

# **Affective and Cognitive Characteristics of Nigerian Student-Teachers: towards Developing an Effective Teacher Education Framework**

**Oyenike Adeosun, Bayo Oladipo and Adesoji Oni**

(University of Lagos, Nigeria)

## **Abstract**

*The study seeks to analyze the affective and cognitive traits of teacher trainees in higher educational institutions in Nigeria. This is with the view to develop an effective teacher education framework by using inputs from the trainees, in-service teachers and teacher educators and to incorporate their ideas into the structuring and organization of not only the educational programmes but also the admission processes into such programmes. Using inputs from classroom teachers, teacher trainees, teacher educators as well as basic education students, a compilation of the personal and professional characteristics of an effective teacher was drawn. These were then developed into a comprehensive open- and close-ended questionnaire covering trainees' perception of and attitude to teaching, their belief systems, measures of cognitive and affective characteristics as well as a test of personality trait. The main sample for the study comprised three hundred teacher trainees drawn from two universities and one college of education from south-west Nigeria. The findings showed that Nigerian teacher trainees possessed varied and widely spread cognitive and affective behaviour some of which is suited for the teaching profession. However, the study could not determine if these attributes are reflective of their personality types prior to exposure to teacher education or not.*

**Key words:** affective, cognitive, characteristics, teacher education, framework, teacher trainees

## **1. Introduction**

In any educational system, the teacher performs the significant function of perpetuating society's heritage and energizing human resources towards social progress. The level of a nation's education therefore cannot rise far above the quality of the teachers of that nation. This supports the fact that the teacher is an important variable in the teaching-learning situation. Hattie (2003) noted that the teacher accounts for about thirty percent of factors of variance in students' achievement. His/her knowledge, skills and attitude are instrumental in creating the conditions for learning. Indeed, it is reasonable to say that teachers have more influence on the future of young people than do the members of other professions. Lassa (1996) identified the teacher as 'the initiator of the learning process, the facilitator of learning skills, the coordinator of learning sequences and indeed the pivotal element in the entire education development. This

makes the teacher the most formidable determinant of quality learning.

Some characteristics of a productive teacher have been discussed in several studies. For example, Kemp & Hall (1992) synthesize research to identify specific factors that contribute to student achievement. It was noted that the teacher factors include attributes such as teacher's knowledge base, sense of responsibility, communication skills, affective and cognitive skills, in-service training and inquisitiveness. Teachers must possess the vital skills, personality characteristics and behaviours that students perceive to impact their motivation to learn, since it is a teacher's job to connect with each student to foster the passion and excitement to learn (Littkey, 2004). Therefore, teachers need a solid foundation and orientation towards their professional practice as teachers. This starts with the quality of training they are exposed to. It is an established fact that like all developing countries, Nigeria faces educational challenges in the area of the teacher professional preparations and development particularly in its quest to achieve the goals of basic education. Baikie (2002) noted that only the teachers who possess the necessary technical competence and professional skills through a well coordinated teacher education can rise to meet the challenges of the crisis that has bedeviled Nigerian's teacher education.

Teacher education in Nigeria is stratified to produce two major qualifications: the Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) and the Bachelors Degree in Education (B.A/B.Sc. Ed.) Recent federal government policy has made the NCE the minimal teaching qualification for primary school teachers up to the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level. NCE awarding colleges run a three year post – secondary teacher education programme. The residues of the Teachers Grade Two qualification are also admitted into the NCE course. The quality of the NCE teacher candidates is affected by various admission policies/requirements across the geopolitical zones. While the officially declared educationally disadvantaged states demand lesser entry qualifications, the other zones require at least five credit passes including English and Mathematics to qualify for admission. These disparities as well as the organization of such have created skepticism and doubts about the actual qualification of NCE holders. The undergraduate teacher education, a four-year course combining academic and professional training, is the responsibility of the Faculties of Education of Universities. It trains students for B.A. /B.Sc. Education degrees and produces teachers for the sciences, humanities or arts. In both institutions, subjects in curriculum and teaching methods largely offered in the penultimate and final years were intended to prepare student-teachers in pedagogical skills and specific subject areas. Links between theory and practice are emphasized in a teaching practicum so that students could draw close professional links between their institutions and the schools where they are prepared to function as teachers.

International educational standards and employer ratings of the graduates of teacher training institutions require a thorough investigation of the quality of the academic and

professional training of teachers. Also, a combination of positive behaviours and personality characteristics are seen as great assets for teachers' successful professional practice. A growing body of research evidence suggests that the spirit of creativity and enquiry, intellectual and professional competencies among in-service and pre-service teachers depends upon certain characteristics of teachers, the teacher educators, the and environment as well as methods of instruction. In congruence with Awoyemi (1986), the identification of these characteristics may be necessary if effective teacher trainings are to be evolved.

In Nigeria, teacher- training institutions have been critiqued for the inability to produce teachers who are properly grounded in pedagogy and content as well as the ability to collaborate professionally in the work environment. For example, educationists observed that the transition from academic theories in universities to classroom practice has often been very sharp suggesting that student teachers are not often properly groomed to put into practice current pedagogy and interactive skills that have been theoretically learnt. The system has not produced the desired result for a transformative educational system in a globalised world, an innovation required for both teacher pre-service preparation and teacher in-service training.

The above is compounded by the fact that over the years, there has been a serious erosion of respect for teachers and this applies to all levels of education since the quality and relevance of education depends a great deal on what teachers do with learners. Recent events in Nigeria show that the traditional respect and prestige enjoyed by teachers in the society have been eroded quite considerably (Awanbor, 1996) and indeed, there has been a loss of interest and attraction to the teaching profession. Consequently, this sordid situation occasioned by low enrolment of teachers in preparation institutions has become a source of worry to teacher educators. Awanbor (1996) further reported that some teacher-trainees did not appear to be particularly enthused by the training goal of teaching as they indicated that the teaching profession was really not an attractive profession to them. Taiwo (1980) observed that the teaching profession had gone down on the scale of respectability and that was causing a number of teachers to drift into more respectable forms of employment. In another development, Omoregie (1994) reports that the attrition rate of teachers, particularly secondary school teachers is attributable to the general poor attitude to the teaching profession. Similarly, Nwangwu (1997) observed that the crisis in the Nigerian education system is traceable to a lack of interest and low morale due to poor social status. Afe (2001) opines that the standing of the teaching profession is affected by the social background, adding that the low status constitutes a problem in recruiting competent hands into the profession.

Many studies have been carried out in both developed and developing countries to find out what motivates students in teacher education institutions to choose teaching as a career. In general, the studies have shown that such students choose teaching as a career for various intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motives (Bastick, 2000; Ejie, 2006). The assumptions in most of these studies seem to be that students in teacher education institutions will enter the teaching profession after completing their courses of study. Evidence from some studies, however, shows

that not all such students intend to teach after graduation. The studies noted a group of education graduates referred to as the 'uncommitted'-- those who decided not to take teaching as a job immediately after they graduate and who regard teaching as irrelevant to their future goals. In the Nigerian situation, the uncommitted group is quite large. Moreover, studies have shown that many of those who join the profession after graduation leave early because such people had a career plan other than teaching. These invariably have an overall negative effect not only on the quantity but also on the quality of teachers produced for schools.

Improving teacher preparation is a worldwide concern. Modern societies now embark on strong and sturdy teacher preparation to ensure a better future for their children. In Nigeria, cognizance is being taken of the argument that the provision of teachers of high quality should be given top priority. The importance of teachers and teacher education has been clearly underscored in the national policy document which states that “no education can rise above the quality of its teachers” (FRN, 2004). That is why emphasis is placed on teachers’ pre-service training to ensure that they acquire the knowledge, pedagogical skills and character training required for success as professionals. Beyond ensuring the quality of the teacher education process, there is the need to ensure the quality of inputs into the profession. However, admissions processes into teacher education programmes don’t often ensure that quality candidates are taken as standards are lowered, purely because of the drive to attract students. The National Teacher Education Policy, (2009) noted major impediments to effective teacher education were the relaxed recruitment, admissions and graduation requirements, among others. Students only opt for education courses when they cannot obtain admission into some perceived lucrative and socially accepted courses which are highly competitive, hence the ‘rejects’ from these courses are taken into education, who only come to ‘manage’ the course. In addition, as an option to being withdrawn from the university, non-performing students are encouraged to transfer to education courses. This culminated in the fact that at the end of the day, we mostly have unmotivated, uninterested and poor performers as graduates of our education institutions.

The trends and characteristics of globalisation perhaps call for a total re-invention or repackaging of the teaching profession in Nigeria. The teacher in the globalised environment must be prepared to think globally and act locally in matters relating to education. He or she must be able to create a learning-friendly and animating environment in the classroom. The Nigerian teachers must be able to participate effectively in the contemporary ICT imposed revolution in knowledge creation, distribution and management. Schools exist to impart knowledge and skills. It is therefore imperative for schools to move with the times in matters relating to knowledge creation and distribution. The core concern therefore is how do we attract quality potentials/candidates into teaching in Nigeria? What cognitive and affective characteristics should we examine in potential teacher candidates and how do we use this to establish effective admission processes and a result-oriented framework for teacher education in Nigeria? These concerns drive this study.

## **2. Theoretical Frameworks**

Brophy & Good (1974) cited in Fang (1996) argued that a better understanding of teachers' belief system or conceptual base will significantly contribute to enhancing educational effectiveness. A number of theories therefore drive the research. These are explored below.

### **Theory of Personality Traits**

Holland's Typology of Personality and Congruent Occupations (1973, 1974) argued that the choice of a vocation is an expression of personality and based on this, proposed six personality types - realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. The theory notes that a social type of a person is more successful in the teaching profession, as he/she prefers activities that involve and develop others and is sociable, friendly, cooperative and understanding. In addition, the Meyer-Briggs Type Indicator (1980) was developed as a psychometric assessment designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive their world and make decisions, and thus categorized personality along four dimensions - how they focus their attention or get their energy (Extraversion or Introversion), how they perceive or take in information (Sensing or intuition), how they prefer to make decisions (Thinking or Feeling) and lastly, how they orient themselves to the external world (Judgment or Perception). The four preferences interact in complex ways to produce sixteen psychological types. Teachers are ENFJ (Extrovert, Intuitive, Feeling and Judgemental). The knowledge of teacher personality type reveals the foundation of their education philosophy. McCrae & Costa (1989) proposed the Five Factor Model, based on five broad personality dimensions- conscientiousness, emotional stability, agreeableness, extraversion and openness to experience- which can be found in virtually all personality types. In relation to teaching, Allen & Whiteley (1968) noted two important dimensions of personality in teacher effectiveness, cognitive flexibility & psychological openness.

### **Teacher cognition and teaching effectiveness**

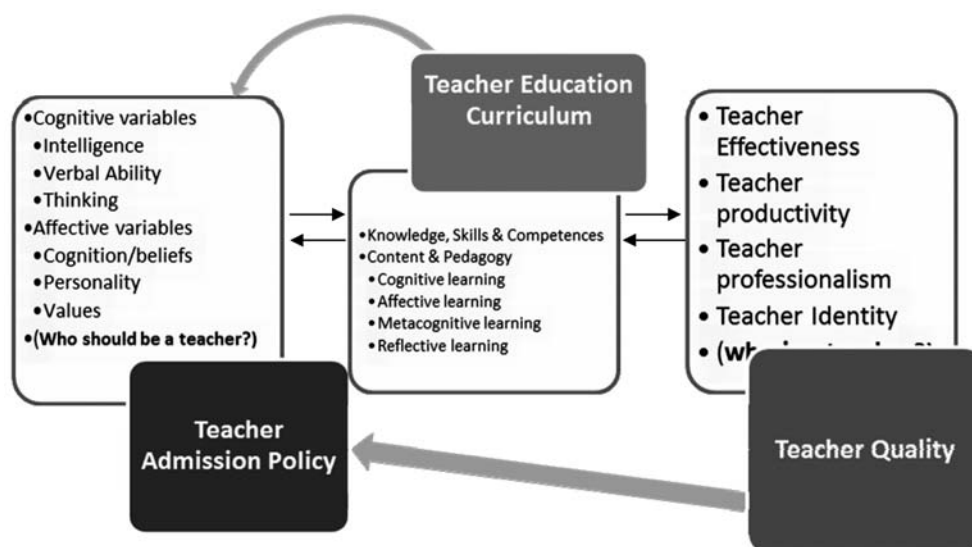
Teacher Cognition deals with understanding what teachers think, know and believe, i.e. unobservable dimensions of teaching (Borg, 2009). A core component of teacher cognition is teacher belief systems which are described as dynamic in nature, undergoing change and restructuring as individuals evaluate their beliefs against their experiences (Thompson, 1992). The importance of teachers' beliefs within teacher education rests within the constructivist's conception of learning and the reflective approach to teaching. A constructivist holds that beliefs are thought of as critical in terms of what and how the student-teacher makes sense of his/her learning in the teacher education programme. Pre-existing beliefs are so influential that attempts to change teaching styles are ineffective, unless these beliefs are directly questioned (Johnson, 1988). The earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure; the more difficult it is to alter (Pajares, 1992). As a result, pre-service teacher education may compete with previously established beliefs that play an active role in the acquisition of new knowledge. Individuals'

prior educational beliefs about language teaching are augmented by the stability of such beliefs and their resistance to change (Joram & Gabriele, 1998), resulting in important implications in pre-service teacher training.

### Social Deconstructionist Theory

Social Deconstructionist theory attempts to help education students deconstruct their own prior knowledge and attitudes, comprehend how these understandings evolved, explore the effects they have on actions and behaviour, and consider alternate conceptions and premises that may be more serviceable in teaching. Critical analysis and structured reflection on formal course knowledge and everyday practical experience are incorporated. The approach seeks to connect theory to practice and views the student as thinker, creator, and constructor. Teachers take responsibility for assessing and solving problems and constantly asking "What decisions should I be making?", "On what basis do I make these decisions?", and "What can I do to enhance learning?" This is closely related to the Reflective Teaching approach which also underlies the professional knowledge bases of teachers. These knowledge bases are centred on knowledge of self, knowledge of content, knowledge of teaching and learning, knowledge of pupils, and knowledge of context within schools and society. Preparation for working with diverse populations in an ever-changing cultural and global context requires teachers who are knowledgeable, caring, and responsive. These theories culminated in the conceptual framework that guides the study.

### Conceptual Framework



The framework establishes a core relationship between teacher admission policy, curriculum and quality, showing a kind of input-process-output relationship, each component feeding and impacting on the other. The core question, ‘who is a teacher’ should first be

addressed through the screening process which should focus on cognitive measures (intelligence, verbal ability and thinking levels) as well as affective measures (attitude, values, beliefs, personality). These should serve as inputs which the teacher education curriculum should build upon -- through new learning, re-learning, construction and deconstruction of knowledge and belief, and reflection – to ensure teacher quality, quality also being a defining characteristic of ‘who should be a teacher’. Therefore, consideration of teacher candidates’ cognitive ability and personality types suited for teaching should form the core of admission criteria. These characteristics should also be considered in developing an effective and quality oriented teacher education curriculum that would be able to further imbue the trainees with the expected teaching quality with focus on classroom effectiveness and commitment to professionalism and therefore improve a teacher’s self-identity and social recognition.

### **3. Objectives**

The objectives of this study from which relevant research questions are drawn include:

1. To investigate the attributes of a productive teacher at all levels of education.
2. To determine the cognitive and affective characteristics of Nigerian teacher-trainees, their motives for entering into education courses, their perception of the teaching profession, as well as their future career plans.
3. To harness the findings from 1 and 2 to develop:
  - i. A framework for admission processes into teaching in Nigeria.
  - ii. A framework for effective teacher training processes in Nigeria.
4. To analyse how these frameworks can be utilised to enhance teachers’ productivity.
5. To draw further necessary conclusions from issues that may arise in terms of challenges faced by teachers in their extended professional preparation and development.

### **4. Methodology**

This study is concerned primarily with Nigerian teacher trainees covering Nigerian university undergraduates as well as students of Colleges of Education. It determines the affective and cognitive characteristics of the would-be teachers with the intention of cataloguing a professional identity of teachers in Nigeria. Using inputs from classroom teachers, teacher trainees, teacher educators as well as basic education students, a compilation of the personal and professional characteristics of an effective teacher was drawn. These were then developed into a comprehensive open- and close-ended questionnaire covering trainees’ perceptions of and attitudes to teaching, their belief systems, measures of cognitive and affective characteristics as well as a test of personality traits. It involved a survey of both in-service teachers of basic and secondary schools and teacher-trainees in Colleges of Education and Faculties of Education from the South-west geo-political zone, Nigeria. In this case, a federal College of Education

and a federal University and a state University were randomly selected from this zone, making a total of 3 teacher training institutions. The teacher- trainees were drawn from among the final year students of each institution. This is because they had adequate exposure to both content and pedagogic courses in the course of their training and were already exposed to practical orientations in terms of teaching practice. One hundred students were randomly selected from each university/COE, a total of three hundred (300) subjects, which covered education students from different course orientations- science and technology, social sciences, languages and humanities. In addition, in-service teachers as well as their students were randomly selected from the geographical areas of the institutions sampled. Research instruments include:

1. A checklist of attributes of an effective teacher which was drawn up by basic/ secondary school students and in-service teachers. To draw the checklist, the subjects here were required to write a composition on their most effective teacher, from which cognitive and affective attributes were inferred.
2. Three comprehensive, self-assessment questionnaires (one for cognitive characteristics, one for affective characteristics and the third for their belief systems) for teacher trainees with focus on their cognitive and affective characteristics, their cognition and belief systems as related to teaching and learning, and their attitude to and perceived suitability for the teaching profession. Both content and face validity were done, and a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was established through test-retest. The relevant data were collected at different times across the groups, though in all, data collection spanned 10 weeks.

## **5. Findings**

### **Descriptive statistics**

A total of 300 teacher trainees (54.4% male, 45.6% female) were sampled from teacher education institutions. The most dominant age grade among the trainees was between 21-24 years with an average percentage of 51% while trainees aged 16-20 years comprised 28% of the sample indicating a level of maturity for tertiary education. Trainees age above 30 were a minimal portion of the sample (5.7%) indicating a very active and agile population as teacher trainees. The mode of admission into education programmes is the same across all the institutions, though it differs across the trainees. Of all respondents, 72% entered into their programme through Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations which is the widely recognised mode of admission into Nigerian institutions. However 22.5% got admitted through direct entry, signifying that they have had three-year training at the College of Education. Others got admitted through preliminary and diploma programmes or were transferred from other courses to Education, often as a result of low achievement in their course of choice.



### Attributes of a productive teacher

A checklist of attributes of an effective teacher was drawn up from secondary school students' writings, as well as summations from in-service teachers, teacher educators and the teacher trainees. This pool of responses was used to determine the attributes of an effective teacher. All 613 respondents were required to write a one page composition on their most effective teacher. Each composition was analysed to highlight the core attributes. On the whole, 27 core attributes/characteristics were drawn from the summations of the respondents. This is summarised in Table 1:

**Table 1: Attributes of a productive teacher**

Attributes	Frequency	%	Type
1. Skilful /teaches well	75	12.2	C
2. Kind	61	9.95	A
3. Intelligent	55	8.97	C
4. Friendly, social with good interpersonal relationship	47	7.66	A
5. Mentors, motivates, counsel	47	7.66	A
6. Self -disciplined	36	5.87	A
7. Committed, diligent, dedicated	30	4.89	A
8. Knowledgeable/mastery of subject	30	4.89	C
9. Role model/well behaved	23	3.75	A
10. Humble	21	3.42	A
11. Hardworking	20	3.26	A
12. Neat, decent and attractive	19	3.09	A
13. Caring and loving	15	2.45	A
14. Patient, understanding and tolerant	15	2.45	A
15. Punctual	15	2.45	A
16. Respectful/ polite	13	2.12	A
17. Honest	12	1.95	A
18. Organized	12	1.95	A/C
19. Good class control	10	1.63	A
20. Helpful	10	1.63	A
21. Integrity/ high moral standards	10	1.63	A
22. Modest/ simple	10	1.63	A
23. Generous	8	1.30	A
24. Creative	7	1.14	C
25. Communicates and facilitates learning	6	0.97	C
26. Experienced	4	0.64	A
27. Assertive	2	0.32	C

Note: Type indicates affective (A) or cognitive (C) characteristics. *Source: Field work 2011*

From the table, it can be observed that respondents in all generated more affective traits than cognitive characteristics, though this is more visible in the write-up of the secondary school students. However, ability to teach well (which encompasses other attributes) occurred most frequently in the write-ups, followed by kindness and intelligence. Key attributes expected

of good teacher according to the teacher trainees themselves include subject matter mastery, emotional stability, positive attitude, high intellectual capability, proficiency in communication and admirable personality. To them, good personality is more important to teaching than cognitive skills or pedagogical knowledge, and an average number of them believe that teachers are made not born and that effective teaching comes from training and practice. By implication, one can deduce that the respondents believe that there are specific characteristics amenable to teaching, and that the trainees expect that the teacher education programme should help them develop the required attributes.

### **Cognitive characteristics of Nigerian teacher-trainees**

Measures of cognitive characteristics include intelligence, intellectual competence, verbal ability, mental alertness, a knowledge base, communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, rational and logical thinking, analytical thinking, initiative, innovation and creativity, and independent thought and judgement. The study could not exhaustively measure these among the trainees. However, as a measure of intellectual competence and knowledge base, especially about teaching, their grades (Cumulative Grade Point Average) were used. The data collected showed that the highest proportion of the respondents (39.6%) falls within Second Class Lower division, followed by Third Class (28.2%), Second Class Upper (23.7%), First Class (4.6%) while Pass has the least representation of 3.9%. The students' grades may result from a number of factors, but the spread indicates an average level of intellectual competence as well as knowledge base. In addition, students were given a Self-evaluation questionnaire with 25 variable constructs, on which they were to rate themselves on a scale of 1-6. The results are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: Cognitive characteristics of Nigeria Teacher Trainees**

Variables	6 (%)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)
1. Certainty about potential solutions to problems	40.9	19.9	7.1	7.4	13.9	10.8
2. Commitment to particular points of view	27.4	28.1	5.9	27.4	7.6	3.5
3. Openness to other people's opinion & suggestions	34.8	9.1	15.2	35.1	0.3	5.4
4. Believe that knowledge is constructed	23	27	10.4	30.2	1.4	6.7
5. Believe knowledge must be evaluated within contexts	33.1	34.8	23.3	--	6.1	2.7
6. Solution to a problem is derived from one correct answer	6.1	20.9	23.6	31.8	9.5	8.1
7. Solution to problem depends on the context	18.9	9.5	20.6	30.1	3.0	17.9
8. Making compromises is a fact of life	21.3	13.2	16.6	27	7.1	14.9
9. Reliance on illogical analysis when solving a problem	5.3	13.9	1.4	26.8	15.6	36.9
10. My opinion is as good as anyone else's	2.7	27.4	12.5	35.5	9.5	12.5
11. Acceptance of diversity in people's opinion	27	34.8	7.4	18.6	3.4	8.8
12. Truth is relative	24.4	31.4	8.7	11.8	9.8	13.9
13. Ability to reflect before taking actions	45.8	26.8	1	9.5	6.1	10.8

Variables	6 (%)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)
14. Ability to reflect on people's thoughts, beliefs & intentions	27.5	15.3	25.8	25.4	0.7	5.4
15. I do organize information in my mind	28.1	24.7	14.2	18.6	--	14.2
16. High capacity to commit things to memory	17.6	28.5	20.3	18.3	2.7	12.2
17. Ability to express emotions positively or negatively	17.6	28.7	20.7	6.0	12.9	13.6
18. Reliance on others to formulate my thoughts for me	8.8	9.2	9.8	3.4	23.4	45.4
19. Voicing educated and appropriate opinions	9.0	18.7	16.3	16.6	30.8	0.7
20. Consideration for consequences of my actions before I act	29.3	16.3	23.1	19.3	5.4	6.1
21. Possess the ability for independent thought/ judgement	33.2	32.9	12.9	4.1	2.7	4.2
22. Often sceptical of suggestions until tested	10.8	23.1	22.7	20.7	5.8	16.9
23. Consider the merits of various viewpoint before decision	36	31.7	0.3	4.3	17.7	3.7
24. Synthesize different viewpoints into a workable solutions	24.7	43.7	18.3	1.3	3.7	8.1
25. Rely less on authority to determine what is right or wrong	16.9	23.4	22.7	33.9	0.3	2.7

**Key:** 6= definitely my style, 5= often my style, 4=my style 50% of time, 3=sometimes my style, 2=hardly ever my style, 1= not my style. Source: Field work 2011

Cognitive characteristics possessed by the teacher trainees include self assurance, open-mindedness, pragmatism/practicality, reflection, being organised, expressiveness and critical thinking, while affective characteristics include cooperativeness, self confidence, friendliness, emotional stability, goal and value oriented, fairness, and time-consciousness. These attributes are spread widely among them.

### **Affective characteristics of Nigerian teacher-trainees**

Measures of affective characteristics include self concept, self efficacy, sense of values, motivation, cooperation, tolerance, patience, compassion, sense of direction, sense of focus, and sensitivity. These are captured in Table 3.

**Table 3: Affective characteristics of Nigerian teacher-trainees**

Variables	6 (%)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)
1. I often cooperate with my colleague/classmates	48.5	14.2	18	4.7	9.2	5.4
2. I give attention to details	40.3	29.2	8.5	16.3	3.1	2.7
3. I often demonstrate self confidence in doing things	28.3	40.7	15.3	6.0	2.7	5.3
4. I maintain good relationships with people who are less	43.2	32.1	9.0	10.1	--	5.4
5. I form and maintain positive interpersonal relationships	33.8	39.5	17.2	1.4	--	8.0
6. I do manage my emotions without allowing others to know intelligent to me	27.3	48.3	9.1	6.1	3.4	5.4
7. I do express my emotions in a socially acceptable manner	27.0	41.2	14.5	7.4	6.4	3.4

Variables	6 (%)	5 (%)	4 (%)	3 (%)	2 (%)	1 (%)
8. I blame others for my failure	6.8	23	6.8	4.1	11.3	47.3
9. I take responsibilities for my actions	38.9	33.8	15.3	8.7	0.3	2.7
10. I have good relationships with people who are not my family	49.7	19.3	15.9	6.1	0.3	8.8
11. I set my own goals and personal values	37.8	24.3	9.5	15.5	3	9.8
12. I allow others to set my goals for me	7.4	27.4	12.8	4.1	16.2	32.1
13. I often weigh the impact of my emotions on my behaviours	21.3	31.8	15.3	19.9	2.7	8.7
14. I do react impulsively to situations	13.5	26.4	6.8	41.6	3.7	8.1
15. I readily agree to engage in activities with colleagues	15.9	23.6	23.3	25.3	8.0	3.3
16. I pay attention to what others have to say	18.7	42.7	3.7	21.6	9.8	2.7
17. I involve others in decisions on issues that affect my group	31.1	38.0	6.7	13.7	7.0	2.7
18. I keep my judgements within the limits of my competence	28.4	30.7	16.9	9.8	11.5	2.7
19. I get angry when people make jokes about me	13.2	13.9	10.2	23.7	26.4	12.5
20. I am willing to share jokes	2.7	2.7	9.8	23.3	34.1	27.4
21. I have positive expectations of people	17.3	19.7	29.3	9.5	15.2	8.1
22. I leave things wherever, I feel like	6.1	23.3	25.3	12.8	16.9	15.5
23. I do things at the expected/appropriate time	27.4	31.7	8.8	13.2	12.5	6.1
24. I am impartial when judging others	48.6	13.9	4.7	9.8	8.1	--

**Key:** 6= definitely my style, 5= often my style, 4=my style 50% of time, 3=sometimes my style, 2=hardly ever my style, 1= not my style. Source: Field work 2011

Predominant affective attributes include cooperation, attention to details, good relationship/friendliness, impartiality, self-concept, self-efficacy, self-confidence, and listening/attentiveness. The least developed attributes include carefree attitude, while others are present on the average level. Stronge (2002) has shown the following attitudes to be necessary to become successful teachers: caring, fairness, respect, enthusiasm, motivation and dedication; Socket (1993) added attitude towards morality and ethics, while Darling-Hammond (1997) included sensitivity towards learners' feelings.

### **Students' motives for entering into education courses**

For those who came into education through mainstream admission, there were several reasons for the choice of education as the course of study - 61.8% indicated their inability to meet the admission requirement in their course of choice while only 22.6% cited their passion to teaching as the major motivating factor. Other reasons cited by the respondents include wrong combination of subjects, late admission, family influences and teachers/peers influences. By implication, there are 77.4% of unwilling teachers among this group. However, 53.7% of them indicated their willingness to teach after graduation, indicating a slight change in attitude to teaching during the course of their training. The study also asked the teacher's trainees if

the teaching job scares them and the result revealed that contrary to the expected result 85.6% of the respondents disagreed that they are scared by the teaching job leaving only 7.2% of the respondents who genuinely admitted their fear of teaching. About 31.1% admitted that they lack the ability and skills for a full-time class room teaching. In a similar reaction, 56.2% of the subjects believed that teachers are made not born, signifying the importance of professional training as teachers. Of the respondents, 56.8% believe that knowledge about teaching comes from practice and training. Finally, 22.1% admitted that their training is for certification purposes. It can then be deduced that a majority of the teacher trainees has a bad disposition towards the teaching profession. We tried to determine if this disposition is borne out of a set of belief systems. Table 4 established this.

**Table 4: Teacher Trainees' Belief Systems**

Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1. I possess the ability to teach	32.3	38.9	4.7	16.9	6.8
2. I shall be a role model to my students	50	31.7	6	5.7	4.3
3. I have a positive attitude that will enhance my teaching	55.9	24	9.7	7.3	2.8
4. I am interested in making a breakthrough in learning & teaching	31.4	53.3	-	10	-
5. I easily adjust to new thinking	41.9	46.6	7.9	3.6	-
6. I will be fulfilled in my teaching career	-	46.2	3.6	32.5	17.7
7. I need to consolidate myself in my subject area	40.4	34.3	7.2	15.2	2.9
8. My training as a teacher has made me more focused	47.3	41.0	0.3	7.2	-
9. Teaching personality is more important than cognitive skills	16.6	45.8	8.7	28.9	-
10. Teaching is about learning a series of tricks	19.5	40.4	0.2	18.3	-
11. Teaching involves coordinating knowledge	50.9	32.7	7	9.3	-
12. Teaching is helping students learn	54.4	45.6	-	-	-
13. Teaching involves different learning styles	57.7	-	39.5	2.8	-
14. Teaching should go beyond the classroom	71.8	25	3.2	-	-
15. Teaching should be systematic	75.4	19.3	-	3.6	-
16. Teaching goes beyond transmitting knowledge	44.6	38.2	9.3	6.7	-
17. Teaching involves different learning styles	62.4	34.4	2.7	0.4	-
18. A teacher must be intellectually capable	59.2	29.9	7.8	3.1	-
19. A teacher should be able to teach & impact knowledge effectively	65.4	25.3	2.7	3.3	2.7
20. Attitude of a teacher will determine his learners success	68.7	21.7	-	8.1	-
21. A teacher must be highly proficient with communication skills	67.1	15.9	16.9	-	-
22. A teacher must have a good mastery of subject matter	65.5	25.7	0.7	8.0	-
23. A teacher must have an admirable personality	49.7	38.9	5.4	3.4	2.7
24. A teacher must be emotionally stable	55.7	35.1	6.4	2.7	-

**Key:** SA- Strongly Agree; A –Agree; U –Undecided; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree. *Source: Field work 2011*

Teacher trainees' belief systems include beliefs about self and the ability to teach, about teaching, about learning and about who should be a teacher. The strongest belief system focused on teaching which they believe should be systematic, should go beyond the classroom and involve different learning styles. Despite their strong beliefs about who should be a teacher (should impart knowledge, possess a positive attitude, proficient communication skills and master the subject matter), they could not strongly see themselves possessing the abilities required to teach effectively as students rated themselves rather low on their ability to teach and willingness to make progress in learning & teaching.

### **Other Findings**

1. The most common entry into teacher education programmes is through the Unified Matriculation Tertiary Examination (UMTE), a jointly administered examination that places candidates into different higher institutions according to their scores. Candidates with higher scores are admitted into universities while those with lower scores are placed in colleges of education.
2. About 61.8% of the respondents had to study education due to their inability to secure admission into more lucrative courses, while only 22.6% expressed an initial intention to study education.
3. After exposure to training, about 53.7% of the trainees intend to teach after graduation. This gives a gain of 8.1% from the initial reluctance to teach.
4. The students have a slightly positive perception of their training programmes in terms of relevance, coverage and currency of instructional content and methods. However, instructional materials and facilities are given very poor rating by a majority of the respondents (81%).
5. On their readiness and ability to teach, 31.1% of the respondents admitted they lack the required skills and abilities for teaching, while 79.9% believe that they have a positive attitude that can enhance their practice as teachers. Though mostly uninterested, 81.7% believe that if they by chance are found in the teaching profession, they would act as role models to their students. On the contrary, about half of them (50.2%) indicated they would not be fulfilled as teachers, though they admitted their training has made them more focused.
6. Motivation, positive disposition, a strong knowledge base, possession of adequate skills and competencies and the involvement of students through prompt feedback are some of the important factors which shape students perception of their training.
7. Content courses provide the knowledge base for teachers. Lack of a strong knowledge base will lower trainees' competence and erode their self-confidence if these courses or some of them are not adequately taught or if they are insufficient or too difficult, the knowledge base of trainees will be eroded and the self-confidence to teach will be lacking.
8. Any methodology or pedagogy programme no matter how adequate, enjoyable and

exciting to students cannot compensate for any shortfall in the content programme because there will be nothing to teach even if the skill and motivation is abundant. Teachers cannot give what they do not have!

## **6. Discussion and Implication of Findings**

The core questions to address here are: how do we use the findings to (i) enhance the admission process into teaching; (ii) develop standardized and robust teacher education programmes; and (iii) enhance teacher productivity in schools?

The reality of what teachers face in the classroom upon graduation is daunting, making it imperative that decisions about who to admit into teacher education programmes are significant and critical (Casey and Childs, 2007). This is because teachers need to be able to handle challenging situations and experiences far beyond what their trainings prepare them for (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). The objective of students' recruitment into teacher education should therefore be to admit high quality candidates. As Darling-Hammond (2000) noted, the admission processes are expected to select candidates who will succeed in the pre-service education and become good teachers. There is insufficient evidence to support the notion that standardized tests are a suitable admission mode when determining which teacher candidates are capable of becoming highly effective teachers. Studies have demonstrated there is no strong correlation between standard test scores and effective teaching as measured by students' teaching practice grades and supervisor feedback (Baskin, Ross and Smith 1996). Therefore, changing admission standards is required in order to ensure that high quality students are admitted to education programmes. While the academic rating of students is a very important determinant of IQ and other academic scores in admissions procedures, it should be supported by other measures. Casey and Childs (2007) further observed that the relationship of admission criteria to the knowledge, skills and attitudes beginning teachers need and the preparation provided by the programmes needs to be made explicit. To design effective admission requirements into teacher education in Nigeria, the following criteria for admission are recommended for selecting candidates into the teacher education programmes, borrowing from internationally accepted practices. These include the following points:

1. Smith and Pratt (1996) suggested the use of a written profile in conjunction with academic rating. Such a profile requires applicants to describe their relevant experiences or why they are interested in teaching. Caskey, Peterson and Temple (2001) argues that profile can reveal motivation related to pupils needs, congruence with the philosophy and mission of a teacher education programme, a vision for need for quality in schools and the ability to express oneself in a compelling manner in writing. Written profiles should be reviewed regularly to be sure they provide opportunities for teacher candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

2. Interviews are also suggested. Interviews are said to reveal information about language proficiency, attitudes and interpersonal skills (Casey & Childs, 2007). Jacobovitz (1994) suggested that interviews are necessary to ensure selection of applicants who understand the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching. Therefore, as part of the post-UTME screening process for teacher education, interviews can be conducted for applicants who have fulfilled other admission criteria.
3. Also suggested is letters of reference which can be open- or close-ended, detailing the key attributes and values of each applicant including personal characteristics and academic competences. However, there are concerns about the objectivity of reference letters, since referees are often selected by the applicants.

Concerning teacher education programmes, a significant component of preparing future teachers is to equip them with professional and personal qualities as teachers and instilling the basic disposition and behaviour as teachers. Teacher education programmes need to create a balance between content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical skills and attitudes. It is important to distinguish which knowledge, skills and attitudes that beginning teachers need and which can be learned in the teacher education programme. Those that are not already possessed by applicants prior to entry into the programme should be learned in the programme. There should be explicit instruction to affect pre-service teachers' attitudes, such as openness to learning through mentoring and reflective practices. Pre-service and new teachers need to learn situational-relevant approaches to subject matter, how to think on their feet, how to size up situations and decide what to do, and to study the effects of their decisions, and how these will affect their planning (Ball & Cohen, 1999). In addition, the objectives of teacher education should include cultivating in the teachers the attitude of continuous learning.

In creating an effective balance, mentoring should be an integral part of teacher education and the professional development process. Mentoring is a process of building mutually beneficial partnerships among teachers, i.e. between teacher educators, experienced teachers and teacher trainees, to help develop the skills, behaviours and insights into the teaching goals and ensuring quality outcomes. It involves a process of socialization/induction to the teaching profession, adjustment to the classroom, school and community procedures and mores, and the development of effective instructional and classroom management skills.

The use of reflective practices in training should also be emphasized. Reflective practice often referred to as a careful review of and thoughtfulness about one's own teaching process has been described repeatedly in studies of teacher effectiveness. Effective teachers continuously practice self-evaluation and self-critique as learning tools. Reflective teachers portray themselves as students of learning- they are curious about the art and science of teaching and about themselves as effective teachers, they constantly improve lessons, think about how to reach particular students, and seek and try out new approaches in the classroom to better



meet the needs of their learners. Through reflection, effective teachers monitor their teaching because they want to be better teachers and to make a difference in the lives of students. Reflective practices should be the core of teacher education processes because they are crucial to lifelong learning and a professional necessity. Teacher educators should model reflection in their teaching, give trainees tasks/assignments that involve reflection, and during teaching practice, trainees should be encouraged to keep journals and diaries where they not only record their school experiences, but also meditate and think critically about them. In this sense, teacher trainees can 'grow' with reflection even before graduation from colleges. On the whole, teacher educators should create educational contexts and opportunities that support and sustain trainees as they navigate through their training and practice experiences. These approaches should also be incorporated into in-service teachers through professional development that emphasizes lifelong learning, collaboration, peer tutoring, team planning and teaching, and lesson study.

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