Enhancing Economics Teachers' Education Programme for Global Competitiveness

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Abstract

The study focused on enhancing Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 408 respondents which comprise 310 final-year economics education students and 98 economics lecturers of faculty of education Abia State University, Uturu. The sample of the study was 163 which include 124 final Economics Education students and 39 Economics Education lecturers which were selected using the stratified simple random sampling technique. The instrument titled: "Enhancing Economics Teachers' Education Programme for Global Competitiveness Questionnaire (EETEPGCQ)," was designed by the researchers and used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three validates from the College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistic which yielded 0.84 reliability coefficient considered reliable for the study. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the three research questions and t-test statistic to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the current content of Economics teachers' education programme is relevant in meeting global competitiveness to a high extent. Also, it was found that the challenges confronting economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness were: poor funding of teacher education programme, policy inconsistencies and poor implementation of teacher education policies, depilated infrastructural facilities in economics teacher-education programme, incessant strike actions by universities among others. Based on the results of this study, it was recommended that; there is the need for regular review of the Economics education teachers curriculum contents by curriculum experts to ensure that it align with global standard for global competitiveness; government and stakeholders should realize that teacher education is a determinant to a knowledge-based society and do the needful through adequate funding, provision of needed facilities and staff welfare in order to avert incessant strike actions and so on.

Keywords: economics, teachers' education programme, global competitiveness

Introduction

Education across the globe has been seen as the only veritable tool for progress and survival of any nation. The formulation and translation of good policies are depended upon by quality education. Educational institutions exist primarily

for the purposes of cultivating, generating and supplying of manpower needed for the attainment of aims and aspirations of the society through developmental programmes (teaching, learning and research) to solve existing and anticipating problems as well as expanding other frontiers of knowledge by providing other varieties of services to cater for the societal needs (Ifeakor, Anujeonye & Nneamaka, 2019).

However, from all indications, a comprehensive education would inculcate relevant knowledge, refine the minds of the citizens and prepare them to a decent life and develop a virile society. It is a generally perspective that whatever you want in the society is attain through the school system. This is to say that the school is the manufacturer of the society as well as the mirror of the society. Therefore, there's need to put in place a functional programme to help achieve the objectives, goals and aspirations of the society (Osuji, & Taiwo, 2019).

The teachers' roles in the society are numerous and significant to the extent that if their training/preparation is not given adequate considerations, the society is bound to collapse. Aside playing prominent roles in the school and community, teachers also contribute significantly to nation-building, curriculum planning and implementation, policy formulation, conflict resolution and even in the electoral process (Rosita & Saheed, 2012). All these relevant roles are societal based, not minding the stratum at which the teacher performs them. It should not be forgotten that teacher education is a professional education of teachers which is tailored towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the needs of the society at any point in time (Osuji, & Taiwo, 2019).

In addition, the teacher is the principal actor in the implementation of policies and procedures in the educational process (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). It is the teacher who translates the nation educational goals and objectives into meaningful reality through the inculcation of worthwhile values, knowledge and skills to the learners (Mgbodile, 2015). This is why the central thrust of reforms in the teacher education programme is to produce teachers who can perform adequately in the world of work and meet the present day challenges and global competitiveness. Commenting further the teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in schools and classrooms. It is an education programme which is properly planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach in any levels of education (Adedeji, in Abubakar, 2021). More so, education programme is specifically designed for individuals who are willing to become teachers to acquire skills, disposition, knowledge,

habits, attitudes, values, norms, ethics and professional competencies that can compel them to effectively influence learning situation (Sylvester in Abubakar, 2021). Consequently, economics education teacher is not left out of the part of teachers education programme and in the task of producing potential Economics teachers for global competitiveness. Meanwhile, the study of Economics provides students' with good background for careers in business administration, banking, marking, politics and so on. It provides training for students intending to become professional economists who can serve as special advisers in governments and research specialists in business corporations and universities. A good knowledge of Economics can help an individual in a good decision making. For instance: an entrepreneur with the knowledge of Economics is bound to make more rational and rewarding business decision than his counterpart without such knowledge. The study of economics enhances good citizenship in the sense that much of government policies today are Economics in nature. For instance, issues like inflation, unemployment, income, inequality, population explosion, external debts, balance of payments disequilibrium among others are the things that dominate government policies in today world (Ekpenyong, in Ugochukwu, 2019).

According to Robbins in Okeke (2015), economics is defined as a social science that studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses. This definition is said to be the most appropriate and widely acceptable definition of economics. This is because Economics studies the behaviours of consumers in relation to price and quantity demanded. Based on the foregoing, Economics teacher education programme aims at: educating economics education teachers who will be positively oriented towards teaching economics as a subject, producing effective economics teachers who are highly motivated and conscious of the important role they are expected to play in the development of economics education, producing Economics teachers who possess sufficient knowledge in the theory and practice of economics education which they can in turn teach in the teacher training colleges and equipping the Economics education students with sufficient knowledge and skills (Ugochukwu, 2019).

The development of a nation for global competitiveness is highly dependent on the quality of teacher education received by her citizens. Global competitiveness refers to the phenomenon where the borders separating countries are disappearing. This allows the flow of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, economy, knowledge, people, values and idea across borders. However, bridging the global competitiveness gap through Economics teacher education programme may partly depends on the content of the teachers education

programme for equipping the trainee teachers with worldwide knowledge and skills needed for global competiveness (Rosita & Saheed, 2012).

Therefore, enhancing economic teacher education programme is paramount in ensuring that economics teacher education programme in Nigeria are align with the standard in other developed countries. Robert in Shishi, Muhammed and Wever (2016) state that to enhance is to increase the level of which something is done. With reference to this study, to enhance means that the standard of Economics teacher education programme and the training and learning contents provided can equip the trainees with right knowledge, skills and competencies needed to succeed anywhere in the world. Hence, in order to enhance Economics teacher education programme, an enabling environment and the right materials and human resources ought to be put in place to ensure that graduate of Economics education programme are actively engage in practical and theoretical aspect of teacher education preparatory programme.

Therefore, the content of economic teacher education training programmes need to have the direct link with the knowledge and teaching skills needed in 21st century and the content of the training programmes should equipped the trainees teachers with skills to address environmental issues from the perspective of their subject matter among others (Rosita & Saheed, 2012). Nevertheless, economics teachers education programme in Nigeria seems to be constraints with myriad of challenges which retard the effectiveness of the programme for global competitiveness such as poor funding of teachers education programme, incessant strike actions by academic union and the host of other challenges aim at identifying through the findings of this study. Arising from the backdrop, the researchers sought to examine ways of enhancing Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Economics is a practical subject that equips the students with useful knowledge and skills for analyzing economic problems, framing of economic policies, distribution of income and opportunity as well as human behaviour in taking rational decisions relating to use of scarce resources. Therefore, given the importance of Economics in secondary schools, it becomes imperative that teacher education is properly position to impart the needed knowledge and skills to the students in Economics since teachers are the life wire of any nation and the greatness of any nation is depended on the quality of its teacher education as bedrock for production of quality manpower for global competiveness.

Despite the above mentioned importance of teacher education, the quality of teacher education programmes in Nigeria and Abia State in particular remain questionable due to numerous problems facing teacher education pro-

grammes ranging from lack of adequate educational funding as recommended by United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), poor teaching and learning environment in teachers training institutions, lack of well equip micro-teaching laboratory for practical teaching experiments, poor condition of services provided to lecturers in teachers training institutions, lack of teaching and learning facilities, poor curriculum structure, excess workload on the part of the teachers, lack of incentives and motivation and incessant strike action among others. All these post serious impediment towards the actualization of quality teachers' education which invariably lead to production of teachers who lack the requisite competencies required in the 21st century for global competitiveness. It is therefore against this backdrop, the study focused on enhancing Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness with particular reference to Abia State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is on enhancing Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness. Specifically the study sought to:

1. examine the extent current content of Economics teachers' education programme is relevant in enhancing global competitiveness;

2. ascertain the challenges confronting Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness and

3. find out the strategies of enhancing Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness.

Research Question

1. To what extent current content of Economics teachers' education programme is relevant for global competitiveness?

2. What are the challenges confronting Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness?

3. What are the strategies for enhancing Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significant:

Ho_1: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent current content of Economics teachers' education programme is relevant for global competitiveness

Ho$_2$: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the challenges confronting Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness.

Ho$_3$: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the strategies for enhancing Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The design was chosen because it permitted investigation, description and recording of information in their natural setting (Nkwocha & Akanwa, 2017). The population of the study was 408 which comprises of 310 final year Economics education students and 98 Economics education lecturers of Faculty of Education Abia State University, Uturu. The sample of 163 was selected for the study which include 124 final students and 39 lecturers selected using the stratified random sampling technique since the population is made up of sub-sets of heterogeneous elements (lecturers and students). This is supported by Nwanna cited in Nwanna in Nkwocha and Akanwa (2017) when he recommended that when the population runs into few hundred use 40% or more, when several hundred use 20%, when thousand use 10% and when several thousand use 5% or less. Furthermore, the proportionate stratified simple random technique was used in selecting the required sample that was used for the study.

The instrument titled: "Enhancing Economics Teachers' Education Programme for Global Competitiveness Questionnaire (EETEPGCQ)" was designed by the researcher and used for data collection with four points rating scale of Very High Extent/Strongly Agree (VHE/SA), High Extent/Agree (HE/A), Low Extent/Disagree (LE/D), Very Low Extent/Strongly Disagree (VLE/SD). The instrument was validated by three validates from the College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Statistic which yielded 0.84 reliability coefficient considered reliable for the study. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the three research questions and t-test statistic to test the hypotheses.

Results

The data used for answering the research questions are presented in the tables below.

- **Research Question 1:** To what extent current content of Economics teachers education programme is relevant in meeting global competitiveness?

Table 1: **Respondents's view on extent current content of economics teachers education programme is relevant in meeting global competitiveness**

	Item statements	$\overline{X}$	S.D	Rmks
1.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes has a direct link with the knowledge needed for global competitiveness	3.05	0.54	High extent
2.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes has a direct link with the skills required for global competitiveness	2.88	1.05	High extent
3.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes equipped you to develop the trainee teachers communication skills	2.85	1.0	High extent
4.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes has a creative ability needed in the 21st century	3.01	0.78	High Extent
5.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes has innovative ability needed for global competitiveness	3.03	0.80	High Extent
6.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes has ability to develop the supervision capacity for effective management of students	2.87	0.99	High Extent
7.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes can equip trainee teachers ability in the use of instructional media	2.84	1.02	High Extent
8.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes can develop the trainee teachers ability in the use of instructional methods/strategies	2.78	1.08	High Extent
9.	The content of economics education teachers training programmes equipped can develop the trainee teachers ability in the management of students learning behaviour	2.88	0.92	High Extent
10.	Economics education teachers training programmes contained learning experiences that can equip prospective teachers with the skills to develop adequate communication for effective teaching and social interaction of learners	2.96	0.79	High Extent

	Item statements	X̄	S.D	Rmks
	Cluster summary	2.92	0.93	

KEY: = mean, S.D = Standard deviation, Rmks.= Remarks

The mean ratings of the responses of the respondents in Table 1 above ranged from 2.78 to 3.05 which are all above the limit of the mean based of highly extent. This implied that the 10 identified items in Table 1 shows that the current content of Economics teachers education programme is relevant in meeting global competitiveness on high extent. The standard deviation values of the 10 items in the table ranged from 0.79 to 1.08 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and to the mean.

- **Research Question 2:** What are the challenges confronting Economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness?

Table 2: **Mean ratings of the responses of respondents on the challenges confronting Economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness**

/N	Item statements	X̄	SD	Rmks
1.	Poor funding of teacher education programme	3.9	0.79	Agreed
2.	Depilated infrastructural facilities in economics teacher education programme	3.54	0.75	Agreed
3.	Policy inconsistencies and poor implementation of teacher education policies	3.57	0.75	Agreed
4.	Consistent strike actions by academic unions which thwarted academic calendar's and programme	3.59	0.72	Agreed
5.	Curriculum deficit for global competitiveness	3.51	0.79	Agreed
6.	There is no congruity between teacher education curriculum and the new age teaching and learning environment	3.51	0.85	Agreed
7.	Poor provision of educational instructional technology for equipping the economics education trainee teachers for global competitiveness	3.58	0.73	Agreed
8.	Poor learning/inadequate availability of teaching and learning materials	3.54	0.76	Agreed

/N	Item statements	$\overline{X}$	SD	Rmks
9.	Inadequate numbers of competent educators to equip Economics education trainee teachers with adequate skills for global competitiveness	3.57	0.75	Agreed
10.	Lack of adequate and effective supervision Economics teacher education programme for global competitiveness	3.59	0.69	Agreed
	Cluster summary	3.55	0.76	

KEY: = mean, S.D = Standard deviation, , Rmks.= Remarks.

The mean ratings of the responses of the respondents in Table 2 above ranged from 3.49 to 3.59 which are all above the acceptable benchmark for the study. This implied that the respondents accepted the 10 identified items in Table 2 as the challenges confronting economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness. The standard deviation values of the 10 items in the table ranged from 0.69 to 0.85 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and the mean.

- **Question 3:** What are the strategies for enhancing Economics teacher education programme for global competitiveness?

Table 3: **Mean ratings of respondents on the strategies for enhancing economics teacher education programme for global competitiveness**

	Item statements	$\overline{X}$	SD	Rmks
1.	Adequate funding of teacher education should be a priority of governments and stakeholders for global competitiveness	3.79	0.61	Agreed
2.	Appropriate legislation for adequate implementation of the National policy on teacher education is a necessity in Nigeria for global competitiveness	3.59	0.79	Agreed
3.	Government policy on computer education should provide for the training of economics educators who will be well placed in training trainee teachers for global competitiveness	3.56	0.84	Agreed

	Item statements	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rmks
4.	Develop of responsive curriculum relevant to the current and anticipated needs, problems and aspirations of the learners for global competitiveness	3.51	0.86	Agreed
5.	Provision of adequate training facilities for teacher education programme	3.66	0.68	Agreed
6.	Provision of confortable teaching and learning environment	3.68	0.63	Agreed
7.	Effective supervision of Economics teacher education programme	3.67	0.61	Agreed
	Cluster Summary	3.62	0.71	

KEY: = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, Rmks.= Remarks.

The mean ratings of the responses of the respondents in Table 3 above ranged from 3.51 to 3.71 which are all above the limit of the mean based of agreed. This implied that the 7 identified items in Table 3 were the strategies for enhancing Economics teacher education programme for global competitiveness. The standard deviation values of the 7 items in the table ranged from 0.61 to 0.86 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and also to the mean.

Hypothesis One

- Ho_1 : There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent current content of Economics teachers education programme is relevant in meeting global competitiveness

Table 4: **T-test analysis of difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on extent current content of economics teacher-education programme relevant in meeting global competitiveness**

Respondents	N	Mean	S.D	DF	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Lecturers	39	3.29	1.06				
				161	0.81	1.98	N. sig.
Students	124	2.54	0.79				

The data presented on the Table 4 showed that the t-calculated value of 0.81 is

less than the t-critical value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance and at 161 degree of freedom. Since the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value the null hypothesis was accepted and alternative hypothesis rejected. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the extent current content of Economics teachers education programme is relevant in meeting global competitiveness.

Hypothesis two
- Ho_2: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the challenges confronting economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness.

Table 5: t-test analysis of difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the challenges confronting Economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness

Respondents	N	Mean	S.D	DF	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Lecturers	39	3.40	0.78				
				161	0.42	1.98	N. sig.
Students	124	3.69	0.73				

The data on table 5 showed that the t-calculated value of 0.42 is less than the t-critical value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance and at 161 degree of freedom. Since the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the challenges confronting Economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness.

Hypothesis three
Ho_3: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the strategies for enhancing Economics teachers education programme for global competitiveness

Table 6: t-test analysis of difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the strategies for enhancing economics teachers

			education programme for global competitiveness				
Respondents	N	Mean	S.D	DF	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Lecturers	39	3.58	0.65				
				161	0.16	1.98	N.S.
Students	124	3.67	0.78				

The data on table 6 showed that the t-calculated value of 0.16 is less than the t-critical value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance and at 1.61 degree of freedom. Since the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the strategies for enhancing Economics teachers education programme for global competitiveness.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings was done based on the results of the data analyzed. The findings of the study revealed that the current content of Economics teachers education programme is relevant in meeting global competitiveness on a high extent. This finding relate with the study of Rosita and Saheed (2012) that the content of Economic teacher education training programmes need to have the direct link with the knowledge and teaching skills needed in 21stcentury and the content of the training programmes should equipped the trainees teachers with skills to address environmental issues from the perspective of their subject matter among others for global competitiveness.

Also, it was found that the challenges confronting Economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness were: poor funding of teacher education programme, policy inconsistencies and poor implementation of teacher education policies, depilated infrastructural facilities in Economics teacher education programme, consistent strike actions by academic unions which thwarted academic calendar's and programme among other challenges. This finding is in line with Abubakar (2021) who reported that: myriad of challenges confronting economics teacher education programme which retard the effectiveness of the programme for global competitiveness were poor funding of teachers education programme, incessant strike actions by academic union and the host of other challenges.

Lastly, it was further revealed that the strategies for enhancing Economics teacher education programme for global competitiveness include: adequate funding of teacher education should be a priority of governments and stakeholders for global competitiveness, appropriate legislation for adequate imple-

mentation of the National policy on teacher education is a necessity in Nigeria for global competitiveness, government policy on computer education should be provided for the training of Economics educators who will be well placed in training trainee teachers for global competitiveness among others. Hence, this finding is similar to the findings of Osuji and Taiwo (2019) that sufficient funding of teacher education and provision of functional facilities are some of the strategies for enhancing teacher education.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that no society can dangle with quality of teachers education and hope to meet up with the global demand/competitiveness which is in harmony with the assertion that no education can raise above the quality of its teachers. Placing side by side Nigerian policy-statements on teacher education and today teacher education in Nigeria, it is obvious that the gap would add to the challenges of our time. Invariably, the nature of Economics teacher education in Nigeria with its attendant worries as discussed in this work and the 21st century demands call for a proactive restructuring of the programme.

Recommendations

Based on the result of this study, it was recommended that:

1. There is the need for regular review of the Economics education teachers curriculum contents by curriculum experts to ensure that it align with global standard for global competitiveness.

2. The government and stakeholders should realize that teacher education is a determinant to a knowledge-based society and do the needful through adequate funding, provision of needed facilities and ensure staff welfare in order to avert incessant strike actions and production of Economics teachers whose lack the requisite knowledge and instructional skills needed for global competitiveness.

3. Economics teacher education programme should be given the needed professional attention in terms of policy implementation and outfitted with the 21st century skills needed for global competitiveness.

Educational Implications of the Findings

The findings of the study have the following implications:

• Since the challenges confronting Economics teacher education programme which impede global competitiveness has been identified. This implies that the strategic measures revealed in the study would enable the government to address the challenges confronting Economics teacher education programme for enhancing Economics teacher education programme for global competitiveness.

- The study revealed teacher education programme curriculum deficit which impede global competitiveness. This implies that the findings will enable the curriculum planners and developers to identify areas of weakness in the curriculum content of Economics teacher education programme well as the methods of delivering lessons; thereby introducing innovations for the production of effective and efficient professional Economics teachers for global competitiveness.

- The findings of this study also revealed inadequate numbers of competent teachers which implies that if training modules are develop and use regularly in workshops, seminars and conferences by education ministries in training the serving teachers it could also help in improving the competencies of serving teachers for global competitiveness.

- The findings of this study provide educational literature on enhancing Economics teachers' education programme for global competitiveness and will serve as empirical data to other researchers who may have interest to carry out further studies related to the scope of the present study and probably serve as a baseline to broaden their literature.

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