

Staff Development Programmes and Secondary School Teachers' Job Performance in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

Staff development programmes act as a catalyst for teachers effectiveness. It is a potent means of updating teachers' skills and knowledge for improving instruction and learning. This study was carried out to investigate the influence of staff development programmes on secondary school teachers' job performance in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria. A single hypothesis guided the study. Data were collected using two sets of questionnaires titled "Staff Development Programme Questionnaire" (SDPQ) and "Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire" (TJPQ). SDPQ was administered on 450 teachers while TJPQ was administered on 1800 students to assess teachers' job performance. Data collected were analyzed using Independent t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that teachers who participated in staff development programmes were more effective in their job performance than those who did not, in terms of knowledge of subject matter, classroom management, teaching methods and evaluation of student's work. It was recommended among others, that the Ministry of Education and State Secondary Education Board in Akwa Ibom State should on a regular basis organize training programmes for teachers. Such programmes should relate to subject contents, use of teaching aids, lesson preparation and delivery, classroom management and student's evaluation.

Keywords: Staff development programmes, job performance, secondary school teachers.

1. Introduction

Teachers constitute an important factor in the implementation of the curriculum. The quality of teachers is known to be a key predictor of students performance. Stressing this point, Hammad (2001) points out that the simple most important determinant of what students learn is what teachers know. Teaching as a profession demands continuous development of knowledge and ability through training programmes. Such training programmes include workshops, conferences, seminars, induction and orientation for new staff, refresher courses, in- service training and so on.

Staff development has been accepted as an effective method of increasing the knowledge and skills of teachers in order to enable teachers to teach more effectively. According to Lawal (2004), staff development programmes for teachers are important aspects of education process that deal with the art of acquiring skills in the teaching profession. They are essential practices that enhance subject mastery, teaching methodology and classroom management. The objective of staff development programmes is that it ensures the promotion of professional growth, helps to improve pedagogical skills, keeps teachers abreast with new knowledge, meets particular needs, such as curriculum development and orientation, helps in leadership responsibility, helps new teachers to adjust to teaching field, helps to promote mutual respect among teachers and recognizes the need for modern teaching methods (Madumere-Obike, 2007).

In Akwa Ibom state, the State Secondary Education Board employs both professional teachers and non-professional teachers. Most of the professional teachers have not received any other form of training after the initial pre-service training. The non-professionals have never received any form of training in the art of teaching, neither were they properly inducted into the school system. Thus making them ill prepared for the task of imparting knowledge. Uche and Enuokoha (2004) points out that teaching is a profession, therefore all who desire to work as teachers should be well groomed in the art of teaching. Brennen (2001) asserts that new teachers are faced with several challenges upon beginning their teaching career; such as: class assignment, classroom discipline and management, demanding teaching loads with assignment of extra duties, motivating students, dealing with individual differences among students, assessing students and so on. Hence the need to provide effective staff development programmes which will assist novice teachers as they begin their teaching career.

Mohammed (2006) noted that many teachers after graduation have little or no opportunity for re-training and their training ends as soon as they graduate with no opportunity for updating their knowledge and skills by attending seminars, workshops and conferences that will subsequently enhance their knowledge and skills and their classroom teaching. Subscribing to this view, Esu (1997) observed that there has been greater awareness

that teachers who were trained some few years ago are not adequately equipped for effective teaching except complemented by in-service training. She further stated that the 2-3 years teacher preparation programmes in higher institutions of learning do not adequately prepare teachers for the teaching job, as there are too many grounds to be covered in the teacher preparation programme.

To take care of the inadequacies of pre-service teacher preparation, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in the National Policy on Education made provision for development of teachers by stating that teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of the changes in methodology and in the curriculum, and that in-service training for teachers and head teachers shall be regulated. This therefore emphasizes the importance and the need for every staff to be constantly renewed, upgraded and updated in his or her knowledge to be refreshed and to keep abreast with the rapid changing society through staff development programmes.

Teachers' job performance has been one of great concern to stakeholders in education of recent in Akwa Ibom State, given the deteriorating academic performance of secondary school students in external examinations (Ekpoh, 2007). A lot of people, notable among them: parents, students, government and even teachers themselves have expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in the schools. In spite of improved academic and professional qualification of teachers and huge government investment in education, secondary school system has failed to produce people who can contribute to solve the problem of the society. Akwa Ibom State government on its part has made substantial moves to improve teachers' work performance through such measures as increased and regular salaries, provision of car loans, regular promotions and yet to no avail. In his contribution for a solution to poor job performance, Mgbekem (2002) suggested staff development as a very important tool for improving the skills and performance of employees in an organization. As pointed out by Odden, Archibald, Fermanich and Gallager (2002), effective professional development produces changes in teachers' instructional practices which can be linked to improvements in students' academic achievement. This therefore implies that staff development practices are effective motivational strategies for skill and knowledge acquisition for enhanced teachers' job performance.

The purpose of this study is to find out if there is any relationship between provision of staff development programmes and teachers' job performance in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

2. Literature review

Numerous studies exist on the relevance of development programmes for practicing teachers. For instance, Mohammed (2006), Madumere-Obike (2007), Ntukidem and Etudor (2003) have continued to stress on the importance of continuing professional development for the teachers who are the ones to translate the training acquired to better classroom practices. Continuing staff development programmes for teachers is about reinforcing all the dimensions of good teaching throughout a teachers' career. It is a means of increasing the competence level of teachers in a way that would enable them to contribute to a knowledge base that would in turn also contribute to development of teaching as a profession.

Previous studies have shown that successful staff development practices can impact on teachers' job performance in and out of the classroom (Saks, 1996., Andrews, 2002., Borich, 2003, and Villegas-Reimers, 2003). A study by Cohen and Hill (2001) found that teachers whose in-service training were focused on the curriculum can teach well when what has been learnt were applied in the classroom. The study also showed that students' achievements are usually good if their teachers participated in training that focused on the curriculum. Similarly, Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman and Yoon (2001) studied teachers' involvement in an in-service training that emphasized on mathematics and science subjects. They discovered that teachers were more prepared to implement changes in teaching practice, as well as improve their knowledge and teaching skills when the training was much related to daily experiences and parallel to assessment.

Zatta (2003) conducted a study on the effectiveness of the Massachusetts curriculum assessment system (MCAS - AIT) on disabled students' achievement. The study arrived at an important finding that teachers' involvement in professional development activities can have a positive impact on teachers' performance. Similarly, Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, and Birman (2002), conclude from their longitudinal study that professional development characterized by "active learning", where teachers are not passive recipients of information....boast the impact of professional development activities. Ntukidem and Etudor (2003) conducted a study on principals' provision for

professional growth and teachers' job effectiveness. A total of 400 teachers were selected as samples and analysis of the study found that, making provision for the professional growth of teachers often led to greater teacher effectiveness. Given the importance of staff development programmes in the career of serving teachers, there seem to be no alternative to sustained, continuous staff development practices.

3. Statement of problem

Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board has on its staff list both professional and non-professional teachers. Most of the professional teachers have not received any form of in-service training after their pre-service training to update their skills and knowledge in a fast changing and technology driven world. Neither do the non-professional teachers, most of whom are not well versed in the art of imparting knowledge and are often found wanting in the discharge of their duties.

Administrators of education and school heads rarely organize in-service training, conferences, seminars, refresher courses or workshops for secondary school teachers to improve themselves in spite of their critical role in bringing about teachers' effectiveness. Most teachers who undergo post qualification training do so on their own. Staff development programmes are meant to help employees to increase their knowledge and perform their roles effectively. Since the quality of any educational system depends to a great extent on its teachers, it is imperative that provisions are made for staff development programmes for teachers to develop themselves.

Given the new educational challenges, there is a growing concern that the preparation of teachers need to be enhanced for them to be fully effective in the discharge of their duties. The problem of this study, is to examine if teachers participation in staff development programmes relates to their job performance. To achieve the aim of this study, a single hypothesis has been developed to guide the study thus:

There is no significant difference between teachers who participate in staff development programmes and those who do not in their job performance in terms of:

- a. knowledge of subject matter.
- b. Classroom management.
- c. Teaching methods/aids.
- e. Evaluation of students' work

4. Methodology

The method adopted for this study was the survey design. Uyo metropolis in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria was used as the study area. A population of 1,093 secondary school teachers in 2011/2012 academic year was used to enhance the study. From the 18 public secondary schools that exist in Uyo metropolis, twenty five (25) teachers per school were sampled for the study, giving a total sample size of 450 teachers. Four students were randomly selected per each of the teachers' class to assess teachers' job performance and this gave rise to a total of 1,800 students.

To acquire relevant data for the study, two sets of questionnaires were designed by the researchers: Staff Development Programme Questionnaire (SDPQ) for teachers and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) for students. The responses to SDPQ were designed on the basis of a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (4points), agree (3points), disagree (2points), to strongly disagree (1point). Reflected on SDPQ were provision for in-service training (6 items), provision for staff attendance at conferences (6 items) and provision for staff attendance at seminars (6 items). For Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ), items included teachers' knowledge of subject matter (6 items), classroom management (6 items), teaching methods/aids (6 items) and evaluation of students' work (6 items). The students were to score their teachers over a range of 1-10 with one (1) representing very poor or ineffective and ten (10) representing very good or effective.

The reliability indices of the two questionnaires were established using test-retest method with 50 teachers and 50 students not used in the study. The reliability coefficient of the variables was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis and the indices of the variables ranged between 0.65 and 0.93, thus making the instrument good enough to justify its use in the study.

Distribution of the questionnaire was done by the researchers with the help of research assistants in each of the schools selected for the study. All the questionnaires distributed were successfully retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using independent t-test statistics. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance with 448 degrees of freedom.

5. Results

The Hypothesis of this study stated that "there is no significant difference between teachers who participate in staff development programmes and those who do not, in their job performance". The independent variable is this hypothesis is staff development programmes and the dependent variable is teachers' job performance and this was subdivided into four dimensions namely, knowledge of subject matter, classroom management, teaching methods/aids, and evaluation of students. To test this hypothesis, scores of teachers from staff development programmes and job performance were analyzed using Independent t-test statistics. Result of the analysis is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Independent t-test analysis of the difference between teachers who participate in staff development programmes and those who do not in their job performance (N=450).

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t
Knowledge of subject matter	Attendance	165	32.61	2.48	16.3*
	Non-attendance	285	27.93	3.18	
Classroom management	Attendance	165	31.89	3.45	4.78*
	Non-attendance	285	27.62	11.17	
Teaching method	Attendance	165	31.08	3.43	13.62*
	Non-attendance	285	26.41	3.55	
Evaluation of students Work	Attendance	165	32.47	3.11	13.98*
	Non-attendance	285	27.40	4.02	

P >.05; df=448; critical t = 1.96

The result of the analysis in Table 1 indicates that the calculated t-values of 16.23, 4.78, 13.62, and 13.98 are respectively higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level and with 448 degrees of freedom. With regards to this result, since the calculated t-values were greater than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is retained. This implies that there is a significant difference between the job performance of teachers who attend staff development programmes and those who do not in all the four dimensions of job performance.

6. Discussion of findings

The findings of the study have revealed that there is a significant difference between the job performance of teachers who participate in staff development programmes and those who do not, in terms of knowledge of the subject matter, classroom management, teaching methods and evaluation of students work. Teachers who were exposed to staff development programmes were more effective in their job performance than those who were not. Implied in this finding is the fact that staff development plays a very important role in raising teachers' teaching performance, raising the interest of the teachers towards the subject they are teaching and the teaching profession, as well as, raising their self confidence.

This finding is in agreement with earlier studies conducted by Ntukidem and Etudor (2003), Garet et al (2001), Darling-Hammond, (2000) and Zatta (2000). Their studies indicated that staff who were exposed to training programmes performed more effectively in their classroom job than those who were not. Similarly, the outcome of this study confirms an earlier finding by Cohen and Hill (2001) that teachers whose training programmes focused on the curriculum taught well when what was learnt were applied in the classroom. The study further revealed that students' achievements were also good. The outcome of this research further confirm the view of Esu (1997) that the 2-3 years teacher preparation programmes are inadequate to prepare teachers for teaching job.

Apparent from this finding is that, provision of staff development programme is imperative in enhancing teachers' effectiveness in the discharge of their duties in the secondary school system in the areas identified in this study. Thus, teachers need to be regularly provided with opportunities for them to improve their knowledge of the subject they teach and the teaching skills they had acquired in the pre-service courses they offered. This is based on the recognition that we are living in a rapidly changing world such that whatever knowledge and skills teachers learnt in their pre-service training becomes stale very fast, just as new challenges and realities emerge in the socio-economic and political environment (Mohammed 2006). To meet the needs of the changing world, there is need for continuous staff development programme. A well packaged staff development programme with current issues in education is likely to further equip teachers with more techniques and competences to discharge their duties effectively.

7. Conclusion

This study has shown that there is a relationship between staff development programmes and teachers' job effectiveness. Teachers need to be continuously exposed to training programmes to update their skills and knowledge in the light of a changing educational system, so as to improve their teaching effectiveness. Effective staff development practices will produce effective teachers and ultimately successful students. Going by the words of Hammad (2001), if we want to improve students' learning, invest in teachers' learning.

8. Recommendations

From this research outcome, it is recommended as follows:

- i. Ministry of Education and State Secondary Education Board in Akwa Ibom State should on a regular basis organize training programmes for teachers. Such programmes should relate to the subject contents, use of teaching and lesson preparation and delivery, classroom management and students evaluation.
- ii. There should be formal policy guidelines for training of teachers. Opportunity should be made for teachers to attend training programmes at least once every academic year.
- iii. Adequate funds should be provided by the Ministry of Education for training programmes. A unit in the Ministry of Education should be created for training purposes.
- iv. Serving teachers should be encouraged to undergo training programmes for self improvement and this should be government sponsored.
- v. Teachers should be involved in planning staff development programmes. The involvement of teachers will guarantee that the training programmes meet their needs and interest. Also, they will be able to

advise on the type of training needed to meet their needs, and will be able to provide meaningful feedback.

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