

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON STUDENTS' EMPLOYABILITY IN AWKA SOUTH EDUCATION ZONE IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study evaluated the impact of Teacher Education program on students' employability in Awka south Education Zone, Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 2,000 primary and secondary school teachers. The samples size consisted 150 secondary school teachers. Teacher Education programme Questionnaires (TEPSEQ) was used to collect data. The instrument was validated by two experts from department of educational foundations Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Aww. The reliability of (TEPSEQ) was determined using crombach alpha method. The reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering research questions and Chi-square for testing the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that Teacher Education background has positive impact on Students' employability. Additionally, Teacher Education programme affects students' career success including their capacity to find and keep a job in the competitive job market. The authors then suggested that government should promote relationship between teacher education programme managements and employers to better graduates of the programme for the workforce.

Keywords: Evaluation, Impact, Teacher Education, Students' Employability and Teacher.

Introduction

Teacher Education Programme plays a critical role in preparing students to become effective teachers who can positively influence students' learning and development. Students' competencies are shaped by teacher education, which gives them the information, abilities, and attitudes they need to be successful in the job Gümüs, (2022). By placing a strong emphasis on both academic and practical learning, it helps students get ready for a variety of obstacles in their professions. Teachers have a significant impact on shapping the future of their students by impacting knowledge, skills, and values that

are essential for success in both academic and professional settings. Understanding how Teacher Education Programme affects students' employability is becoming more and more crucial as employability has taken center stage in education. By examining the impact that Teacher Education backgrounds have on students' employability and students' preparedness on career success, including their capacity to find and keeping a job in competitive job market, this study seeks to close this gap in Awka South Educational Zone, Anambra State. Education programme refers to programmes, policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, approaches, methodologies and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community (Oancea, 2014). Teacher education programme is therefore designed to equip aspiring educators with the knowledge, skills, and pedagogical practices necessary to effectively instruct students on various subject areas. Learning Matters (2025) states that Teacher Education Programme is a programme that equips teachers with techniques and modern pedagogy strategies that help them to better connect with, manage, and teach their students in a manner which ensures that all students are learning and benefitting. The professionals who engage in training the prospective teachers are called teacher educators or teacher trainers.

Furthermore, according to Simran, (2024), Teacher Education, is the comprehensive training programme designed to transform passionate individuals into superheroes of the classroom. This came to be as societies evolved and the demand for formal education intensified, then the need for teacher education and specialized training became much more evident. It is a programme that prepares individuals to teach students at more than one educational level, such as a combined program in elementary/secondary, early childhood/elementary, elementary/middle school, or junior high/high school teacher education National Center for Education Statistics Federal agency (n.d). In Nigeria, there are separate Institutions that provide Teacher Education Programme for various teacher categories. This study investigates about programme in the colleges of Education or faculties of Education in universities. Furthermore, institutions called Teacher centers provide continuing professional development for teachers. Learning Matters (2025) <https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jtese>

explains some of the major benefits of teachers training programmes as follows: Professional growth which gives them the opportunity to continuous professional development -to learn new ways, methods, strategies, skills and tools. These give them confident, happy and motivated to achieve greater things their students. Better student management; as a teacher, it is important to know, understand and analyze one's students effectively which only when known can teach their students. Modern pedagogy strategies which enables to up-date practices and methodologies, and techniques which they can implement in the classroom to better educate their students. Building better relationship with parents which is a predictor of happiness and success and Impacting to thousands of students indirectly which is a big role to play in nation building because students are the citizens of tomorrow.

A teacher who can also be addressed an educator is a person who helps students to acquire knowledge, competencies, virtue, via the practice of teaching (Burger, *et al*, 2022). Nisa & Saleh, (2020) Suggest for teachers to improve professional competence, time management, and the production of useful scientific work in order to increase their effectiveness in teaching profession. In this present dispensation, the world of education continues to be in demand in order to produce human resources in accordance with community needs and employment in accordance with community technological and cultural development (Renie et, al, 2024). Teaching abilities are a distinguishing feature of the teaching profession. Achievement of learning objectives and success in overcoming learning problems heavily depend on teachers' ability or competence (Murkatik *et al.*, 2020). Teachers serve as role models, mentors, and facilitators of learning, guiding students to achieve their full potential in school and beyond.

Abhishek (2025) states that an effective Teacher Training Programme blends various key components which empower educators to excel in their career successfully such as; pedagogical techniques, technology integration, classroom management, assessment and feedback, cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. Abhishek, (2023) also states that an effective Teacher Education Programmes is like a recipe for success, blending various key components that empower educators to excel in their teaching profession such <https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jtese>

as: pedagogical techniques, technology integration, classroom management, assessment and feedback, cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. Rao et, al (2014) opion that a crucial element in any Teacher Education Progammes is teaching practice (practicum) which is embedded in the Teacher Training programmes itself such times become challenging for teachers, for their teaching would be observed and assessed by a teacher educator. Other components according to the researchers are compulsory caseworks (core courses), professional education major (professional practice), and elective packages, while Simran, (2024) listed the following components/elements of Teacher Education Programme: Pedagogical Knowledge which equips aspiring teachers with the methods of instruction, strategies, and approaches that they use to bring learning to life, Subject Knowledge which involves exploring different learning pathways and uncovering the "why" behind the "what.", Field Experience is where aspiring teachers get to test-drive their newfound knowledge and skills in real classrooms under the guidance of experienced educators, Instructional Technology: This involves using new-age digital tools for lesson planning, creating interactive presentations, or even utilizing online resources for personalized learning experiences by embracing technology, Reflective Practice which encourages them to pause, ponder, and assess their teaching practices, and Diversity and incision fostering a thriving learning community: which ensures quality education, professionalism and standards, and meeting diverse students' need. Thus, employability encompasses both the more general, transferable talents that allow people to thrive in a variety of situations as well as the specialized skills needed for certain employment. Technical expertise, effective communication, flexibility, problem-solving skills, teamwork, and a strong work ethic are all essential elements of employability (Mahajan, *et al*, 2022; Zuma, 2021). Personal attributes like drive, self-assurance, and the capacity to direct one's career path also have an impact on employability (Wong, & Saraih, 2024). These elements are crucial for guaranteeing long-term career sustainability and upward mobility in the fast-paced labor market of today.

Due to the current challenges in the Nigerian economic landscape, there is an increasing demand to promote effective employment for teacher education students. The historical evolution of the concept of employability traces back to the early 20th century, with Gazier (1999) being an early researcher in this area in 1990s. Employability gained prominence as an analytical tool for labour policies in Europe and America particularly focusing on individual potential and university students' job concerns, elevating its importance in employment capability (Hillage & Pollard, 1999). Employability shifted in the early 21st century to prioritize technical skills and knowledge for gaining and sustaining employment, with a subsequent focus on attitudes and ability (Harvey, 2001). Bennet (2019) emphasizes that in higher education, employability involves preparing students to excel in life and work beyond graduation. Bennett (2020) defines employability as the process of equipping students with necessary skills and knowledge to navigate their post-graduate life and career successfully. Clarke (2018) links employability to career identity and social capital. (Hillage & Pollard in University of Plymouth, 2025). The researchers further state that employability consists of four elements such as employability assets (knowledge, skills, attitudes), deployment (career management skills), presentation (job getting skills, CV, interview technique, etc) and personal circumstances (who you are, responsibility, labour market, etc). According to Helen, (n.d) employment is a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. The success of the education sector relies on the contentment and dedication of teachers, whether from public or private institutions.

Employers view readiness for the workforce, the educational results and experiences they prioritize in employment decisions, and their opinions on recent graduates' preparedness for entry-level roles, promotion, and career advancement. The report also investigates differences in employer attitudes based on age and educational attainment (Finley, 2021). Through comprehensive coursework, field experiences and professional development opportunities, teacher education programme aims to cultivate

the following competencies in teachers which help them to be effective in their teaching profession:

1. **Content knowledge:** Teachers must possess a deep understanding of the subject matter they teach in order to effectively convey concepts and ideas to students. A strong foundation in content knowledge enables teachers to design engaging lessons, differentiate instruction, and assess students' learning effectively.
2. **Pedagogical skills:** An effective teaching requires a repertoire technique, and classroom management practices. Teachers need Pedagogical skills to be able to adapt their teaching methods in other to meet the diverse learning needs of students and supportive learning environment that facilities academic growth.
3. **Communication and interpersonal skills:** Teachers need communicative and interpersonal skills in other to communicate effectively with the students, parents, colleagues, and administrators to foster positive relationships and collaboration. A strong interpersonal skill enables teachers to establish rapport with the students and create a conducive learning environment where students feel supported and motivated to learn.
4. **Critical thinking and problem-solving skills:** Teachers need these skills in other to play a key role in developing students" critical thinking skills, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. By designing challenging tasks, asking thought-provoking questions, and encouraging students to think independently. Teachers can help students develop the cognitive skills needed to succeed in the workforce.
5. **Ethical and professional standards:** These skills help the teachers to uphold ethical standards and act with professional codes of conduct in their interactions with students, colleagues, and community. By modeling ethical behaviour and demonstrating professionalism, that will instill important values in their students which are essential for their success in the workforce.

Teachers go beyond the academic realm to include development of essential skills and qualities that are highly valued by employers in the workforce. Therefore, teachers play a critical role in cultivating the following employability skills in their students which

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equip them for employment: Communication skills, teamwork and collaboration, leadership and initiative, adaptability and resilience, Problem-solving and critical thinking. Soft skills including classroom management, communication with parents and coworkers, and emotional intelligence are also necessary for employment in the teaching profession (Sydorenko, 2020; Scheerens, *et al*, 2020; Mitsea, *et al*, 2021).

Literature Review

Numerous studies have demonstrated that one of the most crucial elements in student accomplishment is teacher effectiveness, making teacher education programs a focal point of discussions on educational outcomes for a long time. Since it includes the subject matter expertise, pedagogical abilities, and interpersonal traits that teachers bring to the classroom, the impact of teacher education programs on student outcomes is complex. An increasing amount of research demonstrates the link between student learning quality and teacher preparation. For instance, research by (Jacob, *et al*, (2020) has shown that teachers who undergo extensive training, which includes in-depth subject-matter expertise and successful teaching techniques, typically have a greater influence on the learning results of their students. According to this study, teacher preparation programs that combine academic instruction with hands-on training have a higher chance of producing graduates who can greatly improve student achievement.

However, academic accomplishment is not the only way that teacher education programs affect student outcomes (Didion, *et al*, 2020). Additionally, teacher education programs help pupils develop a variety of social and emotional skills. Well-prepared teachers were more successful in fostering pupils' social skills, emotional control, and general well-being, according to a study by Kumar, (2020). To create a learning environment that supports both academic and personal growth, teacher preparation programs that prioritize classroom management, communication skills, and student engagement are crucial. According to these findings, teacher education programs need to include techniques for handling diverse classrooms and meeting the needs of students from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds in addition to traditional academic instruction. Consequently, there is a growing understanding that the breadth of <https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jtесе>

teacher education should encompass not only academic preparation but also training in classroom dynamics, interpersonal communication, and the capacity to inspire and motivate students.

Additionally, studies show that graduates' employability is impacted for a long time by the caliber of teacher education programs. Employability is the collection of abilities, know-how, and character traits that increase a person's chances of landing a job and succeeding in their chosen field (Mezhoudi *et al*, 2023). The idea has expanded beyond just finding a job to include a person's capacity to adjust to shifting employment marketplaces and career trajectories. Employability, according to Rivaldo & Nabella, (2023) is the capacity to locate, hold, and switch between employment in accordance with one's qualifications, experiences, and personal qualities. Alvarez - Gonzalez *et al*, (2017) characterize employability as an individual's subjective perception of their ability to secure, maintain, or acquire a new job. Employability is now seen as a shared obligation of employers, the educational system, and individuals. As the global economy experiences a steady decline and unemployment rates soar, the enhancement of individual employability has become a crucial matter. Employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realize potential through sustainable employment. For the individual, employability depends on the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they use these assets and present them to employers and the context (personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek work. Employers recognize the abilities and competences earned during teacher training, therefore teachers who graduate from reputable programs typically have an easier time finding work. Graduates of thorough teacher preparation programs had a higher chance of being employed and staying in the field than those from less demanding programs, according to a study by (Herbert, *et al*, (2020). This relationship between the quality of teacher education and employment results emphasizes how important it is for educational systems to fund top-notch programs that can adequately prepare graduates for the challenges of contemporary classrooms.

Beyond landing a job, employability encompasses career advancement and employment happiness. Employability is a crucial component of higher education programs since. In Nguyen, (2020) opinion, it is a comprehensive idea that includes not just job acquisition but also employment retention and advancement. The quality of education and its connection with labor market demands are frequently strongly linked to employability results, therefore the educational system must constantly change to meet industry expectations (Oxenham, 2024).

Employability takes on new dimensions in the setting of teacher education since graduates are expected to have pedagogical skills that allow them to interact and communicate with students in an effective manner in addition to subject-specific knowledge. As a result, teacher education programs need to provide graduates with the abilities and information required to satisfy the demands of various learning environments and adapt to the changing needs of students. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the employability of graduates from teacher education programs not just based on their academic and subject-specific knowledge but also on their ability to handle the real-world difficulties of teaching in a range of settings.

The general purpose of the study is to evaluate the impact of Teacher Education on Students' employability in Awka south education zone, Anambra State. Specifically, the study seeks to evaluate the impact of Teacher Education backgrounds have on Students' employability, how Teacher Education Programme affects students' career success including their capacity to finding and keeping a job in competitive job market and the elements of teachers' preparation that have the biggest impact on students' readiness for workforce in Awka South Education Zone, Anambra State. It is unknown whether this discrepancy affects students' work preparation and employment results after graduation because different institutions offer different quality levels of Teacher Education. The efforts of the researchers were guided by three research questions.

Despite the challenges, there is a growing concern across various sectors on how to assist workers in improving their skills and qualities to enhance their competitiveness in the job market.

Research Questions:

1. What impact does Teacher Education background have on Students' employability in Awka South Education Zone, Anambra State?
2. How does Teacher Education Programme affect students' career success including their capacity to finding and keeping a job in competitive job market in Awka South Education Zone, Anambra State?
3. Which elements of teachers' preparation that have the biggest impact on students' readiness for workforce in Awka South Education Zone, Anambra State?

Hypotheses

To carry out the study, the researchers tested the following formulated research hypotheses at 5% level of significance.

Ho₁: Teacher Education background does not significantly impact on students' employability in Awka South Education Zone, Anambra State.

Ho₂: Teacher Education Programme does not significantly affect students' career success and their capacity to finding and keeping a job in competitive job market Awka South Education Zone, Anambra State.

Method

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Awka South education zone in Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 2,000 secondary school teachers in Awka South Educational Zone in Anambra State. 150 secondary school teachers made up the sample of the study. Simple random sampling techniques without replacement was adopted to draw sample for the study. Instruments titled Teacher Education Programme on Students' Employability Questionnaire (TEPSEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts, one from Curriculum Unit and one from Measurement, Evaluation and research unit, all in the Department of Education Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was determined using cronbach alpha method and coefficients of 0.85 was obtained. The researchers employed descriptive tool for analyzing the data collected. Mean and standard deviation

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were used to answer research questions while chi - square (χ^2) was used to test null hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance with the decision rule, where the p-value is greater than or equal to the alpha value of 0.05, the null hypotheses will be rejected; otherwise, the null hypothesis will not be rejected. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 was the software used for data analysis.

Result

The collected data were analyzed and the resulting outcomes presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 on the stated research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What impact does Teacher Education background have on students' employability?

Hypotheses One:

H₀₁: Teacher Education background does not significantly impact students' employability in Awka South Education Zone of Anambra State.

H₁₁: Teacher Education background significantly impacts students' employability in Awka South Education Zone of Anambra State.

Table 1: Impact of Teacher Education Background on Students' Employability

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESPONDENTS (N=150)	MEAN (\bar{X})	SD	P- VALUE
1	Preparedness for employment post-graduation	122	3.09	0.803	.007
2	Development of independent thinking	142	3.40	0.634	.002
3	Willingness to continue in the education profession	134	3.34	0.711	.012

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that teacher education background has a statistically significant and positive impact on students' employability. Item 1 (Preparedness for employment) recorded a mean score of 3.09 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.803, signifying that a substantial number of respondents believe their teacher education program prepared them adequately for post-graduation employment. Item 2 (Development of independent thinking) showed the highest mean value of 3.40 with the lowest SD of 0.634, indicating strong consensus among the 142 respondents who supported this view. Item 3 (Willingness to continue in the education profession) also

scored high with a mean of 3.34 and SD of 0.711. All three items recorded p-values less than 0.05, implying statistical significance in the observed responses. These results affirm the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{01}), suggesting that teacher education background significantly influences key employability traits such as preparedness, critical thinking, and professional commitment.

Research Question 2: How does the Teacher Education Programme affect students' career success, including their capacity to find and keep a job in a competitive job market?

Hypothesis 2:

H₀₂: Teacher Education Programme does not significantly affect students' career success and their capacity to find and keep a job in the competitive job market in Awka South Education Zone, Anambra State.

H₁₂: Teacher Education Programme significantly affects students' career success and their capacity to find and keep a job in the competitive job market in Awka South Education Zone, Anambra State.

Table 2: Does Teacher Education Programme Affect Students' Career Success and Their Capacity to Find and Keep a Job?

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	RESPONDENTS	MEAN (\bar{X})	SD	P-VALUE
4	Preparedness to meet diverse learners' needs	140	3.46	0.619	.007
5	Course relevance to career goals	144	3.48	0.587	.002
6	Course content up-to-date	148	3.48	0.527	.012
7	Content courses met expectations	144	3.39	0.566	.007
8	Professional education courses met expectations	146	3.39	0.542	.002
9	Helped understand student diversity	146	3.47	0.551	.012

Table 2 illustrates that the Teacher Education Programme contributes positively and significantly to students' career success and their ability to secure and retain jobs in a competitive labour market. High mean scores across items (ranging from 3.39 to 3.48) signify strong agreement among the respondents that the teacher training curriculum aligns well with their career aspirations and job market realities. The highest mean scores were observed in items 5 and 6, both at 3.48, suggesting that relevance to career goals

and the currency of course content are critical to career success. These were closely followed by items 9 and 4, both of which highlight the importance of understanding learner diversity and being prepared for real classroom challenges.

Research Question 3: Which elements of teacher preparation have the biggest impact on students' readiness for the workforce?

Table 3: Elements of Teacher Preparation with the Biggest Impact on Students' Readiness for the Workforce

ITEM	ELEMENT	RESPONDENTS	MEAN (\bar{X})	SD
10	Use of educational technology	136	3.29	0.707
11	Application of human development theories	140	3.35	0.655
12	Content knowledge for teaching	141	3.38	0.651
13	Pedagogical skills	148	3.47	0.526
14	Communication skills	147	3.47	0.586
15	Critical thinking	145	3.40	0.590
16	Ethical and professional standards	146	3.45	0.573

Table 3 outlines the individual elements of teacher preparation that respondents identified as having the most substantial impact on workforce readiness. Pedagogical skills and communication skills ranked highest, both with mean scores of 3.47 and supported by 148 and 147 respondents, respectively. These findings reveal that the ability to teach effectively and communicate clearly are perceived as the most vital tools for employment success. Ethical and professional standards ($\bar{X} = 3.45$) and critical thinking skills ($\bar{X} = 3.40$) also received strong support, further indicating the importance of soft skills and professional ethics in enhancing employability. While use of educational technology received the lowest mean (3.29), it still had a significant influence, suggesting a need for further strengthening of digital literacy in teacher training programmes. These insights point to the value of integrating these competencies into teacher training curricula to ensure that graduates are equipped to meet the dynamic demands of today's job market. The findings align with Abhishek (2023) and Simran (2024), both of whom highlight pedagogical knowledge, content expertise, communication skills, and inclusivity as critical pillars of an effective teacher training model. These components collectively prepare educators for practical teaching environments and broader career demands.

Discussion of findings

In this section, discussion was made in line with the findings of the study.

1. It was found that teacher education background has a statistically significant and positive impact on students' employability. This outcome is supported by Finley (2021), who underscores the importance of educational background in shaping employer perceptions and hiring decisions. Additionally, Hillage and Pollard (as cited in University of Plymouth, 2025) emphasize that employability depends not only on knowledge and skills but also on how these attributes are presented and applied in real-world contexts. Therefore, the study confirms that a solid teacher education background improves graduates' chances of securing employment, thereby emphasizing the need for continuous investment in teacher training programs.
2. The findings of the study also illustrate that the Teacher Education Programme contributes positively and significantly to students' career success and their ability to secure and retain jobs in a competitive labour market. This is consistent with Abhishek (2025), who stresses the role of integrated components in teacher training—such as pedagogy, diversity, and technology—in preparing graduates for sustainable careers. The framework by Hillage and Pollard also supports this finding, identifying employability assets, deployment, presentation, and personal circumstances as pivotal to securing employment. Given that all items recorded p-values < 0.05 , the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected, affirming that the Teacher Education Programme significantly affects career outcomes. It can be concluded that the program does not only equip students with the credentials for employment but also enhances their adaptability and long-term career success.
3. It was also revealed that elements of teacher preparation have the most substantial impact on workforce readiness. The findings align with Abhishek (2023) and Simran (2024), both of whom highlight pedagogical knowledge, content expertise, communication skills, and inclusivity as critical pillars of an effective teacher training model. These components collectively prepare educators for practical teaching environments and broader career demands.

Conclusion

Teacher Education programme has a significant impact on Students' employability by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and qualities needed to succeed in the workforce. Teachers play a crucial role in cultivating academic proficiency, employability skills, and ethical values in their students, preparing them to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy, by investing in high - quality teacher education programmes that prioritize the development of effective practices and employability skills, we can ensure that students are well prepared to thrive on a competitive and dynamic job market.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by the authors based on the study results;

1. The government should promote relationship between teacher education programme management and employers to better students/ graduate of the programme for the workforce.
2. A study on skills and competencies need by the employers for employability.
3. Government should consider incorporating more practical, hands-on learning opportunities for teacher candidates to help better prepare them for the demands of the workforce.
4. Teacher Education Programme Management/ Authorities should stay current with trends in the education field and adjust the curriculum accordingly to ensure that students are receiving the most relevant and p-to-date information.

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