PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF RESEARCH CULTURE IN NIGERIA MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT

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Abstract: The international literature base in teacher education provides broad consensus on the usefulness of both using and doing research in teacher education programmes. In Nigeria intercultural and multicultural linguistic context, teacher education programmes demand continuous research efforts in order to improve the quality of manpower development and engender best practices. Pre-service teachers' are encouraged to conduct research in their final year in fulfillment of their Bachelor Degree in Education and for professional growth. However, not much has been published about pre-service teachers' actual experiences with research, their aspirations about research and challenges they face. Specifically, the study investigates the research culture at Faculties of Education in two Nigerian Universities in relation to the aspirations, challenges, and experiences of the pre-service teachers'. Samples of three hundred and forty four (344) trainees' were randomly selected from four hundred levels in two Universities. Questionnaires and interviews were utilized as instruments in data sourcing. Analysis of data involves frequencies and percentages represented by component bar charts. Results indicate that pre-service teachers' are enthusiastic to conduct research. However, multiple factors such as difficulty in choosing a research topic, ignorance of research methodology, lack of incentive, lack of materials, ignorance of internet and library search skills, contextually inappropriate training and the researchers' relationship with supervisors, etc, tend to discourage pre-service teachers' aspirations to conduct research. Suggestions were offered with a view to creating awareness, promoting effective research culture, encouraging networking with experienced researchers so as to facilitate professional growth for sustainable best research practices in Nigeria and global communities.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, multicultural context, understanding, research, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education can be viewed as a veritable tool for societal change and sustainable development. For this reason, the demand for quality assurance in most countries of the world has precipitated series of innovation and research methods (Ajayi, 1999:113-114; Uvah, 1999:127-129; Ogunleye, 2000:1-58). Over the last decade, considerable attention has gone into promoting educational research and enhancing quality in Nigeria. Researches (Lawal 2008:5-7; Bamisaiye-Ayodele, 2009:2) continue to express the view that the process of global modernity, innovations, best practices in education and day to day realities have prompted the need for a rethinking on how teacher education should be organized in meeting societal goals in a more sustainable manner through research efforts. More importantly, the changes that are now taking place in global economy, coupled with the rapid advances in technology and communications' revolution have predicted a paradigm shift in education and training. For this reason, teacher education needs adequate research and better use of research results to enable it cope with the changes in a fast moving world. Williams (1999:203) asserts that intellectuals and academics strongly hold the opinion that teacher education is sustained and sustainable if its foothold is firmly entrenched in research. Consequently, many teacher education programmes aspire to improve current practices in knowledge acquisition and pedagogy through scientific

research process. Previous attempts such as (Brindley, 1992:89-105; Halliday, 2004:73; Avoke, 2005:90; Hiep, 2006:2) to record teachers' experiences in conducting research largely focused on teachers that are already in the field in such countries as Romania, Australia, Hongkong, UK and the USA. However, very little is known about the challenges of educational research culture among pre-service teachers' in developing countries. In this study, educational research embraces all studies, empirical and theoretical, carried out in support of educational programmes in Nigeria. We do research to gain knowledge, understand phenomenon and solve problems.

2. THE CONCEPT OF RESEARCH

2.1 Definitions and meaning. The essence of research has been variously defined by scholars. According to Tuckman (1999:44) research is viewed as a systematic attempt to provide answers to questions. It may yield abstract or general answers as basic research often does or it may give extremely concrete and specific answers as applied research often does. In both kinds of research the investigator uncovers facts and then formulates a generalization based on an interpretation of facts. Babbie (2007:87) defined research as a process of steps to collect and analyze information in order to increase understanding of a topic or issue.

According to him, it is through research that basic questions regarding aspects of the environment are manipulated to achieve development objectives. Referring to research as a fact finding mission, Avoke (2005:92) observed that research is part of the requirement for a degree qualification, because it helps to develop the critical mind of inquiry and cultivate in teachers the ability to evaluate their own practice. In this sense, he notes that when research is properly focused and conducted it is a veritable catalyst for national development as it serves to generate information and knowledge which may be developed and delivered in a form that has useful and enduring benefits in practical, economic and social terms.

Although each of these definitions has touched on some concern of research, the view of research with which this study is in agreement is that of Ogunleye (2000:10) which considered research from an educational perspective. He contended that research is a systematic collection of information or data on matters concerning education in order to confirm, improve, modify or predict a particular learning environment. Such practices, he averred, may include for example problems that emanate from teaching, school management, discipline, overcrowded classroom facilities, equipment, attitudes, social pressure and technological changes. No wonder then that Busari and Adekoya (2007:40) argue that: "Through research new facts and insights about teaching and learning are discovered, and this knowledge is remolded and restated in more satisfactory or more illuminating terms" (p. 40).

Ogunleye (2000:24) concludes that educational research enables us to:
- Examine educational and administrative problems in schools;
- Solve societal problems prevalent in schools;
- Choose better techniques that could be used to improve the conditions of teaching and learning in institutions of learning;
- Give satisfactory explanation of various causes of failure in education;
- Improve and update our existing body of knowledge;
- Predict future trends in the various aspects of education such as teaching, learning methods, materials etc.

It is therefore important for teachers and students to participate in research as this will provide them with training in problem solving as well as in leadership qualities. Research will enhance their academic and professional growth; provide satisfactorily the utilization of available resources and contribution generally to their pool of knowledge in planning and development. It will also expose teachers to knowledge of research design, teaching, and techniques of measurement and analysis of data using statistical procedures. For this reason therefore, in many institutions of higher learning, research is an integral part of

fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts or Science degrees and diplomas. All final year trainee students' that enrolled in final year courses at the University are expected to conduct a research project leading to a graduation thesis. Though different Universities have different norms about the structures of their research document, there are some standardized structures on how to write a research project. Generally it involves choosing a topic, writing a proposal which is submitted to the assigned supervisor and presentation of a final report.

2.2 Research and teacher education programme in Nigeria. Much of literature such as (Ajayi, 1999:113; Lawal, 2008:5) continue to support the notion that the role of research efforts are central to teacher education programme. The importance of teachers as the managers of knowledge is well recognized by government. It is emphasized in the Nigerian Policy on Education (1977, reprinted 1998, FRN 2004:5) that "education in Nigeria is an instrument "par excellence" for effecting national development (p. 5) and clearly endorses the fact that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers" (p. 33). Accordingly, the philosophy for teacher education programme as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004:5) is anchored on five objectives:

1. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education.
2. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
3. To help teachers fit into the social life of the society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives.
4. To provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignments and to make them adaptable to any changing situation in life.
5. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

These policy thrusts are to be emphasized in all the Nigerian universities in ensuring that teacher education produces quality and effective teachers for national development. Underlying these policy, therefore, are the core objectives as anchored in the goals of tertiary education. According to the National Policy (FRN: 2004:5) the goal of tertiary education shall be:

(a) To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training.
(b) To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the society.
(c) To develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
(d) Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self – reliant and useful members of the society.
(e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community services and
(f) Forge and cement national unity and promote national and international understanding and institutions.

Underlying these policies is the core mission of inculcating in teachers the right values, the knowledge of research, attitudes, behaviors and skills required by the individual for national survival, understanding the world around us and for the acquisition of mental, physical, social ability skills to perform their tasks effectively. This direction is also in line with UNESCO focus on four major themes for teacher education:

1. From basic to University.
2. Teachers in search of new perspectives (research).
3. Choices of education.
4. International cooperation: educating the global village.

It is therefore believed that tertiary educational institutions shall pursue these goals through: teaching, research and development. Teachers should not only be concerned with their actual teaching responsibilities but should be conversant and interested in research, their findings and their implications for teaching and learning. In other words, the quality of the manpower produced from the educational system would essentially be determined, among other inputs by the quality of the teacher and indirectly by the quality of that teacher's educational programme. It can then be said that the final objective of teacher education in many disciplines and for any level of education, is

capacity building in that discipline for national development be it social, economic, political, educational, scientific or technological. With high-quality of research in place in education, we can guarantee effective teachers in schools thereby ensuring first – class teaching that will raise students' academic achievements.

2.3. Previous research culture in Nigeria universities. Many strands of research converge and attempts have been made to examine the status of and pace of research and capacity building in education in Nigeria. For instance, Uvah (1999:127) and Ajayi (1999:113) confirmed that there have not been any global studies to determine the precise status of research culture in Nigerian Universities. They contend that the reason may not be unconnected with the perception that research which breaks the frontiers of knowledge does not have immediate developmental impact. Other problems identified by them include the quality and quantity of research, the policy vacuum, poor attitude to research and development, gross lack of research facilities, lack of proper research administration, funding, lack of information on and utilization of research findings. They concluded that research is yet to be given its due recognition in Nigeria's higher institutions and this is probably attributable to the culture of underdevelopment which the country is yet to completely shake off as a nation.

In discussing university research culture in Nigeria, Munzali (1999:2) argued that the dimensions of research since the educational reform of the 6-3-3-4 have created awareness of the need to increase the quality of teacher education in Nigeria. Policy makers and teachers he observed have continued to look for new teaching methods that aim to equip trainees' with sufficient information for current and future manpower needs. Munzali asserted that educational research is generally regarded as a set of activities which involves the systematic collection and analysis of data with a view to producing valid knowledge about teaching. He further contended that research has a vitally important contribution to make to the development of educational policy and practice.

Ajayi (1999:114) argued that if sustainable development is 'the management of resources in such a way that societies can fulfill their needs while maintaining the essential ecological processes, biological diversity and naturally occurring life support systems' then research is the backbone for sustainable development. In this perspective, he claimed that the standard of research in our tertiary institutions was, at one time in the past, higher than it is today. Rather than move forward, he lamented that we have regressed at many points. He claimed that only the knowledge and information accumulated through research can produce sustainable development, including sustainable environment. He warned that our strategy to sustainable, education, therefore, should be first and foremost to seek to make growth, research and development culture cumulative. As the succinctly put it: "We have to note that it is the tertiary institutions which train and provide teachers and act as role models for other levels of education in addition to direct input of research into the shaping of society" (p. 114).

In contemporary parlance, Ilogu (2006:v) contended that the deficiencies and inadequacies of the pre-20th century methods of research are more complicated and compounded by the ever expanding demands of 'our educational policies' which have made our educational problems more complex. This complexity he posited has made it more veritable the adoption of the scientific methods of research in the field of education so that complex problems could be investigated and solved by the collection and verification of empirical data in all fields of learning. Babalola (2007:v) asserted that the mission of University education is teaching, researching and public service for the production of qualitative graduates within the creation of new knowledge and innovation for the overall socio-economic development of the society. Universities, he averred are therefore meant to be places where all learning activities are governed by creative and constant questioning, disputations and argumentation. In order words, educational institutions, in which the University is the peak, serve the principal function of promoting social change through

the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge borne out of research findings.

While not disagreeing with these ideas, Ogunleye (2000:58) lamented that despite many advantages from carrying out research, there are still many constraints militating against the execution of research in most developing countries like Nigeria. Some of these he clearly enunciated as:

- Poor funding of research work by various governments and institutions of learning.
- High illiteracy rate which makes data collection an uphill task as many respondents may be unwilling to provide useful information when demanded.
- Inconsistent and unreliable instruments used in gathering data.
- Lack of continuity in research findings.
- Lack of societal recognition of research results.
- Inadequate documentation and computerization of previous research works.

He summed his opinion thus: "that the changes of research in teacher education are chronic and enormous; hence no significant progress has been made over the years".

Nonetheless, despite these pessimistic notes, a recent observation, Ibidapo – Obe (2008:2) pointed out those steps taken by most Universities in improving the quality of teacher education through research and support of faculty programmes have paid off positively. He noted that all academic programmes of the Faculty of Education have full accreditation by the Universities Commission and the introduction of new programmes in Education has also resulted in a significant increase in the students' enrolment for the Faculty. All this, he averred, were possible because adequate attention was paid to the issue of teacher education and research culture within the institution.

Lawal (2008:7) further echoed the views of Ibidapo-Obe (2008:2) when she counted the tangible gains of research in education. She opined that the gains of research efforts, the world over, have facilitated advances in medicine, technology, social and economic developments and education. She identified the major gains that research have created in the provision of basic necessities such as drinkable water, cheap food supply, and affordable shelter and relatively clean environments. Self – employment and other forms of empowerment are the products of research activities, she said. She further noted that researches have also prompted the inclusion and use of the indigenous language and culture in basic education and the extension of learning beyond the classroom space to various sites and community institution. Finally, she argued that through research, it has been proved that pre-school education has positive impact on developing key social skills among young children.

So far, the awareness of the fast changing pace in the process of educational research and its context of operation, research has vitally contributed to the development of educational policy and practice and this is true of the University of Lagos experience. Of recent, various steps have been taken to meet the challenges of quality teacher education through research and analysis of data collected. The University of Lagos, for instance, has just concluded its Annual Research Fair (2009) to reward researchers and motivate academic staff to pursue research more vigorously than in the past. More lecturers are now keen on seizing the opportunities the incentives offered to engage in research. Other steps in this direction included regular and continuous review of curriculum, commitment to teacher quality, continuous teaching and learning improvement, Academic Mentoring Process, Library development, Linkages, Quality admission, Internal generation of funds to subsidize government funding, Information and Communication technology (ICT), Support from Alumni, Private Sector/ Corporate Organizations and External Bodies, Staff Motivation and Development and increased funding by government.

In a similar vein, the Federal Government has inaugurated special funds for research, and the universities are making it mandatory for lecturers to engage in research and showcase their findings. The National Universities Commission (NUC) is now more poised than hitherto to make research a virile culture in our universities. University lecturers are therefore

urged to target their research at primary, secondary, higher education, adult literacy, children and women. In all, this is the evidence that Universities have recognized their responsibility as the apex repository of intellectual and professional resource to effectively initiate quality reform strategies through research.

Findings revealed that many Nigerians who study abroad often choose to make domestic issues the focus of their research and thus decide to return home to collect data for their research. Also, an increasing number of lecturers have started to publish their research findings in local, regional and international fora. This indicated that besides instrumental motives to earn a degree or satisfy institutional regulations, many Nigerian educators are motivated to conduct research to enhance their teaching performance and scholarship. International Agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc. are committing funds to research and support programmes in these areas. In support of this notion, UNESCO cited in Owhotu (2008:5) highlighted the areas of research it envisages in school based learning of the millennium as: "Having to focus on generating a robust knowledge based on learning in varying conditions characterizing the school systems in developing countries. This would draw, wherever relevant, from lesson learned and already accumulated internationally. The effort should lead to effective collaboration between north-south and south-south research and organization".

Finally, Owhotu (2008:5) clearly enunciated the critical areas of research that should be the focus of attention in capacity building for sustainable teacher education in the 21st century as:

- In depth studies and analysis of the issues happening at various levels, particularly at the local levels in order to enhance advocacy, policy making and qualitative reform and innovation.
- Assessment and quality including whole school approach and elements of effective schools; teacher development, training and status of teacher, mother tongue literacy, early childhood education; nutrition and mental health along with improved system of socio-emotional support to children.
- Development of knowledge sharing networks on learning, creating forms for continuous exchange of ideas and innovations through South – South collaboration and documentation of successful practice in enhancing learning under varying circumstances" (UNESCO 2007:3).

Rekindling the culture of research especially applied research in teacher training and development at both pre-service and in-service levels which will definitely enhance quality education through learning to know, do, be, and to live together.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The major goal of teacher education in any system is to produce good and effective teachers for the implementation of the curriculum at each level of education. In this perspective, researchers (Ajayi, 1999:113; Owhotu, 2009:2; Ogunleye, 2000:54) recognized the relevance of research culture as an integral part of national development and teacher productivity as well as an effective means of attaining worthwhile educational goals in a multicultural context. However, many lecturers and the public at large have noted with concern the difficulties of pre-service teachers' in understanding and applying basic research methods in their project writing. Ogunleye (2000:52) for instance, lamented that in many of our institutions of higher learning, the overwhelming majority of the pre-service teachers' usually experience difficulties in understanding how to conduct and report research. He further stated that many students become engaged in research just to satisfy institutional requirements and thus do it in a superficial way. Not only is the problem of local significance, it has had an international ripple effect as Le (2005) cited in Hiep (2006:8) observes that: "Casual conversations with many lecturers have confirmed that the quality of these reports is often far from desirable, but they are usually assessed as acceptable or good, either because those responsible want to help the students to go or

because those in charge do not have appropriate expertise to properly evaluate the reports. In the end, these writings whether good or bad fall 'into oblivion' No one even seems to use any of them." (pp. 8-9).

Furthermore, much of the literature in education in Nigeria is concentrated on the country's research culture in general. Few studies, if any, have focused on understanding the research culture, aspirations and challenges of pre-service teachers in Nigerian universities. This study is one of the initial attempts to bridge this gap.

4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study therefore sought to explore the emerging research culture at Faculties of Education in two Nigerian Universities in terms of: aspirations, challenges, motivation and experiences of pre-service teachers regarding research projects. It is expected that the results of this study will provide insights that can help teacher educators as well as other bodies to promote research in Nigeria Universities and in similar cultural contexts world over.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study particularly addressed the following research questions:
(1) What are the challenges that pre-service teachers undergo in conducting research in terms of:
    (a) Research Methodology;
    (b) Supervision-Student Relationship;
    (c) Training-Computer skills and Library Skills
    (d) The Most Difficult Area in Research Structure.
(2) What are the general attitudes, dispositions and aspirations of pre-service teachers toward conducting research projects?

6. RESEARCH METHOD

The research design used for this study is the survey research design. The population of this study consisted of all 400 level pre-service teachers. 400 level trainees' were chosen

because they have done the compulsory courses and training titled: Research Methods in Education (A and B) and are in a position to say the extent to which they have understood the essence of research. The researchers used cluster sampling technique to pick the population of the study.

The sample comprised (344) respondents selected through simple random sampling technique within the faculties of Education from the two Nigerian Universities involved in the study. The criteria for selection involved a Federal University – University of Lagos and a State University – Lagos State University. This is to justify the comparison of findings. The subjects for the study comprised three hundred and forty four (344) pre-service teachers. Out of this sample, 148 were males while 196 were females and all in 400 level.

A researcher constructed questionnaire was used as survey instrument to reach at the respondents. A total of (45) items questionnaire was drawn made up of three sections. Section A sought the personal information of the respondents with respect to gender, educational levels, and marital status. Section B comprised (39) statements measuring the challenges of conducting research among pre-service teachers in terms of: methodology, reading challenges, aspirations, supervisor-student relationship, difficulty in understanding research, training etc. in two Nigerian Universities. Section C contained (6) open-ended items which dealt with definition of research, sub-headings of research proposal, the most difficult and the easiest area of research methodology as well as their general attitudes towards the conduct of research. Responses to each statement were placed on a 5-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U); Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree. The sum of all responses in the three parts comprised the respondents' rating on the variable.

The in-depth interviewing method used in the study was administered on 57 pre-service teachers which came to about (14%) of the total population of the respondents. Seidman (1999:56) phenomenological approach which consisted of 15minutes interview was applied on each participant. According to Seidman

(1991:56) "at the heart of interviewing is an interest in other individual stories because they are of worth" (p. 56). Open-ended questions were used to build on and explore the participants' responses allowing them to recount their experiences and challenges with research methods. Each interview response was tape – recorded using an electronic portable-cassette recorder. The interviews were transcribed to find common occurrences among participants' statements. Common occurrences within the interview transcriptions were categorized as emerging themes and used in analysis.

The initial content and face validity of the instruments were determined by expert opinion of the researchers who certified the instruments as appropriate for use in the study. Some items were deleted and the fifty items were reduced to forty five. A pilot study was carried out using test – retest method to establish the reliability of the instruments. The researchers administered copies of the questionnaire on thirty (30) 400 pre-service teachers from the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos. The instruments were administered to them twice within a two-week interval.

Thereafter scores in the first and second administration were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlated Procedure. A calculated re-value of 0.82 was obtained. This co-efficient of relationship was accepted as high and appropriate for this study.

6.1 Administration of the Instruments. Copies of the questionnaire were administered with the help of six research assistants who were Masters' students in each of the two Universities. The researchers first gathered the students inside the auditorium and briefed them on the objective of the research as well as how they were expected to respond to the questions. They were told to be sincere and honest with their responses. Out of the total 350 copies of the questionnaires distributed, only 344 were retrieved. The percentage return was deemed high.

6.2. Method of Data Analysis. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and represented with component bar charts.

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7. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this section, we present analysis of the result. The responses to a 42-item questionnaire are analyzed and the results are presented in the following sub-sections as follows.

Table 1 below shows the responses from items 1 and 3 of the questionnaire which state "I did not understand my lectures on Research Methodology" and "I found the sub-headings of research methods difficult to understand" highlight the challenges faced by pre-service teachers in the conduct of research. The analyses showed that 178 respondents (51.7%) and 152 respondents (44.4%) agreed that the contents of Research Methodology are difficult to decode hence the students are averse to research. This was also testified by the component bar charts of Table1 below indicating that the method and technicality of content were the major factors that hinder the teaching and learning of Research Methodology as a course work and the difficulties in understanding how to conduct and report research findings. This finding is in line with Ogunleye (2000:1-58) who reported the difficulties majority of the students encounter in research methods.

Table 1 Pre-Service Teachers' Understanding of Research Methods
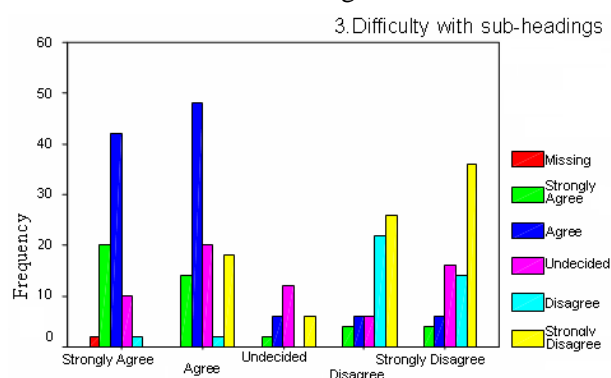

Furthermore, an analysis of Table 2 below showed that the students, considered research work as a worrisome and rigorous task. This is evidenced in item 7 of the questionnaire which states that: "I review a lot of materials for my project" with 250 respondents (72.7%) strongly agreeing that reading challenges are one of the factors that militates against the

carrying out research. No wonder some trainees' prefer to contract people to write their projects for them. The trainees' also testified to the attitude of supervisors, their bias and their perception of research. This was reflected in their responses to items 22 and 25 of the questionnaire with 180 (53.6%) agreeing that their supervisors' disappoint meeting them at scheduled times and this makes them to consider research as a threat to their academic work. Furthermore, 152 (44.7%) showed that the fear of meeting their supervisors in their offices made the aim of supervisor-student relationship in carrying out research ineffective.

This was also evidenced in the component bar chart of Table 2 below which illustrated that the two items (22&25) as responded by the pre-service teachers hinder the smooth carrying out of research.

Table 2 Supervisor-Student Relationship
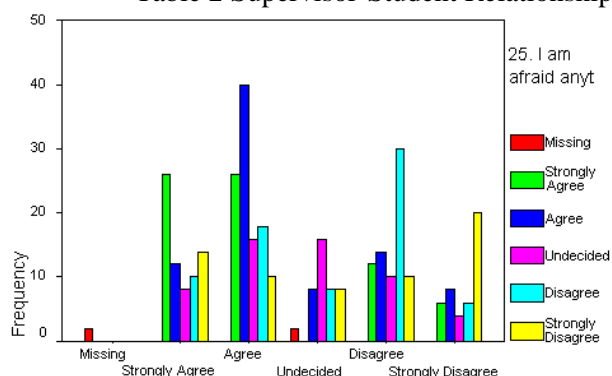
22. My supervisor does not have time to attend to us on the appointed "da".

It was also observed that inadequate training, lack of materials, Internet search, computer skills and library skills were the major challenges that face students in the conduct of research as shown on Table 3 below.

The responses to questionnaire item numbers 38 and 39 indicated that 71.9% and 58.2% respectively support the assertion as illustrated on the component bar charts of Table 3 that poor training facilities is a factor in carrying out research. Since the students are unaware of the empowering potentials of the use of computer and Internet search for research purposes, it was no surprise that they are not motivated on issues of research methods. This finding also corroborated Ajayi

(1999:113) and Owhotu (2008:5) idea that there were multiple constraints militating against the execution of research in teacher education in Nigeria especially gross ignorance of the use of digital technologies in carrying out research. If trainees are to be further exposed to digital information and library search, they will become more aware of the limitless potentials of technologies in the conduct of research and more motivated to carry out research with full confidence. Recognizing the danger that professional incompetence can pose to teacher education programme, Ewer (198:124) warned that: "if teachers are not provided with the tools with which to develop their professional skills and judgment, the teaching will be reduced to n the level of craft which will not provide a sound basis for quality in education in general" (p. 104).

Table 3 Training
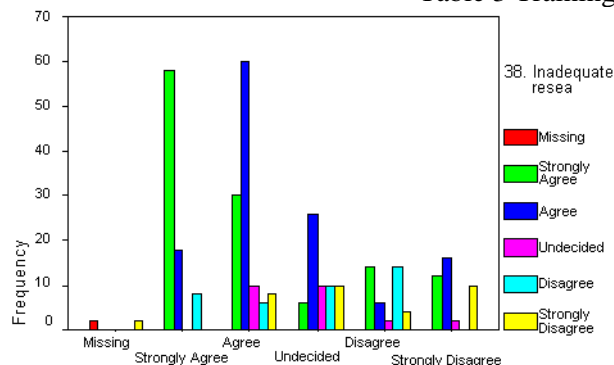
39. Lack of material, computer skills and library skill are my greatest

Surprisingly, analysis Table 4 below indicated that (100%) of the trainees' found the discussion of the findings very easy. Following closely to this result was choosing a topic which (12.0%) of the respondents found very difficult. These findings were linked to the lackadaisical attitude of students towards research.

The choice of a research topic is a personal matter in which the researcher must be keenly interested and should be within his personal observations over the years or it could arise from a general review of current issues in the literature (Ogunleye, 2000). The researcher should therefore need to be a versatile and avid reader in order to be able to identify an educational problem to which he intends to find a solution.

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Table 4

41. Read a – i and tick your most difficult area in research work according to order of difficulty using

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Choosing a topic	32	9.3	12.0	12.0
	Writing the introduction	12	3.5	4.5	16.5
	Writing of statement of the problem	20	5.8	7.5	24.1
	Writing the methodology e.g. population and sample	40	11.6	15.0	39.1
	Deciding on the instruments to be used	38	11.0	14.3	53.4
	Significance of the study	14	4.1	5.3	58.6
	Literature review	44	12.8	16.5	75.2
	Analysis of data	46	13.4	17.3	92.5
	Discussion of findings	20	5.8	7.5	100.0
	Total	266	77.3	100.0	
Missing	System	78	22.7		
Total		344	100.0		

7.1 The Results of the Interview: Trends of Viewpoint. To further validate the responses of the instruments, some teacher trainees were interviewed. Regardless of harsh supervisor-student relationship, the trainees talked about numerous issues that they believe tended to discourage them from having interest in conducting research. The strongest trends of opinion of the respondents were transcribed verbatim as follows:

On teachers' definition and aspirations for research, many trainees' said that they aspire to conduct research primarily because they wanted to improve the problem of teaching and learning. The trainees' also claimed that doing research is also a process of going into a new knowledge and analyzing situations from an intellectual point of view. For example,

Respondent A said: *"For me I think as students we need to do research, but research for us basically means reflection of our practices, on a particular classroom problem to find out ways to improve our work"*.

On inadequate research training and lack of library and computer skills, two trainees talked about their lack of skill in doing research.

Respondent B lamented: *"Yes, I can tell you all the difficulties I had when I was doing the course called: Introduction to research methods. Up till now I don't know how to go about choosing a topic. They taught us many concepts about research, the abstract concepts; we were not taught how to conduct research practically. For example, how to* choose a topic, how to design research methods, or how to design questionnaire and doing analysis remains an enigma till today. The lectures should be taught with more, subtleness, field work, better venue, more training on ICT and should be more interactive".

Respondent C recounted the same problems thus**:** *"The approach to teaching Research methodology (A) kills the interest for Research methodology (B). The lectures are often overcrowded and very uninteresting and we have transferred the hatred we developed for Research methodology (A) into Research methodology (B). We never had a good foundation on the principles of research methods hence the difficulties we are having with our projects right now".*

On the area they found most difficult most:

Respondent D talked about her experiences thus: *"My greatest problem is choosing a topic because I never understood what this word "research" meant. Writing my proposal alone took me three months. My lack of interest in this whole business keeps me away from my supervisor all the time. I am now an extra year student because of my project. God help us".*

Respondent E retorted: *"The whole mention of research methodology and choosing a topic makes my heartbeat to skip. It gives me goose pimples. I hate that course. Sorry madam".*

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Universities should be committed to regular training, organizing seminars and workshops and provide both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for pre-service teachers. These will enable them to have flare for research and learning.

2. The importance of continuing education for all trainers cannot be over-emphasized. It becomes imperative that lecturers need to up-date- their knowledge and skills in handling research methodology ensuring that new techniques, equipment and skills are introduced regularly.

3. Research is a course which permeates every discipline; therefore lecturers need to handle the course as applied research and not strictly a theoretical issue. Sharing the students in manageable groups with different lecturers addressing the various parts of research methodology could be a way out of the problem. Conference marking should also be applied at the end of the semester.

4. In this new millennium and with globalization, there is the need to rethink teacher education in terms of improving the quality of research in pre-service and in-service teacher education globally. This is the only way to raise the level of its quality, engender best practices and create positive development in any society.

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is clear from the views running through the interview comments and the responses of the questionnaire that the true character of educational research culture among pre-service teachers in Nigerian universities has never been more transparent than what this study has revealed. In as much as majority of the participants believe in research as a professional improvement strategy, results showed that pre-service teachers still face challenges in many areas; for instance:

- Total misconception of the whole concept of research;
- Relationship with supervisors;
- Lack of library and Internet search skills;
- Lack of thinking skills;
- Poor understanding of the fundamental principles of research methodology;
- Lack of incentives and motivation;
- The unmanageability of lectures in overcrowded classrooms;
- The lackadaisical attitude of the teacher trainees'.

It may be difficult to completely eliminate all challenges reported by participants in this study, but, one shares the optimism that they definitely can and should be minimized and managed. It is truism that education provides the foundation, the pivot and catalyst for developments and gains in other areas of human development for economic and social advancement. In this regard, the Nigerian National Policy on Education (Section 6, p. 51) asserts that research shall be relevant to the nation's developmental goals. Universities and teacher education programmes should therefore take research work more seriously with the view of creating awareness, promoting more effective networking research culture by becoming more research-friendly and facilitating professional growth for self reliance in Africa as a whole. Finally, teacher education classrooms should be embraced as research gold mine, if we are to achieve the aspirations of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs).

10. LIMITATIONS

Finally, this study no doubt has its limitations. For instance, the aspirations of students in research work from other Faculties beyond education were not considered. This might have provided more insights into whether there was any significant difference in their actual experiences and challenges encountered. Secondly, no attempt was made to compare the attitudes and conceptions of students about research across the different disciplines in education, and possibly different cultural backgrounds. Also, the researchers did not employ sophisticated statistical methods of analysis for this study, relying rather on qualitative data, as presented, to speak for themselves. All these limitations notwithstanding, the study has succeeded in presenting a bird's eye view about research culture in two Nigerian Universities. We propose further futuristic studies concerning students' research culture in other Faculties across Nigeria, Sub-Saharan African and European communities. When we build data, it becomes easier to address the problems of research globally at the undergraduate levels.

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