



# **The Role Of Professional Development In Staff Projection In Educational Institution (A case Study Of Delta State University)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Professional growth is essential for achieving quality education in all organizations, including the teaching profession. One-third of the teaching workforce participates in qualification-driven in-service education, necessitating prioritization of educators' professional development. The methodological section employed a simple random methodology to choose participants for the study, resulting in a sample size of 220 individuals. The questionnaire was employed to gather information from respondents. The study population comprised the staff of Delta State University, Abraka. The data obtained from the field report was analyzed using Pearson Correlation with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0). Consequently, the data indicate a significant association between training and development and staff career progression at Delta State University. The findings indicated a substantial correlation between the work environment and employee commitment at Delta State University. This study recommends that tertiary institutions and management ensure the Academic Board effectively plans professional development programs for academic staff, involving all key stakeholders in decision-making, sensitization, and implementation. Furthermore, alternative or supplementary funding should be pursued to enhance the organization of professional development within the institution, thereby ensuring the program's robustness and success.

**Keywords:** Professional Development, Staff Projection, Career Progression, Work Environment, Employee Commitment

## **INTRODUCTION**

Professional growth is essential for achieving quality education in all organizations, including the teaching profession. Professionalism is closely linked to one's professional identity and perceptions on the prerequisites for being an effective educator or staff member (Choi & Kang, 2019). Teacher professional development has garnered interest in numerous nations and has been influenced by alterations in procedures, practices, and professional attitudes (Bawuro, Danjuma & Wajiga, 2018; Fernandes, Araújo, Miguel & Abelha, 2023). According to Altun (2017), the advancement of teachers depends on the nature of their learning, the content of that learning, and the impact of this learning on student outcomes when implementing new pedagogies and knowledge. His approach is complex and involves both intellectual and passionate involvement, both individually and collaboratively with

colleagues, to effectuate change and enhancement in the educational pursuits of themselves and their pupils.

Educators must continuously acquire knowledge and refine their skills, as teaching is a profession. Educators can enhance their professional efficacy and qualifications via diligent study; professional credentials are regarded as significant indicators of teacher professionalism in societal and political contexts. Teachers' professional development pertains to the enhancement, cultivation, and augmentation of educators' knowledge and skills (Kåre, 2019; Atiku, 2021). Innovation in teachers' professional development encompasses educators' practical experience and the development of instructional practices that enable students to acquire independent, reflective, and critical thinking abilities. As stated by Greece (2020), professional development is characterized as a cognitive and personal endeavour that necessitates interaction with novel concepts, experimentation with innovative methodologies, enhancement of pedagogical practices, and emotional investment (Lee, Longhurst & Campbell, 2017). Consequently, examining educators' perspectives on the influence of professional development on their pedagogical skills, knowledge, and career progression is essential for acquiring a thorough understanding of the current and potential challenges teachers may encounter (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2018; Asiyah, Wiyono, Hidayah & Supriyanto, 2021).

Moreover, teacher professional development encompasses the learning processes of educators, including their methods of acquiring knowledge and its application in practice to benefit their pupils (Nebo, Iloanya & Egole, 2015). Educators can enhance their knowledge by engaging in diverse courses, reflecting on their own instructional practices within the school environment, and seeing and contemplating the teaching methods of their colleagues (Louws et al., 2017; Oyeniya, Adeyemi & Olaoye, 2017). Learning can transpire during scheduled reflection meetings among educators, or through spontaneous discussions with colleagues prior to or during instruction, as well as at parent-teacher conferences. Consequently, learning can transpire through multiple modalities, both formal and informal (Tantawy, 2020). All undertakings are destined to encounter tumultuous moments. The formulation and implementation of good professional policies and practices depend on the ability of creators to conceptualise and elaborate on the subject matter (Postholm, 2012; Asiyah et al., 2021). The significance of offering professional development to employees, especially in the educational sector, is paramount. Educational institution providers and administrators should be keen to investigate the potential obstacles that may impede professional development activities (Parthasarathy & Premalatha, 2017).

Educators occupy a crucial role in the development of children. In light of the expected rise in their population, they must ready themselves for the future. Improving the quality of human resources requires educators' knowledge and dedication to professional advancement. Teacher training programs can facilitate professional development to improve learning (Lee, Longhurst, & Campbell, 2017; Parthasarathy & Premalatha, 2017). As noted by Ndongfack (2015), not all educators possess the capability to utilize technology to enhance learning quality, as numerous teachers have not had adequate training (Fernandes, Araújo, Miguel & Abelha, 2023). Educators sometimes overlook the significance of engaging learning material for pupils, which tend to be predominantly repetitive and tedious. Innovative and creative pedagogy is a fundamental requirement for educators to address the educational demands of the current generation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Educational activities necessitate a strong foundation to implement essential development and transformation in the lives of students and society at large. The execution of professional development programs for educational institution personnel necessitates careful thought to guarantee success. Educational leaders and their management teams are legally required to provide value for money in all decision-making processes. This requires that any resources designated for educational activities must produce favourable economic outcomes. Staff professional development must enhance the performance of both personnel and students. To ensure the anticipated good impact, the program must be designed to incorporate reflection regarding potential difficulties to professional development, allowing for proactive planning and mitigation of these obstacles.

The educator assumed the role of facilitator to enhance meaning-making in classroom instruction. Evidence (Ibad, 2016; Lee, Longhurst & Campbell, 2017; Kåre, 2019) indicates that one-third of the teaching workforce participates in qualification-driven in-service education, and in numerous cases,

despite significant salary increases, these qualifications had minimal or no effect on classroom practice. Consequently, it was deemed essential for all educators to augment their competencies for the implementation of the new curriculum and for staff advancement. A significant majority of educators must enhance their topic knowledge, pedagogical content understanding, and instructional skills. This constituted a significant appeal for prioritizing the professional development of educators. Nonetheless, discernible deficiencies exist in the academic contributions of multiple writers; (Ibad, 2016; Lee, Longhurst & Campbell, 2017; Louws, Meirink, van Veen & van Driel, 2017; Choi, J., & Kang, 2019; Kåre, 2019; Fernandes et al., 2023). This anomaly requires research attention due to the scarcity of accessible literature on professional growth and staff projection. This research aims to explore the function of professional development in staff advancement inside educational institutions.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of professional development on staff performance in educational institutions, specifically focusing on Delta State University, Abraka. Additional objectives of the study include:

1. Examine the significant relationship between training and development and staff career progression in Delta State University.
2. Determine the relationship between work environment and employee commitment in Delta State University.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are presented for this paper:

1. What is the relationship between training and development and staff career progression in Delta State University?
2. Is there any relationship between work environment and employee commitment in Delta State University?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses have stated and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H<sub>01</sub>*: There is no significant relationship between training and development and staff career progression in Delta State University.
- H<sub>02</sub>*: There is no significant relationship between work environment and employee commitment in Delta State University.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The human capital hypothesis derives from macroeconomic development theory (Schultz, 1993). Becker's (1993) foundational text, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis with Special Reference to Education*, epitomises this domain. Becker asserts that other types of capital include schooling, computer training programs, and healthcare expenses. Discussions regarding the virtues of punctuality and integrity are equally invaluable. They authentically improve health, elevate wealth, or develop an individual's literary appreciation over the course of their career. Consequently, it is wholly aligned with the traditional concept of capital to claim that expenditures on education, training, and healthcare are investments in capital. These are not only expenditures but investments with measurable returns. Classical Economic Theory perceives human capital as labour regarded as a commodity that can be purchased and sold.

This classical philosophy largely underscores the exploitation of labour by capital. Human capital, unlike the traditional notion of labour, refers to the knowledge, competencies, and skills obtained through education and training. Becker (1993) emphasised the social and economic importance of human capital theory, claiming that the most valuable kind of capital is investment in individuals. Becker distinguishes between firm-specific human capital and general human capital. Firm-specific human capital includes knowledge gained from education and training in management information systems, accounting practices, or other skills particular to a single organisation. General-purpose human capital denotes knowledge obtained via education and training that is beneficial to several organisations, encompassing universal abilities in human resource development. Becker considers education and training to be the foremost investment in human capital, regardless of its application.

### Concept of Professionalism Development

Strategies for improving teacher professionalism include: (1) lesson study, aimed at refining learning processes via constructive peer feedback, (2) enhancing teacher performance in disciplines such as discipline, motivation, administration, creativity, and innovation, (3) conducting classroom action research (CAR) to detect and address learning deficiencies, and (4) participating in workshops, teacher working groups, reading groups, writing journals/articles, compiling portfolios, engaging in peer observations, and partaking in mentoring (Fernandes et al., 2023).

### Staff Projection

Li, Tong, and Wong (2012) describe career progression as the "systems of training, development programs, promotion, incentives, and salary of an organization." Career progression refers to the evolution of employment positions that frequently results in enhanced status, increased responsibilities, and occasionally higher compensation (Coldwell, 2017). Kaplan and Kaplan (2018) assert that the teaching profession presents a rather stagnant career trajectory, devoid of adequate leadership opportunities for seasoned educators who exhibit proficiency in the discipline. The degree to which teaching career trajectories provide ongoing advancement and opportunity to enhance educational quality is crucial for attracting and maintaining highly educated and motivated educators. Furthermore, educators typically desire elevated career trajectories to foster innovative learning and sustain enthusiasm for their teaching; in the absence of such chances, those seeking professional growth are compelled to transition into administrative positions within education.

### Challenges on Teachers' Professional Development

The initial step in surmounting obstacles is to recognize them; according to the research, the following are the primary issues impeding teachers' professional development (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2018).

- **Limited knowledge of opportunities:** Educators may lack knowledge regarding the professional development options accessible inside their workplace. Professional development encompasses more than merely targeted training programs. It encompasses peer-class observation, coaching, conversations, networking, and classroom-based action research.
- **Difficult working conditions:** Challenging working conditions, including inadequate remuneration, overcrowded classes, insufficient materials, an unsafe working environment, and a lack of respect, contribute to teacher demotivation, hence diminishing their performance and willingness to improve.
- **Lack of support:** The deficiency of teacher professionalism frequently mirrors the inadequacy of professionalism throughout the school system. Rigid and hierarchical educational institutions disincentivize educators (Gemedá & Tynjälä, 2015). Exhausted educators may oppose efforts to augment their professional skills, particularly when professional development fails to yield enhancements in classroom practices or career advancement.
- **Lack of teacher identity:** Numerous educators enter the field not by choice, but out of need, resulting in a deficiency in professional identity or motivation to enhance that identity.
- **Lack of confidence:** Educators' self-belief is positively associated with their performance (Akyeampong, 2003). Teachers experiencing poor confidence due to insufficient professional support become frustrated. This thus damages teacher-student relationships, the quality of instruction, and the perception of teaching as a desirable vocation. Educators may refrain from participating in professional development if they believe it will provide no significant improvement.
- **Poorly designed professional development:** Professional development opportunities are frequently sporadic, lack competent facilitators and effective learning methodologies, are constrained by budget limitations, and encounter logistical obstacles (Darling-Hammond, 2000). This leads instructors to view development programs as substandard and useless, so discouraging participation.
- **Insufficient policies and budget for professional development:** The absence of comprehensive policies and procedures results in disorganized training for educators. This manifests as challenges in scheduling, absence of coordinated frameworks, and inadequate funding (Bawuro, Danjuma & Wajiga, 2018).

**METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a descriptive research design, utilizing a questionnaire as the research instrument. The survey was segmented into two parts (A and B). Section A of the questionnaire included the respondent's personal information. Section B of the questionnaire has a 4-point Likert scale for responses, ranging from 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The study's population comprised all staff of Delta State University Abraka; however, a sample of 220 staff members was picked using a simple random sampling technique. The data obtained from the field report was analyzed using Pearson Correlation with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0).

**Results**

**Table 1:** Relationship between training and development and career progression

Variables	Mean	SD	R	R2	R%	Decision
Training and development	3.21	.54	.698	.532	68%	Positive relationship
Staff career progression	2.68	.32				

Table 1 illustrates the correlation between training and development and employee career advancement. The mean and standard deviation for training and development were 3.21 and 0.54, but the mean and standard deviation for staff career progression were 2.68 and 0.32, respectively. The correlation coefficient between the two variables was .698, indicating a positive association, while the  $r^2$  value of .532 demonstrates that staff career progression is explained by 68% of the variance. Consequently, a favourable correlation exists between training and development and staff career advancement at Delta State University.

**Table 2:** Correlations between training and development and staff career progression

		Training and development	Career progression
Training and development	Pearson Correlation	1	.431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	220	220
Career progression	Pearson Correlation	.431**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	220	220

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (Z-tailed).

The correlation study revealed the intensity and orientation of the linear link between training and development and employee career advancement. The Pearson correlation coefficient between training and development and staff career growth is  $r = 0.431^{**}$ ,  $n = 220$ ,  $p = .000$ , demonstrating a positive, strong, and significant association between the two variables. Consequently, we acknowledge a substantial correlation between training and development and employee career advancement. The null hypothesis is hence rejected..

**Table 3:** Relationship between work environment and employee commitment

Variables	Mean	SD	R	R2	R%	Decision
Work environment	3.14	.56	.721	.641	59.4	Positive relationship
Employee commitment	2.74	.24				

Table 2 illustrates the correlation between the work environment and employee commitment. The mean and standard deviation for the work environment were 3.14 and 0.56, but the mean and standard deviation for employee commitment were 2.74 and 0.24, respectively. The correlation between the two variables was .721, indicating a positive association, while the  $r^2$  value of .641 demonstrates that employee commitment accounts for 59.4% of the variance. There exists a positive correlation between the work environment and employee dedication at Delta State University.

**Table 4:** Correlations between work environment and employee commitment

		Work environment	Employee commitment
Work environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.440**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	220	220
Employee commitment	Pearson Correlation	.440**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	220	220

\* \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis revealed the magnitude and orientation of the linear association between the work environment and employee commitment. The Pearson correlation coefficient between work environment and employee commitment is  $r = 0.440^{**}$ ,  $n = 220$ ,  $p = .000$ , signifying a positive, robust, and significant association between the two variables. Consequently, we acknowledge a substantial correlation between the work environment and employee dedication.

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings indicate that the first hypothesis demonstrates a significant relationship between training and development and staff career progression at Delta State University. The findings of Nebo, Kenneth, and Egole (2015) supported the impact of staff training and development as an effective instrument for organizational efficiency. The investigation examined the issues of insufficient funding, the hiring of unqualified personnel, and the failure to attract new staff following retirements and deaths. Consequently, the study aimed to determine whether staff training and development might be impacted by insufficient funding. To assess the impact of hiring unqualified personnel, as well as the consequences of the retirement and demise of senior staff members. The study design employed was a survey approach. The study's total population was 479, and Taro Yamane's formula was employed to ascertain a sample size of 218. The research employed three inquiries and three hypotheses. The Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical method was employed to evaluate the hypotheses. The organization is adversely impacted by insufficient funding, the hiring of unqualified personnel, and the retirement or demise of veteran staff, which has significantly affected the Water Corporation in Awka. The report advises the Anambra State Water Corporation to train its workers in modern technical equipment, project its workforce, and devise innovative strategies for revenue generation. Moreover, the results indicate a substantial correlation between the work environment and employee dedication at Delta State University. This result was corroborated by Smet's (2022) study, which examined the influence of numerous facets of professional development for teachers, along with the relationships among these facets, on job satisfaction. The primary objective is to clarify the relationships between the necessity for and engagement in professional development activities, facilitating more nuanced assessments that may enhance the comprehension of the underlying mechanisms. We utilize data from the 2018 iteration of the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). The hierarchical data structure of teachers within schools and regions necessitates the application of suitable estimating techniques, specifically multilevel or hierarchical linear modelling (HLM). A substantial positive correlation exists between job satisfaction and the necessity for professional development in teaching diversity and special needs, which is negatively mitigated by the quantity of professional development activities in which a teacher has engaged. Another indicator, assessing the necessity for professional growth in content knowledge and pedagogy, demonstrates a significant inverse correlation with job satisfaction and is positively mitigated by the extent of professional development received.

### CONCLUSION

The primary focus of this study was to investigate the impact of professional development on staff retention at educational institutions, while comparing training and development, work environment, staff career advancement, and employee commitment. The literature was also based on the sociocultural theory of learning. Nonetheless, professional growth is a pervasive aspect of the teaching profession. Professional development has been extensively researched as a means to enhance

teacher practice and improve student results. Research indicates that well-structured, high-quality, and effectively executed professional development, administered at the appropriate moment throughout a teacher's skill acquisition, can enhance the teacher's prospects for employee commitment and career advancement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teacher professional development must integrate best practices, a clear framework, content focus, active learning, collaboration, coaching and expert assistance, feedback and reflection, and extended duration. It should also involve reassessing professional development and reallocating funds based on effectiveness, while reinventing support by balancing investments in development with recruitment and retention efforts.
2. Tertiary institutions and management must guarantee that the Academic Board conducts thorough planning of professional development programs for academic staff, ensuring the inclusion of all important stakeholders in decision-making, awareness, and implementation processes.
3. Alternative or supplementary financing should be pursued for the organization of professional development at the institution to enhance the program's robustness and success.
4. A thorough examination of the sustainability determinants of professional development programs for academic staff has been conducted in related study that remains unpublished by the author. It is recommended that the leadership of tertiary institutions study that research finding and other pertinent studies to be informed about sustainability issues as a strategy to address challenges in professional development programs.

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