

The Influence of In-Service Training, Seminars and Workshops Attendance by Social Studies Teachers on Academic Performance of Students in Junior Secondary Schools Incross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research examined the influence of in-service training, seminar and workshop attendance by social studies teachers on students academic performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, one hypothesis was formulated to direct the study. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. A sample of five hundred Social Studies teachers (500) and students were selected for the study. The instruments for data collection were a set of questionnaire to measure Social Studies teachers in-service training, seminar and workshop training and Social Studies Performance Test (SOSPT) to measure students academic performance. The reliability estimate of the instruments were established through the split-half reliability method and it associate Spearman Brown prophesy formula. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was adopted to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that there exists a positive and small relationship between the frequency of teachers' attendance at in-service training, seminars and workshops and students' academic performance in social studies. It was recommended that government should make it mandatory for all teachers in both primary and post primary to undergo professional training. As it is the case with other professions like law and medicine among others.

1. Introduction/literature review

Teachers are the hub of the educational system in the world generally and particularly in Nigeria. Teachers therefore constitute a great percentage of the working population and are in the forefront of the battle for national development. Their roles in the development of manpower and in the achievement of national educational goals are outstanding. It is in the light of this, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2008:54) stated that "Teachers education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development". Moreso, the policy stipulated the purpose of teacher education is to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system. It is in the light of this that Okolie (1991) stated that the seven cardinal goals of education are intellectual, emotional, physical, moral, aesthetic, vocational and social development. He also opined that some philosophers have classified these variables into three major areas: development of the head, the heart, and the hands- "The three Hs". The key to the attainment of these goals has been entrusted to some people, here-in-after called "Teachers".

Uche (1981) stressed that to facilitate and maximize the us of discovered new skills of teaching, teachers should undergo in-service training. According to him, this will enable teachers to acquire mastery of new skills and to be abreast with new knowledge. In consonance with such an idea, the Cross River State Government (1979) reports. "In-service training of any kind is designed to expose officers to modern and contemporary approved techniques, knowledge and skills for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness and improved performance of public officers". For Social Studies teachers to be competent in their area of specialization, there must be adequate provision for their in-service training.

Nkpa (1991) conducted a study on innovative programme for the retraining of Science Teachers for effective integrated science teaching in Nigerian Secondary Schools. The subjects for the research were 126 N.C.E teachers who enrolled for the integrated science sandwich degree programme at the University of Ilorin, Institute of Education. The instrument for the evaluation of the study was the prior qualification of teachers selected for the training and their performance in their different subject components of the integrated science core content.

The result showed that teachers with prior qualifications in the Science Subjects performed better. It also revealed the need for retraining of Science Teachers, if they must be effective in carrying out their duty. Sacco and Marvin (1979) investigated into the effect of in-service training on teaching effectiveness in Maryland, Lagos. The sample consisted of 20 teachers drawn from different elementary schools. Ten (10) teachers receive in-service training and the other ten (10) did not receive in-service training. At the end of the in-service training, which consisted of 16 two-hour sessions, they were given an effectiveness questionnaire to fill. At a 0.05 level of

significance, the Kruskal Wallis non-parametric one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed a significantly different response from the teachers in the two groups. The groups that passed through in-service training performed better than those that did not receive in-service training. This result supported Uche's assertion in (1981) and Cross River State Government Reports (1979).

In their conclusions, that is Sacco and Marvin (1976) they opined that education should stimulate curiosity, raise questions, develop functional intellectual, interpersonal skills and confirm in each individual a concept of self worth, self esteem and self confidence. This will be greatly enhanced if in-service training is made part of the school routine plan. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2008) emphasizes teacher education as a continuous process. This is in consonance with the Indian National Education Policy on Education (1986) as cited by Edunoh (2002:56) which stressed that pre-service and in-service component are inseparable from each other. The policy emphasized that however effective the programme on pre-service education of teachers may be, in-service education is very important to help teachers discharge their functions effectively.

Okon and Anderson (1982:89) opined that in-service training for teachers help to foster continued professional growth. They further stated that through teachers' meetings, seminars, workshops, training sessions and academic study circles, opportunities can be provided for teachers to keep abreast of new development in their field. They also suggested that teachers should be encouraged to take leave of absence from teaching in order to pursue higher degree in order to increase competence in teaching.

Esu, Erukoha and Umoren (1998:185) while discussing major modes of disseminating the philosophy, objectives and methods of curriculum innovation opined that in-service, pre-service is adopted to ensure that teachers accept the philosophy, objective and method of the new curriculum.

Esu (1988) undertook a study to examine in-service education programmes for primary school teachers in Cross River State. The investigation touched on different areas of in-service education programmes for primary school teachers in Cross River State. The investigation touched on different areas of in-service such as its planning and organization and teachers perceptions and attitudes towards in-service education.

The students' performance in junior secondary school certificate examination in social studies when compared to a subject like Christian Religious Education calls for concern. The reason for this comparison is because the two subjects belong to the same subject group in the junior secondary school syllabus. See table 1.

TABLE 1

Jss3 results for social studies and Christian Religious Education for the period 1998 to 2000

Year	Subject	Total no of schools	Total enrolment	No of passes in percentage		No of failure in percentage	
1998	Social studies	12	2197	1098	49.97	1099	50.03
	Christian Religious Education	12	2197	1637	74.5	560	25.5
1999	Social studies	12	1974	849	43.00	1125	57.0
	Christian Religious Education	12	1974	1916	97.1	58	2.9
2000	Social studies	12	1879	752	40.02	1127	59.98
	Christian Religious Education	12	1899	1865	99.3	14	0.7

Source: Cross River State Ministry of Education Examination and Certificate Unit 1998, 1999 and 2000 master list result summary

Hurd (1975) noted that there is a high rate of examination failure in science by our Secondary School Science Students. He further stated that where some managed to pass, most times the credit level pass obtained is through examination malpractices of different forms. Etim (1989:2) observed that some people lay the blame on the government for their shortcomings towards school such as inadequate teaching materials, poor environmental conditions and lack of qualified and competent teachers. She further stated that others blame the principals' administrative Efficiency while others lay blame on the teachers for their incompetence in their various areas of specialization.

Etim (1989:2) stated thus:

In the educational system the academic performance of students is seen as purely dependent in a large part on the quality of the teacher, his teaching and facilities available which in turn depends on both the education and motivation of the teacher.

A teacher whose needs are met is efficient and competent whereas a dissatisfied teacher is psychologically unstable and therefore not productive. A close examination of the backgrounds of Nigeria's past and present legislators, ministers, commissioners, civil servants, premiers and presidents would unearth that more than half of them were teachers at one time or the other (Edunoh, 2002:2).

According to Fafunwa (1980), public corporation, commerce and industry draw a sizeable proportion of their manpower from the teaching profession. Edunoh (2002:2-3) opined that most teachers voluntarily withdraw

from the classroom because they are dissatisfied and inadequately motivated and so they look out for more lucrative, challenging and prestigious jobs. In the same vein Ejiogu (1980) stressed that Nigerian educational sector was fast losing much of its personnel to other sectors of the Nation's economy and that teachers move into more enterprising jobs, which they considered more lucrative than the teaching profession.

Today, because of the declining economy, a worker is not adequately motivated as his needs are not satisfied. Late payment of salaries and wages; cuts in salaries and fringe benefits; inflation, mass retrenchment, premature retirement; abolition or reduced opportunity for sponsorship for in-service education and embargo on promotion have become the order of the day. So workers can no longer plan for the future because of the fact that their jobs are no longer secure. For example, in Cross River State, between 2001 and 2002, there was mass deployment of non indigenes of Cross River State from the civil and public service to their home states. Despite equality in conditions of service for civil servants, teachers' remunerations are often delayed. In Cross River State for example, fringe benefits, like leave grants since 2001 through 2003 are paid in piece meal. Promotion interview results are delayed for years. Even when they are released the implementation is delayed for yet a longer period of time.

Etim (1989:4) noted thus:

The prestige attached to teaching in the past is no longer enjoyed by teachers who in the past have been strongly and persistently criticized and accused by the public as being responsible for the falling standard of education, low morality of youths and the general failure of education to achieve its aims. Today, the onus of the failure of education rests on the teacher.

According to Etim (1989) loss of esteem for the profession, coupled with inadequate satisfaction of other needs, resulted in low productivity and high attrition among teachers.

Katz and Khan (1966) postulated that organizations have three basic behavioural requirements. First, people must be attracted not only to join the organization but also to remain in it. Secondly, people must perform the task for which they are hired and must do so in a dependent manner. Lastly, people must go beyond this dependable role performance and engage in some form of creative, spontaneous and innovative behaviour at work. Katz and Khan (1966) stressed that unless workers are allowed to engage in some creative spontaneous and innovative behaviour, they are bound to be incompetent.

Ferber and Miller (1981) argued that teachers are rarely allowed autonomy and spontaneity to be innovative in their teaching methods and this leaves them disgruntled. It becomes necessary to study teachers' variables and secondary school students' academic performance in social studies in Cross River State so that government and educational planners could fashion out ways of meeting teachers needs despite a poor economy.

2. Theoretical background

It is necessary that one has an insight into the background of theories that support a particular study and from where the problem may be identified and hypothesis formulated. The researchers examined the social system theory since the study dealt with relationships and interactions between variables within a social system (in this context, the junior secondary schools). According to Kinbrough and Nunnery (1983) scholars in the late 1950s who were concerned with the organization of complex organizations began to view organization as a system. The underlying thesis was that, to understand the phenomenon, the whole must be recognized as being greater than the sum of the parts. Hall and Fegen (1968) defined a system as a set of objects together with relationship between the objects and between their attributes, whereas Choforas (1965) view a system as a group of interdependent element acting together to accomplish a predetermined goal.

Educational institutions according to Peretomode (1999) are formulations of systems and sub-systems in which the components among others include people. A system is made up of inputs and the external environment. These inputs include raw materials, human resources and capital that may transform them into outputs. The external environment reacts on these outputs through a feedback loop and this becomes an input for the cycle of the system. Although the system theory has some limitations as opined by Silver (1983), Lipham and Hoeh (1974), its implication for this study is very important because it concerns the efficiency and effectiveness of input and process and these are the areas in which this study is focused.

Given the system theory, it sounds logical to expect variations in the inputs to be reflected in variations in output. Specifically, does input variable such as in-service training, seminars and workshops relate to a system output such as academic performance in social studies?

3. Statement of hypothesis

The frequency of Social Studies teachers' attendance at in-service, seminars and workshops does not influence the academic performance of students'.

4. Design/methodology

The research design used for the study was ex-post facto. It was ex-post facto because the study seeks to investigate possible cause-and-effect relationship by observing an existing condition or state of affairs and searching back in time for plausible causal factors. A total of five hundred students and 500 teachers were selected from the secondary schools in Cross River State and used for the study. A set of questionnaire for the teachers and social studies performance test for the students were the main instruments used for data collection. In terms of validity three experts in educational measurement and evaluation affirmed with 94% agreement that the entire instruments were suitable for measuring what it purported to measure. Using the split-half reliability method and its associate Spearman Brown. The reliability index of the instrument was found to be 0.94.

5. Data analysis/discussion

The data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation analysis. The hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance at 498 degree of freedom.

TABLE 2

Pearson product moment correlation between teachers' frequency of attendance at in-service, seminars and workshops and students' academic performance in social studies (N=500)

Variables	X	S	r	Significant level
In-service training	27.62	4.65	0.047	0.291*
Academic performance	35.16	11.90		

* $P > .05$ df = 498 critical r-value = .195

As can be observed in table 1 the calculated r-value is 0.047 indicating that there exists a positive and small relationship between the frequency of teachers' attendance at in-service training seminars and workshops and students' academic performance in Social Studies. The positive relationship implies that students' academic performance increases with teachers' frequency of attendance at in-service, seminars and workshops. However, since the significant level for the calculated r-value is 0.291 which is greater than .05 significance level at 498 degrees of freedom, it means the observed positive relationship is not significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is retained. There is no significant influence of frequency of teachers' attendance at seminars, in-service and workshop on students' academic performance in Social Studies.

6. Discussion of findings

With respect to the variable of in-service, seminars and workshops, the finding of this study has shown no significant influence of a teacher attending an in-service, seminars and workshops on academic performance of students. This is probably so because what is paramount for the teacher to be able to function effectively is to be trained and acquire a professional certificate. In-service courses, seminars and workshops act on their capacity as extra-incentives to the teachers' know-how and further acquisition of working experience. The finding of this study with respect to in-service training is contrary to the view of Uche (1981) who found out that in-service training, seminars and workshops act as catalysts or boosters for the acquisition of self mastery in the job being performed. These findings are also contrary to the assertions of the Cross River State Government (1979) which stated that in-services trainings of any kind are meant to expose officers in any capacity to their job performance, to modern and contemporary approved techniques, knowledge and skills for the purpose of enhancing efficiency, the effectiveness and performance of public officers.

The findings of Nkpa (1991) are supportive of the finding of this study. In his study, Nkpa found out that once a science teacher had been trained effectively, he can continue to function in the business of knowledge transfer. He however concluded that teachers should be exposed to in-service trainings where they will further gain new methods of imparting knowledge to students. Sacco and Marvin (1976) as well as Edunoh (2002:56) all asserted that education should stimulated curiosity, raise questions, develop functional intellectuals, interpersonal skills and confirm in each individual a concept of self-worth, self-worth, self esteem and self confidence all enhanced by the frequency to which an individual is exposed to the outside world (through workshops, seminars and in-service trainings).

Therefore, the insignificance of the finding of this study regarding in-service training, workshops and seminars should be regarded as purely coincidental and a chance occurrence. The insignificance of this finding may stem from the fact that in Cross River State today it is very difficult for teachers and other categories of civil servants to be sent on in-service training due to reasons of poor funding of educational programmes, as noted by Esu, Eukoha and Umoren (1998). But on the whole, teachers must be caused to attend in-service programmes so as to facilitate the imbibing of the discriminating philosophy objectives and methods of curriculum innovation. However, the finding of this report is consistent with the findings of Esu (1988) in which an insignificant influence of classroom management technique was recorded between in-service attendants and non-attendant based on lack of experience by one (non-attendant) group. But this insignificance notwithstanding the general findings and agreement among researchers (like Sacco and Marvin, 1976, Edunoh 2002:56; Okon and Anderson,

1982:89; and Esu, Enuokoha and Umoren, 1998, among various others) is that in-service training, seminars, and workshops are all significantly related to improved teacher instructional techniques, and the overall academic performance of students in the secondary schools. In-service training, seminars and workshops improved teachers' instructional techniques, and overall academic performance of students' in the secondary schools.

7. Conclusion/recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that social studies teachers' level of attendance at in-service training, seminars and workshops does not significantly influence students' academic performance in the subject. It was recommended that government should make it mandatory for all teachers in both primary and post primary to undergo professional training. As it is the case with other professions like law and medicine among others.

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