

## EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN TEACHER EDUCATION MODEL IN UNDERSERVED NIGERIAN COMMUNITIES

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the effectiveness of a Community-Driven Teacher Education (CDTE) model in addressing teacher shortages, improving instructional quality, and enhancing learning outcomes in underserved Nigerian communities. Grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory and the Participatory Development Theory, the study employs a convergent parallel mixed-methods design to evaluate how the CDTE model fosters teacher development and strengthens community ownership of education. Data were collected from 120 CDTE-trained teachers in rural areas of Anambra, Imo, and Enugu States through structured questionnaires. Additionally, 20 community leaders, 15 local education officers, and 10 school heads participated in semi-structured interviews, and observational data were gathered from five selected communities. Findings indicate that 83% of CDTE-trained teachers demonstrated enhanced motivation, commitment, and classroom effectiveness. Community involvement was linked to the use of culturally responsive pedagogy, stronger school-community ties, and greater student engagement. Nevertheless, challenges such as lack of standardized curriculum, inconsistent funding, and insufficient government recognition were identified. The study concludes that the CDTE model is a viable grassroots strategy for improving rural education in Nigeria. It recommends national policy integration, sustainable funding frameworks, standardization of teacher training modules, and structured capacity building for community participants to ensure long-term impact and scalability.

**Keywords:** Community-Driven Teacher Education, participatory development, rural education, Nigeria, teacher training, sociocultural learning

Introduction

### **Introduction**

Teacher quality remains a decisive factor in the educational development of any nation. However, in Nigeria, underserved communities continue to grapple with significant teacher shortages and ineffective pedagogical delivery (Ezema, Obi, & Onah, 2023). Despite various government reforms and international donor interventions, many

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rural schools lack trained educators, culturally relevant instruction, and sustainable teaching support systems. This has deepened educational inequality between urban and rural areas.

To address this issue, innovative models such as Community-Driven Teacher Education (CDTE) have emerged. CDTE seeks to empower local communities to participate in the selection, training, and mentoring of teachers who are culturally aligned with their environments. Unlike top-down teacher deployment models, CDTE builds on local ownership, making education more context-sensitive and sustainable (Chalari, Mordi, & Ubah, 2023).

This paper evaluates the effectiveness of CDTE initiatives in selected underserved Nigerian communities. It examines how CDTE influences teacher quality, community engagement, and student learning, while identifying challenges and opportunities for policy integration.

### **Review of Literature**

This study is rooted in the Participatory Development Theory, which emphasizes active involvement of community members in designing and implementing initiatives that affect them. CDTE reflects this paradigm by positioning the community as a co-creator of teacher education rather than a passive beneficiary. Participatory development prioritizes contextual relevance, cultural responsiveness, and collective ownership—attributes essential in ensuring that education reflects the lived realities of learners. According to Olayinka and Deniran (2024), educational development projects anchored in community participation tend to produce better long-term results than those imposed externally.

This study is anchored on Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory, which emphasizes that human learning and cognitive development are socially situated

processes shaped by cultural tools, language, and interpersonal interactions. According to Vygotsky (1978), individuals do not acquire knowledge in isolation; rather, learning is mediated by more knowledgeable others, such as teachers, peers, and community members, within a shared cultural and social context. Central to this theory are concepts such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), scaffolding, and cultural mediation, which highlight the ways in which learners internalize knowledge through guidance and collaboration.

The sociocultural perspective underscores that learning is not a purely individual cognitive activity but a collective enterprise deeply influenced by cultural practices, linguistic resources, and community norms. Language, in particular, is viewed as a primary cultural tool that facilitates both communication and the internalization of concepts. In this regard, teaching and learning are most effective when instructional practices are situated within learners' cultural frameworks and draw upon their lived experiences (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Applied to teacher education, Vygotsky's theory provides a robust rationale for community-driven teacher education (CDTE) models. Teachers who are trained within their local communities are not only exposed to pedagogical knowledge but also grounded in the sociocultural realities of the learners they serve. This alignment enables them to employ culturally meaningful strategies, adapt instructional tools to the local context, and connect classroom content with students' everyday experiences. The CDTE approach resonates with Vygotsky's assertion that learning is enhanced when teachers and learners share cultural backgrounds, as this fosters relevance, engagement, and deeper understanding.

Furthermore, the theory suggests that teachers themselves are lifelong learners whose professional growth depends on continuous interaction with peers, mentors, and

community stakeholders. By embedding teacher training within community contexts, CDTE ensures that teachers develop professional competencies while simultaneously engaging in the cultural mediation processes that shape effective pedagogy. This aligns with the notion that professional development is not merely the acquisition of abstract teaching methods but also the cultivation of contextually responsive practices that bridge the gap between school and community (Kitooke & Mahon, 2024).

## **Literature Review**

### **Challenges in Conventional Teacher Education**

Traditional teacher education programs in Nigeria often overlook the contextual and cultural realities of rural environments. Teachers are frequently posted without adequate preparation, leading to disconnection and poor learning outcomes (Ezema et al., 2023).

### **The Emergence of Community-Driven Teacher Education**

Community-Driven Teacher Education (CDTE) addresses this gap by involving communities in the recruitment and training of teachers. Chalari, Mordi, and Ubah (2023) document how CDTE fosters ownership, reduces attrition, and enhances student engagement. The model builds on local structures, leveraging existing knowledge systems to support teaching.

### **Global and African Perspectives**

Globally, participatory education models have been effective in marginal communities. Kitooke and Mahon (2024) highlight how community engagement improves accountability and pedagogical relevance in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, CDTE remains under-researched but shows promise in building sustainable educational outcomes. While promising, CDTE lacks standardization, policy integration, and long-

term funding mechanisms. According to Olayinka and Deniran (2024), the absence of regulatory frameworks limits the

## **Methods**

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, which allowed the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. This approach was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to simultaneously collect and analyze numeric data on measurable variables and in-depth narratives that captured participants' lived experiences. The combination of these methods provided a richer interpretation of findings, enhanced validity, and addressed potential weaknesses inherent in relying on a single methodological orientation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Bryman, 2016).

The research was carried out across five rural communities located within Anambra, Imo, and Enugu States of South-East Nigeria. These communities were purposefully chosen because of their unique rural characteristics, their participation in community-driven teacher education (CDTE) initiatives, and the pressing need to evaluate the educational outcomes of such interventions in resource-constrained environments. The target population comprised CDTE-trained teachers actively working in rural schools, as well as community stakeholders such as community leaders, education officers, and school administrators. The inclusion of these diverse groups ensured that the perspectives of both implementers and decision-makers were captured, thereby enhancing the depth and applicability of the study findings.

The sample size for the quantitative strand consisted of 120 CDTE-trained teachers who were purposively selected on the basis of their direct involvement in classroom instruction. This sample size was considered sufficient to provide meaningful statistical insights into the challenges and effectiveness of CDTE practices in the study area. For

the qualitative strand, 45 participants, including community leaders, education officers, and heads of schools, were drawn to offer reflective and experiential insights into the broader community and institutional perspectives on teacher education and school functionality. The purposive sampling technique was considered appropriate because it ensured the selection of participants with relevant knowledge and experiences required to address the research questions effectively (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Multiple instruments were used for data collection in line with the mixed-methods approach. For the quantitative strand, a structured questionnaire was administered to the teachers. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended items designed to elicit objective responses on specific variables and a few open-ended prompts that allowed for additional clarifications. For the qualitative strand, semi-structured interview guides were employed to facilitate in-depth discussions with community leaders, education officers, and administrators. These guides provided flexibility, enabling participants to express their views freely while ensuring that the discussion remained focused on the study objectives. An observational checklist was also utilized to systematically capture contextual and behavioral indicators during field visits, such as classroom interactions, availability of teaching resources, and community-school engagement. This triangulation of instruments strengthened the credibility and reliability of the findings (Patton, 2015).

Data analysis was conducted in two complementary phases. Quantitative data collected from the teachers' questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26). The analysis included descriptive statistics, which summarized participants' demographic characteristics and distribution of responses, as well as inferential tests such as t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which were applied to determine statistically significant differences and relationships across variables. The application of these inferential techniques was

consistent with established practices for testing hypotheses and comparing group differences in educational research (Field, 2018). Qualitative data from interviews and observations were transcribed verbatim and subjected to thematic analysis using NVivo software. The analysis involved open coding, categorization, and the generation of themes and subthemes that reflected recurring patterns across participants' narratives. This process allowed the researcher to highlight the nuanced and context-specific dimensions of CDTE implementation (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The results of both strands were integrated during interpretation to ensure a balanced representation of quantitative trends and qualitative insights. The mixed-methods integration offered a holistic view of how CDTE-trained teachers, stakeholders, and community contexts interact to shape educational outcomes in rural communities.

**Table 1: Teachers' Perception of CDTE Model Effectiveness (N=120)**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Improved Motivation	4.35	0.62	Strong
Enhanced Classroom Effectiveness	4.22	0.71	Agree
Greater Job Satisfaction	4.18	0.65	Agree
Use of Cultural Responsive Pedagogy	4.40	0.56	Strong
Improved Teachers Community Relationship	4.27	0.60	Agree

Over 83% of teachers strongly agreed that CDTE Model improved their motivation, classroom practices and ties with their community.

**Table 2: Independent sample t-Test of perception by Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Male	60	4.25	0.61	0.81	0.418
Female	60	4.30	0.58		

There was no statistically significant difference in perception based on gender ( $P > 0.05$ )

**Table 3: One way ANOVA on perception by years of teaching Experience**

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	1.75	2	0.891	2.00
Within Groups	48.756	117	0.417	
Total	50.538	119		

Teaching experience did not significantly affect teacher's perception of CDTE (P>0.05)

### **Qualitative Data Presentation and Thematic Insights**

#### **Theme 1: Cultural Relevance of Teaching**

“The CDTE teachers know our values. They use stories that our children understand.” – Community Leader, Imo State

#### **Theme 2: Community Participation and Trust**

“We feel part of the school now. Before, teachers were strangers. Now they are our people.” – Education Officer, Enugu State

#### **Theme 3: Barriers to Implementation**

“We train teachers, but without support from the government, many drop out or go back to cities.” – School Head, Anambra State

### **Discussion**

CDTE has demonstrated its effectiveness in promoting teacher commitment, culturally relevant instruction, and stronger school-community bonds. The quantitative results confirm significant positive perceptions across key metrics, while qualitative insights reveal grassroots support and practical challenges.

### **Conclusion**

The Community-Driven Teacher Education model has demonstrable benefits in enhancing teacher quality, motivation, and student engagement in underserved Nigerian communities. Grounded in participatory principles and sociocultural learning, CDTE

fosters local ownership and pedagogical relevance. However, it requires structured support to overcome systemic challenges.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Policy Integration:** The Nigerian Ministry of Education should adopt CDTE as part of its teacher development strategy, particularly for rural education.
- 2. Standardization of Curriculum:** Develop a national training guide for community-based teacher education models.
- 3. Sustainable Funding:** Establish partnerships between government, NGOs, and community cooperatives to ensure long-term funding.
- 4. Capacity Building:** Train community members in leadership, monitoring, and instructional supervision to sustain the model.
- 5. Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks:** Introduce tools for continuous assessment of teacher performance and student outcomes within CDTE communities.

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