

Teacher Professionalism in Times of Rapid Global Change

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1. Background

Teachers form a very important component in any educational system. The teaching profession is the largest in the world. In 1960, there were 12 million teachers. The number grew to 18 million in 1968, to over 29 million in 1978 and more than 50 million in 2000 [Ogundare, 2009]. In Nigeria, statistics on teachers reveal that there were 599, 172 primary school teachers in 2005. Out of these, only 299, 386, representing 49.97 percent were qualified teachers. At the secondary school level, there were 144, 413 teachers. Of this figure, 16.50 percent were graduates without teaching qualifications [FME, 2007].

Due to the growing population of school age children in Nigeria, teachers [either qualified or not qualified] continue to be in great demand. Table 1 shows that in four out seven years there were shortfalls between the demand for and supplies of primary school teachers in Nigeria. These shortfalls reflect more on the low capacity of the teaching labour market to absorb the available trained teachers than the inability of training institutions to meet the demand for teachers. The paradox of teaching in Nigeria is that there are many unemployed trained teachers side by side with an educational system that is filled with so many unqualified personnel.

Table 1: Trend in Supply of and Demand for Primary School Teachers in Nigeria

YEAR	NUMBER OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS		SHORTFALL OR EXCESS	
	Actual Supply	Expected Demand	Shortfall	Excess
1999	432096	447683	15587	
2000	446405	478786	32381	
2001	488164	476031		12133
2002	491751	495152	3401	
2003	591041	642620	51379	
2004	597532	534888		62644
2005	599172	552886		46286

Source: FME [2007]

Based on the foregoing background, the questions for this study are: [1] Can teaching be professionalised like Law, Medicine, Engineering, and so on where there are professional standards involving specialized skills, competencies, or characteristics expected of a member

of these highly trained professions? [2] To what extent can teacher professionalism stop the infiltration of unqualified teachers into the teaching profession in Nigeria? [3] Considering the rapidly changing global environment, how can professionalism improve teaching and other classroom practices?

2. Historical Foundation of Teacher Professionalism

The first issue on whether teaching can be professionalized [to involve specialized skills and highly trained experts] like Law, Medicine and Engineering will be addressed in this section. Historically, the belief that teaching is a profession underlies teacher education principles and practice. Since the time of the renaissance of knowledge in the early post-industrial era, the education of the teacher has rested on the three pillars of professionalism; namely: professional standards, professional ethics and professional competence. This is contrary to the earlier belief, before the evolution of professional teachers, in which virtually everyone was regarded as a teacher as long as he or she was able to influence others to learn. By implication, a farmer who teaches his children how to cultivate ridges on the farm is a teacher, a mother who teaches her child how to sit, how to walk, how to talk and how to dress is a teacher. At this early period, people talked more about teachers as being born than being trained or made.

In times gone by, the Greek Sophists were the first set of professional teachers. These groups of 'learned' teachers used to go from place to place teaching the people and charging some money for rendering their services. They groomed their students in rhetoric, which is the art of public speaking. Socrates (469-399 B.C.) in his time was noted for going from one market place to another teaching, however, without, charging any money for the services rendered. His teaching was directed at awakening people's consciousness rather than accepting tradition without questioning. Socrates saw teaching as an instrument for modelling the future of the state. With the conquest of Greece by the Romans about the middle of the third century B.C., Greek education and civilization began to influence the Roman Empire. For instance, educated Greek slaves were made to serve as 'teachers' and mentors for the Roman children. During this time, the concept of 'teacher' spread and a kind of hierarchy was introduced to typify teachers at one level of education as different from those at others. The Roman primary school teacher was referred to as the "Literator", while the Roman grammar school teacher was called 'Ludi Magista'. Nevertheless, following the diversification of educational institutions over time, teachers' titles have changed tremendously, some of which include, 'Master, Tutor, Lecturer, Reader and Professor'. The general conception is that irrespective of the name, lecturers and professors are teachers, for they all perform the basic function of teaching [In fact, many countries including Nigeria, have made policies, although still being faced with many challenges, regarding professional development, especially, on-the-job, of teachers at the tertiary level].

Enhanced sophistication, salaries and the status of teachers have always been a subject of discussion as far as teacher professionalism is concerned. For instance, during the time of Plato,

as more people began to appreciate the role of teachers in society, he advocated that teachers should be handsomely rewarded. According to Plato's educational design, the highest officer in the state should be the Minister of Education. In his view, education should be a socialization process to make an individual righteous, truthful and good. To achieve this, he opined that all schools should be adequately staffed with trained teachers who are paid salaries commensurate with the services they render. With the emergence of universities and other diversifications of schools during the medieval period, teaching then became more complicated and the status of the teacher more enhanced. It then became more evident that a teacher cannot perform up to expectation unless he or she is trained for the job. This trend has continued until the present time, in that pre-service training is now a pre-requisite for any professional teacher.

Teacher professionalism evolved from the simple to complex with time. It started with the erroneous belief that no training is required to demonstrate professionalism in teaching. Between the 19th and 21st centuries, when people generally believed in moralistic education, the component of professional ethics became a standard for measuring a professional teacher. It was commonly assumed that man is a moral agent who knows the right thing and possesses the ability to do the right thing rightly or conscientiously. As a result, conscientiousness became one of the features for measuring a good teacher. In this period, teacher education was expected to promote, preserve and propagate a culture of thoroughness in material [academic soundness] and method [pedagogy]. After this era, John Dewey championed progressive education in which knowledge is seen as an ever-changing concept. Thus, teacher education moved from the ethical dimension to the cognitive facet. Teacher development was expected to encourage original, imaginative, resourceful and critical thinking. Teachers were to be developed as creators of culture, and learners were expected to respond to rapidly changing knowledge by quickly recognizing and tapping it for the benefit of the society and that of individuals. The teacher's task should involve the organization of the class as a democratic problem-solving group through scientific and flexible teaching methods. Based on this general belief, resourcefulness, creativity or critical thinking became the second factor for measuring a good teacher.

Around the 1950s and early 1960s, some thinkers such as Ausubel [cited in Ogundare, 2009] added the dimension of professional competence to teacher development. This school of thought proposed that teachers should be trained to think like a scholar who is highly competent in teaching the subject [material] and pedagogical practices [method]. By implication, teacher education involved the inspectorate in which quality assurance of the inputs, teacher development processes and classroom practice were advocated to ensure acquisition of the right skills among pre-service trainees.

Between 1960 and 1970, the concept of professional competence became widened beyond academic competence to incorporate the self competence of the teacher. All the debates around this period cumulated in what was known as "Combs' Personalistic Education" in which teacher education is to help a prospective teacher to establish self competence or the ability to understand self and to learn to understand others in the community. To this end, prospective teachers should be trained to develop social, cultural and professional [methodological]

skills. Teacher education was expected to lay more emphasis on practical engagement between classroom practices and realistic problems in the neighbourhood. Consequently, prospective teachers should be equipped with human skills [such as communication, leadership, motivational, relational skills] for service delivery. The issue of community spirit was extended to the language of instruction and it was believed that prospective teachers should be trained to develop and use indigenous language, materials and knowledge as part of classroom practice.

Recent debates [from 2000 to date] address the issue of commitment to the teaching profession. To this effect, according to Ogundare [2009], Alexander and Oliver proposed the “Professional Commitment Model” which anticipates four stages of professional development for teachers. The first stage of pre-training assumes that everything the teacher has learned before the training is a part of teacher development. The second stage of pre-service development comprises the formal teacher training at the university level. The third stage of induction comprises what the teacher learns from practice. The fourth stage of in-service teacher professionalism consists of all formal training organised by institutions or individuals for the professional improvement of teachers

3. State of Teacher Professionalism in Nigeria

All of the above ideas seem to have influenced the philosophy of teacher professional development in all countries of the world. For instance, in Nigeria a professional teacher is expected to display the “5Cs” of conscientiousness, critical thinking, competence [in subject matters and pedagogy], community spirit, and commitment to professional standards and best practices [Figure. 1]

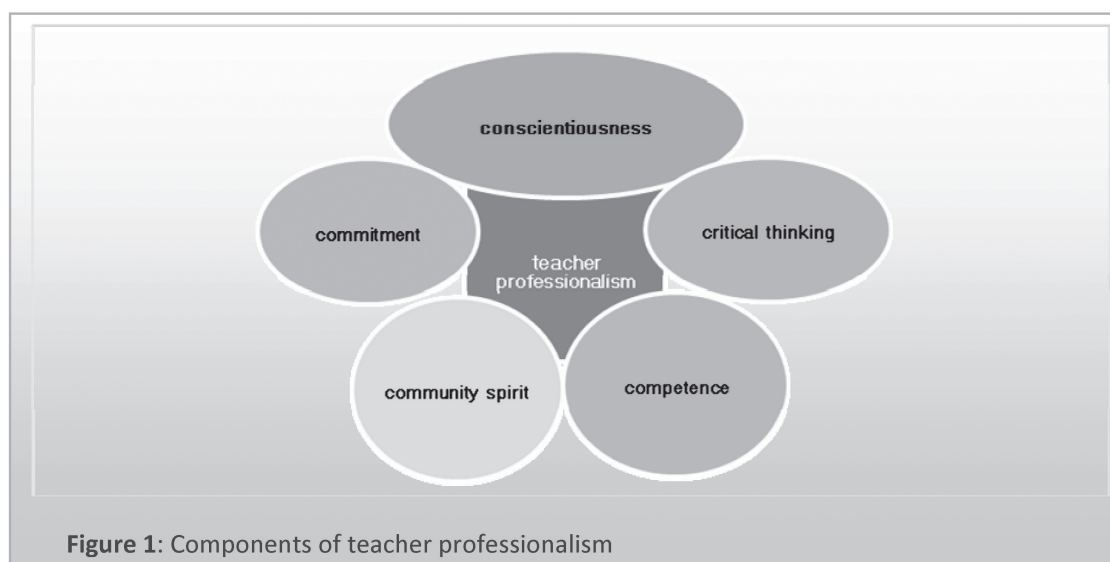


Figure 1: Components of teacher professionalism

These are entrenched in the National Policy on Education as the five specific objectives of teacher education in the country.

As stipulated in the National Policy on Education [FRN, 2004] the objectives of teacher education in Nigeria include: [1] To produce highly motivated, *conscientious* and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system; [2] *To encourage further spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers*; [3] To help teachers fit into the social life of the *community* and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives; [4] To provide [*competent*] teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the whole world; and [5] To enhance teacher's *commitment* to the teaching profession. Figure 2 reveals that all the objectives of teacher education in Nigeria appear to be far from realised. This effectiveness would definitely translate to a lowering of the status of teacher professionalism in Nigeria

Figure 2: Characterisation of a Professional Teacher in Nigeria

SN	A professional teacher is:	Ideal Indicators	Reality as perceived by the author
1	Conscientious	careful, thorough, meticulous, painstaking, reliable, diligent, hard-working, assiduous	Owing to economic and historical reasons, a Nigerian teacher is seemingly unmotivated, lackadaisical, anecdotal and lethargic about professional ethics
2	Creative or Critical	Original, imaginative, inspired, inventive, resourceful, ingenious, innovative	Based on the bureaucratic mode of training and practice, a Nigerian teacher is mostly traditional, uninspired and unimaginative. The teacher is expected to lead children to identify and solve problems and learn how to create knowledge
3	Community related	Contextual, related, appropriate	Partly as a result of the theory-based training, a typical Nigerian teacher is mostly unconnected with the neighbourhood
4	Competent	Knowledgeable, well-informed, skilled, experienced, expert, proficient in courses in education, teaching subjects, general studies and teaching practice	Owing to the nature of the training and practice, especially since the late 1980s, an average Nigerian teacher seems to be half-baked, lacks mentorship and is an amateur in pedagogy
5	Committed	Dedicated, loyal, devoted, steadfast, unswerving, faithful	Partly because of the admission process that allows education to be a dumping ground for "cheaters", there are practicing teachers who are uninterested, unattached and apathetic to the teaching profession

Source: the elements of a professional teacher are extracted from the five objectives of teacher education as stated in the National Policy on Education [FRN, 2004], indicators are dictionary meanings. **Note:** SN means Serial Number

4. Teacher Professionalism in a New Global Context

The global context in which we live and do businesses has started experiencing the following changes: *There has been heightened economic, social, political and environmental uncertainties that have led to more concern for people than for performance or productivity.* Following the September 11 incidence, stocks and sentiments descended, layoffs began in earnest. There was a serious economic *uncertainty* affecting all professionals. In the midst of this uncertainty coupled with grief, anguish and tragedy unlike before the incidence, people in the United States and around the world began to come to each other's aid. They lit candles, held vigils, mourned, marched, sent money, gave blood, donated food and clothing, and went to religious services. Following the September 11 incidence in America, the environment that was earlier charged with "greed theory" suddenly changed and became driven by "good theory". Instead of putting work and wage at the top of their agendas, people started putting warmth, family and friends in the number one spot. There was a drastic shift in paradigm from coldness and competition to compassion and collaboration. There is a change from laying emphasis on productivity and profit to people first in a perilous time. How does this affect teacher professionalism? The global concern for a learner's welfare [economic, social, emotional, security and environmental] became as important as that for learning achievement in measuring a professional teacher.

There is increased global connectedness. This shift from laying emphasis on profit to people and from coldness to compassion came in the midst of a digital revolution when the Internet, instant messages, pagers and mobile phones have connected the world into a global village. Contrary to the expectation however, the electronic global village suddenly become a place of exploitation where the Internet has been exploited for its commercial capabilities such as buying, billing, bartering, and brokering instead of sharing and supporting. The global village has surprisingly become a place where Information and Communication Technology [ICT] has been used to concentrate power in the hands of those with the central servers than to give power away to the under-served people. The Internet has become an instrument of unethical practices by the "Yahoo boys". ICT has also become a master ruling the life of many young people rather than become a servant to be used for instant messages, pagers, mobile phones and electronic mails. Although, data collected from 17,565 children, aged 5–12 years, shows that the relationship between television viewing and achievement was statistically non-significant [Stevens, Barnard & To 2009], there is a strong proposition that technology involving the use of electronic learning and teaching processes can replace the most precious human component of learning and teaching which is face-to-face-contact. The challenge this global change in the technological environment poses to teacher professionalism is how to train teachers to manage the technology as they use to control the classroom environment for effective all-round learning.

Another global change is that there is an increasing recognition of knowledge and social capital as twin production factors. The revolution in Information and Communication Technology has also revolutionized society in the areas of rapid creation, storage and spread

of knowledge. Today, knowledge [in the form of information, data, facts, awareness, and understanding] has replaced land and financial capital as the new economic resource such that knowledge-added is the new value-added. There is a new awareness that accumulation of intellectual power by teachers working in isolation is no longer adequate. In spite of the fact that those with educational degrees have higher incomes and more opportunity than those without educational degrees, there is the recognition of the collective value of human networks or interdisciplinary teamwork among people who have working knowledge of each other and what they could and would do for each other. Thus, professional teachers are now expected to possess and apply both cognitive and relational skills in their businesses.

More than ever before, there is an increasing awareness that the global economy has come to stay as a global order. All the trans-border movements in knowledge and information have been complemented by globalization which means the opening of borders, breaking of boundaries and building of bridges. Today's world is characterised by uncertainty, connectedness, concerns for people, information and communication, speed, knowledge and the global economy. It is a world in which space is getting smaller with geographical boundaries being broken by rapid advances in information and communication technologies allowing rapid global movement of ideas, thoughts, inventions, innovations, fashions and technical products. The 21st century teacher is therefore, expected to be professionally prepared to function and fit into this world in which rapid changes demand that teachers stay alert through lifelong learning and adaptation. The emergence of the knowledge economy has created some challenges for today's teachers. The customary claim that a good teacher is born and not made, runs contrary to today's idea of teacher professionalism which rests on expertise and the demonstration of learned skills by a highly proficient teacher who knows how to teach in an unusual manner as he or she faces changes in the environment. This is different from the usual "talking and chalking", "instructing and correcting", as well as "transmitting information and conveying codified knowledge" to a predictable set of listeners. More than the usual talking and chalking, the professional teacher should know how to handle teaching as 'teaching' in a down-to-business manner in various learning situations to handle learners with different cultural backgrounds and readiness levels. Today's teacher is a globalized teacher who is not limited by the boundaries learners' willingness and ability direct their own learning and provide their own motivational reinforcement. Today's teachers are not limited by the barriers of culture and knowledge codification since teachers of today are expected to possess multicultural, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary skills.

Today, capital easily flows from one country to another, creating a wavelike economic instability and global disequilibrium. In fact, a disaster in New York's financial market quickly and easily affects economic lives elsewhere in the world. The global economic downturn logically implies a global workforce in which the employers and the employees are redefining social contracts. During the recent economic meltdown, many employers shed jobs, downsized or streamlined staff, and increasingly mainstreamed a contingent workforce. The embargo on employment of the teaching workforce increased. More teachers have become self-employed

by choice. Student teachers were told to expect to change careers many times in their lives, and becoming an entrepreneur was a status sought by millions of trained teachers. It seems the end has come to the days of a stable and homogeneous teaching workforce with a harmonized salary scale. The negative effects of this new culture of work on salary, status, satisfaction and the sustenance of teachers cannot be overemphasized.

With increased application of global market mechanisms, there is a wider acceptance of privatization and increased reduction in public expenditure on education. As generally conceived, globalization has also been complemented by privatization in the sense that the wall of bureaucracy [public service] has to give way to free enterprise. Past regulations and legal barriers against private practices and differential wage determination were demolished and various private institutions of learning now pay differential wages to teachers of the same qualification and experience. The days of unionization seem to be coming to an end especially, as more private institutions of learning emerge with the policy of no unionization. Most of the newly trained teachers seriously question whether institutions of learning are going to be loyal to them in the face of so much unemployment that has left teachers at the mercy of their employers. Both public and private employers of teachers expect teachers to be loyal and committed, yet these teachers do not experience life on the job as a reciprocal relationship. It seems that the notions of loyalty and job security have gone and a certain distrust and wariness have crept into the teaching profession. The issue at stake is how to attract the best candidates to teaching jobs.

The digital revolution and globalization have brought a new business culture in which people talk about doing business in an unusual manner, doing business as business, and making sure that people are down to business. People talk about working smartly instead of working hard. The “SMART theory” becomes the order of business such that the “hurry-up culture” or the “speed and ‘accuracy’ culture” appears to be replacing the “slow and steady culture”. Today, we talk about a smart classroom, smart board, smart library, smart objectives, instant messages, instant responses, chalk-less classrooms, etc. All these have their economic advantages but they could also lead to having less quality time for teaching, learning and the learners. Unfortunately, teachers grow and are groomed under this culture of “speed”. Moreover, the learners of today usually turn to the “smart teachers” on the Internet for information and guidance. The issue is how teachers can be prepared to value speed and accuracy in the environment when parents and society do not have quality time to attend to the education and training of their children. Moreover, how do we train a teacher to pay attention to unmotivated learners who do not have time for learning through the face-to-face approach but are constantly in contact with their “Web teachers”? Furthermore, how do we train teachers to customize teaching and learning to fit an environment of speed where everybody is rushing up? Most importantly, how do we train teachers to balance their time between child development [concern for the child] and self development [concern for performance] in an environment where there is a mad rush for resources? These questions will be addressed later in this paper.

There is an appearance of spiritual capital and resurgence of value education: In this

perilous time, several researchers are now probing the link between spiritual capital and scholastic achievement, creativity and innovation. The world of business is not left out in the search for spiritual solutions to business problems. According to Kouzes and Posner [2002: xxii], “whether you call it spirituality, religion, faith, or soul, there’s clearly a trend toward a greater openness to the spiritual side within the walls of business.” Drawing on the literature on spirituality and education, Tisdell [2007] assumes that spirituality is about: (1) a connection to what is discussed as the Life-force, God, a higher power or purpose, Great Mystery; (2) ultimate meaning-making and a sense of wholeness, healing, and the interconnectedness of all things; (3) the ongoing development of one’s identity (including one’s cultural identity and the professional identity of teachers) moving toward what many authors refer to as greater “authenticity;” (4) how people construct knowledge through largely unconscious and symbolic processes manifested in image, symbol, music, and other expressions of creativity which are often cultural. (5) In addition, spirituality is not the same as religion, though for some people who are religious, there are elements in spirituality that overlap with religion; (6) spirituality is always present though often unacknowledged in the learning environment; and finally, (7) spiritual experiences happen by surprise. Nigerians respect spirituality but the curriculum of schools pretends to be devoid of it. The National Policy on Education recognizes the use of indigenous language as a medium of instruction especially at the lower levels of education in the country but schools and their teachers do not implement this. Parents measure the mental development of their children through fluency in the English Language to the detriment of the development of the thought process and enhancement of meaningfulness. The use of indigenous language enhances the development of one’s identity (including one’s cultural identity) moving toward what many authors refer to as greater “authenticity;” how people construct knowledge through largely unconscious and symbolic processes, manifested in image, symbol, music, and other expressions of creativity which are often cultural. The challenge is how to train teachers to understand spirituality in its real sense and be able to promote, preserve and propagate it in an environment where imperialism has made parents ignorant of the cultural and educational value of indigenous language and knowledge.

There is a strategic shift from conservation to the rational management of natural resources. The world seems to be experiencing natural disasters, depletion of the ozone layer, air pollution, environmental degradation, hurricanes, and conflicts. Schools in modern societies often have been called upon to solve various social problems. Since 1921, proponents of conservation education made concerted efforts to infuse the idea and practices of conservation into the elementary and secondary school settings. Above all, concerned educators made efforts to integrate conservation education and citizenship education in order to produce “a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to help solve these problems, and motivated to work toward their solutions.” At the tertiary level, the conservation movement continued to shape the subsequent development of environmental educational programmes such as Environmental Management Education, Resources Use Education, and Environmental Quality Education during the 1960s, which were

aimed at promoting the rational management of natural resources and assumed responsibilities for training environmental professionals. Since the Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education held in 1977, there has been a consensus among educators that environmental education should take into consideration economic, political, technological, cultural, moral and aesthetic environment of the child. The National Environmental Education Act of 1990 in the United States represents an undiminished effort to encourage postsecondary students to pursue careers related to managing the environment. Furthermore, Huey-li [2006] argued that because the rational management of environmental resources can no longer be confined within national or regional boundaries in the age of globalization, planetary management has emerged as a popular agenda of the contemporary environmental movement. The issue of curriculum renewal has come out clearly regarding how to train the teacher beyond the traditional knowledge of nature study to become informed and proficient on the rational management of environmental resources for the purpose of sustainable development.

There is an increasing emotional crisis and calls for emotional intelligence. This heightened emotional crisis necessarily suggests emotion management. After a comprehensive review, Oplatka [2007] observed that in recent years, the role of emotions in school has been receiving increasing attention in the education literature. According to him, emotion is a product of four elements that people usually experience at the same time: (a) appraisals of a situation, (b) changes in bodily sensations, (c) the free or inhibited display of expressive gesture, and (d) a cultural label applied to specific constellations of the first three elements. Oplatka further described emotional states as encompassing both the general mood or frame of mind regarding happiness and sadness, and the more specific emotional state, such as joy, pride, fear, anger, disgust, anxiety, fright, guilt, shame, pride, relief, hope, love, and compassion that result from specific occurrences in the environment or via empathy. Issues on emotion management among teachers include [a] the association between the *culture of teaching* and *teachers' emotional experience* within *parent-teacher interactions*; [b] the link between teacher emotion and [c] teacher beliefs and the expressions of a wide variety of emotions [guilt, anger, frustration, enthusiasm, etc] in teaching.

As far as the culture of teaching is concerned, Oplatka [2007] further found that emotions [especially caring] play an important role in teacher-student relationships. The caring orientation has been explored in terms of teachers' relationships with students as personal rather than impersonal and bureaucratic. In classroom teaching, caring takes the shape of encouraging dialogue, exhibiting sensitivity to students' needs and interests, and providing rich and meaningful materials and activities, among other responsive pedagogical strategies. With respect to the emotional experience of teachers as related to job performance, the literature reviewed by Oplatka reveals that teachers have been found to experience both positive and negative emotions at work. Teachers spontaneously referred to emotions of joy, wonder, and excitement associated with the teaching culture as satisfying. Nevertheless, teachers have been observed to experience negative emotions at work too; frustration, disappointment, anxiety, anger, fear, embarrassment, and sadness. The issue is how to train teachers to foster a positive

teaching culture and control the frustration, anxiety and fear associated with the teaching profession.

There are increased global health risks. Closely related to emotional breakdown is the increase in global health risks. HIV/AIDS, the bird flu, animal flu and drug-resistant malaria have increased health risks at a time when the hearts of men are breaking from fear and anxiety. Several people including children now suffer from stress-related terminal diseases such as renal failure, cancer and heart attacks. The modern teacher is expected to understand beyond the traditional physical and health education to have caregiver to give first aid and, if necessary, refer health cases to the appropriate health facilities.

5. Pedagogical Implications of Recent Global Changes

Some contemporary soft skills are needed by teachers to function in today’s global world. It is a long-held belief that teachers-in-training learn solely to teach others. This belief was appropriate before the current global changes. Today, teachers are not only trained to teach, but are expected to do more teaching by mastering hard and soft skills that make them functional in a rapidly changing multicultural environment. Secondly, the main goal of teacher education is no longer the certificate or diploma but inculcation in learning-to-learn skills. Thus, knowledge of something is no longer as important as the deep understanding and application of it. Thirdly, teacher professional education is expected to combine the inculcation of “knowing yourself” or developing the best in you through intrapersonal skills by knowing and getting along with learners, teachers, parents, the community and policymakers using interpersonal skills [Figure 3].

Figure 3: Changes in Teacher Professional Competence Resulting from Global Changes

Source of change	Traditional Hard Skills	Contemporary Soft Skills Required
Organizational capital	Cognitive intelligence	Emotional intelligence
Spiritual capital	Self expression [bringing hands and heads to work]	Character or value formation [bringing hearts to work]
Social capital	Logical and Computational reasoning for problem analysis	Intrapersonal and Interpersonal reasoning
Human capital	Manipulative and pedagogical skills	Lifelong learning
Knowledge capital	Conceptual skills to generate ideas, inventions and innovations	Perseverance to monitor ideas, inventions and innovation from the inception to the market

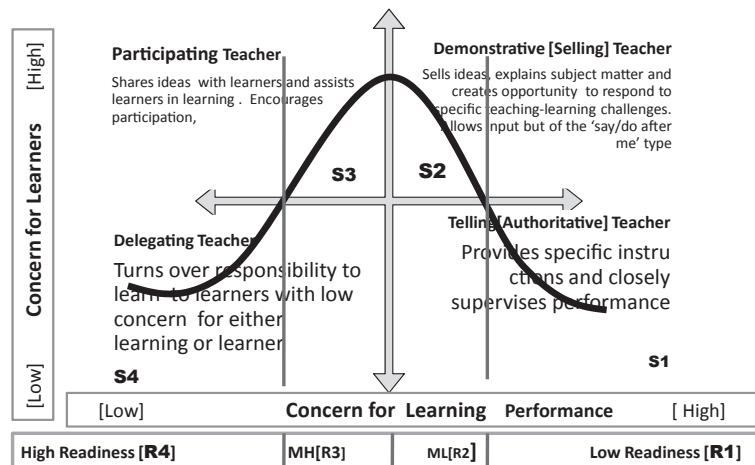
Source: Adapted from Obanya [2010]

More flexible and sophisticated teaching skills are required in this rapidly changing global world. As a way of improving the professional competence of teachers in response to the needs of a globalized-knowledge economy, Obanya [2010] proposed that professional teaching should now emphasize the qualitative transformation of the learner and therefore, should be built around

the principles of transformational pedagogy. To this end, he defined five levels of professional teaching as dictatorial, didactic, demonstrative, interactive and creative. At the lowest first level of professionalism, the dictatorial teacher, being an all-knowing individual, stuffs the ‘empty heads’ of learners [I don’t count this type as being professional, rather this is a quack]. At level two, the didactic teacher, having learnt the formal pedagogical rules, follows them blindly. At level three, the demonstrative teacher allows learners to have input but only of the ‘say/do after me’ type. At the fourth level of professionalism, the interactive teacher encourages students’ participation, but still ‘in-the-box thinking’ type. At the highest level of professionalism, the creative teacher creates responsiveness to specific teaching-learning challenges. While this hierarchical grading provides clear information about various approaches to teaching, it gives the impression that one style [say creative teaching] is superior to another [say dictatorial teaching]. This hierarchical arrangement ignores obvious variation in learning readiness among learners in various local and international communities in which today’s teachers are to function.

Today’s teachers are expected to be flexible to adapt to changes in learners’ readiness. To do this, they need to be equipped with all kinds of professional teaching styles and be able to utilize the right style at the right time to the right audience and in the right place [Fig.4].

Figure 4: Situational Teaching Styles for Global Change



By matching the readiness level of learners with teachers’ style, it can be seen that R1 corresponds with S1, R2 corresponds with S2, R3 corresponds with S3 and R4 corresponds with S4. That is, when the readiness level of learners is generally low [R1], a real professional teacher would adopt the telling style [S1]. This is because, on average, this set of students might not be able to direct their own learning and provide their own reinforcement without provision of specific instructions and close supervision to ensure learning effectiveness. The role of the professional teacher at this point is to stand in front of the class as an authority to tell them the direction. However, when the learners’ readiness shifts up to moderately low [R2], the

professional teacher correspondingly shifts to selling style [S2]. In this case, the teacher's role changes to that of a team leader. The teacher stands out at the centre of the class to sell his or her ideas to the students as team members, encourages them to clarify issues that are not clear to them, stimulates them to supply supplementary information and helps them to bring out the best in them. Furthermore, when the learners' readiness level rises to moderately high, in which case they are now nearly capable of self-directed learning, the professional teacher changes his or her style to a participative and involving one [S3]. In this case the role of the teacher becomes that of active participant and facilitator in the learning process. The teacher shares ideas with students and facilitates leaning activities as if he or she is standing among equals. Lastly, when the level of learners' readiness changes from moderately high to high [at this stage, learners have grown to become capable of directing their own learning and reinforcing sustainable learning], the professional teacher changes his or her style to reflect the learners' readiness level which is now high. Since most of the students are now able to direct their learning on their own and provide their own reinforcement without much assistance, the teacher could turn over responsibility [delegating] to teach and learn to the students without any risk of poor task performance; thus, empowering the learners to learn how to learn. The role of the teacher here is more or less like that of a passive observer watching an active team as they play their own game.

In the end, a group of learners who started with low learning readiness could be transformed from a low to high readiness level using the appropriate teaching style in each of the four stages. Using this approach, a particular style is not seen as being either the best or the worst in all situations. The appropriate style to be adopted would therefore, depend on the readiness level of the learners. This situational pedagogy is particularly suitable in Africa where owing to the poor background of learners and poor preparation for transition from home to schools, most African children enter schools with a low level of learning readiness. With the emergence of a borderless teaching culture, real professional teachers are expected to be trained in situational pedagogy to function in all situations be it in Africa or in Europe.

In a study by Hersey, Angelini and Caracushansky [cited in Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2002], an attempt was made to compare the learning effectiveness scores of students who attended a course in which a conventional teacher-student relationship prevailed [control subgroups] with the scores of students who attended a course in which a Situational Teaching Approach was applied by the same teacher [experimental subgroups]. In the control group classes, lectures prevailed, but group discussions, audiovisual classes, and other participative resources were also used. In the experimental classes, the readiness level of students [willingness and ability to direct their own learning and provide their own reinforcement] was developed over time by a systematic shift in teaching style.

The teaching style started at S1 [high concern for learning achievement but low concern for learners], with the teacher in front of the class lecturing. Then the teaching style moved to S2 [high concern for learning achievement and high concern for the learner], with the teacher directing the conversation of a group sitting in a circle. Thereafter, the teaching style

moved to S3 [high concern for learner but low concern for learning achievement], with the teacher participating in group discussions as a supportive, but nondirective, group member. Finally, the teaching style moved to S4 [low concern for learners and low concern for learning achievement], with the teacher only involved when asked by the class. Student readiness developed slowly at first, with a gradual decrease in teacher direction and increase in teacher encouragement. As students demonstrated their ability not only to assume more and more responsibility for directing their learning but also to provide their own reinforcement [in terms of self-gratification], a decrease in teacher socio-emotional support accompanied a continual decrease in teacher direction. At the end of two experiments using this design, it was found that learners who were exposed to a situational teaching style not only showed higher performance, but they were also observed to have a higher level of enthusiasm, morale, and motivation, as well as less lateness and absenteeism. By these findings, this situational teaching pedagogy has therefore, been proved to be highly transformational.

Teacher professionalism in Africa needs a more intense search for meaning. Teaching as a vocation or a profession seems to have lost its prestige and meaning in Africa. What we observe today is that teachers in most African countries bring their heads and hands to work instead of bringing their hearts or souls to work. This was not so some decades ago when the missionaries brought teacher education to the continent of Africa. The condition and status of teachers started losing meaning under the Colonial periods [British, French, Portuguese, Spanish and German]. At first, teachers were chosen from the cream of society. Teachers were the best students. Teacher education was characterized by academic and pedagogical rigour, hard work and self discipline. The people looked up to them as role models. They played multiple roles in the society. They were the teachers, the preachers, the health officers, public letter writers and change agents. Teacher professional support [supervision] was strong. “For these reasons, and also because job opportunities were limited, most young people aspired to be teachers” [Obanya, 2010:25]. By early 1950s, the preparation for self government in most African countries necessitated an expansion of public services in most African countries. By the 1960s, as countries in Africa gained independence and the emergence of more white-collar jobs with attractive pay packets, employment opportunities widened for the educated, the value, hitherto, attached to teaching fell and there was human capital flight to non-teaching professions. As rightly observed by Obanya [2010], teacher education [broad education of a total teacher-heads, hands and hearts] became replaced with teacher training [narrow training of the heads and hands], especially in the British territories. The lowering of teacher status continued unabated from the colonial era, through the period of the United Nation-driven conferences on education in Africa, to the eras of educational reforms- the World Bank’s [IMF] ‘evidence-based’ public expenditure reduction in education and- unplanned expansion and unmet demands for education leading to teacher education crash programmes that really crashed the teaching profession by taking teachers out of teaching and teaching out of teachers.

6. Concluding Remark

Considering the fact that no education system can develop above the competence level of its teachers, as long as African governments fail to enhance the economic, social, academic knowledge, and pedagogical, emotional and organizational prominence of teachers relative to what exists in other professions such as Medicine, Law and Engineering, the teaching profession will not be able to attract the best brains to the profession. Those in the system will not have enough motivation and capability to perform business as business. The commitment of the existing teachers to get down to the business of teaching as recommended in this paper will not be complete. All other efforts at enhancing the quality of teaching, bringing teachers back to the classroom and making teachers to teach as professionals might not yield the expected results.

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