



**MAKING TEACHING AN ENVIABLE PROFESSION
IN NIGERIA: THE NEW MANDATES FOR THE TEACHERS'
REGISTRATION COUNCIL OF NIGERIA (TRCN)**

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Abstract:

Teaching is a very noble and rewarding profession. It is very important for nation building in its role in facilitating the process of building the knowledge and skills needed in all other professions. Teachers play a pivotal role in the entire educative process; imparting knowledge, skills, values and mentoring of learners. They equally instruct, guide and prepare the young generation for all-around and holistic mental, physical, cognitive, affective and psychomotor development. Notwithstanding these lucid and unassailable facts, teaching as a profession in Nigeria is still evolving because of its numerous challenges, like poor funding of the education sector, decaying infrastructure, and poor public perception of teachers. Despite these obvious challenges, making teaching enviable by ensuring that it is fully professionalized is akin to improving the quality of education and building public confidence in the teaching profession. This paper, therefore, explored the roles of TRCN in transforming teaching into an enviable profession, so as to make it attractive to its practitioners and the general public. Some of the responsibilities of TRCN are to regulate the teaching profession, set standards for teacher education and practice, and advocate for the welfare of teachers. By promoting teachers' certification, continuous professional development, and public awareness, TRCN aims at enhancing the quality of education delivery and eventual elevation of the public status of teachers in Nigeria. The need to implement the National Policy on Education regarding internship for teachers and promulgate the law to establish the Nigeria Teachers' Association, among others are to be vigorously pursued by TRCN, while teachers are being admonished to commit themselves to professionalism and prioritize their service above rewards, the government on its part should strive to invest more on the training and re-training of teachers.

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1. Introduction

The teaching profession is a noble and rewarding career that shapes the minds of individuals for their future well-being. Bello and Madu (2023) described the role a teacher plays in molding learners to that of a bricklayer in building a house. As a fundamental pivot to the educational system, the teaching profession not only shapes the individuals, but also society at large. The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (2013) disclosed that teaching facilitates the learning of skills that are necessary for self-reliance. It equally creates confidence in an individual's capacity to pursue objective choices (Aluede, 2022). Teaching, as one of the oldest of human activities in the world, consists of a body of actions intended to bring about learning through conscious and deliberate efforts of a seasoned and experienced individual in transferring knowledge and skills to others (Afe, 2003).

Emphasizing how important teachers are, Ajiboye (2022) maintained that teaching is more critical to any nation than all other professions, which of course accounted for the reason why in America, Finland and a host of other countries, teaching is classified as a very important profession for the best brains. He further stated that, in the Honorable court of France, only teachers are allowed to sit down; in Japan, the police force must obtain special permission from the government to arrest a teacher for any reason; in Korea, only teachers enjoy the privilege of a minister; and in Germany, teachers are the highest paid civil servants. This however points to the fact that, in these societies, teaching is rated extremely very important to their development agenda, unlike the Nigeria society where teaching is undervalued, to the extent that landlords in some major cities in Nigeria, like in Edo, Ondo and Delta states, would overtly place adverts for house to let, but teachers shouldn't apply (Afe, 2003). This, of course, shows the level of degradation of the reputation and image of teachers in Nigeria.

Teachers are responsible for the impartation of knowledge, skills, values and the mentoring of learners. They equally instruct, guide and prepare the young generation for all-around and holistic mental, physical, cognitive, affective and psychomotor development. A teacher, therefore, is someone who has received professional training in a teacher education program (FME, 2013). Hamdani (2020) described teachers as the cornerstone of any educational institution. According to Odoh & Okeofu (2020), teachers are the engine room of any educational activity. Ofojebe & Kene-Chiedu (2021) referred to teachers as important components of instructional delivery and curriculum implementation. Undoubtedly, teachers are the instruments for social, cultural, and technological transformation and growth in any nation (Ojiemhenkele, 2014).

Notwithstanding these lucid, unassailable and incontrovertible facts, the status of teachers and the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Nigeria is still being seriously compromised and is in a state of almost irrecoverable quagmire. Becoming a teacher in Nigeria is fraught with dilemmas and challenges which negatively affect the teaching

profession (Afe, 2003). The factors affecting teachers and the teaching profession include: low remuneration, inadequate professional development opportunities, and widespread societal relegation of teachers and the teaching profession (Adebayo and Eze, 2021; Awanbor, 1996; Omoregie, 1994). Other factors are limited training opportunities for teachers, poor implementation of education policies, over-politicisation of education, limited access to technology and digital resources, inadequate infrastructure and resources, and stigmatization associated with being a teacher. In reporting the problems of teacher quality in Nigeria, Okebukola as cited in Aluede (2022) asserted that graduates of education have poor knowledge of their teaching subjects; are inadequately exposed to teaching practice; have poor classroom management and control skills; have poor computer skills; are unable to communicate very effectively in English language; have poor attitude to work; lack self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills; and lack professionalism.

There is a persistent shortage of qualified teachers, leading to significant gaps in educational quality and accessibility, especially in rural areas (Adeyemi, 2020). Many prospective teachers in Nigeria are deterred from entering the teaching profession, probably due to the low prestige accorded to teachers in society and poor working conditions (Afe, 2003). Also, many student teachers enter into the Colleges of Education and Universities with attitudes of self-pity arising from their choice of the teaching profession, Afe further stated. In contributing to the growing debate on the problems confronting the teaching profession in Nigeria, Nwangwu (1989) lamented that teachers in Nigeria do their job under serious frustration and are, however, angry about the way society treats them with disdain and ignominy. With these trends, the passion, dedication, empathy and patience, creativity and innovation, commitment to students' success and the determination to put in their very best in teaching practices to ensure that the goal and objectives of the educational institution are achieved are often undermined by these problems inherent in the teaching job.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2022) revealed a severe shortage of qualified teachers in Nigeria, indicating that about 1.3 million additional teachers are needed to meet the nation's education targets. This shortage not only hampers the quality of education delivered but also discourages would-be teachers from coming into the profession, which has invariably led to a vicious cycle of under-qualification and dissatisfaction among the teaching workforce (Okeke, 2022). Today, not too many education graduates from Nigerian universities are enthusiastic about becoming teachers. Many of our young boys and girls seeking admission into the university do not aspire to study education-related courses that may end up qualifying them to become teachers. Even those that found themselves in the classrooms as teachers, consider themselves as people who are unfortunate. The consequences of this shortage are far-reaching. First, it may negatively impact students' learning outcomes and also could pose a serious hindrance to the nation's socio-economic development.

In order to enhance the professionalism of the teaching profession, TRCN was mandated with a mission to regulate and promote the teaching profession, set standards for teacher education, provide avenues for professional development and assiduously push forward the frontiers of quality teacher education program and teaching profession in the country by implementing programs and actions geared towards better service delivery, better classroom practices, and international best standards, most especially in this era of digital literacy and distance learning (Ajiboye, 2022). By enforcing a framework for teacher registration and licensure, TRCN aims to ensure that only qualified individuals enter the teaching profession, thereby raising the overall quality of education in the country. In addition, the TRCN is tasked with advocating for improved conditions of service for teachers, emphasizing the need for better remuneration, professional recognition, and support systems that foster teacher development (Onyia, 2019). This advocacy is crucial, as a well-supported teaching workforce is more likely to produce positive educational outcomes and attract new talent into the profession. Furthermore, the TRCN engages in public awareness campaigns to promote the teaching profession, highlighting its significance in nation-building and social development (TRCN, 2022). Such efforts are essential for changing public perceptions and fostering respect for teachers.

The global education landscape has also evolved, with a heightened emphasis on qualified and competent teachers as key drivers of sustainable development. This shift is encapsulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (UNESCO, 2019). Achieving this goal necessitates a strong commitment to professionalizing teaching in Nigeria and aligning it with international standards that recognizes the pivotal role of teachers in driving educational reform and societal advancement.

The main purpose of this study is to unravel the myriad of challenges facing the teaching profession in Nigeria, using the instrumentality of the TRCN in making teaching an enviable profession. The following research questions were raised to guide the review work: What is a profession, the qualities of a profession and the teaching profession in Nigeria? Why is it important to professionalize teaching in Nigeria? What are the challenges facing the teaching profession in Nigeria? And what are the roles of TRCN in making teaching an enviable profession in Nigeria? Finally, new mandates were proposed for TRCN that would enhance the fortunes of teachers and the teaching profession in Nigeria.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Malcolm Knowles' Andragogy Model of Professional Development. Knowles introduced the four principles of andragogy in 1984 through his book, *Andragogy in Action*. He explained the adult learner experience regarding involvement, experience, relevance and focus. These andragogy principles aim to better understand and develop effective techniques for adult learners. An andragogical

approach prioritizes active involvement, self-direction, and the utilization of existing knowledge to make workplace learning more meaningful and personalized.

The Andragogy Model of Professional Development emphasized the importance of ongoing training and education for professionals to enhance their skills, knowledge and competence. The focus of this model is on learning and professional growth. Teachers, being professionals, require ongoing training and education to enhance their subject knowledge, teaching skills and competences, so as to be able to impact significantly on students' learning outcomes. In order to meet the required teaching standards, teachers' registration and certification become crucial.

This theory is relevant to current endeavor because it emphasizes teacher profession development that brings about increased teacher autonomy and confidence; improves teaching experiences and students' outcomes; greater job satisfaction and personal growth; and more effective, efficient, and engaging professional development opportunities.

3. Methodology

In order to effectively deal with the issues involved in the review, the exploratory and expository research methodology were used to gather necessary and relevant data from multiple sources like; direct research reports, secondary sources on teaching, teaching profession, challenges confronting teaching profession in Nigeria and the roles of TRCN in enhancing the quality of teaching and the teaching profession in Nigeria by the researchers. Within a period of eight weeks, the researchers visited several databases, such as Google Scholar, Research Gate, and Ebscohost, to retrieve and process research reports for this review. The combination of both primary and secondary sources in the gathering of data in the review increased the validity and reliability of the research.

For the purpose of ensuring effective coding and triangulation, data were systematically matched and differentiated so as to note very carefully the various trends that emerged. In that process, all the thoughts and opinions were carefully organized, arranged and profiled so that every observation made would be properly synchronized for the purpose of clarity and logical presentation of the final report and review.

3.1 What is a Profession? Is Teaching a Profession in Nigeria?

When looking at teaching as a profession, it is only proper to first understand what a profession is all about and what makes a vocation or an occupation a profession. There has been a series of debates as to whether teaching is a calling, a vocation, an occupation and or a profession in Nigeria. What then is a profession, and what are the traits that qualify an occupation as a profession?

Australia Council of Professions (2003) defined a profession as a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognized body of learning at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and

exercise these skills in the interest of others. According to Bello and Madu (2023), a profession is the quest for status that involves the acquisition of a body of knowledge, skills, identities, norms, and values necessary to be a part of an identified body that renders a unique service to society. The UNESCO Inter Government Conference on the status of teachers in 1966 as cited in Afe (2003), succinctly declared that teaching should be regarded as a profession, since it is a form of public service that requires expert knowledge and specialized skills that are acquired and maintained through intensive study, which also has to do with a sense of personal and corporate responsibility for training others. From the opinions expressed above, it can therefore be deduced that a profession is an occupation that requires specialized knowledge and skills, formal education and training, certification and licensure, ethical standards and code of conduct, continuous learning and professional development.

3.2 Qualities of a Profession

There are several characteristics that qualify an occupation as a profession. Some of these qualities are discussed here to juxtapose whether teaching sufficiently meets these qualities, so as to be able to conclude if teaching should be accorded the status of a profession in Nigeria.

- 1) **Performance of an Essential Social Service:** The services performed by teachers are purely and essentially social services rendered to humanity and society (Bello and Madu, 2023). What teachers do in the course of performing their duties is to prepare individuals for different and various occupational roles (Aluede & Adubale, 2023). This criterion is, however, meant by teaching as a profession.
- 2) **Possession of a Specialized Body of Knowledge:** Teachers possess a body of knowledge in the course of their training at both the Colleges of Education and in the Universities, where they are certified as trained teachers. During this period of training, teachers acquire both subject matter knowledge and education method knowledge that qualify them in various pedagogies in the teaching field (Aluede & Adubale, 2023). It is therefore correct to say unequivocally that teaching equally meets this second condition to be qualified as a profession.
- 3) **Ethical Code of Conduct:** In every recognized profession, there is a well-defined code of ethics that regulates the conduct of members. This is found in teaching, which qualifies it as a noble profession (Aluede, 2022). By the provisions of the TRCN and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) Acts, these codes of ethics are well defined, which are designed to regulate the behavior of teachers in the teaching profession in their conduct within and outside the classroom. The only question here is, how well are these bodies (TRCN and NUT) enforcing these ethical codes in schools? However, the TRCN has both the Teachers' Investigation Panel (TIP) and the Teachers' Disciplinary Committee (TDC) as disciplinary bodies to check the excesses of teachers, so as to bring them to book; these bodies are yet to commence full operations.

- 4) **Organized Professional Body:** It is expected that every profession should operate under an organized professional association or a body that is saddled with the responsibility of prescribing and maintaining basic standards for its operation. In the teaching profession, there is the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), which is an umbrella body for teachers, though it has, in recent times, been fragmented due to political interference and lack of cohesiveness. NUT right now is of course more of a trade union, which does not, however, have power over the control of its members, unlike what is obtainable in other sister professional bodies like the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), etc.
- 5) **High Degree of Autonomy:** The teaching profession hasn't met this criterion because it does not have self-regulation and self-governance in its practice. The autonomy of teachers to perceive their roles and responsibilities the way they feel best in the interest of the profession and the autonomy of the profession itself are completely lacking.
- 6) **Public Recognition:** Though teachers and the teaching profession have gained some level of recognition by the public, the fact still remains that the reputation and public image of teachers are still very low. Even teachers themselves have very low self-esteem, coupled with an overtly displayed low self-satisfaction demonstrated by them about the profession.
- 7) **Setting of Own Standards:** In the teaching profession, there is a lack of control and legal backing to enforce standards set by NUT. Ordinarily, the standards set by professional bodies are meant to determine the eligibility of members. Though in recent time the TRCN has been conducting mandatory examinations for qualified teachers as a prerequisite for being a registered teacher, it does not however provide laid down standards which must be met by new entrants before they can be admitted into the profession.

Spanning from the above discussion, it is, however, clear that though teaching has meant significantly some of the qualities of being regarded as a profession, much work still needs to be done in making it a full-fledged profession like Medicine, Engineering, Law, Accounting, etc., in Nigeria.

3.3 Why Teaching needs to be Professionalized in Nigeria

Professionalism in teaching is of high importance for the following reasons.

- 1) **Enhancement of Quality Education:** One of the primary roles of professionalism in teaching is to enhance educational quality. Professional teachers are typically better prepared and more capable of delivering high-quality instruction, which directly impacts student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Research has shown that teachers who engage in continuous professional development and adhere to high standards are more effective in their instructional practices, leading to improved student performance (Hattie, 2009). By investing in their professional growth, teachers are better equipped to implement innovative teaching strategies and adapt to the diverse needs of students (Katz, 2019).

- 2) **Fostering of a Positive Relationship between Teachers and Students:** When teachers demonstrate professionalism through respect, integrity, and commitment, they create an environment of trust and mutual respect between themselves and students. This positive classroom culture encourages students to engage more actively in their learning, leading to better academic outcomes (Pianta *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, teachers who model professional behaviour can instil similar values in their students and promote a culture of respect and responsibility within the educational settings (Baker *et al.*, 2017).
- 3) **Building of Public Confidence and Respect for Teachers:** Professional teaching will significantly influence public perception and respect for the teaching profession. Demonstration of high-standard practice, good ethical behaviour, and a commitment to the success of learners will definitely enhance the reputation of the teaching profession (Schneider & McDonald, 2007). This respect is essential for attracting high-quality candidates into the teaching profession and for fostering a supportive environment for teachers. A positive public perception of teaching can lead to increased investment in education and better working conditions for teachers (Adebayo & Eze, 2021).
- 4) **Contributing to Continuous Improvement:** Professionalism in teaching also emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning and continuous improvement. Professional teachers engage in on-going training, reflection, and collaboration with peers to enhance their skills and adapt to changing educational landscapes (Darling-Hammond, 2017). This commitment to growth not only benefits teachers personally, but also contributes to the overall effectiveness of educational institutions. As teachers refine their practices and share knowledge with colleagues, they create a culture of continuous improvement that can lead to systemic changes within schools (Dufour & Eaker, 1998)
- 5) **Aligning with Global Standards:** In an increasingly interconnected world, professionalism in teaching is essential for aligning with global educational standards and best practices. As countries strive to meet international benchmarks for education, having a professional teaching workforce is crucial for achieving these goals (UNESCO, 2022). Professional teachers are better positioned to implement innovative pedagogical approaches and integrate technology into their teaching, ensuring that students are prepared for the demands of the 21st-century workforce (World Economic Forum, 2020). As Nigeria seeks to improve its educational outcomes, promoting professionalism among teachers will be critical for achieving these goals and ensuring that teaching is regarded as an enviable and respected profession.

3.4 Problems Facing the Teaching Profession in Nigeria

The teaching profession is fraught with several challenges in Nigeria. Some of these challenges are discussed below.

- 1) **Lack of Professional Teaching Qualification:** Unlike other noble professions like Law, Medicine, Engineering, etc., there are still people in the classroom teaching who are either untrained or not certified as teachers (Adekunle and Oke, 2015; Imhangbe *et al.*, 2023). The Education Sector Analysis carried out in 2022 by the Federal Government in partnership with UNESCO revealed that about 20% of teachers in public basic education schools are not qualified to teach (UNESCO, 2022). Imogie (1999), quoting Section 47 (2) of the Regulation of the Education (Lagos) Ordinance of 1957, maintained that anybody who is not registered as a teacher shouldn't be found in the classroom teaching. Until the teaching job is exclusively for those trained and qualified for it, this problem will remain endemic.
- 2) **Poor Funding:** With rising debts and global economic meltdown, education in Nigeria is at risk of heightened under-financing, which can exacerbate every other challenge associated with teachers and the teaching profession. Annual budgetary allocation to the education sector is abysmally and ridiculously very low, in fact, very far below the UNESCO recommendation of 26%. This, however, accounts for the poor teacher education programs, since the necessary funds for training are grossly inadequate (Oguntoye, 2014; Ojiemhenkele, 2023).
- 3) **Low and Decayed Infrastructure:** Education Infrastructure is the element within the learning environments that makes learning accessible and easy. They include classrooms, laboratories, learning tools, pieces of equipment, school facilities, etc. Evidence exists that high-quality infrastructure facilitates better educational quality and outcomes (Ojiemhenkele, 2023). The state of educational infrastructure in Nigeria is dire and awful, ranging from overcrowded classrooms to dilapidated buildings, inadequate books, and infrastructural neglect (Aluede, 2022; Imhangbe *et al.* 2023).
- 4) **Low Teachers' Motivation Poor Perception of the Teaching Profession:** Teachers' working environment, public perception about them and the necessary incentives that will guarantee their high job commitment and satisfaction are very discouraging and abysmally poor (Maduwesi, 2015; Ojiemhenlele, 2023; Imhangbe *et al.*, 2023). Ikiyei & Enekeme (2023) revealed that 75% of undergraduate students in the faculties of education in Nigerian universities do not willingly choose to study education; they only accepted to study an education-themed course just to get a tertiary degree and not to become a teacher, and so they are, however, ashamed to be introduced as future teachers. So, the teaching profession has suffered progressively lower perceptions with increasingly challenging issues such as low and unpaid salaries, lack of provision of professional development, career inflexibility, and so on.
- 5) **Lack of Quality Assurance:** The selection and admission process of teachers in training in our tertiary institutions is very porous and weak. Most of the people admitted into the colleges of education and faculties of education in the universities are those who could not gain admission into other viable professions

like Law, Medicine, etc. (Aluede, 2022; Baike, 2012). Also, the quality of teachers that are produced by the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) is deficient, due largely to the way the NTI programs are operated (Elujekwute *et al.*, 2022).

- 6) **Absence of Licensing Institution:** As of today, Nigerian teachers are not licensed. At best, the TRCN only register qualified teachers without licensing them, as it is obtainable in other notable professions like Accounting, Law, etc., where their professional institutions, like the Nigeria Law School, Institute for Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, etc., are licensing institutions that license their practitioners. There is therefore a need for an institution to be called the Nigeria School of Teaching (NST) that would be saddled with the licensing of teachers after their post-teacher training (Aluede, 2022).
- 7) **Lack of Cohesiveness among Teachers:** Teachers in Nigeria are highly polarized. Primary schools, secondary schools, colleges of education, polytechnics and university teachers see themselves in different lights, and don't operate under a uniform body (Aluede, 2022). This, however, weakens their strength and unity of purpose. The NUT has no control over teachers beyond the primary schools. Rather, all other levels of education have unions governing teachers operating in them, like the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), etc. For teachers to operate as a force, there should be a body called the Nigeria Teachers Association (NTA), like the NBA, NMA, etc.
- 8) **Inconsistencies in Education Policies and Poor Implementation:** Every successive government in power comes up with different policies and programs in education, thereby abruptly distorting the existing ones. The high level of inconsistencies witnessed in the education industry due to the change of leadership largely accounts for the poor quality of teachers' education and delivery (Aluede, 2022; Ojiemhenkele, 2023).
- 9) **Lack of In-service Professional Development Opportunities:** The National Personnel Audit conducted by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (2022) revealed that 67.5% of teachers in public schools and 85.3% in private schools have not attended any in-service training in five years. Although the Revised National Policy on Education (2013) speaks of the provision of educational support services, including local government-based Teacher Resource Centres that can provide professional development space for basic education teachers, there is no evidence that this has been implemented a decade after the policy revision. At the tertiary level, although research has confirmed the importance of centres of teaching and learning support within universities, Ajilore (2021) reported that less than 5% of universities have such centres, and the available ones are rarely concerned with educators' instructional practices.
- 10) **Global Crisis of Teacher Shortages:** There is an acute shortage of teachers in Nigeria. Recent data from UNESCO revealed that Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, needs to recruit 16.5 million more teachers to reach its education goals by the year 2030 (UNESCO, 2021). UBEC (2018) equally reported a shortage of

teachers at the basic education level of up to 277,537. Though the National Policy on Education (2013) prescribed a student-teacher ratio of 1:25 for pre-primary classes, 1:35 for primary and 1:40 for secondary schools, the current situation, as disclosed by UNICEF (2023), placed the average pupil-teacher ratio as 124:1 at the basic education level, especially in the northern part of Nigeria due to insurgency.

3.5 The Statutory Roles of TRCN in Making Teaching an Enviable Profession

TRCN plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher professionalism in the following ways.

- 1) **Establishment of Standards for Teacher Education and Practice:** This is one of the primary functions of the TRCN. The Council sets guidelines for teacher training programs, ensuring that they align with national and international educational standards (TRCN, 2022). By doing so, TRCN promotes a uniform quality of education across the country and guarantees that teachers possess the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively deliver instruction. Research shows that adherence to established standards is linked to improved teaching quality and student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Furthermore, TRCN's framework for teacher registration requires teachers to meet specific educational qualifications and professional competencies. This ensures that only qualified individuals enter the teaching profession, thereby raising the overall standard of education in Nigeria (Ogunleye, 2020).
- 2) **Certification and Induction of Teachers:** Certification is a vital aspect of professionalization in teaching, and TRCN is the body saddled with this responsibility. This process will greatly enhance the credibility of teachers. By licensing teachers, a culture of accountability within the profession will be fostered. Licensed teachers are more likely to engage in on-going professional development activities, thus enhancing their skills and effectiveness in the classroom (Adebayo and Eze, 2021). This licensure process is crucial in ensuring that teachers adhere to the ethical standards and expectations set forth by the TRCN.
- 3) **Promoting Continuous Professional Development:** TRCN actively promotes continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers through various programs and initiatives like workshops, seminars, and conferences designed to equip teachers with the latest pedagogical skills and knowledge (Ajayi and Afolabi, 2020). The emphasis on CPD is vital in a rapidly changing educational landscape, where teachers must stay updated on new teaching methods, technologies, and curricular changes. By facilitating professional development opportunities, TRCN helps teachers to enhance their competencies and adapt to the diverse needs of students. This commitment to lifelong learning not only improves instructional practices but also contributes to teachers' job satisfaction and retention (Darling-Hammond, 2017).
- 4) **Advocacy for the Welfare of Teachers:** The TRCN plays a significant role in advocating for the welfare of teachers in Nigeria by lobbying for better

remuneration, improved working conditions, and professional recognition (Onyia, 2019). This will help to enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession and stop brain drain from the education industry. This advocacy aligns with TRCN's mission to ensure that teaching is viewed as an enviable and respected profession by fostering a supportive environment that encourages professional growth and job satisfaction. Research shows that teachers who feel supported and valued are more likely to remain in the profession and deliver high-quality instruction (Sammons *et al.*, 2015, Ojiemenkele, 2014).

- 5) **Public Awareness and Perception Management:** TRCN engages in public awareness campaigns to promote the teaching profession as a viable and respectable career choice. These campaigns highlight the significance of teachers in nation-building and the positive impacts they have on society (TRCN, 2022). By changing public perceptions, TRCN fosters respect for the profession and encourages aspiring teachers to consider teaching as a career. Public awareness initiatives are crucial for improving the status of the teaching profession in Nigeria. A positive public image can lead to increased investment in education and better support for teachers, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes (Adebayo and Eze, 2021). By fulfilling these responsibilities, TRCN aims to improve the quality of education and elevate the status of the teaching profession, ensuring that it attracts and retains dedicated professionals who are committed to shaping the future of the nation.

3.6 Future Directions of TRCN in the Enhancement of Teacher Quality and the Teaching Profession

The following strategies are, however, suggested towards enhancing the dying image of teachers and the teaching profession.

- 1) The provision of the National Policy on Education regarding internship for teachers that says new teachers are required to undergo an internship program, by emphasizing that beginner-teacher will be considered as interns for the first year of their teaching career, and that after graduating from any Teacher Education program, new teachers must register with TRCN after completing at least one year of successful internship should be given speedy attention and implementation. If this provision is effectively implemented, new teachers will be provided with practical experience and training which they seem to presently lack, and this will ultimately ensure that they are well prepared for the teaching profession.
- 2) There is a need to urgently establish the Nigeria Teachers Association, which would be an umbrella body for all practitioners in the teaching profession, as against the current situation in the country where every level of teaching (Primary, Secondary, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, and Universities) has fragmented unions and associations. This current practice, where every level of teaching has a

separate body regulating its own activities and practice without a uniform umbrella body for teachers, weakens the collective strength of teachers.

- 3) A law to regulate teaching practices, standards and training of teachers should urgently be passed at the National Assembly for implementation. This law, of course, will help to put a halt to all sorts of people, the untrained, undertrained, and unqualified, from entering into the teaching profession. Therefore, anybody found in the classroom teaching that is not trained, registered and licensed by TRCN to teach should be arrested and prosecuted in the law court.
- 4) More opportunities should be provided for teachers to progress in their careers beyond just being classroom teachers and school heads. They could be appointed to positions of authority as directors in the Ministry of Education and even be made permanent secretaries in the public service.
- 5) To encourage innovativeness and creativity in teaching, teachers should be given more opportunities to benefit from an ongoing CPD programs by their regular attendance at organized trainings and workshops to update their subject knowledge and teaching skills. In the process, these teachers will be exposed to high-quality learning materials such as textbooks, digital resources, internet connectivity, and educational software.
- 6) TRCN should negotiate an attractive salary structure and other forms of work incentives (monetary and non-monetary) for teachers to help attract and retain top teaching talent.
- 7) Teachers' performance and education outcomes presently monitored in different states of the federation without a common template should be jettisoned and replaced with a standardized template at the instance of TRCN, that should solely monitor, regulate and evaluate, in order to ensure that the standards of teaching practices are met and the goal and objectives of education are attained throughout in the country.
- 8) As it is in other professions like Law, Medicine, Accounting, etc., where we have the Nigerian Law School, the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN)/ Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN), which regulate/license their practitioners. In the case of teaching, the TRCN law of 1993, which only empowers the body to certify, induct and register teachers in Nigeria without any form of regulation in the practice of teaching, should be amended and have the body vested with regulatory responsibility.

4. Conclusion

TRCN is central to improving the quality of teaching and the teaching profession with its focus on regulation, enhancement of professionalism and development, standardization of teaching practices, increase in public confidence and advocacy for the enhancement of the status and effectiveness of teachers. In the determination and efforts of TRCN at

strengthening partnerships with educational institutions across the country, enhancement of technology integration, expansion of CPD, improvements in teachers' welfare and benefits, and an increase in public awareness and engagement, an educational environment that can attract and retain dedicated professional teachers would be created.

The dying and glorious image of teaching can only be revamped if the necessary steps in regulating teaching practices, implementation of the National Policy on Education regarding internship for teachers, promulgation of law to regulate the practice of teaching, establishment of the Nigeria Teachers' Association, and the regulation of teachers' education program are vigorously pursued by TRCN. Teachers must, however, make efforts to commit themselves to professionalism, pursue knowledge endlessly, and prioritize their service far and above rewards, while the government, on its part, should vigorously invest more in the training and re-training of teachers, improve their welfare and invest in technology by making teaching and learning of technology real and not abstract.

Conflict of Interest Statement

On behalf of the authors, Andrew E. Ojiemhenkele, Unity Ofangbonmu, Oyaziwo Aluede, and Joseph A. Emosoga, I declare that there is no conflict of interest with respect to our article, Making Teaching an Enviably Profession in Nigeria: The New Mandates for the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, accepted for publication in the European Journal of Education Studies.

Thank you.



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