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Teachers' Retirement Age Act: Tenure and Teacher Quality in Nigeria

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Abstract

Education is crucial to national development and teachers are the principal component in educational production. Teacher quality manifests in student achievements and educational outcomes. Improving the quality of education rests on attracting and retaining good teachers who can help students navigate their ways in a changing world and produce graduates that can drive development and technological revolutions. Selection into the teaching profession is facing severe threats, and there is a growing teacher shortage. A complex interaction of demand and supply factors causes teacher shortages. In addressing the shortage of teachers, the government introduced a demand side intervention by enacting and activating *The Harmonised Retirement Age for Teachers in Nigeria Act*. The law extends the tenure and retirement age of teachers in the face of crippling teacher shortage in schools. This study assessed this development in relation to tenure and teacher quality in Nigeria. The working conditions of teachers are poor and demotivating. Data reveals that many of the current teachers have poor attributes. The study concludes that keeping incapable and poorly trained teachers longer in teaching service will not benefit educational development and student outcomes. The government intervention only masks deeper issues affecting selection into the teaching profession, which should be addressed.

Keywords: Labour law, Retirement age, Teacher quality, Teacher shortage, Tenure

JEL classification: I28, J48, J58, M59

1. Introduction

Teacher shortage has been advanced as the main reason for enacting and activating *The Harmonised Retirement Age for Teachers in Nigeria Act* (also known as the Retirement Age Act) in 2022. The Act extends the tenure and retirement age of teachers from 35 years to 40 years and from 60 years to 65 years, respectively. It enables a teacher to remain on the Teaching Service Commission's (TSC) payroll until the teacher either attains 40 years in active service or reaches the retirement age of 65 years, depending on whichever comes first, before bowing out of the service. The teachers' labour unions, spearheaded by the National Union of Teachers (NUT), pushed for the enactment of this law after similar laws were passed for university and polytechnic lecturers. Their argument was hinged on the teacher shortage in classes due to various factors and the loss of experienced hands to retirement.

Selection into teaching jobs is discouraged because teachers endure poor social status and pay in Nigeria (Hargreaves, 2009; Omoruyi & Osunde, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). In general, there is a lower return to skill in teaching. Additionally, teaching is a highly demanding job. It requires a lot of effort from teachers, leading, sometimes, to high stress levels and burnout. The debilitating and unenviable working conditions force many teachers to bow out earlier than the mandatory retirement age (Sims & Jerrim, 2020; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). And this creates shortages of class and subject teachers in schools. However, teacher shortage can only partially be attributed to excess demand due to the peculiar nature of teaching services unlike other labour demands in the labour market (Lovenheim & Turner, 2018; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Several factors on both supply and demand sides determine selection into the teaching profession and availability of teachers. Therefore, a supply side policy cannot be applied when teacher shortage is principally attributable to demand factors. The extension of tenure and retirement age is basically a demand side policy. This policy basically masks the problems associated with teachers' working conditions that discourage entry into the teaching profession without addressing them.

This study offers an assessment of the new law, given its far-reaching implications on education and educational development in Nigeria. With educational development, all other development objectives may be easier to realise. Teachers are the major factor in educational production and development (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006), especially at the basic education level. Having altered the tenure of teachers, the behaviour of teachers can change in response to the new law, especially older teachers in TSC. Issues of absenteeism and teacher effectiveness may become

an ever-surfacing problem to grapple with. It is common knowledge that teacher training and on-the-job capacity development of teachers are on the wane, which can potentially complicate teacher effectiveness (Bashir et al., 2018). The longer a teacher with deficient capacity stays in the system, the lower the capacity to deliver his duties. The saying that ideas rule the world has never been truer than now. Nigeria is lagging its peers and competitors all thanks to poor human capital development. We require teachers who can help children navigate their worlds seamlessly and drive development, technological and industrial revolutions. Besides, this law can attract bad teachers into TSC. Many government employees in other departments can enter teaching as their retirement approaches to remain in government employment till the retirement age of 65 years.

This assessment is the first on this law, to the best of our knowledge, since the law became operational two years ago. Though the implementation of the law across the states of the federation is challenged, this paper posits that its existence does not significantly resolve issues affecting the supply of teachers to Nigerian schools. The incentives on offer do not motivate selection into the teaching profession. There is a need to address concerns about teachers' social status and working conditions apart from pay (Sims & Jerrim, 2020; Hargreaves, 2009; Omoruyi & Osunde, 2005; Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 2004). Working conditions' issues include career progression, work-life balance, stress and burnout, application of technology, work environment, teaching assistant, and training and continuous capacity development. Lastly, there is a need to build a support system, especially mentoring for teachers to motivate performance. This work is organised as follows. Section one introduces the study. Issues in tenure and retirement are reviewed in section two. Section three focuses on institutional setting and data. Section four deals with issues in the teaching profession in Nigeria, ranging from teacher status and selection into teaching jobs, teacher quality in Nigeria, to potential effects of the *Retirement Age Act*. The study is concluded in section five.

2. Issues in tenure and retirement age

Tenure and retirement laws and policies are tinkered with to respond to issues such as pension, technological innovation, workforce skill, supply of labour, gender, affirmative action program, fertility and birth rate, population structure, discrimination, mortality, and labour force participation rate, among others. All these issues can affect the productivity and sustainability of government financing, especially tax income and debt. Therefore, the government can adjust

laws and policies on tenure and retirement to respond to fiscal issues. The workforce in developed countries is fast ageing and policymakers respond to the fiscal sustainability of state pensions by raising retirement ages (Böheim & Nice, 2019). The current workforce will be catered for in retirement through the tax contributions of future workers under an overlapping generation framework and the assumption of a pyramidal population age structure. When the pyramidal population age structure becomes inverted, the government can decide to extend tenure and retirement age to manage public expenditures and debts that may result from the pension plans in such an environment. It follows that the regulation of tenure and retirement age, especially in the public sector, may be done in the public interest.

Personnel practice may mirror the change in tenure and retirement regulations. Fredriksen and Manchester (2021) document the impact of the Age Discrimination and Employment Act (ADEA) in 1978 in the US on personnel practice. The introduction of ADEA eliminated the mandatory retirement age at 65. This regulation incentivises firms to substitute long-term implicit contracts where the wage profile is steeper than the productivity profile with pay-for-performance contracts (Fredriksen & Manchester, 2021). The delayed compensation in the mandatory retirement system ensures positive work ethics and discourages moral hazards (Lazear 1979, 1981). Impliedly, a worker will show strong performance at a lower cadre to be promoted to a senior position and work hard to keep the position till retirement in order to exit the firm with all entitlements and benefits of retirement at a senior level. This imposes little or no cost on the firm and equally rewards the workers. A change in law that extends retirement age changes the cost associated with hiring and firing and the incentive system in employer-employee relationships.

Pay-for-performance contract system becomes imperative when the retirement age is extended or eliminated. The contract system may motivate organisations to engage in premature separation of workers because it may be difficult for them to monitor their employees' performance. The implication is that the intended consequence of a change in retirement age may not be realisable since private firms cannot be forced to keep workers because of their profit motives. Korea implemented a retirement age extension policy in 2016 by mandating firms to put the retirement age at 60 years and above. Lee and Cho (2022) find that workers targeted by the legislation were unable to retain their jobs till the legislated retirement age. This finding corroborates conclusions of earlier studies. Firms have incentives to motivate workers to go into early retirement as it costs more to monitor the performance of older employees (Frimmel et al., 2018). Analogously, businesses are strongly motivated to use separation to

manage the cost of older workers' contracts (Hakola & Uusitalo, 2005). Thus, an extension of the retirement age tends to affect job security negatively (Boeri, Garibaldi & Moen, 2022).

Legislation was passed and implemented in Portugal to extend the retirement age of women to 65 from 62 in 1994, while that of men remained the same. Martin, Novo and Portugal (2009) submit that the output of older female workers in the targeted firms who were mandated to work longer hours remained unchanged; firms hired fewer female workers, which led to a drop in the number of young female employees. Clearly, there is an incentive for a pay-for-performance practice here by employers. Besides, the finding suggests an intergenerational competition for jobs as a consequence of the extension of retirement age. Böheim and Nice (2019) doubt the existence of competition for jobs among older and young workers. However, the intergenerational competition for jobs may be intense in a country where young people dominate the population and there is high youth unemployment. This intensity of competition for jobs among older and young workers can be made worse if the retirement age extension is sectoral or no regulation prevents workers in fields that are not targeted by the retirement age extension policy from crossing over to the targeted sector in order to remain in employment. The benefit of retirement age extension legislation, if at all exists, will be captured by most of those crossing from other trades/professions into the targeted sector.

Retirement does cause a change in the health of retirees, especially for retirees of highly demanding jobs like teaching. The implication of retirement age on retirees' health has been studied. The jury is still out as the debate still rages on whether retirement age has an impact on mortality. Although, workers in Western countries can protest retirement age extension as they favour early retirement when they can exit the labour force, studies have yet to confirm that retirement from work causes mortality conclusively. Hernaes et al. (2013) posit that early retirement did not have any effect on mortality in the studied population. Early retirement reduces the probability of dying five years after retirement in a study by Bloemen, Hochguertel, and Zweerink (2017) and one year after retirement in another inquiry by Bozio, Garrouste, and Perdrix (2021), while Bamia, Trichpoulous, and Trichpoulous (2007) conclude that early retirement may account for all-cause and cardiovascular mortality in healthy persons. By and large, retirement does have an effect on the lifestyle of retirees (Oshio & Kan, 2017; Ding et al., 2016) and raises the probability of obesity (Godard, 2016). Most of these studies are conducted in Western countries with excellent health facilities to manage health crises. As such, one cannot conclude that retirement, either early or late, will have a similar effect in developing countries. Besides, mortality is different from morbidity. People may not actually die but may

be living with severe health conditions arising from working conditions and working for more extended periods over their lifetime.

3. Institutional setting and data

3.1 The Retirement Age Act

The Retirement Age Act was passed and assented to in 2022. The law extended the tenure and retirement age of teachers. Section 1 of the Act specifies that teachers in Nigeria shall compulsorily retire on the attainment of 65 years of age or 40 years of pensionable service. The Section provides that whichever comes first shall apply to the affected personnel. Section 3 exempts teachers from any Public Service Legislation or Rule that mandates a person to retire from the public service at 60 years of age or 35 years of active service. The law has been passed in cognisance of the shortage of teachers in primary and secondary schools across Nigeria. Schools are losing old and experienced teachers to retirement, while new teachers are not being employed. Thus, the labour unions in the teaching profession, spearheaded by the NUT, pushed for the extension of teachers' retirement age and tenure of service. The union must have taken a cue from the success of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Academic Staff Union of Polytechnic (ASUP) in getting the government to extend the retirement age of academic staff in Nigerian universities and polytechnics to 70 years. However, this legislation does not address the real issues in the shortage of teachers.

In every decision by officeholders, there is a potential for personal interest to override a common goal. Most union leaders have enjoyed longer tenure in their workplaces or professions. They are usually at the top cadres of their careers. This vantage position may influence most of their decisions. Besides, union leaders want to show performance to their members to justify their monthly dues to their unions. In view of this, they go into negotiations with their employers to influence decisions on what they consider important to their members' welfare. Sometimes though, union leaders push for things that are off the track of members' welfare. The law on retirement age may fall into this category. It remains to be seen how this law, motivated by the action of NUT, will benefit ordinary members across the country while leaving issues that discourage selection into teaching jobs unaddressed. Though the federal government has directed the implementation of the law, the subnational governments have been having hiccups with compliance. As of today, less than half of the states of the federation have domesticated and implemented the federal law. Additionally, the shortage of teachers that the

law intends to address is both demand- and supply-related problem. In other words, if the incentives, working conditions, and regulations are right, there will be an abundant supply of teachers.

3.2 Data

This study adopts a descriptive analysis using a combination of electronic survey and administrative data. The electronic survey data comes from a questionnaire designed and administered to undergraduates in faculties of education of some universities in South-West Nigeria. A purposeful sampling technique was used. Some students of education were contacted and asked to share the link to the questionnaire with their colleagues. A total number of 138 responses were generated. The collated demographic data and responses of respondents to the electronic survey appear in Table 1 below. Reference will be made to the table in other subsections of this study. The demographic data speaks to the youthful population of Nigeria. The median age in the country is less than 18. A large proportion of the respondent are in their early 20s and almost rounding up their degree programmes in education, according to their levels of study in universities. The teaching profession, especially at the basic education level, is dominated by women. The data corroborates this fact as there are more young women in schools of education in universities.

The administrative data was collected and published by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC). Since the introduction of the 9-3-4 system of education and the passing of the *Universal Basic Education Act*, which makes the first nine years of basic education free and compulsory, the federal government has empowered UBEC to fund and monitor the organisation of nine years of basic education in conjunction with state governments through State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) in Nigeria. Therefore, they collect and publish data on their activities in relation to basic education. They publish information about pre-school (also known as Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE)), primary schools, and junior secondary schools (JSS) in Nigeria. The data shows teacher attributes and patterns of tenure of teachers in pre-school, primary schools, and JSS. Also, there is data from UBEC which gives information about training and capacity development of teachers. The information on exposure of teachers to training, seminars or workshops was collected over five years and reported in 2018. The data is analysed in the subsequent sections of this study.

Table 1: Demographics, Responses, Frequency (n = 138) and Percent of Respondents

<i>Demographics/Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Gender		
Female	89	64.49
Male	49	35.51
Marital Status		
Single	136	98.55
Single with kid(s)	1	0.72
Married	1	0.72
Age		
Under 20	20	14.49
21 – 24	92	66.67
25 – 28	24	17.39
29 – 32	2	1.45
Level of Study		
First year	5	3.62
Second year	11	7.97
Third year	47	34.06
Fourth year	72	52.17
Extra year	3	2.17
Did you apply to study education?		
Yes, I have a natural talent for teaching.	44	31.88
Yes, I want to be a teacher.	21	15.22
No, I was advised to choose education.	40	28.99
No.	33	23.91
How satisfied are you with teaching as a profession in Nigeria?		
Very satisfied	54	39.13
Somewhat satisfied	24	17.39
Undecided	38	27.54
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	4.35
Very dissatisfied	16	11.59
Is teaching your first-choice job post-graduation?		
Yes	53	38.41
No	85	61.59
What do you think about the occupational status of teachers in Nigeria?		
Very high status	25	18.12
High status	26	18.84
Modest status	37	26.81
Low status	40	28.99
Very low status	10	7.25
Would the new Teachers' Retirement Act raise the status of teachers?		
Certainly would	2	1.45
Probably would	21	15.22
I do not know	48	34.78
Probably would not	40	28.99
Certainly would not	27	19.57
Would policies that raise teachers' welfare improve their status?		
Certainly would	49	35.51
Probably would	67	48.55
Chances about the same	14	10.55
Probably would not	4	2.90
Certainly would not	4	2.90

Note: The minor discrepancies in percent are due to rounding errors. Source: Compiled by the author from electronic survey (2024).

4. The teaching profession in Nigeria

4.1 Teacher status and selection into the teaching profession

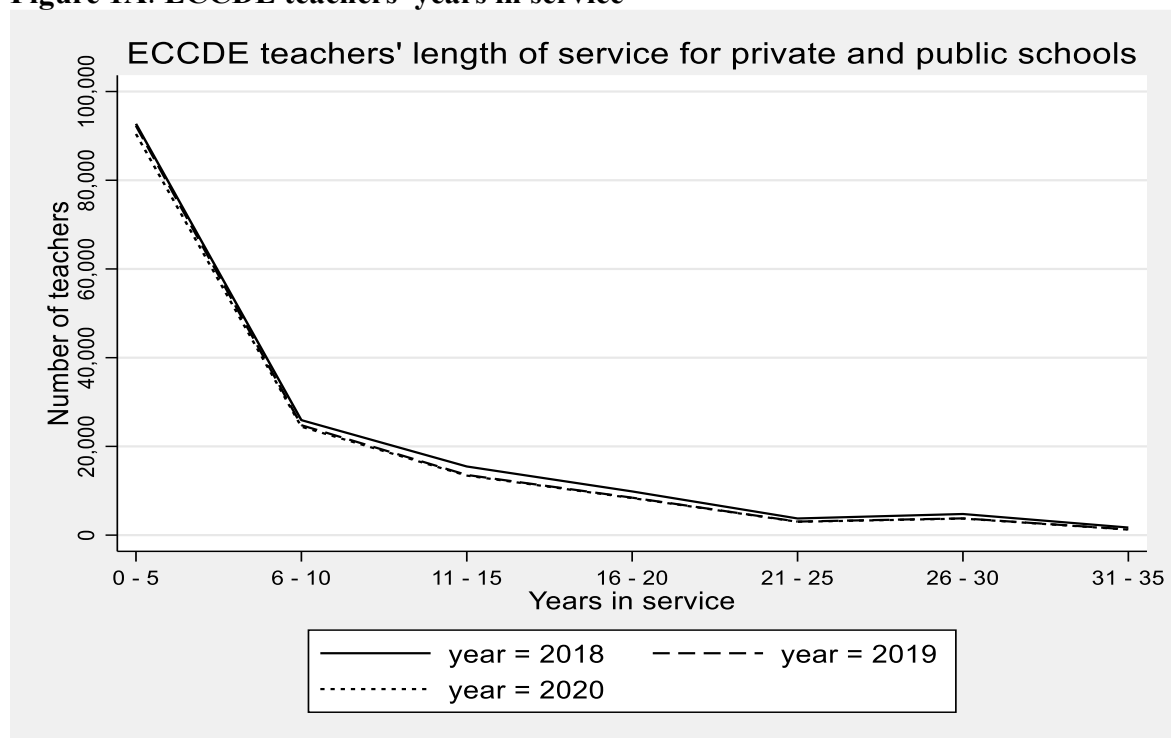
According to Fwu and Wang (2002), “the social status of teachers refers to the relative standing of teaching as an occupation in a hierarchy of all occupations.” The status of the teaching profession, among other professions, smacks of the importance of education in national development. The teaching profession enjoys a modest status in many developed and developing countries. The status accorded to teachers reflects in the quality of their human capital. Teachers in Germany, Japan, and Taiwan enjoy security of tenure, including satisfactory remunerations to motivate them (Fwu & Wang, 2002). Though teaching has never occupied a top ranking among professions in terms of fame, power, and access to cash and wealth in Nigeria, the fortune of teachers has never been as bad as the current situation. Teaching was once a highly respected and coveted profession. The misfortune of teachers started with the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) in Nigeria. Information in Table 1 shows that teachers now have a low status, according to teachers-in-training.

Since the SAP era, economic volatility and high inflation have left teachers to deal with unprecedented poverty as many teachers are now working poor. They have had to contend with poor remunerations, irregular payment of salary, lack of job security, lack of facilities, poor working environment, excess workload, stress and burnout, negative behaviour towards and perception of teachers, low self-esteem, lack of job satisfaction among others (Hargreaves, 2009; Omoruyi & Osunde, 2005). Teachers can hardly afford suitable accommodation in highbrow areas. Many teachers have difficulties supporting their wards through higher education. All these have impacted the teaching profession, and current teaching jobholders and ordinary members of society now discourage their wards from choosing teaching as a profession (Omoruyi & Osunde, 2005). The implication is that entry into the teaching profession is now driven by a lack of jobs in other sectors and the poor academic background, as shown by poor quality of basic schoolteachers. No one now voluntarily chooses to teach, as 61.59 percent of surveyed teachers-in-training do not want teaching as a first-choice job post-graduation. Any applicant with any postsecondary school certificate can now be employed as a teacher. This situation has significant implications for the quality of teaching and commitment to raising future generations of leaders.

The unions in the profession are not able to stop the absorption of teachers who are not adequately trained in teaching methods and educational psychology. Also, these groups of

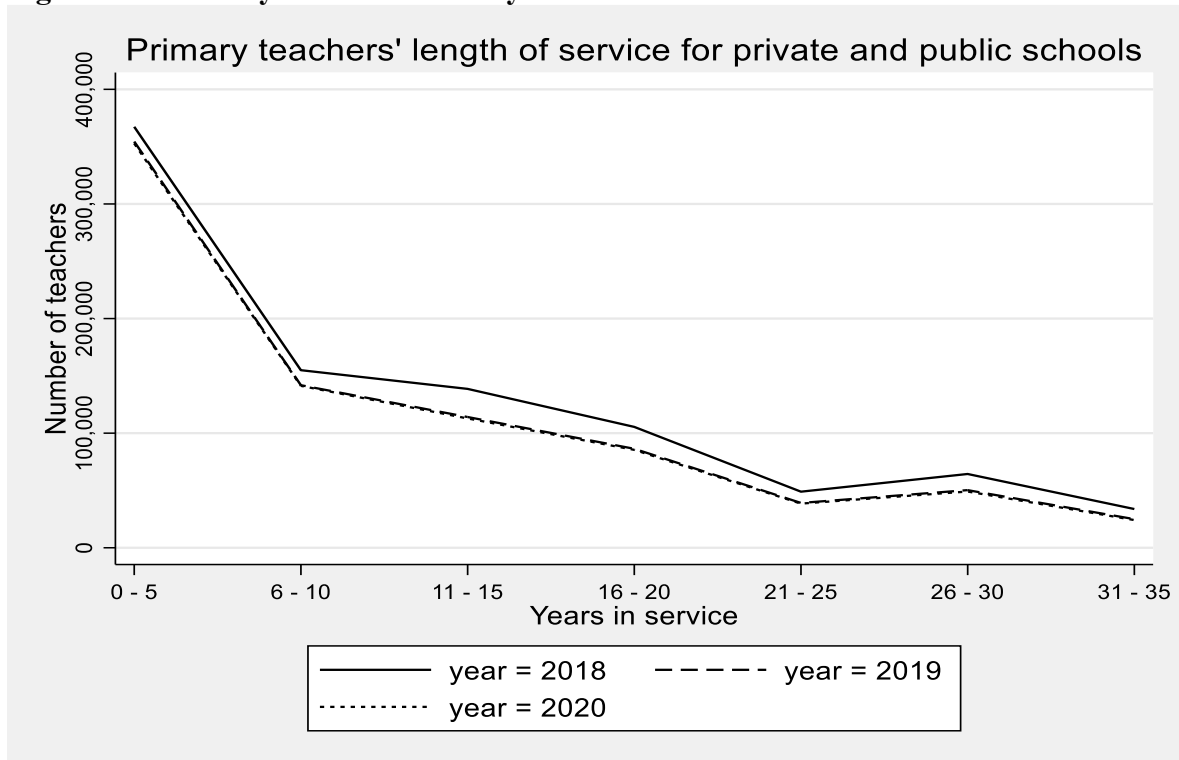
teachers do not stay long in the system. Even when those who received training in education get into teaching across basic education levels, they leave as soon as they can access opportunities in other areas. Data collected by UBEC shows that teachers in basic education leave in large numbers before their first ten years of service, and only a few teachers stay till the retirement point of thirty-five years in teaching service, as shown in Figures 1A to 1C. At the level of ECCDE, about 75 percent of teachers recruited will probably only stay within ten years in teaching service after their employment (Figure 1A). The trend at primary and JSS is similar, as about 60 percent of recruited teachers are likely to leave before their tenth year of employment despite an increase in the number of JSS teachers in 2019 and 2020 (Figures 1B & 1C). There was an apparent decline in the number of teachers at the primary level in 2019 and 2020 compared to 2018 across years of service. This development may not be peculiar to Nigeria as empirical evidence suggests a high rate of transition in the early stage of the teaching profession, which may be attributed to poor working conditions (Sims & Jerrim, 2020; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004).

Figure 1A: ECCDE teachers' years in service



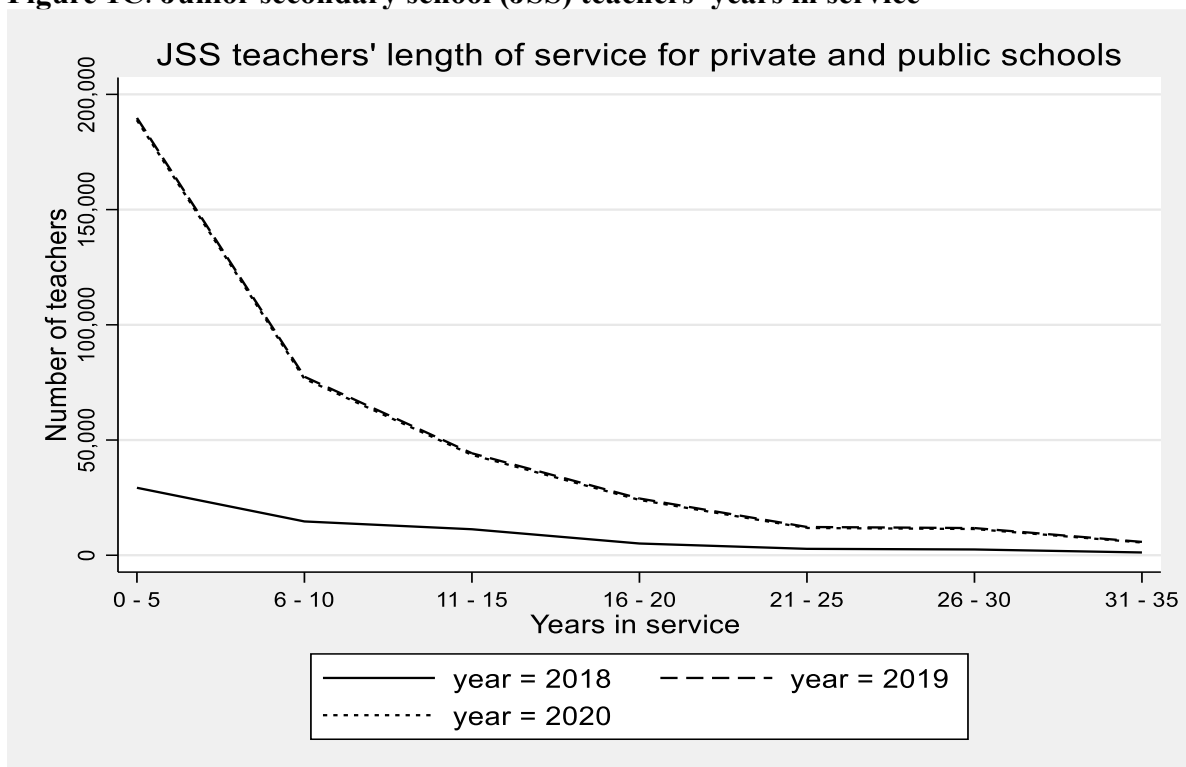
Source: Author's compilation from UBEC (2021, 2022) data. ECCDE implies Early Childhood Care and Development Education.

Figure 1B: Primary school teachers' years in service



Source: Author's compilation from UBEC (2021, 2022) data

Figure 1C: Junior secondary school (JSS) teachers' years in service



Source: Author's compilation from UBEC (2021, 2022) data

The poor status of teachers drives people from selecting into teacher training and, eventually, teaching jobs. According to the data in Table 1, more than half of our respondents did not apply to study education of their own volition. When probed further about how they found themselves studying education, the teachers-in-training gave responses such as the Joint Admission and Matriculated Board (JAMB) and admission offices in their higher institutions of learning admitted them; some claimed they just wanted a university degree, others claimed they were tired of writing JAMB, some did not meet the requirements for their first-choice courses, while some said they changed to education due to academic challenges in their initially chosen courses. This situation signals many problems. Investment in teacher education amounts to a sheer waste of public funds. There is a problem of motivation among those who get trained in teacher education because of their routes to their university education. This has a perverse influence on teacher effectiveness if the teachers-in-training eventually choose to become teachers. Most respondents claimed they were satisfied with the teaching profession but would not take teaching jobs.

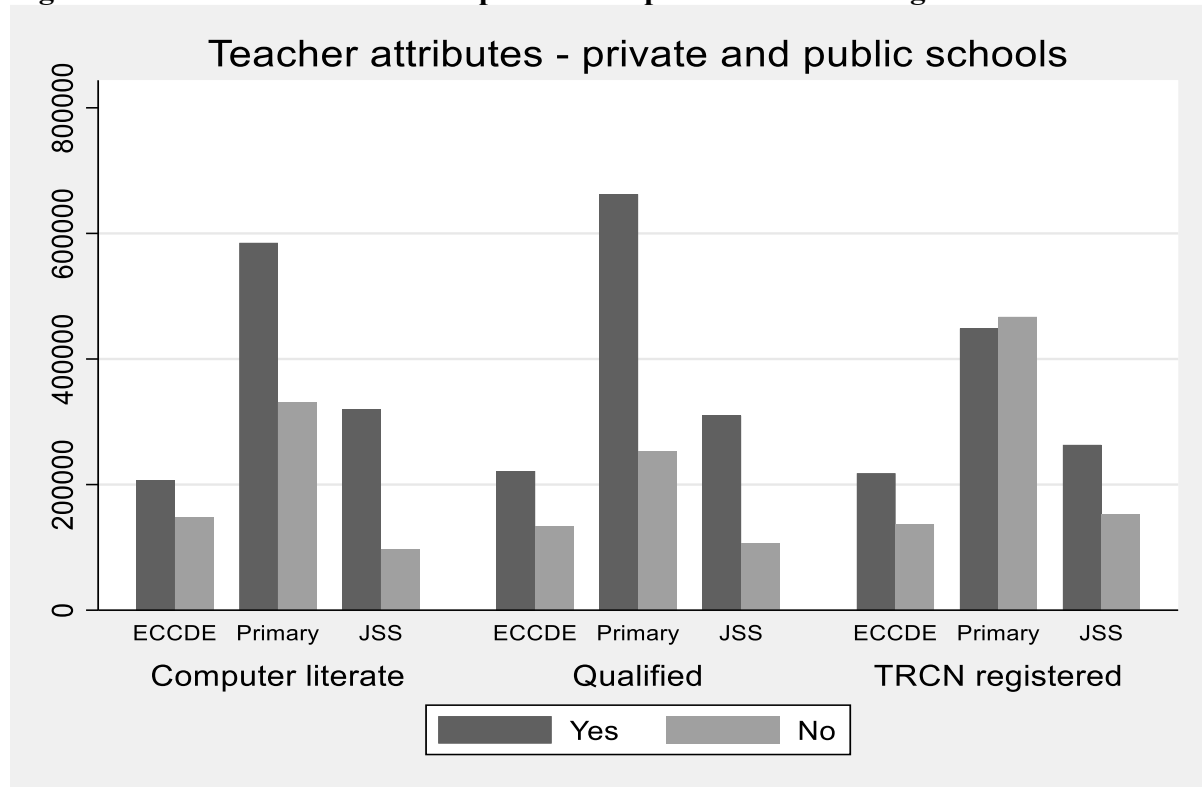
4.2 Teacher quality in Nigeria

Progress in education at any level is hinged on the quality of personnel involved in teaching and shaping the future of the young generation. Teacher quality is an essential factor in the education system, though it is difficult to observe. Thus, teacher quality addresses different attributes of teachers which determine their effectiveness (Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2006). These attributes among others include school certificate grade, JAMB score, admission into teacher education, educational attainment, class of grade, certification, continuous professional development, speciality, and experience. These characteristics jointly influence the quality of teachers without mincing words. The challenge here is the quality of information available in the public domain about these characteristics of teachers in Nigeria. Since we do not have much information about these attributes, the focus will be on issues such as admission into teacher education, qualifications, certification, and continuous professional development.

Ensuring the availability of quality teachers to man various levels of education and classrooms starts from who gets into teacher training, the process of recruitment into teaching positions, availability and consistency of continuous professional development programmes and work incentives for teachers (Bashir *et al.*, 2018). These are demand side issues that can be handled with appropriate regulations. The first issue highlighted smacks of poor quality of teachers

entering the teaching profession. The situation in Nigeria is diametrically opposed to that of Taiwan and other countries where the best hands are recruited into teaching jobs (Fwu & Wang, 2002). Thus, a quality teaching workforce is nonexistence for schools *ab initio*. Most students admitted to teacher education did not actually apply, and they were not among the high-performing applicants. Many applicants for postsecondary school admissions were admitted by JAMB and universities' admission offices to fill the quotas for education programmes because of a lack of patronage for these courses. These applicants do not actually have any incentive for teacher education, but they jump into the training due to a lack of outside options. Qualifications and professional certifications signal some level of competence *ceteris paribus*. Teachers' qualifications are essential measures of teacher quality. In many countries, teachers are required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education to qualify for teaching positions in schools. However, lower qualifications such as first school leaving certificate (FSLC), basic education certificate/junior school certificate (BEC/JSS), senior school certificate examination (SSCE), teacher grade II certificate (TC II), associate certificate of education (ACE) ordinary national diploma (OND), diploma in education (Dip. Edu), and national certificate of education (NCE) are still paraded as teacher qualifications, apart from higher national diploma (HND), bachelor's and master's degrees without education (UBEC, 2022). Though teacher quality or effectiveness does not depend on teachers' advanced degrees or certification (Hanushek et al., 2005), the situation in Nigeria is under par, and it can negatively affect learning outcomes. Additionally, many teachers are not computer literate, thereby making the application of modern technology in education complex (OECD, 2024). By law, all teachers are required to register with the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) as a form of certification. Many teachers are not registered in violation of the extant law. Figure 2 below shows some attributes of Nigerian teachers.

Figure 2: Attributes of teachers of private and public schools in Nigeria



Note: “Yes” indicates number of teachers that are computer literate, qualified, and registered with Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). “No” is otherwise. ECCDE implies Early Childhood Care and Development Education, while JSS is Junior Secondary School. Source: compiled by the author from UBEC (2022) data.

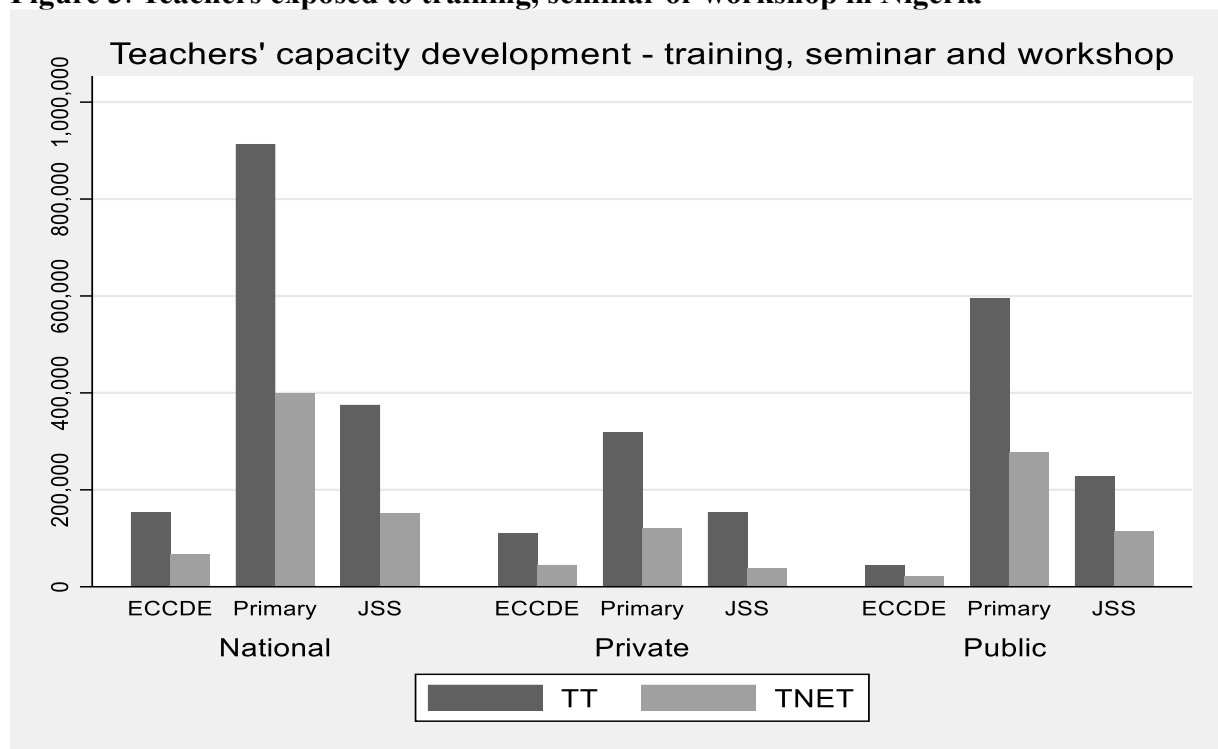
Sometimes, the surge in the number of students in a school year may warrant engaging people without a background in education in order to keep the wheel of education rolling for the affected pupils/students. Teacher recruitment is fraught with a lot of problems. Despite this, these teachers can be equipped with the required pedagogical, subject and instructional technology knowledge for effectiveness before being deployed for the service required of them. The recruited teachers are generally poorly prepared. Thus, the teachers have limited capacity to contribute to and improve students’ learning outcomes. Political intervention is the worst problem facing the recruitment of teachers in this part of the world. Merit is relegated for political targeting and settlement of electoral base and party members. Thus, recruitment standards and procedures are sacrificed on the altar of politics.

Another issue with teacher quality is that the knowledge acquired during their career formation stage at schools cannot guarantee effectiveness throughout their career life. Teacher training and formation is not a one-off exercise. It requires continuous retooling and upgrading. Continuous capacity development is helpful and essential for raising performance (Bashir *et*

al., 2018; Harris & Sass, 2011). Many teachers in Nigeria hardly get a chance at any training after their certification in teacher education. This reality, though flawed and unfortunate, is corroborated by the data collected by UBEC. Figure 3 below displays the national data on teachers in ECCDE, primary, and JSS, including the disaggregated data into private and public schools. For national statistics, almost half of the teachers in ECCDE, primary, and JSS have not been exposed to any training, seminar, or workshop over five years.

Private schools are not better than public schools in terms of capacity development for teachers, despite the much-touted market advantages. The working conditions are poorer in private schools; some schools do not pay their teacher during the holidays. Sometimes, they pay them for holiday lessons only. The workload and burden of teachers in private schools hinder their efforts to raise their qualifications. For the capacity development programmes, the proprietor may be the only resource person at a seminar for his employees where he gives the direction of his work and the expected roles of teachers. Still, they work more because of the private interest involved and the capacity of owners to wield the big stick against any erring and uncooperative teachers.

Figure 3: Teachers exposed to training, seminar or workshop in Nigeria



Note: TT means total number of teachers, while TNET implies total number of teachers not exposed to training, workshop or seminar. National data is the aggregation of the data for private and public schools. ECCDE implies Early Childhood Care and Development Education, while JSS is Junior Secondary School. Source: compiled by the author from UBEC (2018) data.

4.3 Potential effects of the Retirement Age Act

Teaching is a highly demanding job. It saps the mental energy of teachers which quickly results to loss of physical strength. There are other problems which make teachers get older and become frail quickly. These include large class size, lack of class assistants to relieve main teachers of their burden, and poor pay which prevents a decent life for teachers. The quality of life of teachers in retirement is poor due to their workload during service years, encounter with poverty, and continual suffering in retirement, as most teachers do not have any budget allocation power which they could have benefited from during their career years. Most teachers are tired before retirement, but the imminent retirement poverty prevents those without other means of survival from quitting before the stipulated retirement age. Thus, the extension of retirement age is bound to keep demotivated older teachers in teaching jobs which may have adverse delivery effects on their jobs. This is likely to increase with absenteeism, as this problem is more likely among older and tired teachers. Absenteeism has been identified as a major threat to learning in this part of the world (Bashir *et al.*, 2018). The contribution to student educational outcomes may be less than envisaged gains from keeping older teachers.

Those who graduated their teacher education program thirty-nine years ago can still be in teaching service this year, with the retirement age extension. These set of teachers were not trained with modern technology and digital equipment being used now in many schools. There was no internet during their time and teaching technology was crude. More so, many teachers are not exposed to training in the course of their service. With poor capacity development for teacher (as revealed in Figure 3), it begs to be seen what contribution of older and tired teachers in the teaching service across the land would be. This development will only lead to increased compensation of workers without a complementary value addition. Performance of older workers can be difficult to monitor, as moral hazard will set in after their retirement age extension. This unnecessarily imposes higher cost on the employer, but service from older teachers will most probably not improve.

A uniform and compulsory retirement policy helps eliminate discrimination among workers, improves employment and promotional opportunities among younger workers, and lowers retirement uncertainties (Godson, 1960). Since this retirement age legislation only affects a section of the public service, there is the tendency for those who acquired training in teacher education but got absorbed into other departments in the public service to exploit the new retirement age to remain in the public service. They can do this by transferring their service to

TSC before they reach 35 years in active service or 60 years of age. The implication is that the real teachers will be worse off.

Part of incentives for teachers is to appoint some senior teachers who have served meritoriously as administrative and education district heads. Those who are crossing from other departments of public service can hijack the system to favour themselves. Having been core public servants for some years, they know the rules of public service politics. They are more likely to get appointed into administrative positions and continue to enjoy budgetary and allocative powers over the real teachers who have toiled and moiled in TSC. The real teachers will become more demotivated, demoralised and disenchanted. Furthermore, frivolous granting of tenure and retirement age extension makes governments irresponsible to poor working conditions of workers that demand urgent attention. On the bright side, the older teachers could serve as trainers and mentors for new hires, if they are adequately trained for their jobs. The retirement age extension could give some financial support to older teachers, since they will remain on their jobs for an extended period. This may help them avoid old age poverty, especially those who depend solely on their earnings.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The supply of teachers is a complex interaction between demand and supply factors. Both supply and demand issues in teacher recruitment require distinct policies to promote selection into teacher education and the teaching profession among young jobseekers. The government needs to deploy a better thought-out demand side solution to address the teacher shortage in schools. As shown in Figures 1A to 1C, mere retirement age extension will fail to attract more hands into teaching jobs, as a large number of teachers exit their jobs before the end of their first ten year in teaching service. These figures point to the inadequacy of incentives to drive and sustain people in teaching jobs, as there are deeper issues that have been left unaddressed.

Teachers are essential to educational development. It is vital to attract excellent and trainable teachers into teaching. Nigeria's developmental aspirations will amount to nothing if teachers are not adequately trained and retrained to produce students who can support Nigerian visions. It is doubtful if the *Retirement Age Act* is the magic wand for solving the teacher shortage problem. Figure 2 shows the teachers' attributes, while Figure 3 presents information about the capacity development of teachers. There is a strong reason to believe that teachers who will remain in teaching service till the new retirement age are not likely to be adequately trained

and retrained for their jobs. Meanwhile, many of those presently in teaching should not even be there as they lack the capacity to do the work. Poor capacity development programme for teachers, which requires serious attention, can be a turnoff for many young jobseekers. Teacher recruitment is another major issue. Teaching is not for everybody, and it should not be used as a political settlement. Politics eliminates the competition among those seeking teaching jobs. This partisan intervention has brought many incapable hands into the teaching profession and has lowered the quality of teachers. Thus, recruitment into teaching should be depoliticised. Besides, recruitment should begin with encouraging motivated, talented and brilliant minds to choose teaching jobs.

Teaching jobs are burdensome. Good teachers run away from teaching to avoid the pressure of work. Teaching does not end in schools. Teachers continue working at home. If this workload of teaching is not addressed, it will be difficult to fill many classes and subjects with required teachers. More so, other graduates who do not experience the same burden at work enjoy better fame, access to wealth, and power. Technological innovations exist that can reduce the workload of teachers. Attendance, tests, assessment of tests, drawing of objects, and so on can be handled using simple technology. However, investment in educational technologies could be better. The government needs to invest in technologies and provide relevant training to teachers to handle technological equipment to lessen their burden. There is a need to improve the working environment and conditions of teachers. Many schools lack requisite facilities. Where they exist, they have become dilapidated and are threatening the continued existence of school members. If this situation is not improved, best hands will not accept teaching jobs.

There is a need for teachers to have an excellent work-life balance. This issue needs to be given prominent attention when considering hiring problems in teaching jobs. Teachers want an excellent work-life balance like their colleagues in other professions, whether in college or in the workplace. The burden of teaching jobs that teachers endure makes it unattractive to younger generations. Teachers' work-life balance has a significant effect on their mental health and general wellbeing. Many teachers go on retirement with one form of occupational injury or the other, as teaching jobs are replete with occupational hazards. Stress and burnout among teachers are significant obstacles to fulfilling their responsibilities. Teaching must be organised enjoyably with a lot of flexibility. Increasing class size requires the hiring of teaching assistants, who will probably become teachers, to lessen the burden on teachers.

Besides, there is a need to support teachers through school leadership. Various educational hierarchies such as the Ministry of Education (ME), SUBEB, and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA), need to show support to teachers because of the challenges they face in recent times. Schools are no longer what they used to be, as students' behaviours have changed in response to global developments. The behaviour of students places a severe demand on teachers in performing their duties. This issue is capable of discouraging entry into teaching (Sims & Jerrim, 2020; Omoruyi & Osunde, 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Therefore, educational authorities are under an obligation to build a support system around the teaching profession through mentoring and encouraging cooperation and collaboration among teachers (Martinez & McAbee, 2020). Moreover, teaching jobs should dignify those who accept them. Apart from salary, the nonpecuniary benefits of teachers are factors in attracting teachers, especially those that accept rural postings. The compensating differentials should be attractive to pull into and sustain more graduates in teaching jobs.

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