Nigerian Colleges of Education: Issues, Challenges and Solutions

[1]Aina Jacob Kola, PhD and [2]Akintunde Zacchaeus Taiwo, PhD

[1]Kwara State College of Education (Technical) Lafiagi, Physics Education Department, Nigeria. [2]Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Science Laboratory Department, Nigeria.
Corresponding author: akoja64@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper reviewed issues and challenges of Nigerian Colleges of Education and possible solutions. The establishment of the Colleges was traced to the Ashby Commission report of 1960. Colleges of Education are tertiary institutions in Nigeria mandated to train teachers for primary and junior secondary schools. The script argued that the certificate awarded by these Colleges, the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), has lost its recognition because of some issues and challenges. Therefore, the current position of the Colleges among tertiary institutions around the globe needs attention because of some issues. A few issues and challenges facing the Colleges were discussed, and solutions. The paper stressed that colleges still operate education far from education 4.0, which drives the fourth industrial revolution. It also observed that these college graduates lack employability skills that could provide them with jobs outside the teaching industry. The paper suggested many solutions. One of the solutions is for all Colleges to adopt the Application, Creativity and Employability (ACE) framework.
Keywords: College of education, creativity, employability, education 4.0, technology.

Introduction

The College of Education in Nigeria came into existence due to the Ashby Commission report of 1960 that produced Teacher Grade One College. As a result of the nation's quest for quality teacher education, in 1973, Advanced Teacher Colleges and Colleges of Education were established in Nigeria (Awodun & Boris. 2020; Ezugoh et al., 2020). The Colleges were established to train primary and junior secondary school teachers (Suleiman et al., 2020). In addition, the Colleges were mandated to award the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). The curriculum and programmes of these Colleges were designed to meet the nation's educational needs. However, the curriculum and programmes became obsolete with global changes in education. The matters about these Colleges in the last two decades suggest that the institutions have lost their early glory (Ezugho et al., 2020). Therefore, some critical issues and challenges require solutions as education changes globally.

This is a review article or a position paper that uses previously published related literature in journals and books. Therefore, the authors did not apply any theory being a reviewed article: however, to enrich the argument, the paper presented some conceptual frameworks as represented by figures 1 and 2.

Issues in Nigerian Colleges of Education

The country's and its citizens' growth and prosperity depend on education (Jahantab, 2021). The world is currently in education 4.0 and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Education 4.0 equips students with the skills they need to meet new challenges (Suvin, 2021). With the current situation, Colleges of Education in Nigeria are far behind education 4.0, which makes the situation critical. To increase students' cognitive, emotional, and social development, Education 4.0 provides a self-directed learning environment and virtual learning environments (Miranda et al., 2021). It is a technology-driven education in which access to education is supplied via a technology-driven platform as opposed to a traditional campus setting (Goh & Abdul-Wahab, 2020). The concept of education 4.0, according to Suvin, placed a strong emphasis on six essential elements: project-based learning, remote learning, a wealth of educational resources, openly available data, and individualised instruction.

Research and publication are critical in higher education, including Colleges of Education. However, research and publication in Colleges of Education in Nigeria are weak (Suleiman et al., 2020). Research is critical to the national development of a nation (Fayomi et al., 2018; Aina et al., 2021). There is no meaningful research activity in most Nigerian Colleges of Education because of a lack of motivation and other factors. Most College management frustrates the efforts of the TETFund by corruption (Ebisine, 2013). The TETFund Institution Based Research (IBR) in many Colleges is worthless because of College management's attitudes towards it. Some lecturers have been on IBR projects for over two years because of the frustration of college management. Most academic publications lacked innovation that could impact the Nigerian educational system. Many lecturers published to get their promotion but not for the knowledge economy, which makes their publication lack innovation. Most of these publications are within the Colleges of Education in Nigeria, which many international journals with high impact factors would not accept. These papers cannot be cited except in physical libraries because the journals are not indexed in any database.

Most graduates of Colleges of Education are not employable because they lack employability skills (Omoniwa & Adedapo, 2017). Today's higher education must emphasise employability since it bridges graduates and the job market (Pegg et al., 2012). Employability in higher education refers to knowledge, skills, and experiences helpful to employers (Gedye & Chalkley, 2015). A graduate's employability is a collection of abilities, knowledge, and qualities that help them land a job or succeed in their chosen field (Bakaret al., 2007). According to Pegg et al., employability includes finding work and acquiring critical and reflective skills to empower and improve students. As a result, employability skills are among the soft skills that any employee in today's industrial sector should have (Rasul et al., 2009).

Regardless of their field, higher education graduates should be prepared for the workforce in the age of the industrial revolution by having employability skills (Asonitou, 2015).

Moreover, in today's competitive employment market, Nigerian graduates must possess employability skills and technical expertise (Ang, 2015).

The issues discussed above have raised challenges in Colleges of Education that require solutions. Unfortunately, these challenges make the NCE certificate lose the expected recognition in Nigeria today. The challenges are discussed below.

Challenges in Nigerian Colleges of Education

Education 4.0 prepares learners for future challenges (Suvin, 2021). Therefore, the College of Education curriculum would become obsolete and irrelevant in a few years. Thus, the College of Education graduates will be out of jobs except those who can create jobs through entrepreneurial skills. In addition, the present College of Education curriculum lacks the digital skills learners require to tackle the present and future challenges that Education 4.0 provides. Figure 1 shows the vital digital skills Education 4.0 requires (Suvin, 2021).
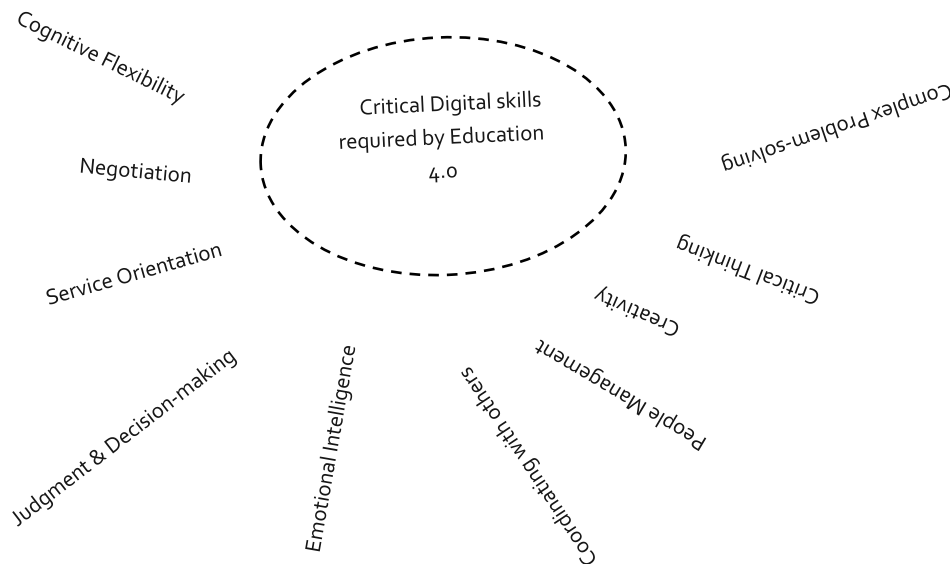

Figure 1: Education 4.0 digital skills (Aina et al., 2022)

Many Nigerian Colleges of Education graduates lack the digital abilities depicted in figure 1 because they lack education 4.0. Similarly, governments do not provide adequate digital devices in schools: thus, few who are literate do not have digital instruments to use in the classroom. In addition, many Colleges lack internet access for lecturers and students, and those with access to a mobile phone face the issue of erratic power supplies. These and other difficulties make Education 4.0 a challenge.

The challenge will make it difficult for Nigerian College of Education graduates to find work in the future because of education 4.0. This is an era of 4IR driven by education 4.0, where every graduate must be an entrepreneur with appropriate digital skills. Lecturers and workers are also at risk because the features of 4IR might give their jobs to machines, as done in some advanced countries.

Funding is a critical challenge in many state Colleges of Education that impacts teaching and learning negatively. These Colleges depend on subventions from the government and school fees. Many Colleges have no internally generated revenue (IGR) to supplement the government subvention. Universities and Colleges in advanced countries boost their IGR through the public-private partnership (PPP) in Education (Khalid et al., 2016). Companies and industries would only partner with schools with sound research-based. There are international agencies that give grants to institutions and individuals. Unfortunately, most of our Colleges do not have a research and development unit to access these grants for Colleges. Although there are qualified lecturers with PhD who can facilitate these grants, most College provosts are not committed and lack vision for it.

Many provosts of the Colleges do not have a clear vision because their appointments are political. Some Colleges face problems due to their visionless administrators (Ossai & Nwalado, 2017), whose primary focus is money. Most Governing Council members are politicians who lack knowledge of higher education. These people compromised the standards and brought the Colleges to the present conditions.

Colleges' curriculum is only to prepare students for teaching. This is a critical challenge in a century where all works, including teaching, are almost automated. The 4IR, driven by education 4.0, will soon give all teaching jobs at all levels to machines. However, Colleges of Education do not adopt the Application, Creativity and Employability (ACE) framework. The framework will be discussed in the next section. Students do not apply what they learn to solve problems because it lacks creativity, and they are not employable. The essence of learning is to apply knowledge to solve problems. Applying knowledge requires creativity, and no agency wants to hire or employ graduates that are not creative today: this is the crux of the ACE framework. Notwithstanding, there should be solutions to bring these Colleges back to the global track.

Solutions to Reposition Colleges of Education in Nigeria

The first solution is to change the methods of appointing provosts and Governing Council members. Those aspiring to be provost should be able to clearly state what they will do to change the status of the College. For instance, they should present their blueprint for improving the research capacity, grant, IGR, students' enrolment, and College rank nationally. These must be documented, and such candidates must receive an appointment of two years on probation. Any provost who could not meet at least 50% of what is in the blueprint should be relieved of the post, otherwise should continue. Many provosts have damaged the image of Colleges within five years of tenure because they lacked vision. Unfortunately, in many advanced countries, your vision speaks for you, and once there is evidence of cluelessness in you, they fire you.

All members of the College Governing Council should be knowledgeable of tertiary education. Experience shows that when the Governing Council chairman is from a university or other higher institutions, they produce good results for the College.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the TETFund should partner with each College's quality assurance directorate. It is crucial because of the critical role of the directorate in quality education (Atanda & Adeniran, 2020). In addition, there should be a transparent body comprising of NCCE, the TETFund, the host government, and staffers of Colleges to monitor money for research, infrastructure, and any other programme for the College. Unfortunately, many Colleges access TETFund's money but do not utilise it correctly with the collaboration of the Colleges management and some corrupt officials of the TETFund.

One critical area tertiary institutions generate fund is through research grants and collaboration with private organisations. Every College should establish a formidable research unit to facilitate research grants and collaboration. This could only be possible when research-minded provosts who are not politically minded to steal money are appointed for the Colleges. Similarly, Governing Council chairpersons should not be politicians who do not have tertiary institution experience. Many international foundations like Spencer Foundation and WT Grant Foundation give out thousands and millions of dollars to institutions as educational research grants. The NCCE could come up with a proposal to encourage this initiative.

The curriculum of Colleges should adopt the ACE framework to produce students for teaching and other jobs. According to Alumode and Onuma (2016), Nigerian Colleges of Education curricula are insufficient to suit the needs of the knowledge economy. Figure 2 shows a conceptualised ACE framework.
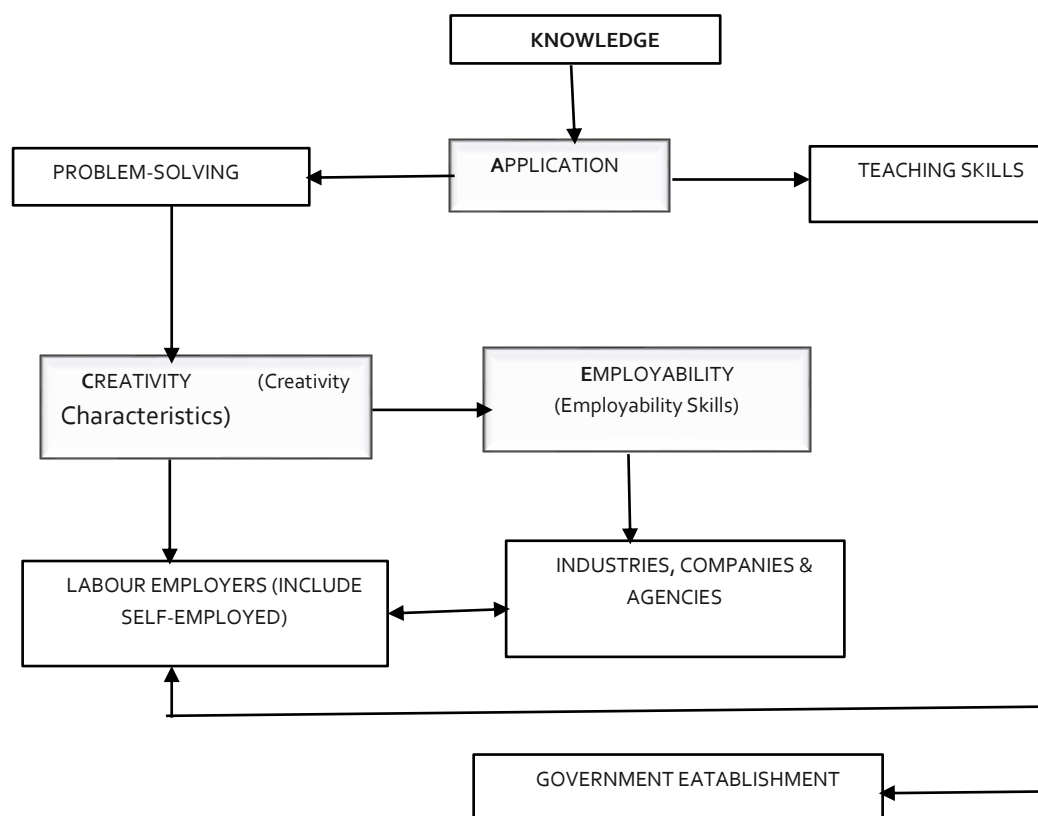
Figure 2, ACE Framework (Aina & Abdulrahman, 2020)

From figure 2, the focus should not simply be on teaching skills; the pre-service teacher curriculum should also include instruction in problem-solving repertoires. The figure demonstrates that graduates have the necessary teaching skills, which enables them to work as teachers for the government. However, this skill is insufficient for employment in industries and other sectors. Nevertheless, problem-solving abilities, linked to creativity and employability, would enable graduates to work in industries and other organisations. Additionally, the graduates may be independent job creators with their businesses. These could include starting new firms, small businesses, and schools. The ACE framework shows the *Application* of knowledge for problem-solving and teaching skills for *Creativity* and *Employability.*

Finally, most of the paradigms employed by lecturers in Colleges of Education are no more working in the global communities. The strategy employed by a teacher is critical to learning (Olayiwola & Alimi, 2015). This is a new era of 4IR driven by education 4.0, where technologies are in vogue. Authentic Learning Adaptation Technology (ALAT) should be adopted in Nigerian institutions. Authentic learning resembles a real-life situation (Gürgil, 2018). It presents learning to students in an environment to mimic real-world contexts. Teachers scaffold and coach but do not teach in an authentic learning environment. The ALAT focuses on employing technologies to the elements of authentic learning to make teaching resemble what happens in real-life contexts. Students learn by themselves to learn what society needs, not what the school curriculum dictates. In Nigeria today, students learn most of what they do not need or are relevant to society. Through ALAT, students are equipped with skills highly demanded by industries and organisations outside the education sector.

There are many lazy students today in Nigeria who graduated with excellent grades but lack sufficient soft and hard skills required for today's economy. This model is purely technology integration. The challenge to ALAT may be poor technology integration (Garba et al., 2013), facilities, and equipment (Ebisine, 2013). However, the challenge could be solved with teachers' positive attitudes to ICT and proficiency (Olafare et al., 2017). It is high time we adopt learning modes that are less teacher-dependent.

Conclusion

The paper looked at the current conditions of the Nigerian Colleges of Education as not good and that Colleges certificate Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) is gradually losing value. Issues of education not connected with the 4IR, the appointment of visionless provost and Governing Council members, and obsolete instructional classroom delivery were raised. The challenges that emanated from the issues were critically discussed, which portend danger for the nation. Repositioning the Colleges requires some steps, which the paper highlighted as solutions.

References

Aina, J. K., Aremu, R. A., & Abdulwasiu, A. A. (2022, June 6-9). *Entrepreneurial education: Emerging education 4.0 and fourth industrial revolution in Nigerian Colleges of education.* Paper presented at the 10th annual national conference of the Kwara State College of Education Oro. Oro, Nigeria.

Aina, J. K., Abdulrahman, A. O., Olanipekun, S. S., & Olaoye, O. T. (2021). Nigerian higher education research and the challenges of sustainable development. *American Journal of Creative Education, 4*(1), 1-9.

Aina, J. K., & Abdulrahman, A. O. (2021). The Nigerian certificate in education (NCE): science graduates' employability. *Innovare Journal of Education, 9*(1), 1-6

Alumode, B. E., & Onuma, N. (2016). Minimum standards and accountability in Colleges of education in Nigeria**.** *British Journal of Education, 4*(5), 53-62.

Ang, M. C. H. (2015). Graduate employability awareness: A gendered perspective. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 211*(2015), 192-198.

Asonitou, S. (2015). Employability skills in higher education and the case of Greece. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 175* (2015) 283 – 290

Atanda, A. I., & Adeniran, F. A. (2020). The academic quality assurance in the Colleges of education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research (Arts, Humanities and Education), 6*(4), 37-51. DOI: www.doi.org/10.46654/ij.24889849.a6426

Awodun, A., & Boris, O. O. (2020). ensuring internal quality assurance in Colleges of education in Nigeria: Benefits and challenges. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS) 4*(11), 246-252.

Ebisine, S. S. (2013). Academic quality assurance in the Colleges of Education: Challenges and ways forward for future development. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences, 13*(2013), 1-9. doi: 10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.13.1

Egede, B. A. J. (2020). Expansion in academic programmes in the Colleges of education through the dual mode: A stitch in time. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, 11*(5), 40-47.

Ezugoh, T. C., Adeola, A. O., & Yakubu, S. (2020). Management of the Nigerian Colleges of education in Delta State for sustainability of a better today and tomorrow. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 20*(6), 60-83.

Fayomi, O. S. I., Okokpujie, I. P., & Mfon, U. (2018, July 9-13). *The role of research in attaining sustainable development goals*. Paper presented at the IOP Conf. Series: Materials Science and Engineering.

Garba, S. A, Singh, T. K. R, Yusuf, N. B. M, Ziden, A. A. (2013). An overview of technology integration in Nigerian Colleges of education. *Journal of Education and Learning.* 7(1), 35-42.

Gedye, S., & Chalklley, B. (2015). Employability within geography, earth and environmental sciences. GEES learning and teaching guide. The higher education academy. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/4029324/Employability_within_Geography_Earth_and_Environmental_Sciences

Goh, P. S., & Abdul-Wahab, N. (2020). Paradigms to Drive Higher Education 4.0. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 19*(1), 159-171. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.1.9

Gürgil, F. (2018). The effect of authentic learning approach in social studies teaching on the academic success. *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 6(10), 2061-2068. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2018.061002

Jahantab, Z. (2021). Role of education in national development. *Pakistan Journal of Applied Social Sciences, 12*(1), 87-108.

Khalid, A., Javed, Z., Nasir, M., & Afreen, S. (2016). The role of public private partnership in provision of physical facilities in schools: A sociological study of district Bhakkar**.** *Bulletin of Education and Research, 38*(1), 225-234.

Miranda, J. et al. (2021). The core components of education 4.0 in higher education: Three case studies in engineering education. *Computers and Electrical Engineering, 93*(2021), 1-13.

Olafare, F. O., Adeyanju, L. O., & Fakorede, S. O. A. (2017). Colleges of education lecturers attitude towards the use of information and communication technology in Nigeria. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences, 5*(4), 1-12.

Olayiwola, I. O., & Alimi, K. M. (2015). Preparedness of Colleges of Education in Southwestern Nigeria for the adoption of blended learning. *Journal of Education and Learning, 9*(1), 25-34.

Olugbenga, M., & Yakubu, N. T. (2021). The issues of access, quality and relevance of education in Nigeria**.** *Asia-Africa Journal of Academic Research and Review, 1*(2021), 17-26.

Omoniwa, O. B., & Adedapo, A. A. (2017). Assessing Nigerian graduate employability. *Global Journal of Business Disciplines, 1*(2), 58-74

Ossai, A. G., & Nwalado, N. E. (2017). Quality in higher education in Nigeria: perceptions of global challenges. *Nigerian Academic Forum, 25*(1), 1-9.

Pegg, A., Waldock, J., Hendy-Isaac, S., & Lawton, R. (2012). *Pedagogy for employability. The Higher Education Academy.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279692964_Pedagogy_For_Employability

Rasul, M. S., Ismail, M. Y., Ismail, N., Rajuddin, M., & Rauf, R. A. A. (2009). Importance of employability skills as perceived by employers of Malaysian manufacturing industry. *Journal of Applied Sciences Research, 5*(12): 2059-2066.

Suleiman, H., Dass, H. Y., Inuwa, H. M., & Saleh, A. S. (2020). Research performance and teaching quality in Nigerian tertiary institutions: Evidence from Colleges of education in North Eastern Nigeria. *Journal of Science Technology and Education 8*(2), 177-185.

Suvin, C. (2020). *Why should higher education institutions focus on Education 4.0?.* Retrieved from https://www.creatrixcampus.com/blog/Education-4.0