulating educational policies that guide educational actions whereas the actual execution of these policies is in the hands of the teachers. The teachers are the most critical factors in the success of the education system for both individuals and countries. The teaching profession is assumed as the most vital and strategic profession given that it is the only profession that its activities ensure the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Hence the effectiveness of the educational system depends greatly on the educational attainment of teachers because no system of education can be qualitatively higher than the quality and commitment of its teachers (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). It therefore follows that the

quality of teachers in the system will automatically determine the quality of students that graduate out of the education system.

The graduate unemployment rate in Nigeria is estimated at 25 million (Babalobi, 2019). The unemployment problem in the country has assumed a catastrophic dimension and its impact is felt by 80% of Nigerian families with different attempts made by the government to curb without any success yet. This challenging situation has brought about object poverty among many homes, increased rate of adult dependency, low saving culture and increase in crime rate. The development of qualified graduates who become effective human resources in the country is the responsibility of the education sector of every country and most especially lies in the hands of the teacher. And to successfully achieve these, there is need to have qualified teachers who have gone through a properly structured and well programmed teacher education that is equipped to meet global standards. This paper discusses investment in teacher education as a prerequisite to check graduate unemployment in the 21st century.

Conceptual Framework Investment in Education

Investment in education is directed at giving an insight into the present position of Education in term of national development. In the view of Onuoha (2020) education is a profitable tool that is globally recognised as a strategic venture that is capable of bringing about economic transformation. This follows that education does not only provide human resources in the country but it also has the ability to bring about positive turn around in the nation's economy and it is in view of these significance of education that parents and countries invest in the education of their children and citizens. Parents go out of their way to invest in the education of their children by sending them to

expensive and international schools with the knowledge that it is the best legacy they can offer; on the other hand the government has not given the education sector the needed attention as an investment in education is on a negative slope.

Education is expected to play the role of training people in the society to be relevant, useful and adequately prepared to offered acquired knowledge for the advancement of economic growth. This is made possible by the sector being able to produce capable professional in different fields who in the long run bring about the success of the economy. Adetula, et. al. (2018) commended the Nigerian government on their investment in education in the areas of the implementation of compulsory education, Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, the introduction of the Teachers Registration Council (TRCN), Task force on Education, etc, but lamented that all these programmes have not been able to succeed due to adequate funding. Jega (1997) in Onuoha (2020) supports the above explaining that the education sector has suffered decades of underfunding which has resulted in the quality of inefficient, poor and inadequate human resources. It is painstaking to note that while the enrollment into schools is on the increase, budgetary to the education section is on a decrease, thereby negatively influencing the provision of infrastructures, instructional materials and the training of qualified manpower in the system. The country's budget has not been able to get close to the 26% benchmark recommended by UNESCO for developing countries in the attempt to improve on their education system. The table below shows Nigerian's educational budget for sixty four years.

Table 1: The percentage budgetary allocations to the education sector by the Federal Government of Nigeria (1960-2023)

Year	% Allocation	Year	% Allocation	Year	% Allocation	Year	% Allocation
1960	6.02	1976	8.71	1992	3.86	2008	13.00
1961	6.15	1977	3.12	1993	5.62	2009	6.54
1962	5.19	1978	11.44	1994	7.13	2010	6.40
1963	3.45	1979	3.70	1995	7.20	2011	1.69
1964	3.65	1980	4.95	1996	12.32	2012	10.00
1965	3.57	1981	6.45	1997	17.59	2013	8.70

1966	4.23	1982	8.09	1998	10.27	2014	10.60
1967	4.88	1983	4.04	1999	11.12	2015	9.50
1968	2.84	1984	4.49	2000	8.36	2016	6.10
1969	2.20	1985	3.79	2001	7.00	2017	7.38
1970	0.69	1986	2.69	2002	5.90	2018	7.03
1971	0.53	1987	1.93	2003	1.83	2019	7.20
1972	0.62	1988	2.40	2004	10.50	2020	6.70
1973	0.88	1989	3.55	2005	9.30	2021	5.60
1974	0.96	1990	2.83	2006	11.00	2022	5.40
1975	4.57	1991	1.09	2007	8.09	2023	5.30

Source: Ohaegbulem and Chijioke (2023)

The table above shows drastic fluctuations in the budgetary allocations to the education sector which is very far from the UNESCO recommendation. Every efficient investor puts funds in that aspect of investment that would yield the best profits; therefore from the table it shows that the federal government has not come to the realization that investment in education is an investment in the nation's economy. Again despite the above challenges of inadequate funding and calls for government to increase

funding in the education sector, the federal government recently proposed 5.3% of the 2023 budget of #21.83 trillion (Source Budget Office of the Federation), which is the lowest in the past implementation of the national policy on education are crystally obvious.

Below is another table comparing Nigerian's education budget and ranking with other countries.

Table 2: Percentage of Budgetary Allocation to Education Sector in the year 2019 by some Countries

S/n.	Countries	Budget allocation to education (%)	Position
1	Ghana	31	1 st
2	Cote d'ivore	30	2 nd
3	Uganda	27	3 rd
4	Morocco	26.4	4 th
5	South Africa	25.8	5 th
6	Swaziland	24.6	6 th
7	Mexico	24.3	7 th
8	Kenya	23	8 th
9	United Arab Emirate	22.5	9 th
10	Botswana	19	10 th
11	Iran	17.7	11 th
12	USA	17.1	12 th
13	Tunisia	17	13 th
14	Lesotho	17	14 th
15	Burkina Faso	16.8	15 th
16	Norway	16.2	16 th
17	Colombia	15.6	17 th
18	Nicaragua	15	18 th
19	India	12.7	19 th
20	Nigeria	8.4	20 th

Source: World Bank sampled Countries (World Bank, 2012).

From the table above it shows that a lot of countries are making efforts to improve their education budget whereas Nigerian with all the

natural endowment is ranked 20th position. The above data was for 2019, the 2020 budget allocation to education is at 6.7% indicating

that Nigerian's ranking would have gone down and more collapse is expected in the sector, which clearly shows that the federal government is not investing in the Country's education sector.

Teacher Education

The teacher in a school is described as a person who has gone through some form of training and has acquired knowledge, skills, attitude and values that are required to teach and impact unto others. Teachers in all forms and levels of education determine what ultimately happens to the country's educational policies, to curriculum guidelines, the use of teaching-learning materials, etc and in fact the fate of a nation's huge investments in education. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) clearly states that no nations' education system can rise above the quality of the teachers in that society, this statement clearly points out the important role teachers play in facilitating teaching and learning and in the determination of quality education service delivery. The role of the teacher is indeed significant in the determination of quality education, a supporting pillar and the force towards the realization of every nation's educational goals and objectives.

Teacher education can therefore be viewed as any form of education that is given to intending teachers in the education sector. Onuoha (2020) define teacher education as the provision of professional and specialized training within a given period of time which is specifically meant to prepare individuals in the development and nurturing of students to become responsible and productive citizens. Akhter and Alam (2016) in another view define teacher education as any policy and procedures

designed to equip prospective and existing teachers with relevant knowledge, attitude, behaviors and skills that are required to for them to function effectively in their assigned task. The definitions can be summed up to mean that teacher education refers to all forms of specialized training that are given to intending and existing teachers in a formal educational system that prepares them for the role of a teacher.

The sole purpose of teacher education is to have programmes in place that are used in the development of proficient and competent teachers, who are equipped with all the requirements of the profession and the tools to face challenges that may arise. This is very imperative as the quality and extent of learners' achievement is basically dependent on the teacher's competence, sensitivity and motivation. This follows that teacher education is provided for teachers to improve on knowledge, abilities, character and mental power with respect to the teaching profession, their areas of specialization and the level of children they teach.

Akhter and Alam (2016) opine that for the effective utilization of the teacher education curriculum, teacher education is classified into three categories; initial teacher training or pre-service training meant for prospective teachers who want to enter into the teaching profession to equip them with all they need to know in the profession of teaching; induction teacher training for providing training and support during the first few years of teaching; and in-service training or continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers who are already in the teaching profession to refresh them of the methods, strategies and systems in the profession.

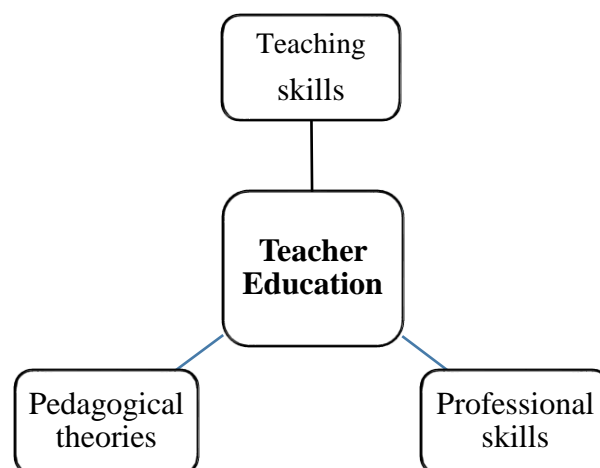


Figure 1: The angles of teacher education
Source: Onuoha (2020).

Figure 1 above explains the curriculum of teacher education is a blend mix off pedagogical theories, teaching skills and professional skills all combine to build an individual with the basic information and skills to impact into the life of leaders. Given the three angles of teacher education, teaching skills is focused on providing teachers with different techniques, approaches and strategies that are involved in the impartation and management of learners. Pedagogical theory involves the philosophical, sociological and psychological knowledge that enables the teacher to have sound teaching skills in the classroom. While professional skills involves all follow ups that are put in place to enable the teacher to grow as a professional teacher.

Investment in Teacher Education

Investment in teacher education focuses on the need for more emphasis to be made in the area of teacher education. To raise a 21st century teacher in this globalised world means that the current system of teacher education needs to have a turn around to meet up with global changes. It means that teacher education and training institutions must design programmes and plans that would assist prospective teachers to know and understand deeply; a wide array of things about teaching and learning and in their social and cultural contexts as well. Teachers have to be shown on how to enact knowledge received in complex classroom situations. If the 21st century teacher is to succeed at the task of teaching, then teacher education and training

institutions must further design programmes that transform the kinds of settings in which both the novices and the experienced teachers teach and become competent teachers.

This follows that teacher education and training must venture out further and further and engage even more closely with schools internationally in a mutual transformation agenda with all the struggles involved. Importantly, the teacher education and training institutions must take up the charge of educating policy makers and the general public about what it actually takes to teach effectively both in terms of knowledge and skills that are needed and in terms all school contexts that must be created to allow teachers to develop and use what they know on behalf of their students.

Chauhan and Sharma (2015:1) quotes The American Commission on Teacher Education that “the quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens, and the quality of its citizens depends not exclusively, but in critical measure upon the quality of their education, the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teacher”. This is also in line with the call for Action for American Education in the 21st Century in 1996 by President Clinton as cited in Beri (2013:5) “every community should have a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom. We have enormous opportunity for ensuring teacher quality well into the 21st century if we recruit promising people into teaching and give them the highest quality preparation and training”.

Havinghurst and Newgarten in Ensley (2015) explained that a teacher plays six sub roles namely; a disciplinarian, a mediator of learning, a parent substitute, a judge, a confidant and a surrogate of middle class morality. Hence the role of the teacher is evolving towards more approaches, embracing cooperation with people outside the classroom and focusing on student centered teaching. To broadening schools' horizons requires teachers to feel comfortable in their different roles in the provision of adequate information and education resources that are in line with global education standards and requirements

In spite of the importance of teacher education, there are a lot of challenges facing it, ranging from changing socio-economic, political, and underfunding. Akpan, et. al. (2009) in a study on the challenges of teacher education in Nigeria showed that both student teachers and educators agreed that course contents/delivery, admission of students, inadequate instructional facilities, teaching practice, examination malpractice, poor funding, knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), poor attitude of the public towards teaching, and poor implementation of teacher education policies posed great challenges to teacher education in Nigeria. It was recommended among other things that government should adequately finance teacher education; provide adequate instructional facilities for effective teaching-learning process in teacher training institutions and for teachers in public schools.

Graduate Unemployment

Babalobi (2019) defines a graduate as a person who has a first degree from a University that is approved by the National University Commission (NUC) or from a polytechnic that is approved by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). In the view of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as cited in Udo (2017) unemployment refers to the

a nations population between the ages of 15-64 years who are available for work, activity seeking for work but do not have. In Nigeria, the graduate manufacturing companies (tertiary institutions) have continued to increase whereas graduate employing factories are reducing. This follows that there is no balance between the increasing job seekers and job givers. Graduate unemployment has moved from being a simple problem to a national catastrophic. Longe (2017) laments that graduate unemployment is a problem in Africa of which Nigeria is inclusive and describes it as a daunting situation.

Different reason have been attributed to the problem of graduate unemployment as cited in Onoyase (2019) and they include; misappropriation and embezzlement of funds for development, collapse of industries, the neglect of the agricultural sector, Inadequate curriculum that suits the job market and job mismatch. On the effect of graduate unemployment, it affects the individual, the society and the nation at large. On its effect on the individual; Madoui (2015) and Longe (2017) asserts that the unemployed graduate is derived from socialization resulting to shame, hardship and frustration; an unhappy person; given no recognition and looked upon as a liability. This is supported by Akpan, et. al. (2009) who agrees that unemployed graduates go through psychological, social, financial and occupational challenges that results to negative attitudes.

On the effect of graduate unemployment to the society and nation, Shadare and Elegbede (2012) explain that graduate unemployment is a problem to the labour market of a country and as such it affects the economy of that nation. Salami adds that graduate unemployment can lead to social unrest (militancy, Boko haram, communal crisis, etc) and anti social behaviours in the form of armed robbery, prostitution, kidnapping, etc.

Table 3: Nigeria Unemployment Rate 2001 - 2018

Nigeria Unemployment Rate - Historical Data		
Year	Unemployment Rate (%)	Annual Change
2018	6.03%	0.01%
2017	6.01%	-0.22%
2016	6.24%	0.92%
2015	5.31%	0.88%

2014	4.44%	0.73%
2013	3.70%	0.01%
2012	3.69%	0.00%
2011	3.70%	-0.07%
2010	3.77%	0.01%
2009	3.76%	0.33%
2008	3.42%	-0.02%
2007	3.44%	-0.23%
2006	3.67%	-0.20%
2005	3.87%	-0.11%
2004	3.98%	-0.08%
2003	4.06%	-0.05%
2002	4.11%	0.08%
2001	4.03%	0.07%

Source: World Bank, 2022.

The table above shows Nigerian's unemployment rate from 2001 – 2018 indicating an increasing rise in graduate unemployment. In spite of all the unemployment programmes and strategies that the federal government has implemented in the past.

Teacher Education and Graduate Unemployment

There is a relationship between education and employment because education is the only key and main driving force in the manpower development of any society (Akpan, et. al., 2009). The type of education provided to people determine the type of labour force in a given place and time. It is obvious that the massive provision of formal education is the bane of the unemployment saga in Nigeria but the gains of literacy far outweigh illiteracy. Therefore, education is also capable of producing the needed change in people when we are able to identify where we have gone wrong and are willing to do it right. It is down to every stakeholder in education to do the needful in order to have the type of education that will provide work to its recipients. Educational planners should be on top of the move while governments on their own should exhibit the right political will to provide a robust economy for quality education to thrive. Madoui (2015) opines that education is the means that unlocks the door to modernization and sustainable development and the teacher is

the key that can be used to unlock the door into sustainable development. Parents and guardians ignore all the options and sacrifice their scarce resources to have their children educated in the hope that education will open the gates of employment into attractive jobs to them. Moreover, it is believed that the higher one climbs the education ladder, the easier it is to secure an attractive job. All these become mirage as thousands of Nigerian graduates roam the streets and various offices in the urban cities in search of unavailable jobs. To such people, higher education has failed its function of empowering graduates to be employable. Teacher education is therefore the tool that is used to efficiently equip teachers to effectively function in the education and nurturing of students who are the future of every economy. This can be theoretically explained using two theories in economics; the Human Capital theory and the Education Production theory. The human capital theory propounded by Smith as explained by Agabi (2017) identifies the productive value of education, in the development of good health, functional skills and knowledge. The theory identifies human capital which can be developed through education and training as form of investment towards human capacity for efficient productivity. The theory is thus hinged on the premise that an educated population is a productive population and constitutes the stock of human capital in the economy.

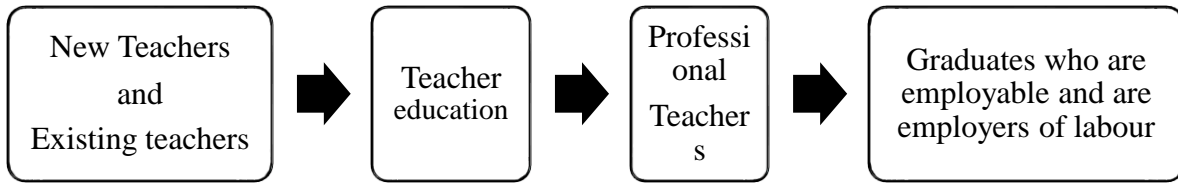


Figure 2: Human capital theory for the benefit of teacher education

Researchers Design

The figure above explains that with adequate teacher education in the system both new and existing teachers can be properly trained to be professional teachers who will be skilled to train students to become employable graduate and employer of labour

The Education production function (EPF) was developed by Coleman, et. al. (1966) as cited in Onuoha (2020) is derived from the theory of Production Function. This theory is used to

explain the critical index in the area of profit maximization; which shows the relationship between changes in output levels to different amounts of a single input while other inputs are held constant. With regards to this paper it can be used to explain the relationship in the quality of teachers and the quality of graduates that will be produced into the economy. The theory is depicted on the framework of **Input** → **Process** → **Output**. In line with this paper, education production function explains that:

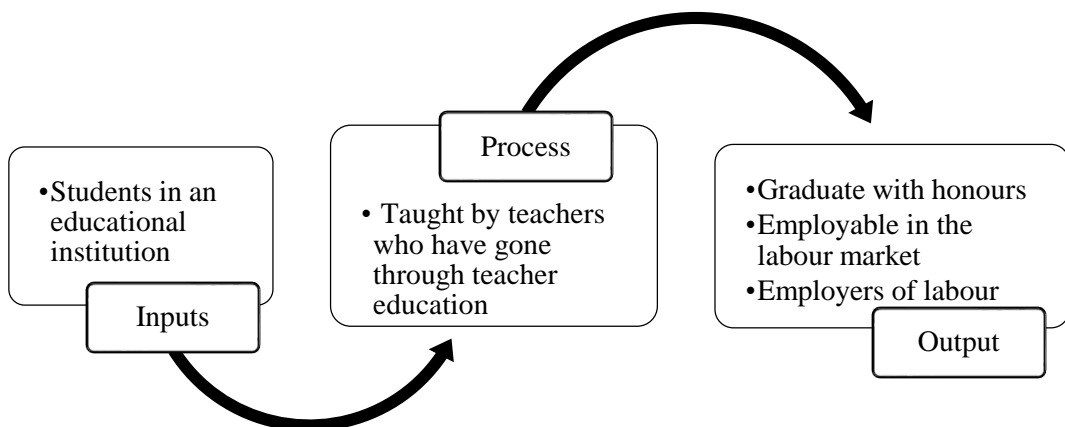


Figure 3: Education production function for Teachers

Researcher’s Design

Figure 3 explains that the role of educating teachers towards producing employable graduates is a process where students who are admitted into education institutions are trained by qualified teachers who are competent in their area of specialization and properly trained in the teaching profession by means of teacher training programmes such as conferences, seminars, mentoring, etc: to enable them teach their students effectively thereby impacting knowledge, skills and morals which are basic requirements for graduate employability in the 21st century.

Implication for Counselling

- 1) Government should establish functional counselling centers in both Federal, State and Local Government areas with Professional Counselors appointed to be in charge
- 2) Government to give proper attention to vocational skills training, thereby making a great way of reducing and in the long run eradicating unemployment in Nigeria

- 3) With Professional Counsellors in place and involved in teacher trainings, it will enable them to acquire skills that are in high demand and also help them become self-employed if need be. Such training will promote entrepreneurship and innovation as well as creativity

Conclusion

No nation has been able to develop beyond the quality of its education system, which clearly shows that the education sector plays a significant role in every nation, and this role is highly dependent on the quality of its teachers. Teachers therefore should be given the most appropriate tools during and after their training, including content knowledge and skills as well as teaching methodology to be able to do their work professionally. For Nigerian to move with global trends in education and teaching, it means that teachers will have to go through thorough teaching programmes and the teaching will have to be recognised like all other professions. Therefore the teaching profession will require stringent training and acquisition of knowledge and skills and professional registration body that is fully operational. To achieve this government will have to invest into teacher education and look into all the challenges confronting its advancement so that future university graduates will have better work opportunities.

Recommendations

- 1) The paper therefore recommend that as a matter of urgency the government and all educational policy makers in the country should have a round table to confront the problems of graduate unemployment in the country by investing in the education sector through teacher education, as it is a strategy that aims towards complete national socio-economic turnaround.
- 2) The national budget on education should be effectively and efficiently planned with the education sector given a priority, ensuring that the fluctuations in budgetary allocations are positive not negative.
- 3) Investment should be specifically made for infrastructural and instructional resources for teacher educational institutions, technical schools and schools that require

some basic instructional facilities to function effectively.

- 4) Teacher education institutions should be created in every state of the nation, and they should work hand in hand with the Ministry of education on teacher on teacher effectiveness.
- 5) Teacher training programmes should be organised more regularly for teachers in the different levels of education
- 6) The Ministry of education should have a standing order that only qualified and professional teachers should be employed into educational institution.
- 7) The teaching profession should be given a face lift with the profession ranked as important as other professions in terms of salary, incentives and better working condition.

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