

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL TASK PERFORMANCE IN KWARA STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The Population of the study consisted of 14,206 public primary school teachers and 1,406 head teachers in the three senatorial districts of Kwara State. The sample for the study comprised 400 teachers and 40 head teachers which were selected using a multistage sampling procedure. A self-designed validated research instrument titled "Staff Development and Teachers' Instructional Task Performance" (SDTITP) was used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was ensured with a coefficient index of 0.77. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage scores. The results showed that in-service training 76.1; mentoring 68.6%, seminars 63.9%; and workshops 62.7%) were the types of development programmes available for the teachers; frequencies of conducting the programme were once every session and the mode used by the management in selecting staff for the development programmes was based on bias/prejudice 68.2%, seniority 65%, and the subject taught 72%. The study concluded that the development programmes of in-service training, mentoring, seminars, and workshops were staff development programmes used by the Kwara state Government for their primary school teachers. However, it was discovered that not all the teachers had the privilege of being selected to go for the programme. It was recommended among others that: the management should endeavour to add conferences as part of the professional development programmes made available for primary school teachers in Kwara State to enhance their pedagogic skills and competence towards meeting the expectations of the general public.

**Keywords:** development; programmes; primary; schools; teachers' task.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teachers' instructional task performance is an important requirement if a school is to maintain its standard in the realization of national educational goals, it also entails the extent to which teachers carry out their teaching jobs, and as a result, it is necessary to investigate the various methods of improving teachers' performance in the school system. A good teacher's performance on instructional tasks in the school is equivalent to that of a good functional teacher.

Hence, the responsibility of the Federal, State, and Local Ministries of Education, as well as the Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) and school administrators, is to achieve the schools' aims, whereas teachers must maximize the school's return by fulfilling the school's goals and objectives. As Okeniyi (2013) reported, good school management is expected to be a result of good instructional task performance in the school. The managerial roles of the school management include controlling, directing, and managing all activities regarding the education enhancement of the school system.

The term "performance" refers to the way and manner in which an activity is being carried out. Performance can also be perceived as the completion of a task in comparison to predetermined known standards of accuracy, speed, cost, and completeness. The execution of a certain activity judged against the established or identified standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed is referred to as performance. In an employment contract, performance is defined as the fulfilment of a commitment in such a way that the performer is released from all contractual obligations.

Apart from competitiveness and productivity, efficiency and effectiveness are components of performance. Training appears to be a means of improving an individual's performance. Efficiency is concerned with one's attainment of the desired goal with minimum input while effectiveness of the teachers is concerned with the attainment of the stated objectives. The term "good performance" refers to how well employees complete the task at hand. Employees in every organization where the school system belongs are held to certain standards in terms of their performance. They are considered good performers when they perform to the specified standards and meet organizational expectations. Teachers' task performance refers to how they carry out their teaching jobs in the school. All the work that teachers are expected to accomplish daily in the school organization is: Lesson planning, classroom management, student assessment, and the like are used to evaluate teachers' performance and good teaching methods.

Others are more routine administrative and operational tasks. Lesson planning is an integral part of teaching that takes place days before a lesson is delivered. Some of the most important responsibilities of the teacher are to plan, develop, and organize lessons. Day-to-day teaching duties become considerably easier and more successful when lessons are planned effectively since it simplifies teaching in the long run. Every day, whether formative or summative, students should be assessed by the teacher in the classroom, if one does not consistently measure students' comprehension, one will not be able to discern if his or her training is effective.

Teaching Methods seem to be a frequently ignored teaching duty that can make all the difference between a good and bad teacher. Teachers must decide what will work best in their classrooms in terms of course delivery, adjustments, and changes for special needs students.

Effective teachers conduct extensive research and maintain an open mind to make informed conclusions about the choice of methods to be used in the classroom regarding these issues. He or she must stay up with the current advances and seek new tools to add to their teaching arsenal that will help them better their teaching. Considering this, teachers have a significant and vital responsibility to play in properly preparing young people for their duties in society as a whole, to attain the specified national educational goals. The impact of the teacher can be seen in every sector of the society.

Staff development, according to Stedman (2009), is the ‘process of providing chances for employees to improve their knowledge, skills, and performance under the organization's goals and values, as well as the employees' interests and requirements. Staff development focuses on organizational learning and it is delivered by the organization, an employee group, or an individual worker at a time when it is needed’. It highlights the idea that organizations will advance to the extent that people develop and evolve. ‘Staff development allows educators to stay up with the ever-growing body of knowledge in the field of education so that they can continue to improve their conceptual and practical skills’ (Gusky and Huberman, 1995).

The primary objectives of staff development encompass providing structured opportunities for employees to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for their current and future roles. Additionally, staff development aims to foster an environment conducive to personal fulfillment, institutional efficiency, innovation, and system rejuvenation. These efforts are aligned with the overarching goals of the education system, particularly enhancing teaching and learning quality for students. Collaborative programs are established to achieve both system-wide and individual goals in terms of achievement and satisfaction. Despite the challenges of classroom management, effective strategies can be developed through various techniques and efforts to maintain control. Teachers are also expected to fulfill additional professional duties based on factors such as school policies, location, and specialization. While these responsibilities may not always be mandatory, they contribute to the overall school community. In Kwara State primary schools, teachers are expected to fulfill all these tasks as part of their job performance.

Staff development serves as a means to enhance job understanding, improve job performance, and set future career objectives. It aids employees in gaining a better grasp of their roles and responsibilities while elevating the quality of classroom instruction. For teachers, professional development involves continual reflection, renewal, and expansion of their role as agents of change in teaching. It also entails acquiring and refining knowledge, skills, and practices in their interactions with students and colleagues throughout their careers. Prioritizing empowering individuals by fostering an inclusive and motivating work environment is essential for every organization.

Furthermore, staff development initiatives play a crucial role in promoting a culture of continuous improvement within educational institutions. By offering opportunities for teachers to engage in ongoing learning and skill development, these programs contribute to the overall enhancement of teaching quality and student outcomes. Moreover, they foster a sense of professional community and collaboration among educators, enabling them to share best practices, support one another, and collectively strive towards common goals. Through a commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth, teachers can adapt to evolving educational trends, incorporate innovative teaching methodologies, and ultimately enrich the educational experience for their students. Thus, staff development serves as a cornerstone in the

pursuit of excellence in education, driving positive change and empowering educators to make a lasting impact in the lives of their students.

Consequently, staff development initiatives aim to enhance job comprehension, foster more efficient task execution, and establish enduring career objectives. They provide opportunities for employees to better understand their responsibilities. These initiatives are beneficial for both novice and experienced educators and teaching assistants. Such programs are designed to elevate the standard of classroom instruction while enabling individuals to advance in their careers. The significance of teachers' contributions to the educational system should not be underestimated. According to studies, 'the first and most essential instrument that moulds and moulds students' academic performance level is teachers' input and involvement in terms of their task performance' (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, Michin, Gordon, Thomas, and Moore, 2011; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005). This indicates that a school's success, particularly in the areas of learner engagement and results, is determined by the quantity and quality of teachers' involvement. Every educational institution is required to be devoted to empowering members by fostering an equal and encouraging working environment.

Teacher development can be defined as "the professional progress a teacher achieves as a result of obtaining more experience and thoroughly assessing his or her teaching." When considering professional development, it becomes crucial to deliberate on the substance of the experiences, the methodologies employed for the development process, and the environment in which it occurs. Professional growth constitutes a journey in which teachers enhance their understanding, skills, and mindsets. It involves the continuous task of generating, maintaining, assessing, and disseminating knowledge through ongoing learning throughout one's career.

Therefore, 'the ingredient of cultivating and conserving intellectual values, curiosity, and integrity to cultivate these values through inculcation is included in development programmes' (Foy, Arora, & Stanco, 2013). 'The primary goal of professional development is to increase the quality of teaching and learning as well as the performance of individuals in positions of teaching and administration' (Foy *et al.*, 2013).

The effective execution of teaching responsibilities is crucial for schools to fulfill their educational objectives. Teachers play a pivotal role in this process, needing to adeptly plan lessons, utilize appropriate instructional materials, employ effective teaching methods, and manage classroom dynamics. Furthermore, they are tasked with conducting regular assessments, promptly grading student work, and providing accurate feedback. To excel in these duties, teachers require continuous professional development opportunities, such as seminars, workshops, and mentoring programs sponsored by the government. Despite such efforts in Kwara state to support primary school teachers, concerns persist among education stakeholders regarding students' underperformance. While extensive literature exists on teacher performance at this level, there is a dearth of information on the specific impact of staff development programs on instructional task performance in Kwara state primary schools. Thus, this study aims to address this research gap.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, the following questions were addressed

- i. What are the types of staff development programmes available for Kwara State primary school teachers?

- ii. How frequently do Kwara State primary school teachers go for staff development programmes?
- iii. What mode does the management used in selecting staff for the development programmes in Kwara State primary schools?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research adopted a descriptive survey methodology. The study population consisted of 14,206 public primary school teachers and 1,406 head teachers spread across Kwara State's three senatorial districts and 16 local government areas. For the study, a sample size of 40 public primary school teachers and 40 head teachers was selected using a multi-stage sampling approach. Two senatorial districts were purposively chosen due to security concerns in the third senatorial district. Proportional random sampling was then employed to select five and three local government areas from the chosen districts, respectively. Within these selected local government areas, five schools were randomly chosen. Subsequently, from each school, ten teachers with a minimum of five years of teaching experience were purposively selected to provide insights into the impact of staff development programs on teachers' performance. Head teachers of the selected schools were also purposively included in the study.

A self-design research questionnaire titled "Staff Development and Teachers Instructional Task Performance (SDTITP) was used to elicit information from the teachers and the head teachers on Staff Development and Teachers' Instructional Task Performance in Kwara State Primary Schools, It has two sections, the first section contained demographic information of the respondents, while the second section contained items that were used to elicit information from the teachers and head teachers on the issue relating to Staff development and teachers' instructional task performances. The researcher used close-ended questions where the respondents were requested to choose the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a given statement on the issue raised by the researcher. The researcher used four-point Likert scale to determine the extent to which the respondent perceived the questionnaire items. The instrument was validated before it was used. Its reliability coefficient was 0.77. Data for the study was collected by the researchers and analysed All information collected through the questionnaire was compiled, analyzed, and discussed by the researcher. The researcher used the descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage scores in analysing the data collected.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Question One:** What are the types of staff development programmes available for primary school teachers in Kwara State?

To answer the research questions raised 440 copies of the questionnaire were used to investigate the types of staff development programmes available for primary school teachers in Kwara State and descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage scores were used to analyse the data generated. The response options of 4 points for Highly Available (HA) and 3 points for Available (A) were merged as Available, 2 points for Scarcely Available (SA), and 1 point for Not Available (NA) The results were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Types of Staff Development Programmes Available for Primary School Teachers in Kwara State

S/N	What types of staff development programmes are available for primary school teachers?	A	%	NA	%	Total	%
1	In service training	335	76.1	105	23.9	440	100
2	Conferences	161	36.6	279	63.4	440	100
3	Workshop	276	62.7	164	37.3	440	100
4	Seminars	281	63.9	159	36.1	440	100
5	Mentoring	302	68.6	138	31.4	440	100

**Source:** Field Data, 2021

Table 1 335 (76.1%) of the respondents agree that they attended in-service training, while 105(23.9%) disagree. Also, 161(36.6%) of the respondents agree that they attended conferences, while 279(63.4%) disagree. In addition, 276(62.7%) of the respondents agree on workshop attendance while 164(37.3%) disagree. Similarly, the result in the Table shows that 281(63.9%) of the respondents agree on seminar attendance while 159(36.1%) disagree. The finding further shows that 302(68.6%) of the respondents agree that they were engaged in a mentoring programme while 138(31.4%) disagree. From the analyses in Table 1, it can be deduced that in-service training, mentoring, seminars, and workshops, were the types of staff development programmes available for primary school teachers in Kwara State. This finding agrees with the finding of Yusuf and Fashiku, (2016) who discovered that three major teachers’ professional development programmes in terms of cluster-type seminars, face-to-face mentoring and on-the-job-training were the types of staff developmental programmes carried out in public secondary schools of North Central zone, Nigeria. Also, the finding is in agreement with the finding of Ayeni (2010) who revealed that cluster-type workshops, mentoring, and full-time in-service training as the various types of development programmes for secondary school teachers in Ondo State.

**Research Question Two:** How frequently is the programme conducted for Kwara State primary school teachers?

To answer the research question, frequency count and percentage scores were used to analyse the data generated. The response options of 4 points for Very Frequent (VF) and 3 points for Frequent (F) were merged as Frequent, 2 points for Not Frequent (NF), and 1 point for Not At all (NA) were merged as Not Frequent respectively. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Percentage Analysis of the Frequency of Conducting Staff Development Programmes for Kwara State Primary Schools Teachers

S/N	How frequently do Kwara state primary school teachers go for staff development programmes	F	%	NF	%	Total	%
1	Once every Month	195	44.3	245	55.7	440	100
2	Once every term	140	31.8	300	68.2	440	100
3	Once every session	389	88.4	51	11.6	440	100

**Source:** Field Data, 2021

The result shows that 195(44.3%) of the respondents agreed that the programme was conducted once every month, 245 (55.7%) disagreed. Also, 140(31.8%) of the respondents indicated that the programme was conducted once every term, while 300 (68.2%) disagreed. Equally, 389(88.4%) of the respondents showed that the programme was conducted once every session, while 51(11.6%) disagreed. Based on the analysis in Table 2, it can be deduced that the frequency of conducting the programme for Kwara State primary school teachers was once every session. The finding of the study is in line with the finding of Olabisi (2013) who found that teachers’ professional development programmes in Ogun State were done once a term or a year. The finding is also in line with the finding of Bright and Innocent (2015) who found that teachers in secondary schools in Ogun State usually attend training programmes to enhance their professional capacities.

**Research Question Three:** What mode does the management used in selecting staff for the development programmes in Kwara State primary schools?

**Table 3:** Mode of Management in Selecting Staff for the Development Programmes in Kwara State Primary Schools

S/N	What method does the management use in selecting teachers for staff development programmes?	A	%	D	%	Total	%
1	Random selection	165	37.5	275	62.5	440	100
2	Based on seniority	286	65.0	154	35.0	440	100
3	Bias/prejudice	300	68.2	140	31.8	440	100
4	Based on the subject taught	317	72.0	123	28.0	440	100

**Source:** Field Data, 2021

Table 3 shows the percentage analysis of the mode used by the management in selecting staff for development programmes in Kwara State primary schools 165(37.5%) agreed that teachers in the school were selected randomly 275 (62.5%) disagreed. Also, 286(65%) of the respondents agreed on selection based on seniority, while 154(35%) disagreed. In addition, 300(68.2%) agreed on bias/prejudice, while 140(31.8%) disagreed. On the last item, 317(72%) of the respondents agreed on selection based on the subject taught, while 123(28%) disagreed. Based on the analysis, it can be deduced that the management made use of three modes, which included: bias/prejudice, seniority, and subject taught in selecting the staff for the development programme. In this sense, the mode used by the management in selecting their staff for the development programmes in Kwara State primary schools was based on bias/prejudice having the highest frequency, next is subject taught and seniority. The implication is that not all the teachers were given an equal chance to part take in staff development programmes in Kwara State primary schools. The finding is in agreement with the finding of Yusuf and Fashiku, (2016) that revealed that not all teachers in the public junior secondary schools in North Central Zone, Nigeria were given equal opportunities to attend professional development programmes based on the criteria for selection. Also, this finding conforms to the finding of Ayeni and Akinola (2008) that showed that 75% of the teachers in secondary schools in Ondo State were not given adequate training opportunities by their principals because facilities to improve their professional competence through in-service training were not adequately provided.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that the development programmes of in-service training, mentoring, seminars, and workshops were staff development programmes used by the Kwara state Government for their primary school teachers. However, it was discovered that not all the teachers had the privilege of being selected to go for the programme.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made among others:

1. As a matter of urgency, the management should endeavour to add conferences as part of the professional development programmes made available for primary school teachers in Kwara State to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and competence toward meeting the expectations of the general public.
2. The government should demonstrate sincere commitment in conjunction with all other stakeholders in education to increase the frequency of professional development for primary school teachers in Kwara State monthly. This would enhance the quality of their instructional task performance.
3. Selection of staff for professional development in Kwara State public primary schools based on bias/prejudice should be discouraged completely and efforts should be intensified in considering random selection when selecting the staff.



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