

PERCEPTION OF TEACHING AS A PROFESSION IN NIGERIA BY SANDWICH STUDENTS OF EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI

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Abstract

This study was a survey type of descriptive research design. It investigated the perception of sandwich students about teaching as a profession in Nigeria. The sample comprised 296 sandwich students, selected using purposive random sampling techniques from Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. The research instrument was a questionnaire. One general question was raised while four null research hypotheses were postulated for the study. The research question was answered using descriptive statistics of mean, percentages and pie chart. The hypotheses were subjected to inferential statistics of x^2 and analysis of variance, all tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from this study revealed that most of the sandwich students' perception of teaching as a profession in Nigeria is negative. While the incoming sandwich students perceived teaching as a profession negatively, the old students agreed that teaching is a profession in Nigeria. Surprisingly, it was found that students who are practicing teachers perceived teaching as a profession in Nigeria negatively contrarily to students who are non-practicing teachers. Based on these findings, recommendations on ways of improving the perception of the students towards regarding teaching as a profession in Nigeria were made.

Keywords: Perception, sandwich students, teaching, profession.

Introduction

The concept of teaching is a domestic one in Nigeria. Teaching is a process of impacting knowledge to someone, which is otherwise regarded as a process of education. Education is generally seen as involving a desirable change in human behaviour through the process of learning, which is an outcome of teaching. Thus, teaching is goal oriented and made up of a number of activities designed with the intention that somebody should be learning what is being taught (Seweje, 2010). From the discourse, obviously, teaching is expected to be accompanied by learning and must be directed at a specific audience. This may be view of Crawford & De Cecco in Seweje (2010) when they related theories of teaching to that of theories of learning in that the acts (i.e. teaching) of the teacher are the cause while the accompanied learning outcomes of the students constitute the effect. Learning can therefore be defined as a series of goal-oriented activities engaged in by the teacher that involve interaction between the teacher and the learners with a view to impact knowledge.

However, Fafunwa (1974) defined education as what each generation gives to its younger ones, which makes them to develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behaviours which are of positive value to the society in which they live. Perhaps, that was why Ogunojemite (2010) concluded that education is the bringing up or development of the individual child through acceptable methods and techniques, according to his abilities and interests and the needs of the society, to take his rightful place and contribute to the growth of the society. To achieve this laudable purpose of education, the role of teaching is crucial. Teaching is the major channel through which a child can be informed (through various methods and techniques) about the needs of his society and be actively involved in such society.

The situation of teaching in Nigeria seems not taking its rightful position. An objective consideration of the condition of teaching as a career in the country Nigeria would really subject one to a doubting mind whether or not, teaching is a profession. The condition of service given to the teachers seems not commensurate with what is applicable to other professional practitioners. This has to do with financial benefits and other non-financial emoluments. The government attitudes to issues that pertain to teachers and teaching processes are not encouraging. The society which they purport to serve is neither friendly with them. This is evident in the way they respond to teachers' yearnings and aspirations. Little or no prestige is accorded teaching in Nigeria. Oftentimes, when secondary schools students are asked of their desired career, hardly could any be found to desire becoming a teacher. They would rather prefer other careers which they considered to be professional like Medicine, Engineering, Accountancy,

Banking and Finance, Marketing, Law and the like, based on their acceptability in the society. This presumes that they do not see teaching as a major profession like others.

Most of the students who are in the Faculty of Education found themselves there just to gain admission into the University, without genuine interest in the education course they are pursuing. Close observation and interaction with the students seem to reveal that the female students in the Faculty of Education fare better than their male counterpart in their view about teaching as a profession in Nigeria. Perhaps this is so because they consider themselves not as a major supplier of domestic provisions on the assumption that when they marry, their husband would take good care of them. Even, the working adults who come for degree programme in the Faculty of Education, otherwise referred to as Sandwich students, appear not to differ in their perception towards teaching as a profession in Nigeria. One would expect that they are running the programme so as to become a professional teacher but this may be far from their true intention. Perhaps, their desire is just to become a degree holder and gain higher societal value. This study therefore intended to find out the perception of sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Professionalization of Teaching in Nigeria

Globally, teaching is classified as a profession. The pertinent question however is whether it is so in Nigeria. Is teaching as a profession enjoying the same prestige and privileges being accorded other highly rated occupation which are often considered to be at the forefront of professional spectrum? Teaching in Nigeria over the ages has been stigmatized with derogatory terms such as a profession for the poor or exclusion occupation for the down-trodden (Ajayi, 1997). To some people in Nigeria, teaching is engaged in by people considered as altruistic social labourers whose rewards are in heaven. On this perception, many school leavers embark on teaching just as a stepping stone pending the time they would find a lucrative job. However, teaching is a noble profession that encompasses the characteristics of other occupations capable of providing gainful living and prospects.

The pathetic situation of teaching in Nigeria has been worrisome to major stakeholders of the profession. Efforts were made to ensure that teaching takes its rightful professional position in Nigeria as is the case in the developed countries. The roles of Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) in this regard have been remarkable over the years. This gave birth to the establishment of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) in 1993. This Council is primarily charged with the task to professionalise and sanitise teaching in Nigeria. To accomplish this great task, TRCN is mandated (among others) to:

- registration of professional teachers;
- ensure that only professionally qualified teachers are found in the classroom;
- production of well-trained teachers;
- set a high intellectual and moral principles that will enable the teaching profession to attain the highest standard possible; and
- provision of structure for teachers.

The activities of TRCN in Nigeria have yielded some encouraging outcomes. The teachers in Nigeria had been registered as professionals in pedagogy while unprofessional teachers have embarked on courses that would qualify them as professionals through sandwich programmes either in the University or College of Education.

Statement of the Problem:

The attitudes and lukewarm responses of teachers to the issue of professionalization of teaching in Nigeria are worrisome. There is mixed feelings as to whether teaching can be regarded as a profession in Nigeria or not. Prospective Student-teachers are reluctant to be identified with teaching as if it is not a stand out profession. The perception of students who are working class but undergoing sandwich programme seems not to be different in this regard. The question then is that: What is the perception of sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria?

Objectives of the study

This study aimed at finding out the perception of sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria. It attempted to examine the relative perceptions of Practicing teachers and non Practicing teachers among the students; fresh and returning students and male and female sandwich students towards teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study is a survey type of descriptive research. The population for the study comprised 832 Sandwich students of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti during 2012 academic contact. A sample of 296 sandwich students was selected using purposive sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was employed to select students according to level (incoming and old), practicing and non-practicing teacher sandwich students, male and female while proportional sampling was used to select students from Ekiti, Ondo, Lagos, Osun and Kogi States. The research instrument was a questionnaire tagged "A Questionnaire on the Perception of Sandwich Students on Teaching as a Profession in Nigeria". 300 copies were distributed but only 296 were correctly available for analysis. One general question was raised while four null research hypotheses were postulated for the study. The research question was answered using descriptive statistics of mean and percentages. Hypotheses one to three were analysed using inferential statistics of chi-squared analysis while hypothesis four was subjected to F-ratio analysis, all tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Questions

What is the perception of sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of incoming and old sandwich students on teaching as a profession in Nigeria.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of practicing and non-practicing teacher sandwich students on teaching as a profession in Nigeria.
- Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female sandwich students on teaching as a profession in Nigeria.
- Ho₄: There is no significant difference in the perception of sandwich students from Ekiti, Ondo, Lagos, Osun and Kogi States on teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

What is the perception of sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria?

Table 1: Frequency counts and percentages of students' perception of teaching

S/N	ITEM	YES		NO	
		N	%	N	%
1	I agree that teaching is a profession in Nigeria	136	46.0	160	54.0
2	I am a student of Education because I deliberately choose it	125	42.3	171	57.7
3	I feel satisfied as a teacher	108	36.5	188	63.5
4	Teaching is accorded the rights of a profession by the government and society	92	31.0	204	69.0
5	I am proud to be a teacher	74	25.0	222	75.0
6	I engage in other venture to fulfill my domestic financial obligations	237	80.0	59	20.0
7	I agree that I am a professional teacher	185	62.5	111	37.5
	AVERAGE	126	42.5	170	57.5

From table 1, the average percentage of the students' positive perception is 42.5% while the average of the students' negative perception is 57.5%. This showed that the students' perception of teaching as a

profession in Nigeria is negative, meaning that on the average, the students did not perceive teaching as a profession in Nigeria. This is further clarified in a pie chart below.

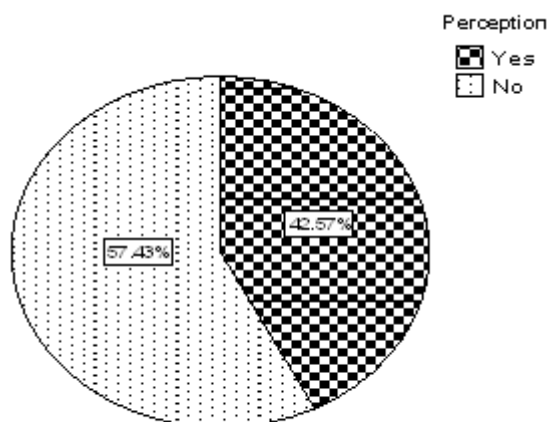


Fig. 1: Pie Chart of Students' Perception of Teaching as a Profession in Nigeria

From the pie chart (fig.1), it is revealed that the percentage of students who perceived teaching as a profession in Nigeria was 42.57% while the percentage of those who did not perceive teaching as a profession in Nigeria was 57.43%. This shows that most of the students do not consider teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of incoming and old sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Table 2: X² analysis of incoming and old students' negative perception of teaching as a profession

	N	X ²	df	Asymp. Sig.	Remark
Incoming Students	155	6.54	1	0.011	Sig.
Old Students	141				
Total	296				

P < 0.05

Table 2 above showed that x² value (0.011) < 0.05 significant level. This means that there exists a significant difference in the negative perception of incoming and old sandwich students of teaching as a

profession in Nigeria.

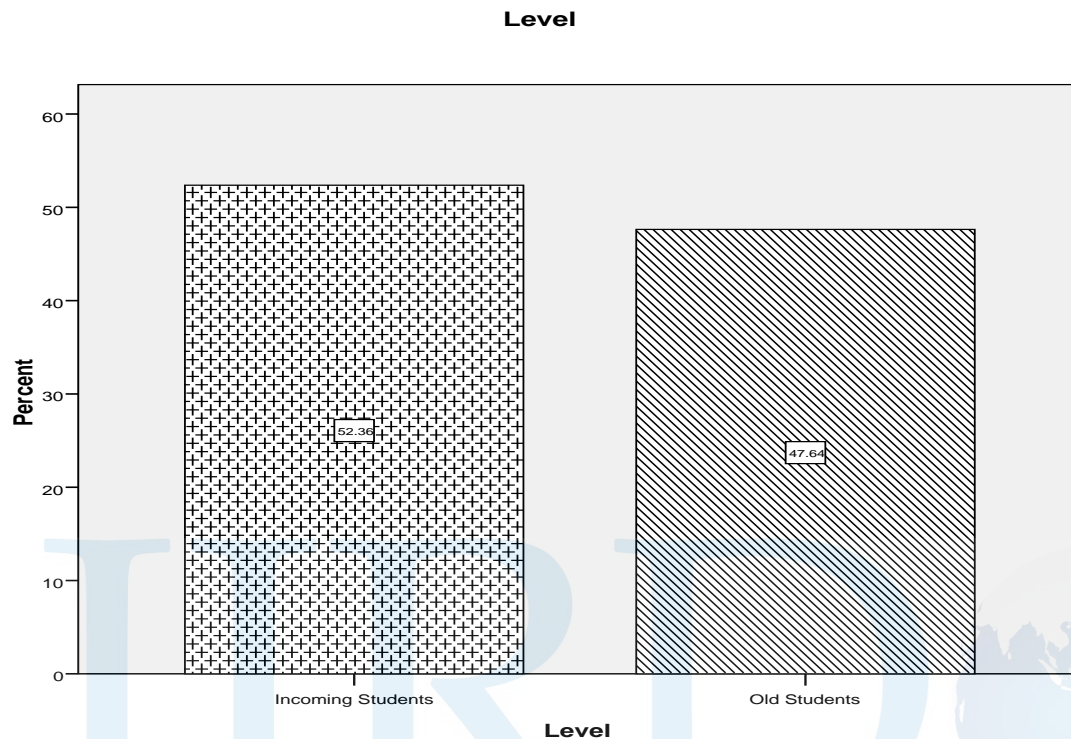


Figure 2: Bar Chart of Incoming and Old Students' Perception

The bar chart above showed the percentages of negative perception of incoming and old sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria. The percentage of incoming students (52.36%) is higher than that of the old students (47.64%). This means that the negative perception of teaching as a profession is higher among the incoming students than among the old students.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of practicing and non-practicing teacher sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria

Table 3: X² analysis of practicing and non-practicing teachers' negative perception of teaching as a profession

	N	X ²	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Remark
Practicing Students	195	29.85	1	0.001	Sig.
Non- Practicing Students	101				
Total	296				

P < 0.05

From table 3, X² (1, n = 296) = 29.85, p = .001 < .05. This implies a significant disparity between the

perceptions of the students. Therefore, there is significant difference in the perception of practicing and non-practicing teacher sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

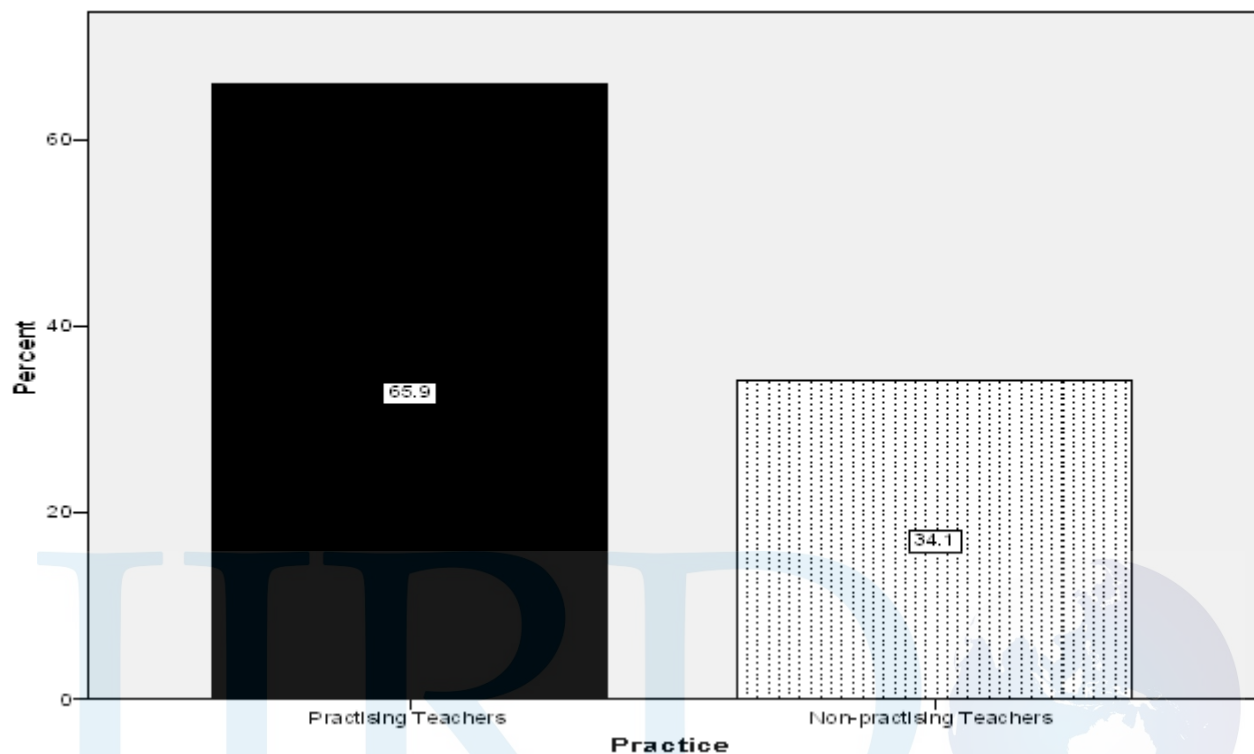


Fig. 3: Practising and Non-practising student-teachers' negative perception

Figure 3 above is a bar chart showing the percentages of negative perception of practicing and non-practicing sandwich student-teachers of teaching as a profession in Nigeria. The percentage of practicing students of 65.9% is higher than that of the non-practicing students of 34.1%). This implies that the negative perception of teaching as a profession is higher among the practicing students than among the non-practicing students.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Table 4: X² analysis of male and female sandwich students' negative perception of teaching as a profession

	N	X ²	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Remark
Male	132	3.46	1	0.668	Not Sigt
Female	164				
Total	296				

P > 0.05

The table 4 revealed that $X^2(1, n = 296) = 3.46, p = .668 > .05$, which showed no difference in the students' perception. Thus, there is no significant difference in the perception of male and female sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Ho₄: There is no significant difference in the perception of sandwich students from Ekiti, Ondo, Lagos, Osun and Kogi States towards teaching as a profession in Nigeria

Table 5: ANOVA of students' perception in South-West Nigeria

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	Df	Fcal	Sig.
Between variables	0.172	0.043	4	0.173	0.952
Within variables	72.193	0.248	291		
Total	72.365		295		

$P > .05$

From table 5 above, $F(4, 291) = 0.173, p = 0.95 > 0.05$. This means that there is no difference in the students' perception across the states. It therefore showed that, there is no significant difference in the perception of sandwich students from Ekiti, Ondo, Lagos, Osun and Kogi States towards teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Discussion

The result of this study revealed that the perception of sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria was negative. The percentage of students who perceived teaching as a profession was lower than the percentage of those who did not perceived teaching as a profession in Nigeria. This shows that most of the students do not consider teaching as a profession in Nigeria. Perhaps, this is why students are not willing to become a teacher, since they do not consider it as a recognized profession in Nigeria.

It was also revealed from the results of this study that the perception of incoming and old sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria differs. The negative perception of teaching as a profession in Nigeria is higher among the incoming students than among the old students. The difference may be due to the exposure to information received by the old students from their course of studies in education. For instance, a 100 level course at EKSU coded EDU 100 which entitled "Introduction to teaching profession" emphasises on the concept of teaching and its professionalization. This might have given the old students a short of reorientation to teaching as a profession globally, irrespective of all odds in any environment or locality.

The study further showed that the negative perception of teaching as a profession in Nigeria is higher among the practicing students than among the non- practicing students. Those students who are practicing teachers might be skeptical in agreeing that teaching is professionalized in Nigeria due to their experiences on the job. As was discussed earlier in the background of this study that the situation

of teaching in Nigeria is worrisome may inform their negative perception. Evidently, their day to day experiences on the job seem to be at variant to the characteristics of teaching profession as they were taught in their course of study, hence conclude that it is not worthy of being classified a profession with what is on ground in Nigeria. Thus, they are running a sandwich programme in education not to become a teacher but just to become a degree holder and gain higher societal value as suggested earlier in the background to this study.

The result of the study however revealed no significant difference in the perception of male and female sandwich students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria. This was contrary to the earlier submission in this study that the female students fare better than their male counterpart in their disposition to teaching as a profession in Nigeria.

Similarly, there is no disparity in the perception of sandwich students from Ekiti, Ondo, Lagos, Osun and Kogi States on teaching as a profession in Nigeria. This revealed that the perceived impression of the students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria is not limited to only a state but cuts across the states in Nigeria.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that sandwich students do not consider teaching as a profession in Nigeria. Though, old students have fair perception of teaching as a profession in Nigeria than the incoming students while both male and female sandwich students showed no difference in their perception. Finally, the negative perception of the students of teaching as a profession in Nigeria is not different across the five states of Western Nigeria where the students came from.

Recommendation

On the basis of the outcomes of this study, the following recommendations were made to give teaching a better place as a stand out profession in Nigeria:

1. Government of Nigeria should provide a worthwhile condition of service for teaching in the country.
2. Teaching should be professionalized absolutely in Nigeria.
3. The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should be allowed to function according to the purpose for which it was established.
4. Practicing teachers should rise up against the challenges facing teaching profession in Nigeria.
5. Nigerian populace should as a matter of reality accept teaching as an indomitable profession like other so called “professional careers”.

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EKIT STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE PERCEPTION OF SANDWICH STUDENTS ON TEACHING AS A PROFESION IN NIGERIA

PART A

Department: Level:

Year:

Work Place Address:

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Resident State: Gender: Male – ; Female –

Academic Qualifications: B. Sc/B.A/HND ; NCE ; ND ; GRD II

Subject Specialization:

PART B

S/N	ITEMS	YES	NO
1	I agree that teaching is a profession in Nigeria		
2	Teaching in Nigeria satisfies these criteria of an ideal profession: i. Provides an essential social service ii. Based on a systematic body of knowledge iii. Requires a period of academic and practical training iv. Autonomous i.e. freedom to practice v. Has a code of ethical conduct vi. Provides in-service growth through training of staff		
3	I feel satisfied as a teacher, put aside the financial aspect of it		
4	I am proud to be a teacher		
5	I am a teacher today because I deliberately choose it		
6	I agree that I am a professional teacher		
7	I am committed to my duty in school with the notion of a professional teacher		
8	Teaching is not accorded the rights of a profession by the government of my state		
9	The average perception of the Nigerians towards teaching as a profession if		

	positive		
10	I engage in other business(es) – petty or major – to fulfill my domestic financial obligations		

