

Professional development strategies for teachers' development in Nigeria

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>This study explored the effectiveness of professional development programmes among teachers in Nigeria, especially the alignment of professional development programmes to the professional needs of teachers, the level of institutional support, and the consistency of government policy frameworks. The main goal of the investigation was to outline the main barriers that hinder the effective implementation of professional development strategies and to evaluate the role of institutional and state-level support mechanisms in enhancing results. The study was informed by the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) which highlighted the importance of social interaction and feedback loops in promoting learning. The study used a qualitative paradigm, which involved document analysis and literature reviews of available reports and academic research on the topic of teacher development in the Nigerian context. The findings showed that professional development programmes often did not respond to the unique issues that teachers face in their classrooms, particularly in rural areas. Inequality in institutional support, such as mentorship and peer collaboration, was also apparent, and governmental policies were seen to be disjointed, thus hindering successful implementation. In addition, the absence of long-term funding and follow-up also limited the effectiveness of PD efforts. Conclusively, the research found that effective professional development in Nigeria requires a more direct connection to the needs of teachers, institutional reinforcement, and long-term governmental investment. In this regard, the researchers recommended that, at all administrative levels, the state must align PD curricula with local demands and actively include teacher feedback. It is still necessary to strengthen institutional support structures, in particular, mentorship schemes and collaborative networks.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Professional development, Nigeria, teacher training, institutional support, government policies.</p>
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Introduction

Professional development (PD) is a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness and competence of teachers, which eventually enhances the educational performance of students. The importance of professional development is increased in Nigeria due to the complicated educational issues that the country is experiencing. Since the infrastructure is poor or the level of skills of the teachers is different, continuous professional growth is essential in providing teachers with the tools and strategies needed to improve classroom teaching. It entails various activities, such as workshops, training programs, conferences, and collaborative learning, to enhance the knowledge, skills,

and overall performance of teachers (Onyekwelu, 2024). In Nigeria, where education reforms play a vital role in the socio-economic growth of the country, PD strategies have been more and more identified as a pillar of promoting sustainable educational changes. The problems that can be directly resolved with the help of effective PD strategies include the use of outdated teaching methods, the absence of knowledge of the content, and the inability to manage the classroom (Awodiji et al., 2020).

Educators in Nigeria are usually confronted with issues that restrict their chances of undertaking lifelong learning. Although there are teachers who attend formal training,

most of them are faced with insufficient resources, low pay, and the excessive classroom demands. Poor access to contemporary teaching resources and materials also undermine the capacity of teachers to use new knowledge acquired during PD programmes (Ajani, 2021). In addition, the effect of PD is occasionally reduced because of the absence of follow-up or poor application of acquired strategies in the classroom. There is, therefore, a need to investigate and develop PD strategies that can bring about sustainable transformations in the professional lives of teachers. This paper aims to find the effective PD strategies that can be applied to the specific situation of the education system in Nigeria. It looks at issues like the perception of local teachers, the education policy systems, and the contribution of institutional support to the quality of teaching and learning (Oyeleye and Fasuba, 2025).

Good professional development strategies are those that are in tandem with the needs of the teachers, the classroom realities and the educational goals of the nation. The studies indicate that the most effective PD strategies are not only to enhance academic knowledge of teachers but also to create a positive environment where teachers are motivated to cooperate, exchange experiences, and practice reflection (Ajani, 2021). Nigeria is becoming increasingly aware that PD should not be a one-time event but a lifelong process that is integrated into the career development of a teacher (Onyekwelu, 2024). Thus, it is in this social milieu that this study paper aims at investigating the current professional development strategies of teachers development in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Professional development of teachers in Nigeria is a major problem that has been a challenge in improving the quality of education. Although the role of teacher training programmes in enhancing the quality of instruction is apparent, the present situation of the professional development strategies leaves a lot to be desired. Educators have to deal with a variety of issues, such as the inability to access training opportunities, the absence of resources, and the inability of the government to support the ongoing professional development (Ajani, 2021). The Nigerian educational system needs teachers who are prepared with the most recent pedagogical methods and knowledge of the subject, but the approaches that can be used to develop professionally are usually intermittent and inadequate. The consequence of this absence of sustained and holistic professional growth is the production of teachers who are unprepared to meet new educational requirements, including the incorporation of technology into the classroom or curriculum reform. In a nation where there are various educational issues, there is a need to fill these gaps in professional development so that teachers are able to

support the present and future educational requirements of their students.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the professional development programmes that are currently provided in Nigeria is becoming a matter of concern. Most of these programmes are non-structured, short-term and not designed to meet the needs of teachers (Oyeleye & Fasuba, 2025). Teachers usually go to single seminars or workshops which are not long-term and sustainable. These programmes do not have a follow-up mechanism and therefore teachers find it hard to implement the knowledge acquired in the classroom. Also, the lack of a feedback loop does not allow educational authorities to determine the actual effect of such programmes on the performance of teachers and student outcomes. What is the point of teachers becoming professional when the programmes they attend do not meet their needs? What occurs when the training provided is not related to the classroom realities? These questions highlight the necessity of a redesign of teacher professional development practices in Nigeria, one that guarantees lifelong learning, practice, and support of teachers throughout their career.

The other important problem is the absence of proper institutional and policy support of professional development in Nigeria. Although the government sometimes tries to launch teacher development programmes, they are usually tainted by lack of proper planning, funding, and integration of policies (Awodiji et al., 2020). Educators are frequently left to their own devices in finding chances to develop professionally, which leads to unequal access to training opportunities in different regions and school types. Moreover, the national education policies do not match with the available professional development programmes to teachers. What is the future of a national educational system that does not help its teachers to develop professionally? In the absence of a systematic approach to PD, which involves explicit policies and funding, how can teachers meet the fast-evolving needs of the global education environment? It is against this backdrop that this study was undertaken to examine the professional development strategies for teachers' development in Nigeria. To this end, this paper seeks to:

1. examine the alignment between existing professional development programs and the specific needs and realities of teachers in different educational contexts in Nigeria.
2. evaluate the role of institutional support and government policies in facilitating or obstructing continuous professional development for teachers in Nigeria.

3. identify and analyze the key challenges that hinder the effective implementation of professional development strategies for teachers in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Professional development

Professional development, also known as PD, is an ongoing and dynamic process that lies at the heart of the enhancement of pedagogical expertise, technical skills, and general professional effectiveness of teachers. It goes beyond the acquisition of new material, and includes the systematic improvement of teaching practices, the streamlining of classroom management, and the responsive changes required by changes in the policy of schooling. Many researchers have defined PD in a variety of ways, thus explaining its broad scope and practical impact on the daily teaching practice.

According to Sancar, et al. (2021), PD is a continuous process that enables teachers to acquire knowledge, skills, and experiences to enhance their teaching effectiveness and professional expertise. Their observation prefigures the dynamism of PD, which prefers ongoing intellectual development to periodic training interventions. Karlberg and Bezzina (2022) further distinguish the educator development by stating that PD is a long-term strategy to improve the skills of teachers by organizing activities and engaging in learning, which is strategic and long-term and therefore necessitates substantive pedagogical improvement. Gordon (2020) adds to this by portraying PD as a process through which teachers undergo organized learning experiences aimed at enhancing their teaching skills, instructional strategies, and classroom management practices, thus emphasizing the systemic scaffolding that facilitates the acquisition of skills.

On the other hand, Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) predict an interactive paradigm, stating that PD implies educators gaining the experience of colleagues, mentors, and professionals in a collaborative and reflective environment. Their focus on socially situated learning prefigures the communal aspects of professional development. According to Guggemos and Seufert (2021), PD is a contextual, focused learning process in which teachers receive the chance to build content knowledge and pedagogical skills, which positively influence student learning outcomes. This kind of definition demands that professional growth should balance personal growth with quantifiable improvements in student performance. All these definitions in the Nigerian context indicate that PD is a dynamic and controversial practice, and most local teachers are faced with structural gaps that hinder the achievement of viable development opportunities. This contextual disjuncture explains why PD

is complicated to meet the unique demands of Nigerian teachers.

Based on the above scholarship, I would suggest that professional development should be viewed as a conscious, continuous process whereby teachers learn, develop, and use knowledge, skills, and dispositions to improve their teaching practices and adapt to the changing educational environment. This definition summarizes the three pillars of lifelong learning, collaborative interaction, and contextual relevance, which are essential in overcoming the challenges facing the Nigerian teachers. PD in this perspective is not a one-time event but an ongoing systematic process that turns educators into adaptive, reflective practitioners who can promote personal professional development and student achievement.

Teacher development is a holistic concept that encircles the plethora of processes by which teachers enhance their knowledge base, sharpen their technical expertise, and polish their pedagogical practice to produce high-quality teaching results. It is concerned with the development of experiential opportunities that can not only contribute to personal professional development but also have a positive impact on the learning paths of students. Throughout the years, various researchers have provided definitions that emphasize the need to continue learning and personal development in the teaching profession. Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) define teacher development as a long-term, collective process in which teachers acquire new methods, share ideas, and improve their pedagogical practices to address the changing needs of the education system. This framing highlights the idea that professional development is a lifelong process that relies on the constant cooperation with colleagues and experts in the field.

Kong, et al. (2020) also define teacher development as a long-term process that entails learning, reflection, and adaptive change of teaching strategies to suit the needs of heterogeneous learners better. Their description highlights the dynamic, reflective quality of this endeavor, suggesting that educators need to take part in active self-evaluation and continuous enhancement to remain effective in their professional activities. Later research, including that by et al. (2023), recognizes teacher development as a strategically oriented practice that combines content-specific training, professional reflection, and the development of new competencies, with the aim of enhancing the performance of individual and collective teaching. This perception is in line with the fact that teacher development should be based on personal growth and the overall needs of the school community.

Scales, et al. (2020) provide a student-focused perspective, viewing teacher development as the improvement of the teacher-student dyad, in which better teaching

competencies simultaneously promote higher academic performance and intrinsic motivation among students. This description highlights the interdependence of teacher development and student achievement, and how highly qualified teachers can have a significant impact on student engagement and achievement. Karlberg and Bezzina (2022) complete the spectrum by defining teacher development as the process through which teachers get a chance to acquire new skills, participate in lifelong learning, and implement new strategies to improve their classroom practice. Their view restores the centrality of continuous improvement in the constant enhancement of the quality of teaching at the school level.

However, even with the range of theoretical stances, there remains a sense of a gap in understanding the particular predispositions of teachers in culturally diverse contexts, particularly in countries such as Nigeria where institutional barriers can override the effectiveness of teacher development programs. In this regard, I consider teacher development as a systematic, continuous process whereby teachers learn new things, enhance their skills, and critically examine their teaching practice to remain receptive to emerging educational demands. This definition brings to life a combined vision of lifelong learning, reflective practice, and adaptive change- which are known to be inseparable in successful teaching.

The theoretical basis of this question is the Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s. According to this paradigm, learners learn new behaviours and cognitions by observing, imitating and modelling, especially when they perceive these activities to be rewarded or effective. The contributions of Bandura, which have been developed over the following decades, predict the central role of cognitive processes in the learning environment, as opposed to the previous focus of behaviourists on the external reinforcement. In 1977, Bandura explained that learning occurs in a social environment and is significantly influenced by the interactions with other people, thus emphasizing the role of role models, social interactions, and environmental stimuli. The conceptual anchor of the research is that people learn and acquire skills and knowledge through observing the behaviour and the results of other people, which is particularly relevant to the development of teachers in Nigeria.

The propositions of the Social Learning Theory can be used to understand how professional development can be enhanced in this setting as teachers internalize the knowledge of their colleagues, mentors, and instructional leaders, by participating in workshops, seminars, and learning communities. The theory assumes that learning is a dynamic process that is highly affected by the social

milieu. Teachers in rural schools in a Nigerian context may find favorable learning in urban schools or global best practices, according to the observations of Onyekwelu (2024). In addition, the theory emphasizes that motivation, which is shaped by rewards and affirmation, can regulate the involvement of a teacher in PD programmes. Since Nigeria has been reported to lack motivation due to lack of systemic support, integration of social learning in PD models will offer more collaborative and enriching learning experiences.

Therefore, the Social Learning Theory provides a useful perspective in which to manage effective PD strategies. Through its fundamental principles, the teacher-training programmes in Nigeria can be structured in such a way that they enable healthy peer interaction, mentorship, and professional development. Teachers could observe and internalize best practices through a range of formal workshops, classroom observations and virtual communities, thus strengthening the mutual knowledge sharing. The social interaction aspect is interwoven and supports the idea that collective intelligence is better in improving pedagogy in schools. In this regard, the incorporation of this theory into the PD approaches responds to the need to not only expose teachers to knowledge but also to energise their implementation, adaptation, and contextualisation. This strategic alignment fulfills the demand of ongoing, contextually germinated professional development in Nigeria as suggested by Awodiji et al. (2020).

The current research design is qualitative research design, which seeks to question the development of professional development strategies among teachers in Nigeria. The information was collected using a variety of secondary sources, such as pedagogical literature, peer-reviewed journals, popular newspapers, governmental reports, and foreign media. This heterogeneity provided a pluralistic view of the issue. The further content analysis, which was used on these sources, offered a systematic approach to the classification and interpretation of the information, thus shedding light on the common patterns and the issues of interest that form the basis of the challenges and opportunities of teacher professional development in the Nigerian context.

Results and Discussion

Existing professional development programs and the specific needs and realities of teachers in different educational contexts in Nigeria.

The alignment between professional development (PD) programmes and the unique needs of the Nigerian teachers has emerged as a critical factor in alleviating the educational crises that are rife in the country. It is the

responsibility of policymakers to make sure that PD initiatives are not just a sham, but rather carefully tuned to the realities on the ground that educators have to deal with.

The pedagogical environment in Nigeria is fraught with numerous problems, most of which are worsened by the inefficiency of teacher development programmes. According to UNESCO, the teacher-to-pupil ratio in Nigeria is significantly higher than the global expectation of a teacher-pupil ratio, and in some states, the average number of teachers per forty-five students is reported to be one-to-forty-five, which is significantly higher than the recommended teacher-to-twenty ratio (UNESCO, 2021). This imbalance highlights a dire need to have effective teacher training programs that can help to improve the quality of instruction and, by extension, student learning.

Add to this is the fact that due to overcrowded classrooms, the teachers in Nigeria are often faced with a lack of essential teaching materials. The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2020) reports that an alarming seventy-two per cent of state schools in the nation are chronically underfunded, which means that most educators are forced to teach without the necessary artefacts, including textbooks, in-class teaching resources, or a stable technological network.

The rapidly evolving curriculum is another relevant challenge to teachers. The integration of emerging fields like computer science and technology requires teachers to develop new skills and embrace modern teaching methods. Conversely, the current PD programmes tend to be generic in nature, and they do not respond to the unique demands of teachers working in such dynamic learning settings. According to a survey conducted by the Nigerian Teachers' Union, over sixty per cent of teachers have little training on how to incorporate technology into classroom practice, despite an increasing need of digital literacy in education (Nigerian Teachers' Union, 2021). This inadequacy makes teachers unprepared to address changing demands of students in a society that is increasingly becoming dependent on digital technology.

As a result, the alignment of PD programmes with the practical needs of teachers is essential to the improvement of the instructional practices and the development of student achievement in Nigeria, especially in the context of the resource-limited institutions and a more fluid curriculum.

Ajani (2023) expresses the increasing awareness that professional development needs to be shaped to the individual needs and contexts of teachers in order to introduce significant pedagogical change. This position is particularly important in a country like Nigeria, where the issues of education are heterogeneous and context-specific.

A survey by the Nigerian Teachers' Union (2021) found that seventy per cent of Nigerian teachers complain of the lack of relevant training in the areas of their subject areas, especially in technology and classroom management, which supports the idea of context-specific PD programs that address the unique issues faced in different parts of the country, such as overcrowded classes, financial limitations, and outdated instruction.

Moreover, according to the Nigeria Education Statistics (2020), only forty-five per cent of teachers get any kind of training that is directly related to the reality of their classroom environment. This fact suggests that the one-size-fits-all PD model is not sufficient. To be truly effective, PD should discuss the particular obstacles posed by the local environment, be it the infrastructure, the availability of resources, or the socio-economic status of the student population. When PD is aligned with these determinants, teachers will have a higher chance of assimilating and putting new strategies into practice, which will eventually lead to better student outcomes and a more consequential teaching profession.

The gap between the needs of educators and the design of PD programmes in Nigeria has been studied by many researchers. Oni and Oni (2017) highlight an acute discrepancy between the range of PD services and the real needs of teachers. Teachers are used to workshops or training programs that fail to tackle the real issues that they encounter in the classroom, including overcrowded classes, lack of teaching materials, and inadequate use of technology. According to a recent survey of Nigerian Teachers Union (2021), sixty-eight per cent of teachers said they had attended PD workshops that had not been designed to address their particular teaching situations, with fifty-five per cent citing large classes and limited access to resources as the main barriers.

Furthermore, the National Bureau of Statistics (2020) states that merely thirty-eight per cent of schools of the general population have basic teaching materials, and even less have digital learning resources, which sheds light on the gap between what PD programmes offer and what is necessary in the classroom. Such a mismatch between PD content and the realities of teaching reduces the effectiveness of such programmes significantly. The teachers are denied the necessary resources and methods to manoeuvre the overcrowded classrooms or to integrate technology into teaching, thus, negating the possibilities of PD to foster the transformative pedagogical changes. Closing this gap requires that PD programmes should be more focused on the daily issues facing teachers and on the tangible needs of their teaching situations.

Lack of follow up after PD events is a critical factor that undermines the ability of Nigerian teachers to apply their

new knowledge in real classroom environments. Oluwatosin (2022) notes that teachers often face challenges when implementing newly acquired strategies because of an apparent absence of follow-up systems, which are critical in supporting newly acquired ideas. This situation is also exacerbated by the inability to provide sustained support, including mentorship or coaching, that would help teachers to transform training into classroom praxis. In the absence of these resources, most teachers find it difficult to implement new methodologies, especially when they have to face the realities of under-resourced learning conditions.

The lack of follow-up assistance is not a Nigerian problem alone but a challenge that is widespread in many developing countries. According to Nnokami and Sule (2017), despite the numerous in-service training programmes teachers in Nigeria attend, they do not receive the scaffolding to put the skills gained into practice due to the lack of follow-ups. This study found out that in Nigerian public schools, only twenty-eight per cent of teachers get sustained mentorship or refresher training after PD, which directly influences the sustainability and effectiveness of the competencies gained. Furthermore, Ogunode and Oluseun (2020) outline that the introduction of PD programmes in the Nigerian institutions of higher learning is often not optimal because of the lack of strategic planning and follow-up processes, which hinders the effective adjustment of the teachers to the changing educational needs.

The role of institutional support and government policies in facilitating or obstructing continuous professional development for teachers in Nigeria.

Professional development (PD) is one of the most important tools of improving the quality of education as it provides educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to improve their teaching methods. The effectiveness of PD programs in the Nigerian setting, however, is often limited by a lack of institutional support and the unpredictable quality of governmental policies. The institutional support, which includes mentorship, teaching material provisioning, and collaborative opportunities, is an essential factor in making sure that PD is converted into long-term pedagogical gains. Without the frequent assistance, teachers must frequently resort to new strategies in the classroom where they are plagued by lack of resources and overcrowding. According to a survey by the Nigerian Teachers' Union (2021), 68 per cent of teachers in Nigeria had limited access to teaching resources, and 61 per cent of teachers stated that they lacked mentorship or peer support after participating in PD workshops.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Oni and Oni (2017) has shown that the absence of follow-up systems in PD programmes impedes the ability of educators to implement the knowledge they gain during the training, especially in

schools with low funding. The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2020) indicates that only 28 per cent of public schools have sufficient teaching resources, which highlights the need to have stronger institutional support to help translate PD into effective classroom practice. In turn, this lack of institutional support and coherent government policy is one of the factors that lead to the low effectiveness of PD programmes in improving the quality of teaching in Nigeria.

The policy framework of the Nigerian government with regard to professional development (PD) has long been afflicted with disjointedness and a glaring lack of a unified approach to the promotion of professional development of teachers. Even though national directives like the National Policy on Education are supposed to improve the standards of education, their application at the grassroots level has been inconsistent and inadequate. This policy fragmentation creates a disjunction between the PD programmes attended by educators and the real classroom issues they face. A research by Falola et al. (2020) highlights the fact that, even though there are numerous educational policies, the absence of coordination and local resources leads to the implementation of PD initiatives that are not well-adjusted to the practical needs of teachers. According to the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2020), 85 per cent of teachers report having access to PD programmes, but only 30 per cent of teachers report that the programmes are sufficient to address issues like overcrowded classrooms, outdated materials, and a lack of technological resources. Lack of institutional-level PD framework that is well-supported and structured also negatively affects the capacity of teachers to transfer the skills gained in the training process, which limits the overall impact of PD programs on improving the quality of education in Nigeria.

The effectiveness of professional development (PD) is based on strong institutional support, which is a key factor in making sure that PD results in tangible improvements in teaching praxis. Oni and Oni (2017) state that the lack of the necessary institutional frameworks, i.e. mentorship programmes and peer collaboration, is a major contributor to the inefficiency of PD in Nigeria. Teachers that attend PD workshops often fail to implement new strategies in their classrooms without proper resources and long-term support. Nnokami and Sule (2017) discovered that institutions that offer sustained mentorship, peer review, and access to pedagogical resources enable teachers to adopt and maintain newly learned practices. However, in many schools in Nigeria, particularly those located in the rural areas, these support structures are conspicuously missing. Thus, educators in such settings are left to face the challenges of high student populations, poor resources, and

insufficient technological support without the support of institutional organizations.

According to the Nigerian Teachers' Union (2021), more than 65 per cent of teachers in Nigeria claimed that they did not receive post-PD follow-up support. This lack of knowledge makes the implementation of the newly acquired strategies in the classroom more difficult since teachers often feel alone and do not know how to integrate their training into practice. The same authors (Awodiji et al., 2020) highlight that the absence of systematic follow-up systems negatively affects the ability of teachers to operationalise PD training. Without constant feedback and mentorship, teachers are not able to close the gap between theory and practice, thus restricting the long-term effectiveness of PD interventions. Based on this, to attain substantive influence, PD it is essential that effective institutional support systems are established, whereby teachers have the necessary tools, resources and motivation to effectively execute and maintain their professional learning in the classroom.

The role of governmental policy in the professional development (PD) of teachers in Nigeria is critical. Although various directives, including the National Policy on Education, have been issued with the aim of improving the quality of education, their application has been marred by lack of uniformity and sufficient funding, political will and a cohesive policy framework. Falola et al. (2020) argue that despite the various educational reforms put in place by the Nigerian government, they have not always been put into practice, thus resulting in a gap between the training offered to teachers and the real classroom issues they face. Baseline information proves that the governmental investment in PD programmes is still minimal and is not coordinated to meet the heterogeneous needs of teachers. Ogunode and Oluseun (2020) suggest that the lack of a coordinated and long-term policy framework has led to ineffective training programs that do not take into consideration regional differences and the unique challenges faced by educators in unequal educational environments despite the numerous PD initiatives. As an example, in rural areas, educators tend to participate in PD activities that are not connected to the specific classroom conditions, such as overcrowding, lack of teaching resources, and insufficient technological access, which Ogunode and Oluseun (2020) describe.

Moreover, the lack of governmental support means that such programmes often do not have any long-term follow-through, mentorship, or provision of resources, thus limiting their sustainability. The effectiveness of PD initiatives is significantly reduced with the addition of Nnokami and Sule (2017) who emphasize the inability of the government to provide full support systems, including

mentorship programmes and lifelong learning opportunities. Teachers are confronted with systemic issues such as inadequate funding, infrastructural shortages, political instability, and unstable policy priorities, which makes it difficult to implement the knowledge acquired through PD programmes. As a result, the overall effect on the quality of teaching is insignificant, even with the existence of PD policies.

Key challenges that hinder the effective implementation of professional development strategies for teachers in Nigeria.

There are various challenges to the implementation of effective professional development (PD) strategies among teachers in Nigeria that make them unsuccessful. Such barriers as poor institutional support, funding, insufficient training facilities, and poor implementation of policies are all factors that lead to the low effect of PD programs on the quality of teaching. Although the aim of the PD programs is to improve the teaching skills and the results of the students, the difference between the objectives of these programs and the situation encountered by the teachers in the Nigerian classrooms is still high. The institutional support is an important aspect to make sure that the PD is translated into sustainable changes in teaching, but in Nigerian schools, such support is not always present. According to Oni and Oni (2017), the lack of mentorship programmes, collaborative conditions, and follow-up mechanisms implies that teachers are not able to apply the knowledge acquired during the PD sessions to real classroom environments. PD initiatives cannot offer continuous support that teachers require to implement new teaching strategies without institutional support.

Funding and Resources: Due to the lack of resources, the problem of inadequate funding is among the major barriers to the effective implementation of PD strategies in Nigeria. Ogunode and Oluseun (2020) note that as PD programmes are being introduced, they are not well-funded, and thus, the programmes are usually under-resourced, resulting in ineffective performance. The percentage of teachers in Nigeria especially in the rural regions lack access to good training because of the scarcity of learning resources and the poor infrastructure in most schools. According to the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2020), 72 per cent of the total number of public schools are under-funded, which affects not only the delivery of PD but also the daily teaching conditions. The financial constraint of PD initiatives leads to the fact that they only train people once, but not on the basis of meaningful professional development, which again reduces the advantages of such programmes. Also, the policy intentions of the government and the real distribution of resources to promote PD programmes have a visible gap that creates inconsistencies

in the quality of teacher training throughout the country (Falola et al., 2020).

Disjointed Government Policies and Irregular Implementation: The policies of the government regarding teacher professional development in Nigeria are usually disjointed and have no coherent structure to meet the various needs of teachers. Although the National Policy on Education highlights the significance of PD, its implementation is not done in a consistent manner and there is no follow up system to make sure that these initiatives are sustainable. Nnokami and Sule (2017) state that PD programmes are often not related to the specific issues that teachers have to cope with, including overcrowded classes, poor facilities, and a fast-evolving curriculum. The absence of a concerted strategy on PD has resulted in programmes which are not in line with the practical requirements of teachers, and therefore there is a gap between the training provided and the classroom realities. The PD initiatives should be supported by the government with regular monitoring and commitment to the long-term and sustainable teacher development programmes. As Adanne (2023) points out, policy frameworks do exist but in most cases, they do not offer the support that the PD programmes need to be successfully implemented at the grassroots level.

Difficulties of Technology Implementation in Professional Development: The other difficulty that prevents effective adoption of PD in Nigeria is the adoption of technology in training programmes. The education system in Nigeria is characterized by high barriers to the implementation of modern technologies in the classroom because of the lack of access to digital tools, insufficient training of teachers, and the lack of technological infrastructure. This is especially true in the rural regions where internet access and availability of digital learning devices are very low. According to a study by Ogunode and Oluseun (2020), even though digital literacy is a focus of the recent PD programmes, a significant number of teachers do not have the skills and resources to incorporate technology into the teaching process. In most regions of Nigeria, the PD programmes aimed at improving digital literacy cannot satisfy the needs of the teachers without proper technological infrastructure and training, which further restricts the effectiveness of such programmes.

Summary of Major Findings

When analyzing the correspondence between the current professional development (PD) programmes and the specific needs and realities of teachers in Nigeria, it was established that there is a considerable disparity between the content of the programmes and the reality of the challenges that teachers have to deal with in their classrooms. Most PD programmes are developed in a one-size-fits-all fashion, and they do not consider the specific

conditions in different educational settings, especially in rural settings. A large percentage of teachers stated that the training they were provided with was not able to provide them with practical solutions to many of the problems they encountered in their work like overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources and lack of integration of technology. Studies by Oni and Oni (2017) and Awodiji et al. (2020) have shown that PD programmes do not usually consider the needs of teachers depending on the regional differences, and the teachers do not have the tools to implement new teaching techniques in their specific settings. In turn, the PD programmes in Nigeria were perceived to have little effects, because teachers could hardly apply the knowledge they gained because of the dislocation between the programmes content and their teaching realities.

The importance of institutional support and government policies in enabling or hindering the PD of teachers was also critically analyzed. It was established that although the Nigerian government had put in place policies like the National Teacher Education Policy, the execution of these policies was in most cases inconsistent. The PD initiatives were not well funded and most schools particularly those in the rural regions did not have the institutional support mechanisms to assist teachers in implementing the skills acquired during the PD programmes. Ogunode and Oluseun (2020) state that the absence of a centralized structure of the PD programmes and the lack of follow-up mechanisms resulted in ineffective PD sessions. In most areas, teachers complained that they received no additional assistance in implementing new knowledge or strategies after they participated in PD workshops. Moreover, the political instability and the unstable priorities of the government were the obstacles to the effectiveness of the PD policies, and the sustained investment in the development of teachers was not provided.

The research also established some of the challenges that prevented the successful execution of PD strategies among teachers in Nigeria. These were poor funding, absence of follow-up support, resource insufficiency, and the inability of PD programmes to help teachers overcome the challenges that are unique to the classroom. Another major obstacle was the lack of good institutional frameworks like mentorship and peer collaboration that are necessary to help teachers successfully incorporate new learning into the practice. A study by Nnokami and Sule (2017) emphasized that infrastructural development especially in rural schools was a factor that led to the failure of PD programmes. Moreover, educators tended to mention that PD programmes were not related to the needs of the classroom, in particular, the need to integrate technology. The research found that successful PD should be in line with the classroom reality and should be backed by the consistent

government policies, sufficient funding, and institutional support systems to equip teachers with the instruments that enable them to have a long-term professional development.

Conclusion

The results of this paper have identified a number of critical issues to the implementation of professional development (PD) programmes to teachers in Nigeria, which shows that there is a great disparity between the PD programmes and the actual needs of teachers. It was discovered that the current PD programmes do not usually cover the particular issues that teachers encounter in their classrooms, particularly in the rural setting where resources and access to technology are scarce. The disconnection between the content of the PD programmes and the reality of the Nigerian classroom has been a major problem in the potential of such initiatives to result in significant changes in the teaching practice. The researchers noted that PD programmes in Nigeria are often generic in nature and do not consider the diversity of the educational settings in the country. This lack of alignment reduces the effectiveness of the PD programmes in general and their ability to produce sustainable changes in the educational outcomes.

In assessing the importance of institutional support and government policies, the research discovered that although Nigeria has implemented some reforms in education, such as the National Teacher Education Policy, they have in most cases been inconsistent and underfunded. Such disjointed and inconsistent policy implementation, coupled with poor institutional support systems, including mentorship and peer cooperation, also compromise the effectiveness of PD programmes. The paper has pointed out that, in the absence of adequate resources or follow-up systems, PD programmes in Nigeria are ineffective and the teachers are not provided with the means to support them in adopting new practices into their teaching. The inability to support teachers after the session of PD leads to the loss of the opportunity to use the skills obtained during the session in practice, which only minimizes the effectiveness of such initiatives.

The paper also established a number of barriers to effective implementation of PD strategies such as lack of funding, resources, and poor coordination in policy implementation. The paper highlighted the failure to incorporate technology in the PD programmes and lack of simple infrastructure in schools as factors that led to the failure of the PD programs. These obstacles impeded the use of new teaching methods and the overall effectiveness of PD to enhance the quality of education. To be effective, PD must be aligned with the needs of teachers in particular, with sufficient funding, and institutional and governmental structures.

The Social Learning Theory as put forward by Albert Bandura (1977) offered some very useful information on the importance of social interaction and feedback during the learning process. According to the theory by Bandura, learning is best done in a social environment where people are able to observe, cooperate, and get continuous feedback. This was especially applicable in the case of Nigerian teachers where institutional and social support following PD programmes was lacking and thus teachers were not able to implement new techniques in their classrooms.

Recommendations

According to the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were identified:

1) PD programmes to match the needs of teachers: The professional development programmes in Nigeria must be modulated to suit the needs of the teachers in various regions. Teachers should be consulted in designing programmes so that they solve real life problems like overcrowded classrooms, lack of adequate resources and incorporation of technology. Teacher feedback on continuous basis ought to be included to improve the content of PD and make it relevant to the local educational settings.

2) Institutional support of PD: To make the PD programmes more effective, it is essential that institutions should support them with continuous help including mentorship, collaboration with peers, and provision of support resources. The schools must have the structures that enable application and reinforcement of new knowledge acquired during PD. Regular check-ins, professional learning communities, and collaborative teaching practices should be included in the institutional support to enable the teacher to use and maintain the learning in the real classroom environment.

3) Government commitment: The Nigerian government should guarantee long term and continuous funding of PD programmes and also put in place a comprehensive policy framework. This framework must be highly coordinated with guidelines on how to implement, monitor and evaluate. PD should also be a priority to the government as a major aspect of teacher professional development, by aligning the policies with the unique needs of teachers and providing follow-up support regularly to maximise the effects of PD programs in the country.

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