



Assessment of Employability Competency of English Language NCE Graduates in Ringim LGA, Jigawa State

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Abstract

The paper investigated the employability competency of English language NCE graduates in Ringim public senior schools of Jigawa State. Two research questions and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the research. The study was conducted using descriptive survey research design. The study has sixty-seven (67) NCE graduates teaching English language in public senior secondary schools in Ringim (58 males and 9 females) as population. A sample of 23 teachers was drawn through simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentages, mean, standard deviations well as t – test. The findings revealed that NCE teachers graduates in English language in Ringim LGA public schools lacked the adequate skills and competencies for an effective function in the schools. The study recommended that more emphasis should be given to practical teaching (micro teaching) in colleges of education in Nigeria than mere theory. For the professional growth of teachers, periodic conferences, seminars, workshops, and in-service training programmes should be organized by the federal, states and local government authorities through appropriate ministries of education and institutions.

Keywords: Assessment, Employability, Competency, English Language, NCE Graduates

Introduction

Educational institutions make a significant contribution in making provision of knowledge and information to the students to lead them towards light from darkness. The key personnel within the educational institutions, who play an important part in the implementation of this task and in bringing about transformation within the lives of the individuals, are the teachers. Teacher is person who has knowledge and skills in a variety of subject areas and the ability and preparation to impact them to others (Ayeni, 2005). Teachers are usually found in classroom settings. Before one answers the name teacher he/she must consciously attempt to receive training in the art of teaching that will equip him/her with requisite knowledge, skills, techniques, aptitude and methods necessary for the job. Therefore, teacher is regarded as the most important element within the educational program. It is the teacher, who is responsible for putting into practice the educational programs at any stage. It is vital to make an investment in leading to preparation of the teachers in an appropriate manner, so that the individuals, community as well as the entire nation can move forward towards progression. Teachers are required to be well-prepared and possess the essential skills and abilities with the purpose of performing their tasks and functions in an appropriate manner.

Teachers are required to be effectively trained not just to perform their duties of educating the students, but they also lead to progress of the community and secure the future of the nation. The significance of competent and proficient teachers cannot in any way be overemphasized. Teacher education comprises of all formal and non-formal activities and experiences that would help to improve the aptitude and quality of a person to assume the responsibilities of the members of the education profession or to carry out his or her duties more appropriately (Ayeni, 2005).

Teacher education is regarded as an indispensable concept for the teachers at all levels of education. These are: pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary. The system of education is different at all levels. The main focus of teacher education is based upon the levels of education. On the other hand, the needs and requirements of the students also vary at each level. The teacher education need to take into consideration the needs and requirements of the students. Therefore, level and stage-specific teacher preparation is essential. Teacher education renders a significant contribution in the development of teaching skills among the student teachers. The teachers (lecturer) employed in professional institutions are informative in terms of practical and theoretical knowledge regarding their respective subjects. It is essential for them to make use of specialized teacher training inputs with the purpose of training the students, who are making an entry into their professions.

The employability and competency of NCE graduates towards teaching is an important factor in the teacher's primary role of transmission of knowledge and skills. Therefore, a teacher would need to demonstrate efficiency in his primary role. This is because; he or she is the major implementer of the curriculum at the classroom level.

Competence has been defined as the ability to accomplish whatever one claims to be able to do when verified empirically (Ayeni, 2005). Competence in teaching simply implies the ability of the teacher to accomplish assigned duties of which teaching is the central part (Ololube, 2006). In providing an answer to the question, "With what parameter can competence of a teacher be measured? Ayeni (2005) postulates that, "the teacher's competence is determined by his methodology, sense of vision, and interest in sharing knowledge". By way of modification Ayeni added that teacher's competence transcends mere interest in sharing knowledge. In addition, competence in teaching



demands active participation in the transmission of knowledge, a process in which the teacher exhibits mastery of the subject matter (Kanu & Ukpabi, 2007). Competence has been used for the evaluation of teachers in three different stages: student-teachers, beginning teachers and experienced teachers. These evaluations are conducted by different parties, including teacher educators, researchers and the government (Hamdam, Ghafar & Li, 2010).

This means, competence refers to the skills and personality of a teacher in handling the instructional process with the help of instructional method, teaching aids and/or resources. Katane and Silvia (2006) state that, competency is ‘a set of knowledge, skills and proficiency in creating meaningful experience when organizing an activity. As a professional, a teacher needs to plan and implement the learning process, evaluate the learning outcome, provide guidance and training, conduct a research, develop and manage school programme and professional competency.

The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programme is run in two modes by different institutions. The full-time programme is run by Colleges of Education while the National Teachers Institute (NTI) handle part time programme only. A notable difference between the full time and part time NCE programmes is in the duration of the course. Studies such as Ichukwu (1999) corroborating the views of scholars such as Obemeata (1995) asserts that real doubts are being cast on the type of teachers turned out to teach through crash programmes and questioned the quality of the programmes in the institutions that turn out these groups of teachers. Ichukwu therefore, called the attention of educators to the common complaint that new entrants to the teaching profession in Nigeria are not equipped to deal with the problems teachers encounter in the course of their duties. The quality and performance of teachers have always been a focus of concerns in education and teacher education research (Darling-Hammond, 2000; 2003; Okpala & Ellis, 2005). Okpala (2005) believes that the quality of teaching is not governed by the qualification, knowledge, skill or competencies of teachers alone but also their enthusiasm, knowledge of subject matter, teacher morale and commitment to teaching.

On the other hand, employability refers to the capability to gain and maintain employment (Hind & Moss, 2011). The employability of an individual depends on the knowledge, skills and abilities an individual possesses. Employability can also be defined as a person’s capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment and obtaining new employment if required & in simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work. Also, employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realize potential through sustainable employment.

Employers of labour often complain that some graduates though professionally or technically qualified are unemployable, in that they lack the requisite, essential skills or competencies needed in the job or for sustainable employment. These skills create a gap in their knowledge which must be filled to make them qualified to compete for few, existing vacancies that emerge from time to time.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) prescribes that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the National Certificate in Education (NCE). Since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development. However, in spite of the several efforts aimed at producing enough qualified and competent teachers to meet the target requirements of the policy, Nigeria is yet to adequately address the problem of the shortage of qualified teachers.

The provisions of the National Policy on Education for teacher education includes the purpose of teacher education, institutions of training professional teachers and their entry qualifications, curriculum of Teachers' colleges and professionalization of teaching. Effective learning in schools would require effective teaching to accompany the efforts of the learners. Teacher competence needs to be very high in order for meaningful teaching learning to take place (Ayeni, 2005).

Ayeni, (2005) state that, the current educational system does not appear to be producing graduates with generic and essential skills, hence the continuous increase in the rate of youth unemployment. Ayeni further state that 24 million jobs are needed over the next ten years to reduce the current unemployment level by half. Even with that, large number of graduates have continuously being found incapable of meeting up with the employment requirements of the work force and have thus been unsuccessful in either securing or keeping a job. This is a challenge for employers in filling their graduate vacancies; even with high level of youth unemployment in the country and NCE graduates not exception. However, observation made by the researcher showed that some teachers in secondary schools in Ringim LGA seem not competent and employable in their roles as teachers. Hence, this paper aims at assessing the employability competency of English language NCE graduate teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawa State.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the level of employability competence of English Language NCE graduates/teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawa state.
2. Determine the differences in the level of employability competence between male and female English Language NCE graduates/teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawa state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study;

1. What is the level of employability competence among English language NCE graduates/teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawe state?
2. What is the difference in the level of employability competence of male and female English Language NCE graduate teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawa state?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide the study.

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the employability competence between male and female English language NCE graduates/teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawe state.



Methodology

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design for the study. According to West and Khan in Anikweze, (2013) stated that descriptive survey involves a detailed and critical examination of a topic or situation with a view of finding out what is and how it is. Anikweze state that most assessment and evaluation studies are descriptive survey.

The population comprised all 67 (58 males and 9 females) English Language NCE graduates teachers in Ringim Local Government Area of Jigawa State. A sample of 23 English Language NCE graduates/teachers was selected for the study using simple random sampling technique.

The Instrument used for this study was adapted Questionnaire from Barineka (2012) titled Teachers' Competence Questionnaire (TCQ). It has two sections i.e., the demographic part and the items parts with forty-four (44) items. Section (A) (Demographic) consisted of four (4) items to elicit background information from the respondents. The items in Section (B) were designed to assess the English language teachers' competency. This section has twenty-five (25) items. The scoring procedure used was categorized as highly competent, moderately competent and lowly competent, as well as to assess the English language teachers' competency in relation to gender affiliation of the respondent. The face validity was conducted and it has the reliability index of 0.86. Data collected were analysed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer the two research questions while the hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of employability competence among English language NCE graduates in Ringim LGA Jigawa state?

Table 1

Percentage Response of Respondents on Employability Competence of English Language NCE Graduates/Teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawa State

S/N	Variable	Frequency of the Responses					
		Highly Competent	%	Moderately Competent	%	Lowly Competent	%
1	NCE graduates/teachers	0	0%	9	39%	14	61%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

It is found that 14 respondents representing 61% of the sampled population are lowly in their competency level, 9 respondents covering 39% are with the moderate level in terms of their employability competency whereas, 0 respondent representing 0% is with the highest level of employability competence. Therefore, based on the table it was revealed that there was low employability competency of English language NCE graduates/teachers in Ringim LGA.

Research Question 2: What is the difference in the level of employability competence of male and female English Language NCE graduate in Ringim LGA Jigawa state?

Table 2

Percentage Response of Respondents on the Difference in the Level of Employability Competence of Male and Female English Language NCE Graduates/Teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawa State

S/N	Gender	Frequency of the Responses					
		Highly Competent	%	Moderately Competent	%	Lowly Competent	%
1	Male NCE grad/teach.	0	0%	4	29%	10	71%
2	Female NCE grad/teach	0	0%	3	33%	6	67%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 revealed that the employability competency by male and female NCE English language graduates/teachers were low, since none of them scored the high level of employability competency. 4 male respondents which are 29% have moderate level and 10 male respondents representing 71% has the low level of competency, so also their female counterpart with 3 and 6 respondents in order of moderate and low levels covering 33% and 67% respectively.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference in the employability competence between male and female English language NCE graduates/teachers in Ringim LGA Jigawe state.

Table 3

Independent t-test analysis of English language NCE Graduates/teachers based on Gender in Ringim

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal.t-value	Sig.
Employability comp.	Male	14	2.54	2.22	21.	.91	.36
	Female	9	2.39	3.65			

Data on table 3 above revealed that the Mean = 2.54, Std. = 2.22 for male, and Mean = 2.39, Std. = 3.65 for the female. The result also shows the df (21) = .957, p-value 0.36, alpha level < .05 for level of employability competency scores differences between male and female English language NCE graduates/teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, it can deduce that male and female English language NCE graduates/teachers' employability competency is at the same level for this sample.



Discussion

The research assessed the employability competency of English language NCE graduates/teachers to teaching; the finding revealed that majority of the sampled teachers recorded a low level of competency in their teaching. The low level of competency recorded in this study is supported by Adetayo (2016) who found that teachers' commitment to teaching significantly explained teachers' professional competence in favour of the NTI NCE trained teachers.

Also, the findings revealed that employability competence of male and female NCE English Language teachers were low. There was no significant gender difference in the level of employability competency of English Language NCE graduate/teachers in Ringim LGA, Jigawa state. The findings are consonance with that of Ajuonuma (2007) who reported that sex of lecturers does not affect their competency in continuous assessment practices in Nigerian Universities. The result could probably attribute to the fact that there is no separate training for male and female teachers on the subject matter.

Conclusion

The study was an assessment of employability competency of English Language NCE graduate teachers in Ringim LGA, Jigawa state. It was necessitated by the fact that most teachers of English Language seem not to have adequate requisite employability competencies for effective teaching and learning of the subject.

It is concluded from this study that the employability competencies among English language NCE graduates/teachers in Ringim local government area is very low. It was also found that the employability competency of male and female NCE English Language graduate teachers were low. There was no significant difference in the employability competency of male and female English Language teachers in Ringim LGA.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. The educational institutions should endeavour to organize robust teaching practice exercise that would dwell much in making student teachers acquire necessary employability competences that would make them function effectively in classroom.
2. Lecturers organizing micro-teaching in faculties of education and colleges of education should lay more emphasis on practical aspect of the course more than theory to ensure that student teachers are inculcated with appropriate employability competences that would make them function well in classroom on graduation.
3. For the professional growth of teachers, periodic conferences, seminars, workshops, and in-service training programmes should be given adequate attention by the federal, states and local government authorities through their respective ministries of education to promote their employability competence in teaching learning task(s).

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