



**STUDENT-TEACHERS' INTEREST IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND THE FUTURE OF TEACHING AS A PROFESSION IN NIGERIA. A STUDY OF FACULTY OF EDUCATION STUDENTS, NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY, BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The teaching profession in Nigeria appears to suffer a lot of neglect compared to most other callings. Ironically, it is the teacher that trained all the professionals including the political class that tends to underrate teachers. Most young people seeking admissions would ordinarily consider this noble profession as their last option of study due to the perceived neglect of those already in the teaching system. In view of the above perception, this study was carried out at the Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria to ascertain the extent of keen interest and zeal student-teachers would appreciate becoming teachers upon graduation from the university. The study adopted a simple random sampling technique to select 50 students each from the 6 (six) Departments within the Faculty to respond to the 12 items in the instrument developed by the researchers for the study. The instrument was presented to experts in Measurement and evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations and considered satisfied before they were administered to the randomly selected respondents. In all, 300 respondents among the 300 Level students served as respondents. Two research questions and one null hypothesis were posed and tested to guide the study. Frequency counts, percentages and mean scores of each item collated from the data and analysed were used to arrive at results for the two research questions, while Independent t-test statistics were applied to analyse for results with respect to the hypothesis. The results from the research questions indicated that the majority of the student-teachers were not interested in the teaching profession and would ordinarily opt out for other careers if they are opportuned to do so. However, the result of the hypothesis tested accepted the null hypothesis, indicating that there is no meaningful difference between student-teachers who will be interested in teaching as their future profession upon completion of their course of study and those who may not want to be teachers upon graduation. The study concluded among others that the issues of teacher welfare in terms of regular/prompt payment of salaries and boosting of their morale through motivational incentives and regular training in addition to considering the aptitude of the student's interest in becoming future teachers should be taken into consideration before they are admitted into the Faculties of Education pursue a course in education. This, no doubt, will check the attrition rate of teacher education graduates and save the future of the teaching profession.*

**KEYWORDS:** Student-Teacher, Teaching Profession, Future of Teaching, Nigeria.



## INTRODUCTION

Student-teachers are pre-service teachers pursuing academic programmes either in Teachers Training Colleges; or other tertiary institutions of learning that are established to prepare professional teachers. The purpose of teacher education according to Oyekan (2006) is to produce qualified professional teachers that can adjust to the changing needs of the students as well as meet the needs of modern society. Closely linked to the above, Adewuji and Ogunwuyi (2002) see teacher education as the provision of professional educators committed to the preparation of qualified individuals who will be ready to nurture the younger ones into responsible, vibrant and talented citizens for a productive nation. The place of teacher education programmes is further explained by Paulley and Benwari (2019) to mean a period designed to groom those who teach or would like to teach or engage in relevant professional services in schools, colleges and ministries of education or other relevant organisations as the case may be. They maintained that the training acquired equipped the trainees to become competent and skilful, thereby improving the quality of the teachers in the school system and any other task assigned to them. The essence of the professional training of teachers is to ensure a desirable change in the behaviour and aspirations of the prospective teachers to match the demands of the profession (Okpaorim and Esu, 2019: 131). Teacher education is the process of preparing, training and educating a prospective teacher for his/her role performance in the classroom/the school setting. Teaching is a specialised area of education with policies, and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and skills they require to perform in the classroom, school and the wider society. It's aimed at producing effective, productive and quality teachers. It is important to state that globally, education is known to have helped societies advance their frontiers of knowledge, and create access to economic growth. Education is acquired through training, and the teacher is saddled with this responsibility. The ingenuity and diligence of a teacher are, therefore, a major yardstick for the technological advancement of any nation. Often, it is maintained that no nation can develop the quality of its human capacity beyond the quality of its teachers. The role of education universally is recognised as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners. What this implies, therefore, is that the effectiveness of any educational system rests squarely on the qualitative output of its teachers.

A profession that plays such an enviable role in society certainly deserves to enjoy a pride of place in the committee of professions. For any nation to succeed in a technological age within the 21st Century, it beholds the government and citizenry to place serious emphasis on the products that will serve as teachers in the future. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, experience and close observation have indicated that a lot of student-teachers pursuing academic programmes in higher institutions of learning are actually not very keen or interested in the teaching profession. It is for this reason that the position by Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) appears apt. They submit that although both the government, education planners and designers might vote large sums of its revenue to education; it is the teacher that will ultimately enable the learner to acquire the set goals of educating the child. No one else but the teachers is expected to translate government policies into actions; principles into practice in the course of carrying out their duties in the classroom with the students. Going back memory lane, teaching was regarded as an enviable profession, but that golden age has since appeared to have passed



away. The value of teaching had eroded so much that student-teachers who are admitted to pursue courses in teaching appear not to be interested in becoming professionals upon graduation after their training. A career in teaching appears to be so debased or not encouraging to all strata of society. Most student-teachers certainly could not imagine themselves becoming teachers. This attitude had affected their psyche, hence some are shy even to introduce themselves publicly as students studying education. A mere observation would portray their inner drive and passion to have studied other courses that society considers noble. Such careers or programmes include law, medicine, accountancy, and engineering rather than teaching. In a study by Efe, Oral and Efe (2012), one of the findings revealed that student-teachers who had chosen to pursue a teaching degree as their first preference after the university entrance exams had a more positive attitude towards teaching than students to whom a teaching degree was not a high priority to during their quest for admission.

Studying attitudes or interests is considered imperative because at least some of the evidence involved suggest that it can be used as a predictor of behaviour (Bohner, 2001; Jaccard and Blankton, 2005). According to these scholars, in education, positive attitudes towards teaching are signs or potential for effective teaching (Stronge, 2002). Others such as Pigge and Marso (1997) had equally emphasised that a negative attitude towards teaching leads to teacher burnout, while interest and a positive attitude result in positive classroom behaviour. This by implication is that for teacher education programmes to provide prospective teachers with opportunities that shape their attitude, which without doubt are reflected in their positive approaches to teaching, the interest or zeal of the student-teacher is essential. Once teacher candidates are accepted to teacher education programmes based on their predisposition for careers in teaching and their attitude towards teaching, environment, social values and individual learners' needs, such opportunities may contribute positively to the quality of teacher education programmes (Oral, 2004).

Presently, there appear to be multiple obvious reasons why most young undergraduates may not develop much interest in the teaching profession in Nigeria. The career of teaching is seen as not attractive in terms of its remunerations to staff and standards in terms of the conducive working environment. Teachers are seen in the Nigerian setting especially due to the lack of political will and policy summer salts as a profession for those who had no other choice or career prospects in other viable sectors of the economy. Their workload appears to be too heavy, yet their conditions of service are not commensurate with what they deserve. Their social value and position had made most teachers develop complex problems psychologically. Under such terrible conditions, most young people can only see opportunities in teaching as a stepping stone for greater prospects in other programmes which will not direct them primarily to the classroom.

This study is conducted in the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State Nigeria to find out if the literature reviewed above could be replicated for student-teachers pursuing undergraduate programmes in the Faculty of Education who actually have a keen interest and disposition for the teaching profession. The study will give a sense of direction to government and policymakers as to which options of remedy are left for the future of teacher



education bearing in mind for one to be in any profession, the person must first be taught by a teacher.

### **Problem of the Study**

The teaching profession, without a doubt, is a major determinant of a nation's economic, technological, political and moral destiny. This fact underscores the necessity for teacher education to be perceived as a sacred duty that must not be taken lightly. The contributions of a teacher to creating an enlightened, disciplined, responsive and forthright society, behold them (teachers) to produce useful young people. Unlike the colonial period, the teaching job which ordinarily is supposed to recruit the most brilliant products is faced with the serious challenge of brain drain as the best students are rather moving to other professions that are believed to provide them with sustainable greener pastures. Teachers appear to have little social value in society despite their enormous contributions. Government policies that are intended to promote the welfare of teachers are being paid lip service and to a large extent issues with their welfare downplayed. Teachers' salaries are delayed most times without justifications and in some cases, even their pensions and gratuities upon meritorious retirement from service are denied them. No wonder Ajayi as cited by Ige & Adepoju (2021) had stated that the occupation enjoys the unpleasant nickname of an "ungrateful trade" a profession for the "never-do-wells" or occupation of the 'down-trodden'. An occupation which is viewed with contempt, a refuse dump for mediocrity, a profession with men and women who have only an average drive for power, ambition and escapism. Their work environments especially in most rural areas are extremely deplorable; those in the cities are over-stressed with over-crowded pupils/students in the classrooms; not forgetting excess workloads. These pillars of human development are so reduced and made an object of scorn by the very people they have empowered with various skills for society's growth do disparage those in the teaching field, what an irony! Young people are scared of becoming teachers because of the way teachers are being treated. Most young people consider it a curse for anybody to suggest that they apply to study education. Many teachers show an inferiority complex, low self-esteem, dissatisfaction, bitterness and every other thing that is demeaning.

A more critical factor for society to ponder is the issue of the candidates being admitted to study education programmes. Only a handful of the candidates appear to be actually desirous of a teaching career. Most of the others are candidates who had opted for other professional courses such as medicine, law and accountancy; however, because they are unable to meet the required cut-off marks or scores, these candidates are drifted to the faculty of education. Their mindsets may already be biased against the occupation, but the need for a degree or certificate becomes the primary reason for their stay in the faculty. According to Ikeotuonye (2000: 62), only boys and girls with poor O-level results reluctantly go to study education. Ikeotuonye further explained that even those who graduate with NCE, make frantic efforts to get into the university to read courses other than education. Only those who fail in this still read education most unhappily. Teacher education programmes appeared not to be competitive as it is like the last option for those who fail to make it to other distinguished sectors. Where teachers are expected to be sound, industrious, articulate and intelligent, a system that admits a relatively



unqualified crop of candidates is to an extent aberration. This acceptance of the role of a second fiddle could as well be a contributory negative and low rating of teachers in society.

The uncondusive nature of the work environment of teachers may also be a likely reason for the unattractiveness of potential teachers to opt for other careers. Many schools appear very unclean, there is infrastructural decay (including dilapidated walls as well as licking roofs) and near total absence of learning materials to facilitate effective classroom experiences for students to explore. Nigeria is one country where from every indications' academic knowledge means little or nothing to those in positions of authority. A nation where millions of naira (the country's currency) could be spent on television reality shows through sponsorship of some very immoral activities instead of supporting academic scholarship. Amidst all this, is also the fact that the profession appears to be very liberal in terms of recruitment of job seekers from other disciplines irrespective of what they studied. Some of the teachers might just be hanging on to teaching pending when their choice jobs prop up. Such teachers might be exhibiting a nonchalant attitude to the profession which is a potential danger to the students' academic future. From the existing literature, much research had been done regarding student-teachers interest towards teaching as a career in several universities elsewhere and Nigeria. This notwithstanding, no such study had specifically focused on the student-teachers of the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa state, Nigeria. The study might help to expose government officials in the ministry of education and assist in opening avenues for broad and more robust ways to explore in encouraging young people to develop an interest in teaching as a career. It will also proffer possible strategies that could be adopted to encourage teachers to accept rural postings or be persuaded to serve in the very under-developed rural communities in the creeks of the deltaic Bayelsa state where most teachers prefer to stay only within the capital city (Yenagoa) and other settlement which are accessible by roads.

## METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, with all third-year (300 level) students in the Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa state, Nigeria comprising the population of the study. These students are considered to be mature enough to independently respond rationally to the items in the instrument. The Faculty is made up of six Departments namely Science Education; Social Science Education; Arts Education; Educational Foundations; Vocational /Technology Education; and Library and Information Technology Department. Fifty (50) students from each Department were randomly selected as a sample for the study bringing the too number of the sample to three hundred (300) students. Two research questions were posed to elicit responses from the sample. Again, one hypothesis was tested to find out the perception of the student-teachers regarding their interest towards the teaching profession. Responses for the research questions were analysed using frequency counts, and percentages. For every item where more than fifty per cent (50%), depending on the positivity or negative response (depending on how the question item is structured), it is either considered as being "Interested" in teaching; while scores below fifty per cent ( from 10 – 49%) implies that the respondents are "not Interested" to serve as a teacher after training. To ensure the success of data administration and collation, the researcher obtained permission





from the various Heads of Departments for the 300-level students to respond to the items in the instrument. The researchers'-designed items were immediately retrieved from the respondents upon completion without any further delay.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of interest demonstrated by students in the Faculty of Education to study courses in Education willingly on their own accord?

Research Question 2: To what extent do students in the Faculty of Education demonstrate interest to become classroom teachers upon graduation?

Hypothesis 1: There is no mean difference between student-teachers with an interest to become professional teachers and those who do not show a keen interest in the Faculty of Education to be future teachers.

**Table 1: Level of desire of students in the Faculty of Education**

Items	ACCEPTED		REJECTED		Mean Score ( X )		VERDICT
	Frequency	Percent age	Frequency	Percent age	Positive	Negative	
1. I willingly choose to study a course in education	78	26%	222	74%	0.26	15.4	Rejected
2. I accepted to study education since I could not secure admission in my first-choice course	193	64.8%	107	36%	0.35	11.2	Accepted
3. I have always wanted to be a teacher.	82	27.3%	218	73%	0.27	0.74	Rejected
4. I accepted to study a course in education just to earn a degree	233	77.7%	67	27%	0.22	0.64	Accepted
5. I will prefer to be a career teacher instead of any other profession.	87	29%	213	71%	0.29	0.72	Rejected
6. I am ashamed to introduce myself as a future teacher	218	72.7%	82	27.3%	0.27	14.6	Accepted



## RESULTS

Table 1: Research Question 1: What is the level of desire of students in the Faculty of Education

The study posed two research questions in order to elicit responses on the interest of the student-teachers towards the teaching profession upon completion of the programmes. The analysis from the data collated in Table 1 indicated that for item one (1) which enquired on whether the students willingly applied to study a course in education, 78 respondents representing 26 per cent of the total sample accepted that they enrolled on their own accord without pressure to study an education course. On the contrary, 222 representing 74 per cent admitted that it was not their intention to study courses in education as their first option while applying for admission.

For item two (2), 193 respondents representing 64 per cent attested that education was not their preferred programme of study while applying for admission. They, however, accepted programmes in education since their preferred courses do not offer them admission. It is clear from the analysis that 107 respondents, representing 36 per cent opted for programmes in education as their first choice.

Analysis from item three (3) revealed that 82 respondents representing 27 per cent wanted to serve as professional teachers from the onset while 218 of the sampled students representing 73 per cent never really wanted to be teachers even as they were studying courses in education.

The result of the fourth item (4) showed that 233 respondents which represent 73 per cent accepted that they are only studying courses in education to enable them to obtain a university degree or certificate. Only 67 respondents representing 27 per cent wholeheartedly desired to earn a degree in education and are willing to utilize the same in the classroom as teachers.

Furthermore, the result of data analysis from item 5, indicated that 87 respondents representing 29 per cent will prefer to be professional teachers rather than seek any other career. 213 respondents, representing 71 per cent of the sample may seek other professions if given the opportunity and chance.

Data analysis for item six (6), revealed that 218 respondents, representing 73 per cent of the sample perceive it as shameful to be introduced as future teachers. The rest 82 respondents indicated 29 per cent are not ashamed to be called future teachers.



**Table 2: Research Question 2: To what extent are student-teachers interested in the teaching profession instead of other careers?**

Items	ACCEPTED		REJECTED		Mean Score (X)		VERDICT
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Positive	Negative	
7. My interest in child development will not allow me to leave teaching as a career	63	21%	237	79%	0.21	19.0	Rejected
8. Other jobs may be better paid but I will rather stay as a teacher no matter the salary	58	19.3%	242	80.7%	0.18	20.7	Rejected
9. The work environment is not a priority conducive for me to ignore teaching for other professions.	108	36%	192	64%	0.36	11.1	Rejected
10. I see teaching as a stepping stone to advance other noble professions.	267	89%	33	11%	0.11	36.4	Accepted
11. My perception of poor salaries for teachers has increased my dislike for teaching.	228	76%	72	24%	0.24	16.7	Accepted
12. I appreciate that my children succeed me as a teacher when I retire finally	53	17.7%	247	82.3%	0.17	22.6	Rejected
					<b>TOTAL = 2.93</b>	<b>TOTAL = 9.77</b>	

Table 2 cover the analysis for item 7 – 12. Item seven (7) indicated that 63 respondents, that is 21 per cent will always want to remain teachers to develop the growing child. On the contrary, the data analysed show that 237 respondents (79 per cent) may not willfully stay in the classroom even if it means creating an opportunity to render their services for the development of the child.

Analysis from item eight (8) reveals that 58 responses, representing 19 per cent stated that despite other better-paid careers, they will rather remain as teachers. Alternatively, 242





respondents representing 81 per cent, revealed that with career opportunities with better incentives, they may migrate from teaching to some other profession.

The result of the data analysis for item nine (9) indicated that 108 respondents, representing 36 per cent will ignore conducive work environments to remain as teachers. On the other hand, the result of the study revealed that 192 (representing, 64 per cent) will rather appreciate working in better and more conducive work environments instead of the classroom or being a teacher.

Research question ten (10), shows from the data analysis that 267 respondents, representing 89 per cent perceived the teaching profession as a stepping stone to advance to other more rewarding and lucrative professions with better incentives. The analysis indicated that 33 respondents (11 per cent) perceived teaching as a career that they can remain with and equally develop themselves.

From the study results in item eleven (11), it was clear that 223 (76 per cent) perceived teachers as being poorly paid in terms of salaries. This notwithstanding, 72 respondents (24 per cent) perceived teachers' salaries as good and would therefore like to serve in the profession.

Item twelve (12), here again, the analysis revealed that 53 respondents (17 per cent of the student-teachers accepted that their children may wish to succeed them as teachers upon their retirement from active service. Main while, the analysis indicated that 247 respondents representing 83 per cent may not appreciate that their children succeed them as classroom teachers.

Hypothesis 1: There is no mean difference between student-teachers with an interest to become professional teachers and those who do not show a keen interest in the Faculty of Education to be future teachers.

The result from Hypothesis 1 shows that for Item 1, which states that “I willingly choose to study an education course, only a mean score of 0.26 respondents had a positive interest towards the teaching profession while a mean of 15.4 respondents indicated a not been interested in their choice of study.

Item 2 states that “I accepted to study education since I could not secure admission in my first choice course”. Only 0.35 indicated interest; while those who do not choose courses in education had a mean of 11.2.

In response to Item 3; “I have always wanted to be a teacher”. Positive mean responses stood at 0.27 while negative mean responses were 14.6.

Item 4: “I accepted to study a course in education just to earn a degree”. The mean result of the analysis indicated that 17.9 respondents choose positively while a mean score of 0.22 had a negative response.

Item 5; “I will prefer to be a career teacher instead of any other profession”. The positive mean score was 0.29 while the negative mean scores are 13.8.



Item 6; “I am ashamed to introduce myself as a future teacher”. Only a mean score of 0.27 respondents do not feel ashamed to be introduced as future teachers, while a mean score of 14.6 respondents felt ashamed to be called future teachers.

Item 7, “My interest in child development will not allow me to leave teaching as a career”. The positive mean score is 0.21 while the negative mean score is 19.0.

Item 8, “Other jobs may be better paid but I will rather stay as a teacher no matter the salary”. Those who will prefer to stay had a mean score of 0.18 while those who declined had a mean score of 20.7.

Item 9, “Conducive work environment is not a priority for me to ignore teaching for other professions”. Responses with a positive mean score are 0.36. The negative; mean score responses indicated 11.1.

Item 10, “I see teaching as a stepping stone to advance to other more honourable professions”. A mean score of 0.11 indicated positive while negative mean responses are 36.4.

Item 11, “My perception about poor salaries for teachers has increased my dislike for teaching”. Only 0.24 respondents do not have such a perception; however, a mean score of 16.7 will dislike teaching due to poor salaries.

Item 12, “I appreciate that my children succeed me as teachers when I retire finally”. Positive mean score responses are 0.17 while negative mean score responses indicated 22.6.

Sumatively a total mean score of 2.98 respondents are positive (interested) about the teaching/the teacher profession while a mean score of 22.6 of the respondents had a negative (not interested) perception of teaching, and the teaching profession.

Hypothesis 1: Table 3 Shows the data analysis that There is no mean difference between student-teachers with an interest to become professional teachers and those who do not show a keen interest in the Faculty of Education to be future teachers.



Table 3: Result of Hypothesis 1: Faculty of Education students' interest in the teaching profession.

N=300

Group	N	X	SD	STD. Error	Cal. V	Mean difference
Positive	77	0.244	0.303	0.092	2.88	1.98
Negative	223	6.881	0.96	0.92		

From the above T-Test result in Table 3 above, it indicates that the calculated t-ratio of -2.88 is less than the critical t-value of 1.98. By this result, the null hypothesis is accepted. It means there is no significant difference between students who have a positive interest in being retained in the teaching profession and those with negative perceptions.

## DISCUSSION

From the results of the above analysis, it is clear to understand from research question one (1) that most students in the six Departments of the Faculty of Education in the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria are not willfully (on their own volition) studying programmes in Education. Their original intention was to study other courses rather than to become teachers before. They are in most instances compelled to study courses that will train them to be teachers due to the fact that they can not meet up the admission cut-off marks in other faculties. This practice, however, may not be in the best interest of the teaching profession as these student-teachers may not be mentally prepared to accept their responsibilities as teachers upon graduation due to a lack of aptitude for the career. This submission is in line with Abanobi and Abanobi (2022). It is also fair to recall that Oyunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) argued that no matter the number of funds prompted or released into the educational sector, can assure any significant impact; it is the readiness of the teacher to perform their duties holistically that is most significant. When the teacher is not desirous of carrying out their assigned teaching duties due to apathy, it is the future of the pupils and students that are doomed. Teachers in this category are not teachers but cheaters. Efe, Oral and Efe (2012) also in their studies concluded that student-teachers who willfully desired to be in the profession perform far better as teachers much later when they are fully employed in the service. This implies that admitting student-teachers who are not interested in the teaching profession may only aggravate the downtrend of education in society since the attitude of such unserious teachers may result in negative tendencies like truancy, and absenteeism in their career performances (Pigge and Marso, (1997).

One could also identify that data analysis from the second research question is a piece of evidence as well as a source of serious concern to all well-meaning citizens of Nigeria about the teaching profession. The teaching profession appears to be a point upon which individuals hold onto while expecting careers that are better rewarded in terms of remunerations. The prestigious place of teaching as a career seems to be fading away. Does the teaching profession



really have a future? This is a question that we must ponder in Nigeria. A situation where due to lack of motivation, and delayed payment of salaries and incentives, the majority of even teachers in the once revered career will not dare to encourage their children to succeed them is an indication that all is not well with the profession. Most lawyers, accountants, and medical doctors would appreciate that their children succeed them. Evidently, most student-teachers have some tendency or apathy about the teaching job. For some, being a teacher means accepting suffocating from economic stress without a future to grow, ready to experience psychological depression, lack of job satisfaction and low self-esteem (Ikiyei, 2006). It appears like most teachers perceive that there are little or no opportunities for career growth, especially at the primary school level. The findings of the study indicated that student-teachers are ashamed of being introduced as future teachers. A feeling of low self-esteem would definitely affect their productivity and learners' output. Negative behaviours such as the above ones certainly may not be in line with the definition of teacher education as expressed by Adewuji and Ogunwuyi (2002) and Okporim and Esu (2019). These authorities assert and see teachers as agents of desirable change. Little wonder, students observed to be exhibiting such arts as truancy, bullying and lack of concentration while learning, may in some instances probably develop these anti-social characteristics by capitalising on their teachers' weaknesses. Those students are largely not adequately monitored by their teachers who themselves have a nonchalant attitude toward their primary responsibilities.

The mean score result of the data analysis clearly indicated that only 2.93 respondents had a positive perception of teaching and the teaching profession while a mean score response of 9.77 had a negative perception concerning teaching and the teaching profession. Imagine that most professionals will appreciate that their children succeed them in their callings like lawyers, medical doctors and accountants. In the case of the teaching profession, the majority of the respondents would rather pray that their children opt for other professions. These results are in line with Ikiyei (2006) where it was identified that teachers have lost their self-esteem due to the poor conditions of service and the perception of society about teachers. It is imperative to note that the situation is worrisome and should be a source of concern to educate policymakers and the government in particular. The study results are an indication of the present brain drain ravaging the teaching profession. Intelligent young men and women who are supposed to be great teachers are opting for either better-paid jobs or frantically exploring means of leaving Nigeria to either other African countries like Ghana and South Africa or other overseas (Western countries) like Canada and Germany where they will not only be well paid but also be appreciated as human beings (respected and their self-esteem earned). A society where educators are not seen to be significant speaks volumes and the hope of the researcher is that this perception will change without delay as no nation can grow above its educational system with teachers as the "arrowhead".

Although the result of Hypothesis 1 is a surprise since it maintained that there are no radical differences as to whether student-teachers with interest and those without interest will remain in the teaching profession. One rational determining factor for students presently may be due to the economic circumstances of the country, Nigeria. The labour market is tough and because of the lack of jobs, young people are forced to accept whatever offer despite the poor treatment they receive. They may see and accept teaching momentarily as a stepping stone. Again, some



of the students might have doubts as to the purpose for which the questionnaires were administered since the researchers are there lecturers from within the Faculty of Education. Some of them may have responded with caution. This result is similar to the study of Henty, Sello and Fiji (2015). The scholars argued that the teaching profession, critically speaking, may not be radically different in status from any other profession such as law, medicine or accountancy. All that is required is for the authorities to improve the work environment of the classroom teachers in order to boost their morale.

## CONCLUSIONS

The proper quality upbringing of the child is a collective responsibility of all well-meaning citizens of the society. Teachers and teacher education are instituted to ensure that the younger generation is trained to do exploits as successors of the preceding generation. Teacher training and mentorship is a *sine qua non* of these lofty objectives. Those admitted most times to be prepared as future teachers appear not to be showing real aptitude towards the service of real dedicated teachers, passionate to put their best; it is obvious that only a handful seems to show genuine commitment. The majority of the student-teachers recognise their training as an opportunity to at least acquire university degrees and certificates. This is not a cheering development for a country where there is a serious desire to bring back street or out-of-school children to new learning experiences. A lot of work is needed to be done by all stakeholders. School administrators must as a matter of urgency consider it as a matter of urgency to initiate programmes to rebuild genuine aptitude and interest among students seeking school placements before offering them admission to pursue teacher education.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, and to encourage the younger generations to become teachers, coupled with the submission that without teachers, no society could sincerely make progress in future, the few recommendations listed here may be relevant to the development of teacher and teacher education generally, researchers and anyone who may be privileged to read this work might then benefit from these recommendations.

1. Beyond the required academic scores for admission of students into the Faculty of Education; the students' aptitudes for the programs/courses they intend to study should be critically examined by the higher institutions admitting them. This will help in no small nature to check teacher attrition upon qualification for the career.
2. The idea that government alone can fund the educational sector had proven to be less successful, individuals, corporate organisations, religious bodies, non-governmental organisations, etc should join hands in supporting teacher education. It might not be only through monetary incentives but other methods by which they could be encouraged. For instance, deserving teachers could receive awards that will motivate or spur them to work with more commitment and determination.



3. The fact that students who cannot secure admission into other faculties/programmes are drifting into the Faculty of Education should be discouraged. Students admitted to the Faculty of Education should be those with very high mental capacity that is outstanding or that excelled in their scores during the entrance examinations only. Teachers who can not give what they do not have intellectually, need not have any business with teaching or teacher education. When incompetent teachers with a low aptitude for teaching serve as classroom teachers, the pieces of evidence would inevitably be poor achievement outcomes.
4. Teachers' progressive development should be made a top priority by all tiers of government through the award of scholarships and sponsorships. The recent pronouncement by the Federal Minister of Education (Malam Adamu Adamu) that student-teachers in the Faculty of Education will be given some allowances while in training, is commendable and a step in the right direction to encourage the younger generation to opt for the teaching profession. It is hoped that the implementation of this policy would not experience hitches and other corrupt practices.
5. Allowances, salaries and other incentives for teachers in the service should be put into the first-line charge of the various tiers of government (Federal, State and Local Governments). A situation where teachers are owed salaries for many months before being paid as though the teachers are being done a favour is a slight on the teaching profession. This lack of motivation had led to the perception that the teaching profession is not good enough for anyone.
6. As painful as it might sound, teachers who are misfits obviously are creating very challenging issues for the profession at all levels of education. Teachers' character and discipline will help to avert mass failure at both WAEC/NECO examinations, thereby retarding the progress of the students. Subsequently, such teachers should be redeployed to areas where their competence might be required instead of the teaching profession.
7. In order to save the future of the teaching profession from experiencing professional misfits, all hands must be on deck to ensure that the educational sector is adequately supported. It would be near impossible without the educational sector for Nigeria or any other nation globally to secure a safe, peaceful and technological future since development must begin first from the minds of men. Education is a guarantee for security, technological growth and good governance and these variables are the responsibilities of everybody in society. Adequate teacher preparation is the solution for a great and enlightened professional devoted to ensuring the betterment of today's and tomorrow's meaningful population.





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