



EXTENT OF PROVISION OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR IMPROVING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN DELTA STATE

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Abstract

This study ascertained the extent of provision of in-service training programmes for improving the professional development of business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State. Two research questions were raised and two null hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The research population comprised one hundred and twenty-four (124) business educators in the four public-owned colleges of education and one university offering business education programme in Delta State. A sample size of 69 respondents was selected for the study using convenient sampling technique as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. A four point rating scale questionnaire containing 15 items was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficients of 0.74 and 0.81 for the different clusters with an overall coefficient of 0.78. The researcher administered the instrument with the help of five research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' while analysis of variance was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS 23.0. Findings of the study revealed that teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme was provided to a low extent and instructional applications of ICT component were provided to a very low extent. The study also discovered that business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge and instructional applications of ICT components of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience. The study concluded that the low provision of in-service training programme will negatively affect business educators' professional practice and development of core pedagogical competencies required for improving the quality assurance of business education programme in tertiary institutions. It was recommended among others that, in-service training programmes should be held frequently in order to keep business educators abreast with current practices of the teaching profession to enable them provide qualitative teaching and learning experiences for their students in tertiary institutions.

Keywords: *In-service training programme, professional development, teacher's professional knowledge, instructional applications of ICT*



Introduction

Highly skilled professionals are product of tertiary education. Tertiary education enhances students' intellectual potentials and instill worthwhile character among them for lifelong learning and nation building (Ementa&Onokpaunu, 2019). According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), one of the goals of tertiary education is principally the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for individuals to leave in, and contribute to the development of the society. Hence, advanced and professional courses are offered in tertiary institutions to prepare students for life in the world of work upon graduation. In the faculty of education of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria, vocational and technical education is a highly specialized course of study that prepares students' with the requisite occupational requirement and awareness to succeed in the labour market. Traditionally, vocational and technical education consists of five sub-courses of learning, namely; health science education, home science education, agricultural education, technology education and business education (Kerre, 2019).

Business education is a programme of study designed for the teaching of employability skills required by business oriented students to meet the competitive needs and demands of the workplace. Adequately positioning students for the numerous pathways of the traditional landscape and electronic wired world of work describes the blueprint of business education programme in tertiary institutions. Business education as a specialized area of vocational education that provides educational training, skills, development, attitudes and adjustment towards business orientation and academic challenges (Jubril, 2010). Business education is an important part of the general education which emphasizes on skills and competency acquisition (Okoli, 2013). The instructional delivery and management of business education programme at all levels of education rest on the shoulders of business educators. Business educators are professional experts charged with the task of teaching employability skills and developing workplace attitudes and attributes among students for the world of work. Equipping students with the requisite practical business skills and workplace intelligence required by employers of labour are the topmost priority of business educators in tertiary institutions. According to Ezenwafor and Onokpaunu (2017), business educators are professionally trained teachers of business subjects who are competent in teaching the content of business education curriculum in the faculty of education in universities and colleges of education. Osuala (2004) opined that a business educator is any person who plays a critical role in making business education viable and visible in the community, plays the critical role of agent of change in business education, delivers high quality instruction in business education and is able to identify problems facing teaching and learning in the field as well as speculate solutions to such problems.

In order to help business educators keep up with the changing trends and standards of the business world, they must appreciate the importance of in-service training programmes. In-service training programmes are instructional packages designed to improve the efficiency and professionalism of teachers. Mohd (2014) averred that in-service training programme is a professional and personal educational activity designed to improve teachers' efficiency, ability, knowledge and motivation. In-service training programmes are improvement mechanisms used to promote educators work rate, eliminate differences within the professional background of educators, keep the teaching profession abreast of new knowledge, and facilitate educators to tackle responsibilities associated with the changing learning environment (Osamwonyi, 2016). In-service training programmes enable educators to acquire innovative instructional skills to provide rich learning experiences for students in the classroom. In this sense, Ekpoh, Oswald and Victoria in Mohd (2014) posited that, in-service



training programmes are organized to increase the performance levels of teachers in the course of discharging their professional duties.

In-service training programmes are deficiency corrective platforms used to bridge the gap between the practice and theory of the teaching profession. The strategic purposes of in-service training programmes include updating educators with modern and effective pedagogical strategies and equipping them with effective classroom methodologies capable of improving students' academic success. The end-point of in-service training programmes as stated by Akhter, Ali, and Nasee (2011) aimed at facilitating the professional development and capacity building of classroom teachers. Professional development is a deliberate exercise aimed at increasing the overall competence and quality of educators.

The terms, in-service training programme and professional development are often used interchangeably, but have slightly different meanings. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2005), professional development signifies any activity that develops an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher. These include personal study and reflection, as well as formal courses while in-service training programme refers more specifically to identifiable learning activities in which practicing teachers participate in for their professional advancement. Specifically, Hicks, Smigiel, Wilson and Luzecky (2010) identified four major constructs of teachers' professional development; they are embedding a student-centred approach, facilitating the scholarship of teaching, initiating and building up networks and relationships, and introducing staff to institutional policies. Professional development is a recurring process instigated by changes in knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes among teachers and other education workers towards improving learning outcomes (Cooper, 2004).

Thus, in-service training programme includes all those courses and activities in which a serving teacher may participate in for the purpose of expanding his or her professional development. In their views, Gokce (2010) and Oztaskin (2010) submitted that in-service training programme improves educators' professional development in the following areas; teacher professional knowledge, school-based curriculum development, self-development, program adaptation, project-based applications, guidance on student development, development of social consciousness, communication skills and instructional applications of information and communication technologies. For the purpose of this study, teacher's professional knowledge and instructional applications of information and communication technologies components of in-service training programme are taken into cognizance.

Teacher's professional knowledge, according to Shing, Mohd and Heng (2018), is a set of knowledge that teachers put into play in the teaching of a specific school subject. Wang, Lai and Lo (2014) defined professional knowledge as a body of knowledge used in educational practice acquired through initial and continuous training, and through active participation in professional networks or working groups. This implies that, in-service training programme improves business educators' professional development by exposing them to current instructional process and assessment techniques essential. In a nutshell, when business educators failed to engage in teacher's professional knowledge, they will lack the professional readiness to handle the challenges and complexities of the teaching and learning process.

One of the challenges of today's instructional design is the introduction of instructional applications of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the school environment. The use of ICTs in education has led to the development of e-learning resources. Hence, Onokpaunu (2016) averred that the future of education is in the internet, as a lot of online universities are on the increase, making teaching and learning in the four corners of a classroom less significant. The instructional applications of ICTs refers to a



conglomerate of synchronous and asynchronous web-based instructional technologies, artificial intelligence platforms, and computer aided technologies used to facilitate the teaching and learning of subject matters. This means that business educators must embrace the use of ICTs in their instructional delivery in order to adequately prepare business education students for electronic powered workplace.

The impact of in-service training programme on teacher's professional knowledge and instructional applications of information and communication technologies goes a long in sharpening the professional and personal growth of business educators. Consequently, this growth gives business education students the competitive advantage to succeed in the workplace upon graduation. In tertiary institutions in Nigeria, in-service training programmes are usually organized in form of augural lectures, annual conferences and seminars. However, what is not known is the extent to which teacher's professional knowledge and instructional applications of information and communication technologies components of in-service training programmes are provided for business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

In order to ascertain the extent of provision of in-service training programme in tertiary institutions in Delta State, the years of teaching experience of business educators are taken into consideration. In the context of this study, years of teaching experience refers to the duration of professional engagement of business educators in tertiary institutions. It is believed that the more years of service, a business educator spend in teaching, the more he or she will be able to identified the components of in-service training programme they have undergone in tertiary institutions. But this assertion needs to be supported by empirical evidence. Moreover, empirical research investigations on the provision of teacher's professional knowledge and instructional applications of ICT components of in-service training programme are readily not available in Delta State. Against this backdrop, the study sought to ascertain the extent of provision of in-service training programmes for improving the professional development of business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are teacher's professional knowledge components of in-service training programme provided for improving the professional development of business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State?
2. To what extent are instructional applications of ICT components of in-service training programme provided for improving the professional development of business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of business educators on the extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of business educators on the extent of provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience



Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised one hundred and twenty-four (124) business educators in the four public-owned Colleges of Education and one university offering business education programme in Delta State. A sample size of 69 respondents was selected for the study using convenient sampling technique as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The instrument for the data collection was a validated questionnaire titled "Extent of Provision of In-service Training Programme Questionnaire (EPISTPQ)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire contained 15 items on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) with assigned weight of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Face validity of the instrument was determined by two experts; one in the field of Business Education, and the other from Measurement and Evaluation all from Delta State University, Abraka. A pilot test was conducted to establish the internal consistency of the instrument by administering it to 10 business educators in Edo State who were not part of the study. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach alpha to obtain reliability coefficients of 0.74 and 0.81 for the different clusters with an overall coefficient of 0.78. The researcher administered the instrument to the respondents with the help of five research assistants and follow up the collection of the research instrument with text messages and phone calls. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views. Decisions on the research questions were based on the grand mean in relations to the real limits of numbers. Therefore, items with mean ratings of 1.00 - 1.49 are rated Very Low Extent (VLE), those with 1.50 - 2.49 are Low Extent (LE), items with mean ratings of 2.50 - 3.49 are rated High Extent (HE), and those with 3.50 - 4.00 are rated Very High Extent (VHE). In testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed for the study. A null hypothesis was accepted where the p-value is equal to or greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), at a degree of freedom; otherwise, the null hypothesis was rejected. The analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0.

Results

The result of the study are presented and analyzed in the following tables.

Research Question 1

To what extent are teacher's professional knowledge components of in-service training programme provided for improving the professional development of business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State?

Data collected in respect to this research question were analyzed and the results are presented in Table 1.



Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme

S/N	Extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Knowledge of subject matter programme	1.31	0.53	Very Low Extent
2	Knowledge of curricular documents programme	2.04	0.31	Low Extent
3	Knowledge of learning styles programme	1.26	0.72	Very Low Extent
4	Knowledge of designing learning objectives programme	1.17	0.26	Very Low Extent
5	Instructional planning programme	2.19	0.87	Low Extent
6	Ethics in teaching programme	3.05	0.64	High Extent
7	Assessment techniques programme	2.78	0.49	High Extent
Grand Mean		1.97		Low Extent

Data in Table 1 shows that three (item 1, 3 and 4) out of the seven items listed on teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme was provided to a very low extent, the respondents rated the provision of two (item 2 and 5) to a low extent while the remaining two (item 6 and 7) were provided to a high extent. The cluster mean score of 1.97 means that teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme was provided to a low extent. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Research Question 2

To what extent are instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme provided for improving the professional development of business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State?

Data collected in respect to this research question were analyzed and the results are presented in Table 2.



Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on extent of provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme

S/N	Extent of provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
8	Use of power-point in classroom instructions	1.72	0.75	Low Extent
9	Use electronic-mail to share instructional content	1.31	0.31	Very Low Extent
10	Use of mobile learning to assess students learning outcomes	1.26	0.72	Very Low Extent
11	Use of social networking tools to engage students	1.33	0.26	Very Low Extent
12	Use of interactive whiteboards to present subject content	1.20	0.87	Very Low Extent
13	Use of electronic bulletin boards to explain subject matter	1.04	0.64	Very Low Extent
14		1.11	0.56	Very Low Extent
15	Use of internet telephony for discussing ideas with students Use of podcast to facilitate students' learning experience	1.07	0.49	Very Low Extent
Grand Mean		1.26		Very Low
Extent				

Data in Table 2 shows that one (item 8) out of the eight items listed on instructional applications of ICT of in-service training programme was provided to a low extent, while the respondents rated the provision of the remaining seven items to a very low extent. The cluster mean score of 1.26 means that instructional applications of ICT of in-service training programme was provided to a very low extent. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean response of business educators on the extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience.

This null hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 3.

Data obtained in respect of hypothesis one are analyzed and presented in Table 3.



Table 3: ANOVA summary of business educators' mean ratings on their extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value	Inference
Between Groups	209.08	2	59.41	0.206	0.079	Accepted
Within Groups	586.74	66	87.03			
Total	795.82	68				

Data on Table 3 show that the F-value of 0.206 with p-value of 0.079 at degree of freedom of 2 and 66 is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). This means that business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean response of business educators on the extent of provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience.

This null hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 4.

Data obtained in respect of hypothesis two are analyzed and presented in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA summary of business educators' mean ratings on their extent of provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value	Inference
Between Groups	614.59	2	26.92	0.513	0.264	Accepted
Within Groups	1003.73	66	98.61			
Total	1618.32	68				

Data on Table 4 show that the F-value of 0.513 with p-value of 0.264 at degree of freedom of 2 and 66 is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). This means that business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

Outcome of the study disclosed that teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme was provided to a low extent. This finding is in agreement with the study of Akuegwu, Nwi-ue and Etudor-Eyo (2013) which reported that the provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme for educators



is low. The study revealed a very low extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme for business educators in the areas of knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of learning styles and knowledge of designing learning objectives programme while a low extent of provision of knowledge of curricular documents and instructional planning programme was discovered. The low extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme in tertiary institutions can be attributed to poor funding which has been affecting the Nigerian education system over the years. However, the study reported that ethics in teaching and assessment techniques in-service training programmes were provided for business educators to a high extent. The researcher was of the opinion that attendance of academic conferences and gathering of research publications were the avenue at which business educators were provided ethics in teaching and assessment techniques. Moreover, the study reported that business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience. This implies both experienced and non-experienced business educators agreed that the provision of teacher's professional knowledge component of in-service training programme is below expectation.

Findings of the study disclosed that instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme was provided to a very low extent. This finding corresponds with Udofia and Ikpe (2012) which reported that the provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme for educators is inadequate for their professional development. The study revealed a very low extent of provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme for business educators in the use electronic-mail to share instructional content, use of mobile learning to assess students learning outcomes, use of social networking tools to engage students, use of interactive whiteboards to present subject content, use of electronic bulletin boards to explain subject matter, use of internet telephony for discussing ideas with students and use of podcast to facilitate students' learning experience while the use of power-point in classroom instructions was provided to a low extent. This revelations are in line with the discovery of Donkor and Banki (2017) who reported that educators have a very low in-service training access on ICTs for instructional purposes. In addition, the study reported that business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of provision of instructional applications of ICT component of in-service training programme for improving their professional development in tertiary institutions in Delta State based on their years of teaching experience. Perhaps, this could be why e-learning resources are very lowly utilized for instructional delivery in business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The policy and practice of in-service training programme ensures that educators develop positive attitude with higher self-efficacy level within and outside the school environment. The provision of teacher's professional knowledge and instructional applications of ICT components of in-service training programme goes in long way in championing the desirable changes in the curriculum of business education and revitalizing business educators' pedagogical practices in tertiary institutions. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that the low provision of in-service training programme will negatively affect business educators' professional practice and development of core pedagogical competencies required for improving the quality assurance of business education programme in tertiary institutions.



Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. In-service training programmes should be held frequently in order to keep business educators abreast with current practices of the teaching profession to enable them provide qualitative teaching and learning experiences for their students in tertiary institutions.
2. Administrators of tertiary institutions/Heads of Department of business education should regularly organize technical workshops or provide institutional support, for business educators to enable them acquire ICT skills required for the utilization of e-learning resources in their instructional delivery.

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