

## ***Influence of Teachers' Education Programme on Economic Growth and Employment in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria***

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### **Abstract**

*The study investigated the influence of teachers' education programme on economic growth and students' skills for employment in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Stratified random sampling technique was utilized. The population consisted 2,884 secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State. A sample of 288 teachers, representing ten percent of the population, was used. The instrument titled "Teachers Education Effectiveness Questionnaire (TEEQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and reliability established using Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded an index of 0.86. Mean, standard deviation and independent t-test statistics were used for data analysis. The results revealed that effective teachers' education increases economic growth and develops students' skills for gainful employment. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that manpower planning and production should guide educational planning in Nigeria by identifying current and future skills needed in all sectors of the economy.*

**Keywords:** Teachers' Education, Economic growth, Employment

## **Introduction**

The socio-economic and industrial development of any nation is hinged on quality skills development of the populace through education. At the individual level, education opens a better chance to healthy and productive lives while at the international level, education has the ability to increase economic fortune of any nation. According to Macionis (2007), education is a social institution through which society provides its members with all important knowledge (practical, applied skills and scientific) capable of increasing production of goods and services, cultural norms and values. This means that education has been recognized as a fundamental factor of development and a key to economic growth.

However, Nigeria as a developing nation is seeking to become a key player in global community and this dream cannot be actualized without putting in place cost-effective education system powered by sound investment in human capital formation through Teacher Education. This is because teachers are the driving force in any form of educational system. UNESCO (2000) points out that teacher education is indispensable for human development and pro-poor growth. For education to succeed and be effective, the role of teacher education cannot be over-emphasized. Mezieobi (2012) defines Teachers' Education as the policies and programmes designed to equip teachers with knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in classroom, school and community at large. In his opinion, Kalu (2009) conceives Teachers' Education as the process of continuing professional and executive education spanning the entire career of the trained teachers. In this study, Teachers' Education is seen as the internal or on-the-job training of professional teachers aimed at developing expert skills, knowledge and experiences for quality service delivery. Although the term "Teachers' Education" has been used interchangeably with Teachers' Training, Teachers' Induction and Teachers' professional development (Adiele & Leigha, 2009), there is concern over the effectiveness of the programme to develop teachers' potentials. This is because the major aim of teacher education programme is to produce professional teachers who are equipped with skills and methodologies of teaching in educational institutions. Nnachi (2015) observed that teachers in Nigerian educational system exhibit nonchalant attitudes towards teaching. It has been argued that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers (Okafor, 2008) and this requires that teachers are provided with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignments.

Moreso, improved cognitive skills as measured by the performance of teachers account for sustained economic growth. According to Investopedia (2016), economic growth is an increase in the capacity of an economy to produce goods and services compared from one period to another. Kuznets (2007) perceives economic

growth as a country's long-term rise in capacity to supply increasingly diverse economic goods to its population. The author argued that education as a public good and services must have the ability to increase an economy overtime. Since teachers are the last implementers of the school curriculum, whatever skills acquired by them in their professional development would be transferred to their students thereby strengthening the educational system which translate to the economic fortune of the country.

Researchers have proven that human capital formation plays a significant role in a country's economic growth. For example, International Institute for Applied System Analysis (2014) found out that education is the key to economic growth and that countries with substantial percentage of teachers lacking in basic skills would produce students with little or no skills needed to survive technologically driven economy. Nevertheless, teachers' constant training and professional development seems to herald students' employment skills. Employment is a situation whereby people with the right type of skills and qualifications find works. Azubuike (2015) sees employment as a condition in which people who are qualified, willing and ready to work finds paid jobs. Edu (2013) observed that the true economic test of the value of any educational programme is its ability to meet the manpower needs and solve employment problems in the society. While making a case for teacher training, the author suggested that the curriculum should spell what knowledge and skills are required by students for each occupation at any particular time. Discussing the case of teacher education as an index of unemployment reduction, Aworanti (2017) noted that human development is much more than the raising of national incomes. The author concluded that the skills acquired by students through teachers' education will enable global competitiveness and economic growth while the return for the individual through employment will be an improved career and a better quality of life. Researches conducted have been reported that teachers' professional skills acquired through teachers' education programme are determinants of students' achievements not only in school but also in life after school (Okwu, 2007; Okpala, 2013; Obi, 2017).

Furthermore, the growing problem of unemployment in Nigeria has contributed to the worsening problem of poverty among the populace which according to Olaitan (2015) leads to frustration, disillusion and eventual crimes. Akpan (2013) maintained that there is need for graduates of secondary schools and higher institutions to be empowered with relevant skills needed for successful living. The author noted that graduates' inability to be self-employed or even employable has a negative impact on the individuals concerned and on economic growth of the nations involved. Skills and behaviour of students can be evaluated through observation of trained teachers in the classroom. It therefore becomes imperative to evaluate the

effectiveness of teachers' education programme for sustainable economic growth and employment in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

In Nigeria, especially Akwa Ibom State, there is growing concern on the quality of graduates from the education system specifically in secondary schools. It appears teaching activity is not taken seriously by teachers. It seems some teachers pay lesser attention to disciplining of students, poor methods of teaching, absent from school and classes as well as lateness to school and classroom. These anomalies in teaching and learning activities seem to have accounted for poor job skills needed for students' employability and economic growth. The problem statement of this study is put in the question form: How effective is teachers' education programme in increasing economic growth and developing students' skills for employment?

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study is to examine the influence of teacher education on economic growth and employment. Specifically, the study is designed to find out:

- 1) The influence of teachers' education on economic growth.
- 2) The influence of teachers' education on students' skills for employment.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What is the influence of teachers' education on economic growth?
- 2) What is the influence of teachers' education on students' skills for employment?

### **Statement of hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant influence of teachers' education on economic growth.  
Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant influence of teacher education on students' skills for employment.

### **Methodology**

The study utilized ex-post facto research design. Nworgu (2015) described ex-post facto as a research design in which the researcher cannot manipulate the independent variable. In this study, the independent variable is teachers' education while dependent variables are economic growth and students' skills for employment. This designed is considered appropriate for the study because the independent variable has already been established and cannot be manipulated by the researchers. The population of the study consisted 2,884 secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom

State (Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Education, 2017). The sample for the study was 288 secondary school teachers gotten using 10 percent of the population. Nwana (1992) submitted that if population is a few thousands, 10% is ideal for establishing 95% confidence level and precision of the sample size. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Akwa Ibom State is divided into three education zones or strata. From each sub stratum, two schools were drawn. This implies that six (6) schools were picked from each stratum (education zone). Thus a total of eighteen (18) schools were used for the study. Simple random sampling technique was thereafter applied to select 16 teachers from each of the sampled schools. The teachers were grouped into two categories based on their responses from the demographic data of teaching experience. Those whose teaching experiences were less than ten years were grouped as “ineffective” while those from eleven years and above were grouped as “effective”.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire tagged “Teachers Education Effectiveness Questionnaire (TEEQ). The questionnaire has two sections, A and B. Section A deals with bio-data of the respondents such as age, sex, teaching experience, school type and school location. Section B focuses on teachers’ education effectiveness in addressing the research variables. It was based on four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (4 points), Agreed (3 points), Disagreed (2 points) and Strongly Disagreed (1 point). The validity of the instrument was ensured through contributions of three experts in Test and Measurement. Their views, corrections and suggestions were taken into consideration. The instrument was trial tested on 30 teachers in schools not selected for the study. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability index obtained was 0.86 which indicated that the instrument is highly reliable. Then t-test statistics was used to test the two null hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

**Presentation of results**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant influence of teachers’ education on economic growth.

**Table 1:** Summary of independent t-test analysis of the responses of teachers on the effectiveness of teachers education in increasing economic growth in Akwa Ibom State (N = 288)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
Ineffective teachers education	132	2.77	.45	286	-2.696	.003	Not accepted
Effective teachers education	156	3.48	.43				

The analysis of data in Table 1 showed that the probability associated with the calculated value of  $t = -2.696$  was 0.003. Since the probability of 0.003 was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not accepted. Hence, there was a significant difference between the mean response scores of teachers on the effectiveness of teachers' education in increasing economic growth in favour of effective teachers' education. This means that in teachers' opinion, effective teachers' education programme to a very high extent is effective in increasing economic growth. This implies that there is a significant influence of effective teachers' education on economic growth in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

$H_{02}$ : There is no significant influence of teacher education on students' skills for employment.

**Table 2:** Summary of independent t-test analysis of the responses of teachers on the effectiveness of teacher education and students' skills for employment in Akwa Ibom State (N = 288)

Group	N	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
Ineffective teachers education	128	1.7863	286	-3.527	.003	Not accepted
Effective teachers education	160	4.4425				

The analysis of data in Table 2 indicated that the probability associated with the calculated value of  $t = -3.527$  was .003. Since the probability value of 0.003 was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not accepted. Hence, there was a significant difference between the mean response scores of teachers on the effectiveness of teachers education in developing skills for students' employment in favour of effective teachers education. This implies that, in teachers' opinion, effective teachers' education significantly influences students' skills for employment in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of findings**

In order to determine the effectiveness of teachers' education in increasing economic growth and developing students' skills for employment in Akwa Ibom State, the opinions of teachers were sought. The findings of the first hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference in mean response scores of teachers on the effectiveness of teachers' education in increasing economic growth in favour of effective teachers' education. This result is in agreement with the findings of Okpala (2013) who found out that education through teachers' in-service training

programme assists in producing desired manpower in driving the country's economy leading to positive growth. The study is also in consonance with that of Okwu (2007) who disclosed that there was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on the effectiveness of teachers-on-the-job training in increasing economic growth. The finding of the second hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference in mean response scores of teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of teachers education in developing students' skills for employment in favour of effective teacher education. This result is in congruence with the findings of Obi (2015) who noted that teacher education influences students' skills acquisition. The finding of this study is also in tandem with the findings of International Institute for Applied System Analysis (2014) who discovered that teachers lacking in basic skills will produce students with little or no skills needed to drive technologically driven economy.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the influence of teachers' education programme on economic growth and students' skills for employment in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of teacher education on economic growth and employment. Specifically, the study is designed to find out the influence of teachers' education on economic growth and the influence of teachers' education on students' skills for employment. The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant difference in mean response scores of teachers on the effectiveness of teachers' education in increasing economic growth in favour of effective teachers' education and that there was a significant difference in mean response scores of teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of teachers' education in developing students' skills for employment in favour of effective teacher education. It can therefore be concluded based on the findings of the study that effective teachers' education programme increases economic growth and develop students' skills for employment. However, the observed variation in the response scores of teachers is a clarion call on re-orientation of teachers education for improved and sustained economic growth and unemployment reduction in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made sequel to the findings of the study:

- 1) Nigerian government at all levels should embark on constant training and retraining of all teachers in the country.
- 2) There is need to identify current and future skill needs in all sectors of the Nigerian economy and focus on acquisition of skills that will help reduce unemployment in Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria in general.

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