

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND TEACHERS' TASK PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA EDUCATION ZONE OF ANAMBRA STATE

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### *Abstract*

*The study determined the relationship between staff development programmes and teachers task performance in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted 1,258 teachers in the zone. A sample size of 126 teachers was drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. Two questionnaires titled: Staff Development Programme Questionnaire (SDPQ) and Teachers' Task Performance Questionnaire (TTPQ) were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts and subjected to internal consistency test using Cronbach alpha method which yielded 0.79 and 0.81 for SDPQ while that of TTPQ was 0.87. Data for the study were collected using direct administration and retrieval method. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze data for the study. The findings revealed that there is a very high positive relationship between teachers' attendance to conferences and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State, a very high positive relationship between teachers' attendance to workshop and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Principals should promote professional development programmes that focus on teachers' subject matter knowledge and teaching skills which are effective in improving teacher task performance. This can include training in instructional strategies, curriculum development, assessment practices, and technology integration.*

**Key words:** Staff development programmes, teachers, teachers task performance, performance.

### **Introduction**

Education is a fundamental right that empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills required to succeed in life. It is essential for personal, professional, social, and economic development; and it plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals, communities, and nations. According to Joseph (2022), education is one of the most important aspects of human development, as it empowers individuals with knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities. He further maintained that education plays a crucial role in shaping one's personality, providing an understanding of the world and its various aspects, and helping individuals make informed decisions. Like every other educational system in different climes, the Nigerian educational system is systematically structured into pre-primary education, basic education, senior secondary education, and tertiary

education. Secondary school education in Nigeria is the education that is provided to students between the ages of 11-17 years old, following the successful completion of primary education. It is also commonly referred to as "high school" or "college" in some parts of the country.

Secondary school education is not only designed to provide sound and responsible school graduates for higher education institutions and the rigorous academic demands of tertiary education; but also to provide students with the foundational knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the workforce upon graduation, if they cannot afford tertiary education. Accordingly, Mbakwe (2022) opined that the secondary school educational system has always played essential role for individual development, national development, and the growth of the nation's economy. It prepares students for further education, enhances their employability, and equips them with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life. The broad aim of secondary school education as highlighted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in the National Policy on Education (NPE) shall be to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and higher education. As a matter of fact, accomplishment of the aims and objectives of secondary school education demands that teachers have crucial tasks to perform; hence, efforts should be directed towards improving teachers' task performance.

Teachers are responsible for imparting knowledge, skills, and values to their students, and they play a crucial role in shaping the academic and personal development of their students. They not only provide instruction but also guide, motivate, mentor and are responsible for creating a positive learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Chiemeka-Unogu, 2018). The concept of teachers' task performance refers to how effectively and efficiently teachers carry out their responsibilities and duties in the classroom and beyond. These tasks may include planning and delivering lessons, assessing students' learning, managing classroom behavior, communicating with parents and colleagues, and participating in professional development. Mbakwe (2022) defined teachers' task performance as the fixed task outcomes that distinguish teaching profession from other professions. Amin et al. (2013) viewed teachers' task performance as teachers' contribution to the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Effective task performance by teachers is critical for student success, as teachers are responsible for creating a positive and engaging learning environment and ensuring that students are meeting their academic and social-emotional goals. Effective teachers are able to create a supportive and challenging learning environment, tailor instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, provide timely feedback, and collaborate with colleagues to improve their practice.

The principal is a primary leader with a responsibility of supervising the activities of the secondary school education for the achievement of the laudable objectives of this level of education as stipulated by the formulated policy on education. As a head, the principal is critical to the improvement of educational performance and eventual quality in the school. Thus, the school principals have a responsibility of developing the visions that guide the operation of their schools. It is the statement of vision and values defined by principals that inspire quality-oriented practices to support constant innovations, changes and developmental programmes that improves teachers' task performance in schools. By virtue of their position, principals remain key central characters in improving teachers task performance.

Sadly, reports from researches revealed that there seems to be problem with the leadership provided by principals in secondary schools in Nigeria. In different reports, principals are accused by stakeholders for inefficiency and failure to utilize available innovative staff development programmes for improving teachers' task performance in schools; which in turn has resulted to poor quality inputs and outputs. Okechukwu (2022) alleged that there is an outcry on teachers' quality, because principals' authority as administrative, technical, and pedagogical heads of secondary schools have become a matter of serious concern. Onyali and Aleke (2022) also reported that stakeholders attributed the poor quality of secondary school teachers to inefficiency of principals in managing the schools. Ironkwe (2023) concluded that one major problem which the entire Nigerian educational system has continued to struggle with is that of poor organization and lack of effective management which have continued to serve as a hindrance to educational development.

From the foregoing explanation, it is imperative to note that teachers' task performance is more than just teaching in the classroom, it also comprised other activities the teachers engage outside formal school activities such as helping students solve their emotional problems; monitoring students out of class activities; involving in extra-curricular activities; among others. These roles teacher play make their task performance crucial. It is in the light of this, Xiao (2018) stated that teachers' interactions, views, duties, and behavior play vital role in ensuring achievement in educational institution. The scholars further revealed that teachers' task performance is the ability of teachers to execute their primary assignment which includes grooming students into useful living by teaching, training and behavior modification. In other words, no school can achieve its objectives and goals without the teachers being at their best. The quality of teacher undoubtedly is known to be a key predictor of students' academic performance; hence, teaching as a profession demands continuous development of knowledge and ability through training programmes.

Staff development programs refer to initiatives or activities that organizations use to help their employees improve their skills, knowledge, and abilities. They are actions implemented by organizations to improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their employees. Such programs are critical for the growth and success of any organization, as they ensure that the staff members are equipped with the necessary tools to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently. According to Uzoechina (2016), staff development programmes are schemes for building up sufficient number of competent and qualified teachers in the school system. It involves the process of training and retraining of teachers in the school organization. Nnaemego (2020) defined staff development programmes as the activities provided for the middle and upper management in and outside the school organization to improve teachers' performance. They are those aspects in school administration, which imply the training of individuals in the school to enhance their job performances. Nnaemego further noted that staff development programmes are the plan of actions for training of personnel in the school organization towards motivating them to become competent and work hard in achieving the goals of an organization. Thus, from the above definitions it becomes clear that staff development connotes the organization's efforts in its programme to provide the need-based training and education to its workers to enable them become competent in handling their present or future assigned tasks.

The objectives of staff development programmes are to ensure the promotion of professional growth, improving pedagogical skills, keep teachers abreast with new knowledge, and meet particular needs such as curriculum development and orientation. In the secondary school system, staff development programmes emphasizes continuous training and retraining of teachers in order to improve in all functional areas and activities of the school. It however requires the school principal who is responsible for leadership to initiate its strategies and also ensure total support for the application. Although staff development programmes that are recorded in literature are numerous, Bingilar and Etale (2014) isolated the following as being ideal for enhancing teachers' job performance: seminar, workshop, mentoring, job rotation, coaching, orientation and promotion. Uzoechina (2016) enumerated the following as techniques of staff development programmes: in service training, vestibule training, job rotation, role playing conferences, seminars, workshops etc. In this study, conferences and workshop were adopted as staff development programmes that could be applied by the school administrators for developing teachers in order to improve teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Conference is a formal meeting of people with a shared interest, typically one that takes place over several days. It enhances teachers' growth and professional development. Ojofeitimi (2012) defined conference as a meeting of two or more persons for discussing matters of common concern. It is usually formal interchange of views mostly held at school level and at cluster level with the purpose of reviewing and reflecting on practices on a regular basis. Madumere (2017) stated that conference comprises different personalities in the field of education with bountiful ideas. Just like conference, workshop is another development programme adopted by school administrators in developing their teachers for improved job performance.

Workshop is a meeting at which group of people engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project. Robinson (2016) saw work as an intensive educational programme for relatively small group of people that focuses especially on techniques and skills in a particular field. It gives the basic

working knowledge required by teachers for effective teaching and learning process in the school. According to Sadiqa (2016), workshop is seen as a group of people who engage in study or work on a creative project or subject. It is meant to upgrade teachers' knowledge and sharing of ideas.

Hitherto, it is glaring that literature corroborates the use of staff development programmes for enhancing teachers' task performance. This connotes that providing opportunities for staff development is an important variable that can enhance teachers' task performance. On the contrary, inadequate or lack of development programmes for members of staff is as good as compromising quality and denying the schools the opportunities for continuous improvement. As a matter of fact, Uzoechina (2016) reasoned that poor development programmes in school organizations signals big challenges to retaining quality teachers in the educational system such that the institutions stand the risk of gradually becoming brain drained. It is against the foregoing background that the researcher conceived the idea to investigate the relationship between staff development programmes and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zones of Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between staff development programmes and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. In specific terms, the study determined:

1. the relationship between teachers' attendance to conferences and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State;
2. the relationship between teachers' attendance to workshop and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State;

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to provide answers for the study:

1. What is the relationship between teachers' attendance to conference and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' attendance to workshop and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

### **Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' attendance to conferences and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers' attendance to workshop and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

### **Methods**

A Correlation survey research design was employed for the study. The study was guided by two research questions and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 1,258 teachers. From the population, a sample of 126 teachers was drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. Two questionnaires titled: Staff Development Programme Questionnaire (SDPQ) and Teachers' Task Performance Questionnaire (TTPQ) were used for data collection. The questionnaires were subjected to face validity using three experts. A pilot test using 20 teachers from two government owned public secondary schools in Onitsha education zone was used to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. The scores obtained were collated to determine the internal consistency of the items in each of the questionnaires. This was done using Cronbach Alpha method. The co-efficient for the three sections of SDPQ were 0.79 and 0.81 while that of TTPQ

was 0.87. The direct method of administration and retrieval of copies of the questionnaire was employed by the researchers. The completed copies were collected on the spot and follow up visits were made in cases where the respondents could not submit on the spot. Out of the 126 copies distributed, 123 copies were returned duly completed, and used for data analysis. This gave a return rate of 97.62%, which the researcher considered adequate for the study. Data analyses was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

**Table 1: Pearson r on the Relationship between teachers' attendance to conferences and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State**

Source of Variation	N	R	P-value	Remark
Conference	123	0.834		
Teachers' task performance			.00	Very High Positive Significant Relationship

The results in Table 1 show the relationship between teachers' attendance to conferences and their task performance in public secondary schools. The computed Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) value is 0.835, and P-value .00 indicate a very high positive and significant relationship between conference and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

**Table 2: Pearson r on the Relationship between teachers' attendance to workshop and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State**

Source of Variation	N	R	P-value	Remark
Workshop	123	0.896		
Teachers' task performance			.00	Very High Positive Significant Relationship

The summary of data analysis on the relationship between teachers' attendance to workshop and their task performance in public secondary schools presented in Table 2 reveals that the computed Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) value is 0.896, and P-value .00 indicate a very high positive and significant relationship between workshop and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

### Summary of Findings

Findings of the study are summarized as follows based on the results of data analysis:

1. There is a very high positive relationship between teachers' attendance to conferences and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.
2. There is a very high positive relationship between teachers' attendance to workshop and their task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

### Discussion of Findings

Findings on the relationship between teachers' attendance to conferences and their task performance as displayed in Table 1 reveal that there is a very high positive relationship between conference and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. The implication of the findings is that teachers in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State recognized that conferences: help them stay passionate in their work; help them stay up-to-date with the latest innovations in their teaching career; provide opportunities for them to network with other professionals that can benefit their career; inspires them to try new teaching strategies in the classroom; provide a platform for them to showcase their research to a wider audience; help them to identify areas where they need intensive professional development; and are valuable source of continuing education credits for them in maintaining their teaching certification, which could ultimately improve their task performance in their schools.

The finding in line with the findings of research conducted by Kim et al. (2013) study who examined the relationship between teacher professional development (PD) and instructional practices in elementary science classrooms in China. The study found that attending conferences was positively related to teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and instructional practices. Specifically, teachers who attended conferences reported higher levels of self-efficacy and were more likely to implement new instructional practices in their classrooms. The study concludes that attending conferences can be an effective form of PD for improving teachers' instructional practices. The finding is also in line with the findings of Wang (2018). The study found that attending conferences had a positive impact on teachers' instructional practices, assessment practices, and student learning outcomes. The impact of conference attendance was more pronounced in the short term than in the long term. However, the study also found that sustained attendance at conferences over multiple years was associated with greater improvements in teachers' task performance over time.

The findings in Table 2 shows that there is a very high positive and significant relationship between teachers' attendance to workshop and their task performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. This implies that teachers in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State acknowledged that workshop is an important factor that improves teachers' task performance in secondary schools. This implies that It is important to: provide follow-up support to teachers after the workshop to ensure they continue to apply what I learned; incorporate technology in a workshop to help teachers adapt to changes in their teaching profession; and to provide feedback for teachers during the workshop to enhance their task performance in their schools. The teachers also recognize that: hands-on workshops are more effective than lectures in improving their task performance; the success of a workshop is also dependent on the facilitator's ability to engage them as participants in the programme; they were able to apply the concepts learned in workshops to their instructional delivery; and group discussions help them to apply what they learned in the workshop to their work in the school.

The findings above are in agreement with He and Schmitz (2015) who established that workshops had a significant impact on teachers' instructional practices, particularly in terms of enhancing their knowledge and skills in student-centered instruction. Additionally, the study found that students of teachers who participated in the workshops demonstrated higher levels of learning outcomes compared to those of teachers who did not participate in the workshops. The study findings also tallies with the findings of D'Agostino and Murphy (2017) who found that participation in a three-day professional development workshop resulted in significant improvements in teachers' knowledge of instructional strategies and their ability to implement them effectively in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a high positive and significant relationship between staff development programme (conference and workshop,) and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Awka Education zone of Anambra State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Principals should promote professional development programmes that focus on teachers' subject matter knowledge and teaching skills which are effective in improving teacher task performance. This can include training in instructional strategies, curriculum development, assessment practices, and technology integration.
2. Older and more experienced teachers should regularly provide younger and less experienced teachers with ongoing support and feedback that can help them improve their teaching practices and better meet the needs of their students. This is because mentoring and coaching programmes can also have a positive impact on teacher task performance.
3. Teachers must be aligned with the goals and priorities of the schools in order for staff development programmes to be effective. Programmes that are tailored to the needs of individual teachers and schools are more likely to be successful.

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