

**Professional Development of Academic Staff and Quality Teaching in
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Annotation: This study examined the professional development of academic staff and quality teaching in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State. The study adopted three (3) research questions and objectives, which guided the study. The study used system theory by Von Bertalanffy and Godson Hearn (1970) and behavioural science theory by Chester Barnard (1938) as the theoretical frameworks. A descriptive research design and purposive sampling technique were used. The paper utilised both primary and secondary sources of data collection. A thematic content analysis was used for non-numeric data analysis. The findings of the study showed that professional development of teaching staff using workshops and conferences has a significant impact on quality teaching in tertiary institutions. It also revealed that professional development of teachers improved their teaching quality and gave room to inculcate trending issues. Therefore, this helped to expunge obsolete teaching strategies and also helped to impact knowledge effectively on the students. The study recommended that the education ministry should advocate for academic staff professional development to grow their educational system. Through this, quality teaching and improved productivity in the educational sector will be enhanced.

Keywords: Professional Development, Academic Staff, Quality Teaching.

Introduction

The desire for more demanding and in-depth student learning has grown. Therefore, educational practitioners, academics, and policymakers have started to more systematically consider ways to increase teachers' learning, including recruitment, preparation, and support, as well as mentorship and other leadership possibilities (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner, 2017). This is because enhanced modes of instruction are required to create 21st-century student abilities such as mastery of difficult subject, critical thinking, complex problem solving, effective communication and teamwork, and autonomy. In turn, instructors need chances to develop and perfect the pedagogies necessary to teach these abilities. Oluremi (2013) said that in the educational sector, high-quality instruction is the most crucial aspect in boosting student success. Through professional development, educators or instructors demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and increase their efficacy. Professional development is seen as an instrument for fostering the development and success of pupils.

At order for teaching personnel in higher institutions and schools to be as successful as possible, they must continue to increase their knowledge and abilities in order to adopt the most effective educational techniques. However, it is a major purpose of a teacher to assist pupils in reaching the greatest levels of learning. According to Stronge, Fletcher, and Villar (2004), the success of a teacher may be judged by instructional delivery, evaluation of student learning, the learning

environment, and the instructor's personal attributes. They stated that these were only achievable for those with a professional orientation. When the professional emphasis is no longer present, these structures become illusory. When discussing professional concentration as a teacher, four things spring to mind. It includes distraction, professional growth, interpersonal connections, and timeliness.

Professional development is vital for teacher retention and classroom improvement (American Association of Physics Teachers, 2009). Professional growth is necessary to guarantee successful teaching. A successful educator enhances his or her teaching abilities and knowledge continuously and persistently. A teacher whose professional focus has been lost if he or she stays on the job for years without pursuing professional development via seminars, conferences, and workshops. The majority of a teacher's abilities and knowledge should not be obtained during pre-service training, but rather during in-service training.

Sadly, many instructors must juggle an overwhelming amount of unexpected topics, including classroom management, teaching, curriculum, school culture and operations, test preparation and administration, state requirements, parent relations, and relationships with other teachers. They may develop counterproductive habits if left alone. However, with additional help, instructors learn more effective strategies to apply to everyday issues. Teachers that get additional assistance via professional development are also positioned to become excellent educators. Numerous school systems offer mentors and induction programmes for instructors deficient in certain areas. However, in many areas, such programmes are necessary for teachers to receive a professional licence. Moreover, research demonstrates that new instructors who got intense mentorship had a substantial impact on student success (Stronge, Fletcher, & Villar, 2004; Serpell & Bozeman, 1999).

Despite its intention, professional development does not always result in professional learning. Fullan (2007) believes that external methods to instructional enhancement are seldom "strong, focused, or persistent enough to change the classroom and school's culture." Thus, a rising number of rigorous studies demonstrate that well-designed professional development may, when implemented successfully, result in desired improvements in teacher practise and student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, Hylar, and Gardner, 2017; Strong, Fletcher, & Villar, 2004; Serpell & Bozeman, 1999).

Today, the difficulty in the teaching profession in Nigeria is a lack of concentration. Numerous other professions in Nigeria, such as medicine and finance, are productive because their practitioners maintain concentration. Insufficient focus on professionalism in the teaching area is detrimental to the efficacy of educators. In his study on Appraisal of Nigerian senior secondary school's English language curriculum in the light of modern curriculum, Olanipekun (2013) lamented that teachers who fail to add value will lack the teaching methods; they cannot even monitor a child's progress psychologically, emotionally, and otherwise in learning the language through continuous assessments and tests. This insufficient emphasis on professionalism most likely caused instructors to lose concentration and devalue their job.

Many things now distract our instructors. Other professions, such as physicians and financiers, are never distracted by anything. For example, one seldom sees medical professionals applying for teaching positions in schools, while teachers are applying for positions in banks and even hospitals. Many instructors are entrepreneurs who bring things to schools to sell. They promote and sell their goods inside and outside the school at every available opportunity. These professors have lost professional concentration due to distractions and are thus ineffective. They were taught as

instructors in a simple and expedient manner and should not allow themselves to get sidetracked by other things. A successful teacher concentrates only on his or her teaching duties without being sidetracked by other tasks.

In addition, a lack of meaningful professional development choices to enhance teaching, restricted participation in planning professional development, inadequate attention for issues of social justice, and a lack of innovation and creativity have impacted teachers' professional development. Therefore, management must consider motivation and sustainability while fostering teacher and student progress. If instructors or lecturers assure professional growth, these strategies may be created.

Because most teachers are not effectively involved in professional development, it has constituted a serious challenge in our educational sector. A study on the COVID-19 pandemic and educational development and improvement in the twenty-first century in tertiary institutions in Rivers State by Emeodu and Obuzor (2021) revealed that poor participation of some staff or lecturers in professional development explains why many of them cannot use digitalized ICT tools to communicate with students during the COVID-19 era.

It was also observed that some of the teaching staff used obsolete teaching strategies and were very weak in academic research. Again, students suffer from this quagmire as poor professional development breeds poor teaching quality. However, what can remedy these problems is professional development by teachers. It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to contribute more empirical literature on professional development and quality instructional delivery in tertiary institutions in Rivers State as a gap to be filled since there are few studies relating to this. The following research questions were put forth as guide to the study. They are as follows:

- i. Why the need for professional development of staff and quality teaching in tertiary institution in Rivers State;
- ii. Does workshop correlate to quality teaching in tertiary institution in Rivers state?
- iii. How does conference correlate to quality teaching in tertiary institution in Rivers state?

Conceptual Framework

Professional Development: No concept of professional growth has been universally accepted. However, professional development often refers to the continual learning opportunities offered by schools to teachers and other educational employees. It pertains to the acquired abilities and information for both personal growth and job advancement. Professional development involves all forms of learning opportunities, including college or university degrees, formal coursework, conferences, and information learning possibilities.

According to Ajoku (2013), professional development is essential for all businesses and professional organisations in order to expand the knowledge and abilities of their staff. As a result, he suggested that instructors aim to increase student performance in order to foster personal and professional growth. In describing the significance of professional development, Ajoku (2013) emphasised the need to enhance professional knowledge and competence via accredited and ongoing education. Consequently, a professional development programme improves a teacher's career via travel, research, workshops, and seminars in collaboration with seasoned experts. He recommended that individuals enrol in a professional development course to enhance their business, teaching, nursing, etc. competence and contribute to organisational growth.

Professional growth refers to a person's progress in their professional job. By getting additional experience in one's teaching capacity, he or she receives systematic professional development experience via analysis of his or her teaching skills (Glattenhorn, 1997). The professional development experience consists of professional seminars and other officially linked gatherings (Ganzer, 2000). Much larger than career development, professional development is described as a teacher's progress throughout the course of his or her career (Glattenhom, 1997).

Professional development and other structured in-service programmes are intended to encourage the growth of teachers and may be utilised to advance their education. The substance and manner of the encounters through which the process will occur must be analysed (Ganzer, 2000; Guskey, 2000). Professional development has depended on a flawed paradigm in which an expert conveys knowledge and information to instructors who are presumed to be incompetent and in need of specialists to teach them new methods of working with children. Professional development also requires systemic changes that alter both the institutions and norms and practises of schools. Such a change process entails four stages, namely active initiation and involvement, pressure and support, behavioural, cognitive, and ownership changes.

Quality Teaching: Responsive and reflective teaching characterise quality instruction. Teaching should be adapted to students' learning processes and styles (John, 2019). It should give sufficient scaffolding for students to become independent. It should respond to the pupils' past knowledge and experiences. They should not be considered to enter class without any prior knowledge. Their experiences should be seen as possible learning opportunities. Teachers who are reflective consider what and how they teach and learn, and they engage in reflective teaching. It is their own tool for observing and evaluating their classroom performance. As a means of participating in the process of continuous learning, it encourages the development and maintenance of expertise as well as the capacity to reflect on one's activities. Therefore, superb educators are inherently excellent educators. They are available to children and their parents, always accessible to students, friendly, compassionate, enthusiastic, devoted, patient, active, communicative, and always upgrading their expertise. They are passionate about teaching and adore their students and topics.

Biggs (2014) noted that high-quality instruction requires constructive alignment. The teaching strategy of constructive alignment emphasises what students should learn and how they should demonstrate their understanding. This should be explicitly explained prior to instruction. Then, instruction is planned to engage students in learning activities that maximise their likelihood of reaching these aims, and assessment tasks are designed to provide unambiguous evaluations of how effectively these outcomes have been accomplished.

Theoretical framework

Systems Theory: Von Bertalanify and Godson Heam formulated this hypothesis in (1970). Systems theory is based on the premise that an organization's many components execute distinct roles in such a manner that they are interconnected and interact with their surroundings. Therefore, what affects one component of a system also impacts the other component and its surroundings. A system may be regarded as a totality composed of interconnected components. It is composed of subsystems and a suprasystem. It may either be considered open or closed. It interacts with that which includes inputs, conversion, and outputs of energy, information, and materials, and it tends to reorganise or alter itself via the process of environmental information feedback.

The many components of the educational system, including employees, students, administrators, parents, the government, and non-profit organisations, interact to carry out their respective tasks. They are school settings that demonstrate the potential for networking among educational

stakeholders in the administration of the educational system in areas such as organisation, financing, supervision, staffing, coordination, and assessment. The reason for using the system theory is based on the composition of an educational institution: students, faculty, and administrators. This research is relevant to systems theory because of the multiple institutions inside and outside the educational institution that collaborate to efficiently administer the education system. Consequently, the inability to grow will have a profound effect on other systems, such as the student and the school.

Behavioural Science Theory: Behavioural science theory was developed by Chester Barnard in 1938. It is a theory that assumes that the best approach to facilitating work and productivity in an organisation is through an understanding of the workers, their job content, and the work environment. The behavioural science theory holds the view that increased productivity and achievement of organisational goals can only be realised when there is a balance or proper integration of work, staff, and the environment. Within the context of this theory, it is expected that school administrators are supposed to draw their knowledge, understanding, and experience from various subjects for a better understanding of the job performance of their staff. It is believed that with such knowledge and experience, school administrators would be in a better position to understand the staff and their work and how they should interact to produce and establish good school organisational management. The behavioural science theory is relevant to this study because it is a theory that enables school administrators to have knowledge about staff, the nature of work, and the school environment.

The behavioural science theory posits that human resources (teachers) are a major functional component of an organisation (school) which must be given a premium. An understanding of the worker as a significant component which integrates with the job content and the environment can lead to higher performance. The systems theory, on the other hand, also gives cognizance to the worker (teacher) as a useful component of the school, which system interacts with other subsystems for the achievement of school goals. However, for workers to be effective in the discharge of their duties for the achievement of school objectives, they must be properly trained and re-trained through professional development programmes to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills to enhance their performance.

Empirical Review

Okwor (2007) investigated incentives to increase the performance of secondary school teachers in Enugu State. The objective was to determine instructors' job motivations. The research used a sample of 1,284 instructors recruited proportionally from the six educational zones of the state. A 31-item questionnaire was the primary data gathering tool. The mean scores were utilised to answer the study questions, whilst the z-test was employed to test the null hypothesis. According to the results, some of the motivations for enhancing the working conditions of teachers include frequent monitoring, the granting of yearly prizes, the provision of professional development opportunities, and regular promotions. Both studies indicate to almost identical incentives that might motivate instructors to be dedicated to their job for the attainment of educational goals and objectives.

Inyang (2009) conducted an evaluation of staff training and development practises in secondary schools in the state of Cross River. The goal of the research was to evaluate the secondary school staff training and development practises. The research was directed by three research questions. The chosen study design was an evaluation survey. A sample of five hundred (500) workers from the secondary school management board, including one hundred (100) principals and four hundred (400) senior administrative staff. This selection was conducted using a simple random sample

approach from a population of eight hundred and fifty (850) comprised of two hundred and eighty (280) principals and five hundred and twenty (520) senior administrative personnel of the secondary education management board. Utilizing a questionnaire, data were collected and analysed using mean and standard deviation. The results found that staff seminars and workshops are not routinely held, and that instructors are seldom offered paid study leave and/or the opportunity to attend conferences in their fields of expertise. This research relates to the present because both examine the influence of staff training and development programmes on the successful implementation of education policy.

Adewumi (2009) explored the need of staff training and development programmes in Ekiti State secondary schools. The goal of this research was to examine the motivation behind staff training and development programmes in secondary schools in Ekiti State. Three research questions and two null hypotheses led the investigation. In this research, a descriptive survey approach was used. Six thousand one hundred twenty-three (6123) staff members were included in the research, including two hundred eighty-one (281) administrators and five thousand, eight hundred forty-two (5842) instructors. The research sample included one thousand six hundred (1600) respondents. For this investigation, a basic random sample approach was used. A questionnaire was used to gather data, and the findings were analysed using the mean, standard deviation, and t-test. According to the results, the purpose of staff training and development programmes is, among other things, to offer orientation training programmes, in-service educational programmes, periodic on-the-job training, and to organise frequent seminars, workshops, and conferences for employees. Both studies focused on the training and development of teachers to improve their effectiveness.

Osuigwe (2001) performed study on the instructional service delivery techniques of primary school teachers in the Onitsha Education Zone in Anambra State. The researcher attempted to identify solutions that may be used to enhance the instructional service delivery of zone instructors. To guide the investigation, four research questions and two null hypotheses were developed. The research used a sample of 694 teachers and 179 staff members of the State Primary Education Board (SPEB). The acquired data was analysed using mean scores and standard deviation, and null hypotheses were evaluated using the t-test. The investigation revealed that

The efficiency of instructors might be enhanced by recognising great educators and providing suitable facilities, equipment, and teaching materials. The research also found that the instructional delivery of instructors might be enhanced by the provision of in-service training and periodical promotions.

Orseer (2006) conducted a research on instructors' opinions of teaching-enhancing elements. The objective of the research was to determine the characteristics that drive and make instructors competent at their jobs. The study was led by four research questions and two null hypotheses. The sample comprised of 245 instructors from 20 public schools in the state of Benue. A 32-item survey was the primary instrument. Chi-square was employed to analyse the data, while the t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. Participation in seminars, utilisation of instructional resources, clinical and peer monitoring, and participative leadership by the principal were shown to increase the efficacy of instructors. The research is relevant to the current study because professional development of instructors requires participation in seminars, workshops, and the use of instructional materials, among other things, as discovered in the present study.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach. Hence, the research design adopted a descriptive approach. Through a purposive sampling technique, the researcher selected Ignatius Ajuru

University of Education and interviewed 24 lecturers in IAUE. The researcher selected four respondents for interview in each faculty using a purposive sampling technique. The method of data collection was through interviews and secondary sources such as published and unpublished materials. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the non-numeric data.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that the need for staff professional development in IAUE is numerous. The reason for this is to improve the quality of teaching, to ensure the inculcation of trending issues, for lecturers to expunge obsolete teaching strategies and become innovative in the teaching act, and to enable lecturers to impact effectively on the students. An interview with some of the lecturers on the need for professional development revealed that it helps to ensure school success and teacher satisfaction (In-depth interview/Lecturers/IAUE/2021).

An in-depth interview response of some lecturing staff that attended the academic and administrative leadership: The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Workshop pointed out that the government should organise more workshops for the teaching staff as it relates to quality teaching and service delivery.

Professional development of teaching staff has an enormous impact on the quality of teaching of lecturers in tertiary institutions. A teacher's frequent attendance at workshops enhances quality teaching. According to Ajoku (2013), teachers' selections for workshops affect quality teaching. The lack of commitment of teachers in workshop programmes is detrimental to teaching effectiveness. Supporting this study was Ekpela, as cited in Akpan and Ita (2015), who reported that lack of attendance to workshops and other professional development programmes is the major cause of poor quality output of teachers, including unpreparedness in terms of skills update and attendance at workshops. Furthermore, Serin (2017) reported that fewer teachers participate in professional development programs, thereby affecting their level of productivity. Corroboratively, Waton in Akpan and Ita (2015) reported that workshops' attendance significantly influences teachers' job performance and also reported a significant influence of workshops on teachers' output.

It was found that teachers' participation in conferences correlates to quality teaching. A conference is a gathering of professionals with like minds who nurture the intention of helping one another to grow and develop intellectually as well as in their areas of specialization. The imperative for conference attendance by lecturers has the capacity to improve quality teaching of the teaching staff in the university. An interview with some lecturers proved that:

Attendance of conferences by teachers in areas of specialty leads to quality teaching, others who spoke also added that Regular attending of conference is essential for quality teaching, Knowledge discussed on contemporary issues during conference is imperative for quality teaching. Attending conferences by all teachers can facilitate ineffective teaching mechanism. Also, it was pointed that organizing conference calls for fund, few respondents reacted that given the role of conference, the sponsoring of conferences by government can facilitate quality teaching (In-depth interview/Lecturers/IAUE/2021).

Buttressing on the findings of this study was the finding of Obi cited in Akpan & Ita (2015), who reported that conference attendance is very paramount in the enhancement of teaching skills and thereby changes the methods of classroom management and control. More so, it was found that teachers tend to suffer from instructional planning and delivery as a result of poor attendance at workshops and conferences (Orobor, 2008). It is found that proper conference and workshop

organisation can bring about quality in the education industry (Obi cited in Akpan & Ita, 2015). Again, Locke in Akpan and Ita (2015) reported that teachers' regular attendance at conferences and seminars resulted in improvement of skills and hence quality teaching.

Conclusion

The study has been able to establish a nexus between the professional development of teachers and quality teaching in tertiary institutions. Given the available data, the study proves that institutions that encourage their teaching staff to perform efficiently and optimally. It should be known that the challenges that affect most teachers are numerous. It is imperative to note that the greatest challenges that hypnotise most teachers to carry out some professional development activities are lack of funds. Therefore, if the Nigerian government can provide a special fund aimed at teachers' professional development, it will go a long way in assisting their efforts in adding new skills and techniques in carrying out pedagogical activities. However, as this unfolds, the students stand to benefit from quality teaching delivered by the lecturers. Therefore, the imperativeness of professional development as a correlate to quality teaching and learning cannot be overemphasized.

Recommendations

Given the benefits of professional development of teaching staff on quality teaching, it is imperative to give the following recommendations as they will help to create insight and address the issue of teachers' professional development and quality teaching. Thus, the following recommendations are given:

1. The Ministry of Education should see the need to encourage/involve the lecturers in professional development so as to grow their educational system. Through this, quality teaching and improved productivity will be enhanced in the educational sector.
2. Teachers in tertiary institutions and other sections of the educational environment should see the need to improve their teaching strategies. To achieve this, professional development, such as workshops and conferences, must become open to innovation, as this will enable them to be competitive among their contemporaries.
3. Through conference organizations, lecturers can present papers as contributions to knowledge in the academic world. As they tend to achieve this, they become rooted in the world of research, which widens their knowledge. Knowledge gained through this will improve or ensure quality teaching.
4. Also, to ensure quality teaching in the educational sector, government should set aside funds for teacher's professional development. The need for this is because most teachers cannot fund it themselves. Such available funds will be used to sustain their professional growth and development.

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