

# Teachers' Continuing Professional Development as Correlates of Sustainable Universal Basic Education in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined the correlates of teachers' continuing professional development on universal basic education in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Using descriptive survey, a sample of 500 teachers was randomly selected from twenty (20) Basic Junior Secondary Schools and Primary Schools used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Correlate of Teachers Continuing Professional Development Questionnaire (CCPDO) ( $r=.67$ ) four research questions were raised for study. Data collected were analysed using frequency distribution and percentages. Findings revealed that the level of teacher preparation for the universal basic education was relatively low. It was also established that teachers were not adequately prepared for the universal basic education scheme. It was concluded that Bayelsa State, has not been fully prepared for the sustenance of universal basic education. It was recommended that the state government should recruit more qualified teachers into the primary and junior secondary schools in the state. Teachers should also be given equal opportunity to attend regular seminars, workshops and service training to enable them to acquire more skills and competence in their job performance.

**Keywords:** Teachers Professional Development, Continuing Professional Education, Sustainable and Universal Basic Education.

## Background to the Study

The maxim that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers clearly demonstrates the role of teachers and teachers' continuing education programmes in the process of educational development. This entails that nations must sustain efforts to produce qualified persons to take up the teaching profession. Continuing professional education for teachers constitutes an enduring career development process which is very crucial in the overall quest for qualified professionals in a dynamic society (Ukpo, 1996).

Teachers' professional development is that component of any educational system concerned with the education and training of teachers to acquire the necessary competencies and skills in teaching for improvement in the quality of teachers in the school system (Afe, 1995). It is often planned and systemically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach, particularly but not exclusively in primary and post primary schools (Okafor, 1998). Continuing professional education is therefore conceptualised as a process for development of skills for coping with changing demands of the job through regular exposure to professional update programmes (Miefa, 2004).

According to Babatunde (1999), the training of teachers in Nigeria began with the introduction of formal education by the missionaries. Efforts were then geared towards helping the individuals fulfil their roles as catechists, interpreter and teachers of the Bible. Formalised teacher professional education however began in 1895 with the establishment of a training school in Abeokuta by the church missionary society. The amalgamation of northern and southern departments of education in 1929 triggered the colonial governments' interest in teachers' education. However, they concentrated on training teachers for primary schools. Trainees were exposed to both the content and pedagogy of teaching in different school subjects and awarded the Grade II teachers certificate at completion. Accordingly, this arrangements above which made Grade II teachers specialists in all subjects of the primary school curriculum, was sustained for several decades.

As Nigerians moved towards independence base on the recommendation of the Ashby commission (1956), teacher professional education programmes for secondary schools was introduced. One of such was the advanced teachers colleges, now known as colleges of education. These are under the supervision of the National Certificate in Education (NCE) to their graduates. According to the Oyenike, Adesoji and Adebayo (2009) in Miefa (2004) there are 72 such colleges in Nigeria. In addition to these are the faculties of education in almost all universities in the nation, which produce graduates teachers with Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree and Diploma in Education for various graduates of other disciplines who desire to become professional teachers. There are also various institutes of education in universities that offer refresher and in-service training programmes for teachers. The teacher is therefore expected to be a specialist in whatever subjects he/she is trained in while the education courses are to prepare him/her for component classroom work. But how qualified are the teachers who implement the content of the UBE? (See table 1).

The table 1 shows that Nigeria still has a significant number of unqualified teachers. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme launched in September 1999 was designed as an improvement on the

Universal Primary Education, Obanya (2000) summarizes basic education as that level, type and form of learning needed to build firm root for literacy and numeracy, to inculcate basic life skills and more importantly to consolidate the skills of learning how to learn.

An attempt to combat the problem of under-qualified teachers as earlier experienced led to the establishment of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) in 1993 with the sole responsibility of determining the standards of knowledge and skills to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as teachers (TRCN, Decree 31, 1993).

- Compulsory registration of all professional teachers;
- Make the Nigerian certificate in education (NCE) the minimum requirement qualification for teachers; and
- Mandatory continuing professional education programme for in-service teachers, however inability to provide variety of general, knowledge trainings and facilities as needed for all the programmes has become a major barrier to effective teachers training and consequently, the full implementation of the UBE.

Its reform agenda include, among other; an analysis of continuing professional training for teachers in Bayelsa State is shown below:

The number of teachers for each centre in the state was 12 i.e.  $12 \times 3 = 36$  trainers in the state (2008 statistics). The statistics for 2008 is 1724 teachers who undergo the training (2006 statistics). The statistics for 2006 is 3594 teachers trained source National Teacher Institute, Okutukutu Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

The analysis above is as follows: 6909 teachers had undergone the training in the state; also the result shows that female teachers were trained more in terms of qualification and the requirements of the scheme. Twelve teachers in each centre amounts to 36 trainees in the state. It also shows that there was no training in 2007 (see table 2).

The analysis in table 3 shows that there are 5,188 teachers on Universal Basic Education in Bayelsa State. 2813 are male teachers while 2375 are female teachers and there are 539 Primary/Universal Basic Education in Bayelsa State. It also shows that Southern Ijaw L.G.A. has the highest number of schools which is 131 schools.

With the UBE in place, Nigeria is beginning to provide increased opportunities for actors in the primary education sectors. This is in line with the global call for "education for all" (EFA) requiring all citizens to have access to basic education. However, there is often wide disparity between policy pronouncements and policy implementations in Nigeria. The crux of basic education in Nigeria is the quality of teachers to implement the policy as innovations in education often take a lot of inputs and preparation before implementation. Any innovation in education relies a lot on the preparedness of the teachers who are termed as curriculum implementers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) section 63 stipulates that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession at any level in the Nigerian school system should be the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). However, the NCE teachers have limited subject specializations where the teacher-trainees are trained in two basic teaching subjects. The curriculum orientation in training then seems inadequate for the UBE school system. This is the gap filled in this study as it examined the correlation of teachers' continuing professional training programme on universal basic education in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

### **Based on the above problem, it was then questioned that:**

- i. What is the level of teachers' professional preparation for universal basic education programme in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the effect of teacher's continuing professional development on the implementation of UBE in Bayelsa State?
- iii. To what extent is teachers' continuing professional training adequately made regular and funded in the universal basic education sector in the state?
- iv. What are the challenges of teachers' continuing professional development on the successful implementation of universal basic education in the state?

### **Consequent upon the questions, it was then envisaged that the specific objectives of this study were to ascertain the:**

1. Level of teachers' professional preparation for universal basic education programme in the state is effective.
2. Effect of teachers' professional continuing education training for universal basic education is effective.
3. Regularity and funding of professional continuing education for teachers' for full implementation of the

- universal basic education programme in the state; and
4. Challenges facing teachers' continuing professional development for effective implementation of UBE.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study gave indications of the general trend in teachers' preparedness and readiness in implementing the universal basic education, especially at the primary and junior secondary school level through its continuing professional training and therefore provided directions in the area of lapses and how to plan accordingly. This study would help in revitalizing the education system in the state, and also aid full implementation of the Universal Basic Education in the state whereby all teachers in the UBE schools will see the need to upgrade their qualifications through continuous training.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study examined the correlates of teachers' continuing professional development on universal basic education programme in Bayelsa state; Nigeria. The study was restricted to those programmes organized by National Teachers Institute (NTI) training centres and those provided during the 2006/20007 and 2008/2009 universal Basic education commission special intervention on professional development.

### **Teacher's Professional Development**

Teachers are expected to play new roles as part of the system reform efforts. Teachers' professional development then provides opportunities for teachers to explore new roles, develop new instructional techniques, refine their practice and broaden themselves both as educators and as individuals. It is important that educators, parents, policy makers and the general public understand the new expectations of teachers, the new roles and responsibilities, and current definitions of professional development. Recognition by the entire community of the complex nature of the changes needed is the first step in building the necessary support to ensure that teacher fulfils their current role in systematic reform.

According to Little (1990), professional development has relied upon a deficient model in which an expert imparts knowledge and information on teachers who are assumed to be deficient and in need of outside experts to teach them new modes of working with students. He also stated that, professional development requires systematic reforms, changing both structures of school and norms and practice within them. Fullam (1991) stresses that, such change process involves four levels namely; active initiation and participation, pressure and support, changes in behaviour and beliefs, and ownership. Without understanding, it can end up adopting innovation after innovations without seeing permanent improvement in the achievement of school goals. The design, implementation, and evaluation of professional development must ensure that attention is given to all phases of the change process. Reforms efforts that do not focus on teacher acceptance may fail. Therefore, professional development must shift its emphasis from working on teachers to working with teachers toward improvement of teaching and learning for all students.

According to Ahmed (2006), teachers need to be continuously updated in knowledge and skills in view of a large volume of knowledge being generated as a result of technological advancement, which in turn calls for new ways (skills) of doing things. Osaretin (2009) cited Oyeyinka (1990) in her address who listed the following conditions for a full professionalization.

- Provision of essential service to the public.
- It is a lifelong work; a job, or a career.
- It requires a long period (sufficient) of specialized training.
- It is also required a degree of some amount of intellectual training and work.
- It requires an organization to set it up
- There is the issue of its autonomy
- It requires certification of members.
- There is also code of conduct.

To be professionally qualified, a teacher ought to possess the requisite academic and professional certificate in teaching, like the NCE, B.A, B.Sc (Ed), B.Ed, PGDE. In addition to this, they should be licensed by the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) on an agreed time scale basis.

The importance of teacher's preparation of UBE is reflected by numerous conducts in that area (Pace, 2003). Teachers must believe that their behaviours can affect the education of their students. They must recognize that they have the capacity and the power to make key decisions which will affect their roles and their student's production. Accordingly, Ashton (1994) explains that basic education in the past had remained largely unsupervised, resulting in poor quality of instruction, ineffective administration, and high rate of wastage. He further explained that, virtual absence of teachers' preparation and supervision of in-service training had made the whole system in-efficient.

To many, teachers' preparation and understanding of basic education varies. Some had articulations for full preparation of basic education in terms of putting the theory into practice. A survey of 170 teachers' trainees comprising 87 students from primary schools and 83 students of junior basic schools all in Kano State revealed that there was no fair conception of the programme. Responses such as basic education being essential, fundamental and foundational, focuses on acquisition of basic knowledge, attitudes on acquisition of basic knowledge, attitudes and skills, and creation of learning opportunity for children of all ages and both sexes are given. However, there is no evidence of clear articulation of its goals and objectives. Here one can therefore conclude that the teachers' trainees' preparation and understanding of the reform in education is shallow (Soalami, 1990).

According to FME (2005) teachers' preparation in universal basic education is not encouraging. It is because there were no consideration of teachers given that they are not included in the reform process and at a later stage they will now be called upon and push into implementing the theories whereas their understanding about the whole of learning, impact of knowledge on pupils and constrict of lives of children at early stage to have social background must be fit for further education. Most of them lack new methods in teaching some particular subjects. It further stressed on other point like understanding pupils, linking pupils to instruction, ensuring effective, psychomotor and effective development of children, transferring skills needed for individuals and social development.

It is on the basis of the above that Eze (1993) pointed out that basic education is the foundational training received by teachers which is aimed at developing and equipping teachers for all around development. This is to enhance their teaching ability and relationship with pupils, and to give teachers to enhance their training effectively.

To upgrade/update teachers' knowledge and skills in curriculum implementation while instilling in them virtues of dedication, loyalty, commitment, discipline and resourcefulness will depend on the pursuit on the following goals; producing teachers' training that is oriented to meet the challenges of the twenty first century; nurturing a commitment of lifelong learning that is creative, innovative and responsive to changes in the world of knowledge and the changing needs; designing and enriching subject content to ensure that he teacher trainees attain a high level of mastery of subject matter; building the capacity of teacher trainees in the use of effective communication skills and relevant technology for the delivery of quality education; development of relevant technology including information and communication technology for effective distance learning delivery; strengthening the institute's monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanisms to ensure effective and efficient service delivery; establishing effective research capability in order to ensure that all the institute's programmes are based on scientifically established grounds in terms of who needs training and the content of training required; reviewing and revitalizing in-service training and retraining programmes for all categories of teachers, school administrators and school supervisors; regularly reviewing and restructuring curricula of all the institute's programmes to bring them in line with changing realities (Okafor, 1998).

Okafor (1998) then noted that the outcome of teachers professional development which was usually classified in terms of teachers competence include knowledge of goal of teaching and its implementation, knowledge of subject matter and skills to be taught and their influence on learning and teaching. Others are knowledge of students, social and individual factors affecting their development and function and self-appraisal skills of the teacher and his performance in the educational setup.

Hanushek (1996) pointed out that the areas that form the core of in-service training of teachers are as follows: lesson preparations; use of instructional materials, using different methods of teaching, knowledge of specialized subject matter, classroom discipline and their physical appearance.

## **Methodology**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Data were generated on the basis of existing trends and evidences that could be observed, described and analysed for plausible inference. This design provides a justification for the descriptive and explanation of prevailing phenomenon as relates to the research focus.

The population comprised 6,491 teachers in the employment of 824 states Universal Education Board (SUBEB) in primary and junior basic secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The population of teachers in the primary schools were 5,324 while those in junior secondary schools were 1,167 respectively. From the population above, five hundred (500) teachers from 20 UBE schools were selected through stratified proportional random sampling technique. Thus, four hundred and fifty (450) teachers from the primary schools and fifty (50) teachers from the junior secondary schools were selected.

## **Instrumentation**

A structured validate questionnaire titled: "Correlates of Teachers' Continuing Professional Development Questionnaire (CTCPDQ) was designed for data collection. It was a closed-ended scale with two sections 'A'

and 'B' in construct. Section 'A' contained the personal data of respondents while section 'B' contained items on the variables investigated with respect to the research questions. The questionnaire was validated through experts peer review technique while a reliability value of .67 was obtained using the Pearson product moment coefficient (PPMC) after a test re-test was conducted on respondents using 20 teachers from public senior secondary schools in the state. The research administered 500 copies of the questionnaire. With 38 copies missing cases, 462 copies were returned validly answered for data analysis through frequency distribution and percentage count.

### **Results and Discussion**

Demographic analysis of the research showed that 46.1% (male), 42.2% (female) in the primary and 53.9% (male) and 57.8% (female) in the junior secondary schools system participated in the study. The mean age of the respondents was 31 years with those in the primary schools accounting for 40.5% and those in the junior secondary schools accounting for 30.7%. Majority of the teachers who participated in the study were holders of the National Certificate in Education (NCE) with 66.5% representation with the least qualification accounting for 6.5% holders of SSCE in the system.

#### **Research Question 1: What is the level of teacher's professional preparation for sustainable UBE programme?**

Table 4 shows that 51.9% of the respondents agreed that teachers lack adequate preparation for the UBE programme in the state. Also, 67.7% of the respondents agreed that teachers were not fully prepared for the UBE programme through continuing professional development.

The table 4 shows that 92.6% of the respondent agreed that teachers needed adequate and consistent training as part of professional development if the UBE programme must be sustained. The implications of the above result are that, a neglect of teachers professional development compromises the progress expected in the UBE programme. Also, continuing professional development must be considered vary primary to government investment in the sustenance of UBE programme in the state.

#### **Research Question 2: What is the effect of teachers' Continuing Professional Development on the Implementation of the UBE?**

Table 5 shows that 66.5% of the respondents upheld that generation and utilization of new teaching skills depends on continuing professional development. Also, 91.3% of the respondents were positive that training was needed to cope effectively with global professional expectations. The result also indicates that career advancement among teachers is only guaranteed to the extent that continuing education is sustained under the UBE scheme.

#### **Research Question 3: To what extent is teachers' continuing professional training adequately made regular and funded under the UBE scheme?**

Table 6 above shows that 82.6% of the respondents agreed that there were no data on trained teachers due to inconsistent training programme. Besides, 83.3% of the respondents agreed that well trained qualified teachers are not readily available for UBE implementation in the state due to poor funding. Meanwhile most respondents contented that training opportunities are sparingly made available to teachers. This findings imply that teachers in the Universal Basic Education School precisely the junior secondary schools are not adequately trained and this condition threatens the sustainability of the UBE scheme in the state. The result laid credence to Heinz and Parker (1992) who recommended that, "Helping in-service teachers to construct beliefs that most positively affect their decision making in the classroom is an important effort in teacher education reform".

#### **Research Question 4: What are the challenges of teachers' continuing professional development on the successful implementation of the UBE in the state?**

Table 7 shows that 91.1% of the respondents agreed that continuing professional training of teachers is not regular and also lacking in practice by agency. Also, 90% of the respondents agreed that professional training for teachers is usually compromised for political consideration in terms of adequate funding and regular implementation. Lastly, the table clearly shows that 73.8% of the respondents agreed that the trainings was lopsided, and in most cases do not capture all segments of the teaching exports in the state.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of the study showed that there were no adequate professionally trained teachers under the UBE programme in the state. If the goal of teachers' education must be achieved, which is "to provide teacher trainees with both intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignments (under the UBE scheme), and to make them adaptable to any changing situation, not only in life of their country but in the wider world" (FRN, (2004), then any effective professional training programme for teachers must rest on the foundation of truth and critical thinking through regular professional and exhibition of scholarship on the job.

### **Recommendations**

Among other things, it is recommended based on the findings above that:

- Consistency in professional development among teachers must be considered as vital to the sustenance of the UBE programmes in the state;
- Well trained and qualified teachers be recruited into the system as full-time staff and not a casual or temporary staff on the basis of inadequate funding;
- Teacher professional development fund be instituted through legislative process whereby companies operating in the area should contribute at least 0.5 to 1% of their profits to it as part of their social responsibility; and
- It is inevitable that well trained teachers are pre-requisite for the sustenance of the UBE scheme and so, fund allocated for such should not be diverted or corruptly misappropriated.

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**Table 1: Numbers of UBE Teachers by Gender & Qualification Primary School 2005**

Qualifications	Male	Female	Total	%
Graduate with teaching qualification	15,201	20,205	35,406	5.99
Graduate without teaching qualification	5,247	4,486	9,733	1.65
NCE holders	99,537	164,443	263,980	44.64
Diploma holders	22,147	11,317	33,464	5.66
Grade II holders	87,676	71,735	159,411	26.96
Grade I holders	80	46	126	0.02
HSC/GCE A LEVEL qualification	335	102	447	0.08
Special Teachers	71	27	98	0.01
WASCE/GCE/SSCE O' LEVEL	3,890	2,483	6,381	1.08
Others	55,772	26,483	82,255	13.91
Total	289,956	301,335	591,291	100

**Source: Federal Ministry of Education (FME): Basic & Senior Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria (2004 & 2005).**

**Table 2: NTI/TRCN Training Centres Showing Number of Teachers by Gender on Universal Basic Education Schools from 2006-2009 in Bayelsa State.**

S/N	Name of Schools	Male	Female	Total
1.	Central Epie Secondary School Opolo	229	302	531
2.	Community Secondary School 1 & 2 Sagbama	240	290	530
3.	Government Secondary School Ogbia	244	286	530

Source: UBE – Statistical Records (2009).

**Table 3: Number of Teacher by Gender and LGAs in Universal Basic Education for 2010 in Bayelsa State.**

S/N	L.G.A	Male	Female	Total	No. of School
1.	Brass	196	223	419	44
2.	Ekeremor	486	264	750	88
3.	Kolokuma/Opokuma	175	234	410	24
4.	Nembe	217	187	404	59
5.	Ogbia	451	567	1018	73
6.	Sagbama	409	315	924	62
7.	Southern Ijaw	498	216	714	131
8.	Yenagoa	381	368	749	59
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2813</b>	<b>2375</b>	<b>5188</b>	<b>539</b>

Source: UBE Statistical Records (2010)

**Table 4: Frequency Distribution on the level of teachers' preparation for sustainable implementation of UBE programme**

Reasoning Items	Response		
	Yes	No	Total
Teachers lack adequate preparation for the UBE scheme in the state.	240 51.9	222 48.1	462 100%
Teachers are not fully prepared for sustainable through continuing professional development.	313 67.7	149 32.3	462 100%
Most teachers do not regularly attend training on the implementation of UBE programmes.	438 94.8	34 5.8	462 100%
Adequate training is needed for teachers professional development with regard to sustainable UBE	428 92.6	34 7.4	462 100%

**Table 5: Frequency Distribution on the Effect of Teachers' Continuing Professional Development on the Implementation of UBE.**

Reasoning Items	Response		
	Yes	No	Total
Generation and utilization of teaching skills depends on new methods of teaching that are made possible through continuing education.	307 66.5	155 33.5	462 100%
I rely on teachers training because I could not gain admission to other courses to improve my professional competence.	412 89.2	50 10.8	462 100%
Training is needed to meet up with global challenges such as knowledge exposure and new job skills.	422 91.3	40 8.7	462 100%
Career advancement is guaranteed through professional development	411 89%	51 11%	462 100

**Table 6: Frequency Distribution on the Level of Regular and funding of continuing professional Training for Teachers.**

Reasoning Items	Response		
	Yes	No	Total
There are no data on teachers to be trained due to inconsistent training programmes	382	80	462
	82.6	17.4	100%
Funds are not readily available for training of qualified UBE teachers.	385	77	462
	83.3	16.7	100%
Very little opportunities are sparingly made available by government for updating teachers' knowledge and technical-know-how on the jobs.	289	173	462
	62.6	37.4	100%
Budgetary provision on teachers' continuing professional development is not usually released.	284	178	462
	61.5	38.5	100%

**Table 7: Frequency Distribution on the challenges of Successful Implementation of UBE in Bayelsa State.**

Reasoning Items	Response		
	Yes	No	Total
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing professional training of teachers is not regular and lacking in practice by the UBE</li> </ul>	421	41	462
	91.1	8.9	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The training programmes are usually compromised by political interest.</li> </ul>	416	46	462
	90	10	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The training of teachers is lopsided as not all segments are captured for professional development.</li> </ul>	341	121	462
	73.8	26.2	100%