



AJOTE

African Journal of Teacher Education

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGE STATUS OF NIGERIAN TEACHERS: 1960-1985 AND 1986-2010

Oluniyi Oyeleke

Osun State College of Education, Nigeria

Abstract

This article examines the activities of teachers in two different historical epochs of Nigerian history. Relevant literatures were reviewed which borders on the commitment and official roles of teachers from the time of missionary sole control of education to post-independent era. Comparative analysis of the two epochs were examined in terms of teachers commitment, degree of motivation and training, tendency to engage in other paid work outside teaching and the degree of communal involvement. The study adopted a survey design. One hundred and fifty teachers from Ayedaade Local Government Area of Osun State were used as the study sample. A questionnaire was designed, validated and administered. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages. The teachers in the first epoch, 1960 – 1985, were rated higher based on their positive impacts on teaching and learning than the second epoch group, 1986 - 2010.

Background to the Study

The introduction of Western education by Christian missionaries in the late 20th century paved the way to a new civilization in Nigeria. The establishment of missionary schools opened up prospects of employment in the education industry. The missions' schools and their curricula were deeply rooted in religion, numeracy and literacy. Nigerians who were successfully trained became either teachers in the expanding education industry or catechists in their churches; and in most cases effectively combined the two. In this dual role, teachers exerted enormous influence in the school, church, and local communities. They served as secretaries to the local community, at times the village letter writer, and often next to the king or traditional ruler. In these various roles teachers assumed many responsibilities. For instance, a mother whose wards manifested deviant traits such as truancy, alcoholism, drug addiction, etc., depended on teachers to enforce disciplinary measures either in the school or in the locality. The teacher was not only regarded as an educator but also a disciplinarian, role model, and guide.

Moreover, it was the duty of the teacher to ensure that members of the community lived in peace and harmony. The teacher also organized social/cultural meetings and activities for members of the community. Summarily, the teacher in a community was a "person of culture" and an expert in child rearing.

The authoritarian structure of the Traditional systems of government in Nigeria during the pre- and post-colonial periods provided a bulwark for the strong authoritative voice of teachers in and outside the school. Their voices carried weight in the Community Development Association and any other gatherings in general. They constituted the first set of educated elites in Nigerian society

Christian missionaries were the dominant figures in education as they established schools until 1882 when the first Education Ordinance was enacted by the colonial government. This marked the beginning of government intervention in education. The Education Ordinance provided for Grants-in-Aid to the Gold Coast (Accra) and Lagos. The colonial government's intervention aroused various perceptions about teachers and the teaching profession. Invariably, the changing perception inspired different voices. Following the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914, the new Governor General-Lord Lugard adopted an Education Ordinance that distinguished between the missionary schools and those established by the government. This distinction led to discrimination in the awarding of grants-in-aids and differential treatment of teachers trained and working in schools established by the two competing institutions - mission and government. This inspired and culminated into the establishment of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) founded in 1931 as an amalgamation of the Lagos Union of Teachers (est. 1925) and the Association of Headmasters of Ijebu Schools (est. 1926) (Oyekan, 2000; NUT, 2011).

Majasan (1999) elaborates on this development. He states that while the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was training teachers since 1849, the colonial administration did not start until 1889. Surprisingly, the graduates of colonial government institutions were regarded as civil servants and enjoyed better treatment. The formation of NUT added another dimension to the teachers' voices. Teachers became a political force to be reckoned with nationally and used the NUT platform to advocate for better work conditions and higher wages. They often used strikes and dialogue to engage government in labor issues. Government intervention in education and especially the formation of NUT with its bargaining power increased the profile of teachers in political circles.

This period also witnessed a gradual decline in the influence of teachers in the community and the school. The decline in power led to waning commitments to the teaching profession. The trend continues for several reasons. One was the rise of other professions that motivated a higher sense of responsibility with increased respectability. Such professions include law, accounting, medicine, and banking. Educated elites were no longer limited to the teaching profession, but drawn to other areas of interest.

The colonial government and European merchants with resources to pay higher wages to workers in other professions dampened teachers' morale. Thus teachers drifted from the field of education into other flourishing sectors like health, police, marketing, and banks. Majasan (1999) notes that the missionaries later found themselves in a "serious competition with their brothers who were colonial administrators and merchants who wanted market for their wares and could afford to pay better wages in urban areas without the moral inhibitions characteristics of missionaries" (p. 8).

Purpose of the Study

The study sets out to:

- 1) Compare the commitment of teachers in Nigeria over two historical periods, and
- 2) Ascertain the 'image-status' of teachers over two historical periods in Nigeria, to examine the changing roles of teachers in Nigeria over time.

Statement of the Problem

There is a visible decline in the quality of education at the primary and secondary levels in Nigeria. This trend has resulted in a negative perception of teachers who are the key players in education and the school system. The paramount questions to ask include what factors are responsible for this trend and what has been the status of teachers in terms of their commitment, roles and 'image' over time in Nigerian history.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the investigation:

- (a) Is there a significant difference in the commitment of teachers to teaching between the periods of 1960 - 1985 and 1986 - 2010?
- (b) Are there changes in the 'image-status' of teachers over time in Nigeria?
- (c) How has the role of teachers in Nigeria changed?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would shed light on the various roles of teachers in the school and community, and the consistency of their roles in the history of Nigeria. It would also show trends in teachers' perception of their commitment to education since Nigerian political independence.

Limitation of the Study

The study is limited by the time frame classification. The actual time teachers began to change is difficult to ascertain. Also, the respondents were limited to teachers in public owned secondary schools in Osun state.

Research Methodology

The study employs a survey design. The study populations included secondary school teachers in public owned schools in Ayedaade Local Government in Osun state. This local government was selected because of its heterogeneity in the rural and urban spread of schools. One hundred and fifty serving and fifty retired teachers were randomly selected as the study sample. Out of one hundred and fifty, fifty were in service since the 1980s, another fifty since the 1990s, while the remaining fifty were employed between 2000 and 2010 respectively. This was to reflect a broad view of teachers' opinion.

Research Instrument

The following two items were used to collect data from the respondents:

1. Self-Constructed Questionnaire titled Teachers' Commitment and Roles Questionnaire (TCRQ).
2. Focus Group - The study employed roundtable discussions by 6 groups of teachers. This included 2 rounds for the 1980's group, 2 rounds for the 2000's group, and 2 for the retired group.

Validation of Instrument

The research instrument was subjected to face and content validity through the assistance of an expert in the field of test and measurement. The questionnaire items were pre-administered to some selected teachers who were not part of the study in an effort to determine the potential of the instrument to obtain the desired information. The reliability of the instrument was established through the Test-Retest method. A correlation coefficient of 0.87 obtained from the tests indicated the instrument's reliability.

Administration of the Instrument

The researcher self-administered and collected the questionnaires. In the case of the focus group discussions, there was an initial arrangement for training and the terms of the discussion. Three groups were drawn from the teachers employed in the 1980's, the 2000's, and the retired group. Each discussion lasted for about one and one half hours on average. A secretary was appointed for each Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to write down focal points of the discussions and individual view points.

Findings and Discussion

Research Question 1: Is there a significant difference in the commitment of teachers to teaching between the periods of 1960 - 1985 and 1986 - 2010?

Table 1 below presents the teachers' response on their commitment to the teaching profession. The respondents were asked if the 1960 - 1985 group was more committed, combined other work, and was more focused on teaching than the 1986 - 2010 group.

Table 1: Teachers' Response on Commitment to Teaching

Items	Agree		Disagree	
	Score	%	Score	%
Commitment to teaching profession	160	80	40	20
Combining other work(s)	140	70	60	30
Focused on teaching only	150	75	50	25
Total average score %	450	75%	50	25%

From Table 1, an average of 150 respondents (95%) agreed that teachers in the period 1960-1985 were more committed than those of the 1980 - 2010 group even though individual personalities of teachers overlapped in the two historical periods. This issue was not solely due to personality, but also reflected a plague confronting the teaching profession. History suggests that when those individuals established their own schools they were more committed.

A visit to some of the public schools revealed a startling difference in the rate of commitment and punctuality between the normal class and lesson periods. Teachers often displayed a lackadaisical attitude during their normal lesson period while deeply committed to the extra lesson period. This was due to the extra income earned by teaching the extra lesson period. The school's working conditions and salary could be responsible factors as a stimulating and supportive environment is absolutely necessary for effectiveness not only in teaching but in every profession. Oyeleke (2010) stressed that, "a good teacher must be committed to teaching, students and the school in general. He must be committed to the goals, principles and philosophy of the school." Part of that commitment is regular and punctual classroom attendance and the performance of duties assigned by the head teacher. This finding supports Aluko's (2010) view that today's teachers are ineffective. He directly links teachers' commitment with teachers' effectiveness and dedication to duty. A measure of teachers' non- commitment to duty is the practice of engaging in business and other duties outside teaching especially during the school hours. This is basically viewed as unethical. Akinsanya's (2010) writings on ethics in teaching should be commonplace knowledge for all teachers. He writes that, "Teachers shall not belong to organizations which are likely to be detrimental to the progress of the school" (p. 23).

Comments that emanated from the focus group discussions with some of the teachers were:

The teachers in 1960-1985 were more dedicated, committed, well respected and more disciplined. The teachers were resourceful and goal achieving. Nowadays, teachers are not respected as before and the parents are not cooperating with the teachers in the process of disciplining their children.

In 1960-1985, teachers seemed to be more disciplined, have class control, are resourceful and aim at achieving the school objectives, but the reverse is the case in these days (1985-2009). This could be attributed to financial and social challenges facing them, and which both the government and society finds difficult to resolve.

Strike action was uncommon with teachers before 1985. Teachers were treated well by the society. Unlike now, in order to make ends meet, teachers nowadays engage in other jobs perceiving teaching as a part-time job. (Discussion group Excerpts, 2011)

The overwhelming consensus among respondents, as reflected in the above excerpt, was positively disposed to the period 1960 - 1985, and divided in terms of dedication, commitment, and discipline among other groups.

Research Question 2: Are there noticeable changes in the image status of teachers over time in Nigerian history? The following variables were presented separately in this question: the level and quality of training, job satisfaction, public recognition and respect, motivation and remuneration. Was the 1960 - 1985 group better trained, more respected with higher job satisfaction, and better motivated and remunerated than the 1986 - 2010 group?

Table 2: Perception of the Respondents on the Changing Image Status of Nigerian Teachers

Items	Agree		Disagree	
	Score	%	Score	%
Training	90	45	80	40
Respectability	160	80	40	20
Job satisfaction	156	78	54	27
Motivation	190	85	30	15
Remuneration	96	48	100	50
Average score /%	1384	67.2	60	30.4%

The average total and percentage of the entire variables used for the image status of teachers favored the 1960 - 1985 group with an average score of 138 (61.2%), while the 1986 - 2010 group scored a total average of 60 (30.4%). On the issue of training, there was an even perception of the quality of training of teachers between the two groups, while those who favored the 1960 - 1985 group as better trained totaled 90 (45%) with 80 (40%) who believed that the 1986 - 2010 group was better trained. This shows a marginal difference of 5%.

The data demonstrated that the 1960 - 1985 group was more respected with higher public recognition than the 1986 - 2010 group. An overwhelming majority, 160 respondent or 80% of the study sample agreed that 1960 - 1985 groups had better respectability or higher public recognition, while twenty 40 respondents or 20% favored the 1986 - 2010 group as better trained with higher public recognition.

Oyekan (2000) writes that “a functional teacher education program is statutorily expected to inculcate a system of virtues in contemporary trained teachers” (p. 297). Banjo (1953) expressed that “teaching is a profession and for every profession, training as well as aptitude is necessary... and those who are not born teachers can cultivate through training” (p. 66). Koleoso’s (2003) comment on National Policy on Education speaks to teacher training. He observed that research recommends that a teacher should be academically and professionally qualified. The overwhelming consensus of the respondents was positively disposed to the 1960 - 1985 group, but divided in terms of dedication, commitment, and discipline.

Job Satisfaction

One hundred and fifty six respondents or 78% agreed that the 1960 - 1985 group was more satisfied in the teaching profession while 54 or 27% believed that the 1986 - 2010 group possessed higher job satisfaction.

Motivation

The 1960 - 1985 group was more motivated than teachers in the 1986 - 2010 period as shown from the data. One hundred and ninety teachers (85%) agreed with this finding, while 30 (15%) disagreed.

Remuneration

Ironically the respondents believed that the 1986 -2010 group was better remunerated than the 1960-1985 group even though there was a marginal difference of 2% with 96 (48%) of the respondents in agreement that the 1960 -1986 group was better remunerated. One hundred (50%) believed the teachers in the 1986-2010 period were better remunerated. If this is the

true picture of teachers and the teaching profession, the question to pose is why the professional education standard is falling in spite of improved remuneration. Several factors could be responsible for this decline.

First, gross increase in salary may not be proportional to the market value and purchasing power of money. The percentage increase may also not be proportional to the rate of inflation. Second, the process of modernization has greatly increased the desire for luxury goods that command a high price. Generally, it may be observed, that society is becoming increasingly ostentatious and materialistic.

The rise of other professions offering higher salaries and better work conditions has had a negative ripple effect on the teaching profession. For instance, teachers whose former students now work in oil companies earn salaries that are one hundred percent higher than that of the teacher. The distributive imbalance of resources in the society contributes to a view constituting a threat to teachers' image.

Research Question 3: How has the role of teachers changed in Nigeria? The teachers' responses on the changing role of Nigerian teachers are presented in Table 3. The role of teachers has changed significantly over time. Table 3 below shows the trends of changing roles.

Table 3: Teachers' Responses on the Changing Role of Teachers in Nigeria

Items	1960-1985		1986-2010		1960 -1985 & 1986-2010	
Community spokesman	160	80.0	30	15.0	50	25.0
Surrogate parent	120	60.0	60	30.0	20	10.0
Official church clergyman	140	70.0	50	25.0	10	5.0
Local community Reps	160	80.0	30	15.0	10	5.0
Counseling services	160	80.0	150	75.0	160	80.0
Teaching	120	60.0	150	75.0	140	70.0

Community Spokesman

The overwhelming perception is that teachers in the 1960 - 1985 group were largely performing the role of community spokesman. This was attributed to the fact that they constituted elites in the society at that time. Thirty respondents (15%) believed that this role continued during the 1986 - 2010 period, while 50 respondents (25%) believed that teachers continued in the role from 1960 to the present.

Surrogate Parent

Teachers as surrogate parents was more pronounced during the 1960 - 1985 period as indicated by 120 respondents (60%), while 60 respondents (30%) held the view that the 1986 - 2010 acted as surrogate parents with only 10 respondents (5%) in agreement that the role of

surrogate parent was equally peculiar to the two groups. This trend could be attributed to a significant decrease in the Nigerian boarding school system.

Official Church Clergymen

As respected members of the church, teachers during 1960 - 1985 were believed to have effectively combined church work with teaching as reflected by 140 (70%) of the respondents supporting this finding. This is not surprising missionaries continued to own the bulk of schools during this period. Even after the government takeover of schools, through Grants-In-Aid the personnel remained largely church clergymen, and most schools were rooted in the philosophy of the founding church.

Local Community Representative

Eight percent of the respondents agreed that teachers in the 1960 - 1985 group acted as community representatives. The reverse was the case among teachers in 1986 - 2010. This position is well illustrated by Fafunwa (1974) who stated that:

At a less formal level, the competent teacher is a good citizen, a community leader, an innovator or an enlightened parent. His influence extended beyond the confines of the classroom. In rural areas, he is looked on as the mainstays of the community or village. (p. 69)

Corroborating this view is Majasan (1995) who wrote that a teacher:

Is the gateway to organization of the grassroots, into an active participating group in civil administration and in the performance of community services. He is the acknowledged leader who serves the community as secretary or interpreter at grass root meetings, religion or environmental health and acts in this capacity without any remuneration. In rural areas, he is the beacon of light for the population, sensitizing them to all kinds of developmental movements and health activities that yield great dividends. (p. 17)

Counseling Services

This role remained consistent across the two historical periods. Respondents expressed an overlapping opinion on the role of the counselor with 160 respondents (80%) supporting the 1960 - 1985 group as counseling service providers, 150 (75%) agreeing that the 1986 - 2010 group provided the same service, and 160 (80%) of the respondents agreed that both groups provided counseling services.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The standard of education in Nigeria has progressively declined. The result of this decline is ineffective teaching in the classroom. The social prestige and privileges historically associated with teachers and the teaching profession has waned drastically. The effects of this decline in status include uncommitted and a nonchalant attitudes that impacted negatively on the standard of education.

Effective teaching can only occur when teachers promote excellence and are motivated to perform at a high level. Central to the absence of commitment is inadequate salary. This portends that teachers should be well remunerated to enhance their focus and encourage total dedication. The age-old saying that "teachers' reward is in heaven" has become obsolete and this should be discountenance as it destroys the quality of students' education.

The image of teachers should be positively projected. They should also demonstrate self-confidence and a positive attitude toward their profession. In order to enhance their image, Aluko (2010) suggests that teachers should always dress appropriately and professionally, be well remunerated, and in some cases be appointed permanent secretary in the State Ministry of Education. The government should grant soft loans and award other amenities to teachers on a regular basis.

REFERENCES

- Akinsanya, T.O (2010). *Teaching as a Profession* in Komolacr M.O Y.O Akinsanya, O.M Akanmu (eds) *Fundamentals of Teachers Education*. Osogbo Nig Ltd.pp 14-24
- Aluko K.O (2010). “Building up the Ego/Image of the would-be Teacher” in Komolacr M.O Y.O Akinsanya, O.M Akanmu (eds) *Fundamentals of Teachers Education*. Osogbo Nig Ltd.
- Banjo S.A (1953). *West Africa Teachers Handbook*. London 48-86 University of London Press.
- .Fafunwa A Babs, (1974) *History of Education in Nigeria*. Ibadan, NPS Educational Publishers.
- Fasanmi, F.O & P.O Jegede (2006). “Trade Unionism in the Teaching Profession in Nigeria” in Ehidero O. J and Aladejana F.O (eds) *Introduction to the Teaching*. Lagos, Litramed Publications Ltd pp 169-178.
- Koleoso A. (2000). *Introduction to Teaching Profession*. Ondo; Alex Publishers.
- Majasan J.A (1995). *The Teachers Profession. A manual for Professional Excellence*. Ibadan: Spectrum Book Ltd.
- Nigeria Union of Teachers. (2011) About Us. Retrieved July 20, 2012 from http://www.nutnigeria.org/_nut/About%20Us.php.
- Ojedokun O.E. (2006). The Roles of the Teacher in School Community and Nation Building in Ehidero O.J and Aladejana F.O (eds) *Introduction to the Teaching Profession*. Lagos Litramed Publications ltd pp169-178
- Oyekan, S.O (2000). *Foundations of Teacher Education*. Ondo, Ebun- Ola Printers Nigeria, Ltd.
- Oyeleke O. (2010). “The Role of the teacher in the School and Community” in Komolafe M.O, Y.O Akinsanya, O.M Akanmu (eds) *Fundamentals of Teachers Education*. Osogbo Nig Ltd. pp 5-13.

