



Assessing Primary School Teachers' Perspectives on Professional Development and Retention in History and Social Studies Education in Ekiti State

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Abstract

The study explores primary school teachers' views on professional development and retention in the context of history and social studies education in Ekiti State. The research focuses on understanding teachers' perceptions of professional growth opportunities, factors influencing their job satisfaction, and strategies for primary teacher retention. The research design adopted was the multistage research design.

The opinion of ninety-six (96) primary school teachers was sought using an opinion questionnaire developed by the author and validated by ten teachers. The questionnaire consisted of sixty-five (65) items on training experiences needed in promoting and sustaining professional development and retention of teachers in the primary school system. Simple proportional percentages and descriptive statistics were the major statistical tools used for the study. Findings show that teachers at the primary school level hold both similar and divergent views. The findings aim to inform decision-makers and stakeholders on effective approaches to enhance teacher development and retention. It also suggests that such views should be closely looked into and that various forms of professional development such as in-service training and vacation courses and sandwich programmes should be encouraged in order to enhance the job performance of primary school teachers, ultimately improving the quality of history and social studies education in primary schools. The findings further show that primary school teachers are of the opinion that those who benefited from such programmes should be retained in a particular mean with a score of 3.63

Keywords: Professional, Retention, History, Education, Teacher and Development

Introduction

Section 3 in the National Policy on Education (1981) stated that primary education is the one on which the rest of the educational system is built upon and that the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole educational system. Some of the objectives of primary education are: the inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively the basic knowledge for scientific and reflective thinking among others. It is a known fact that without the teacher non-achievement of the objectives as planned for primary education could be achieved. Hence it is agreed that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. The major aim of teacher education therefore is not only to produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient teachers for all levels of our educational system but also produce teachers with intellectual and professional background for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation among others.

Professional development in History and Social Studies educators at the primary school level should be a dynamic one for in this rapidly developing world, advances in science, history and social studies are fast becoming a major index of knowing the past to shape the present and measuring socio-economic and political development and no society can afford the luxury of obsolescence (Aina and Omojomite 2023).

Teachers development has its roots in the various seminars and workshops to an encompassing need-based and pragmatic practices designated to facilitate pedagogical skills and professional identity. (Desimone, 2011 and OECD 2020) [3] Effective teaching methods and practices are essential for educators to convey the significance and relevance of these subjects. Research highlights the importance of innovative approaches to teaching history and social studies, such as incorporating technology, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The importance of effective teaching methods and professional development for educators cannot be overstated. Particularly in subjects like social studies, which play a crucial role in shaping young minds in Ekiti State, Nigeria, researchers have emphasized the need for creative, innovative, and engaging approaches to teaching social studies. (Addu-Raheen, 2021) stated that teachers perceptions of the effectiveness of methods like problem-solving and note dictation significantly impact students' learning outcomes. Aina and Omojemites *ibid*, study on storytelling and retelling strategies revealed improved academic performance of primary school pupils in Ekiti State highlighting the potential of creative teaching methods.

Professional development is equally essential for teachers to stay updated on best practices and enhance their teaching competencies. (Osiesi 2021) [9], emphasizes the importance of regular training programs for primary school teachers in Nigeria, citing its impact on teacher quality and internal efficiency.

Studies have also shown that teacher quality and professional development significantly impact student learning outcomes in History (Hydn and Counsell, 2003). Emphasized the need for history teachers to develop pedagogical content knowledge and subject-specific skills. Levstik (2004) highlighted the importance of teachers' historical knowledge and understanding in promoting students' critical thinking and historical empathy. Okobia (2018) emphasized the need for effective teaching methods and professional development in history education. History teachers' lack of pedagogical training and resources hindered their ability to teach the subject effectively. However, whatever facilities, materials, and equipment that are made available in our schools, the extent to which the objectives of any programme at the primary school level are realized depend largely on the quality of personnel involved.

This study therefore is aimed at finding out the opinion of primary school teachers in Ekiti-state towards selected forms of training and experiences that could enhance professional development and relevance of social studies and social studies personnel in the primary school system.

Statement of problem

Aina and Omojemite (2023), Okobia, E. (2018) in their studies of attitude of History and Social Studies teachers in the federal capital territory to the provision of training necessary for promoting and sustaining professional development and retention reported that

1. Respondent favoured in service training as the most viable way of providing for professional development of History and Social Studies teachers."
2. Study leave without pay takes a second position while attendance at seminars and vacation courses takes a third.

3. Distant learning is the last one, while study leave with pay takes the rear position.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study includes:

1. Identifying which of the selected training types and experiences that will enhance professional development of history and social studies teachers through the opinion of respondents in Ekiti State.
2. Making a few suggestions on the result of the study.

Research Questions

1. What form of training and experiences are required in promoting, sustaining, and retaining the history and social studies personnel in the primary school system?
2. How often does history and social studies teachers benefit from identified training types?
3. To what extent does the professional training impact on the performance of history and social studies teachers in Ekiti State?
4. What are the opinions of primary school teachers toward the retention of history and social studies teachers in Ekiti State?

Research Methodology

The research design adopted in this study was the multi stage research design to arrive at the final respondents. The population of this study comprises of all history and Social Studies primary school teachers in Ekiti State.

The sample for the study comprises of ninety-six (96) history and social studies teachers randomly selected from a number of teachers in primary schools in Ekiti State.

Instrument

Sixty-five (65) items consisting of major training types and experiences that are necessary for professional development and retention of teachers were subsumed under four sub-scales.

Administration

The questionnaire was administered on the ninety-six (96), Primary School History and Social Studies teachers in Ekiti State. The questionnaires were completed and returned.

Data Analysis

Sub scale on provision for training programme (PTP) is the Yes/No types; Frequency Counts and respondent response were compiled to show the direction of Positive negative opinion.

Subscales on frequency of benefit from training programme is of always, sometimes, and never scale whose analysis and interpretation follow same method of frequency counts.

Subscale on rating of training type for professional development and rating of impact of professional development have rating scales of 1-5 with a mean score of 3 with the interpretation that an average score of the respondent which is equal to or less than 3 denotes negative attitude while scores greater than 3 denotes positive attitude.

Results

Presented below, in tabular form are the results of the statistical analysis carried out in respect of the data of this study.

Table 1: Below shows that majority of the primary schools are of the opinion that professional development of History and Social Studies teachers take the form of various programmes.

S/N	Types of Programme	Yes	No
1.	In service training	88(0.92)	8(0.08)
2.	Attendance at seminars workshop	72(0.75)	24(0.25)
3.	Attendance of conference	66(0.69)	30(0.31)
4.	Study leave with pay	14(0.15)	82(0.85)
5.	Study leave without pay	81(0.84)	15(0.16)
6.	Vacation courses for teacher	86(0.90)	10(0.10)
7.	Sandwich programme	78(0.81)	18(0.10)

Table 2: Shows items by item analysis of respondent to frequency of benefit from training programme.

S/N	Types of Programme	Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	In service training	22(0.23)	72(0.75)	2(0.02)
2.	Attendance at seminars/ workshop	6(0.06)	75(0.78)	15(0.16)
3.	Attendance of conference	6(0.06)	58(0.60)	32(0.32)
4.	Study leave with pay	26(0.27)	57(0.59)	13(0.14)
5.	Study leave without pay	16(0.17)	57(0.59)	23(0.24)
6.	Vacation courses for teacher	32(0.33)	58(0.60)	6(0.06)
7.	Sandwich programme	30(0.31)	66(0.60)	0(0.00)

Table ii above shows that majority of the History and Social studies teachers in Ekiti-state sometimes benefited from the

various programme that leads to their professional development.

Table 3: Shows rating on impact on professional development on the performance of teacher and pupils.

	5	4	3	2	1	X
Improved learning environment	60	25	8	3		4.48
Improved method of instruction	39	33	22	2		4.14
Innovation/creativity instruction	46	26	6	18		4.04
Improved performance internal examination	21	42	27	6		3.60
Improved personality	36	5	36	8		3.42
Improved public performance in external exams	36	28	28	2		4.06

Table III above shows that majority of the primary schools teachers are of the opinion that the various professional development programmes have positive impact on the performance of teachers and pupils on the identified areas of teaching and learning. The result also revealed that professional development lead to an improved learning

environment and improved method of institution with a mean score of $X = 4.48$ and $X = 4.14$ respectively.

On the impact of teacher's professional development on the pupils the result revealed that it lead to pupils improved performance in both internal and external examination with $X = 4.04$ and $X = 4.06$ respectively.

Table 4: Shows the analysis of response to sub scale on retention of History and social studies

	5	4	3	2	1	X
History and social studies teachers should be retained in a particular school but could be changed from one class to another	32	18	30	10	6	3.63
History and social studies can be transferred from one school to another but school be retained in a particular class	18	33	25	10	10	3.14
History and social studies teachers should be retained in a particular school and a particular class	13	6	6	45	26	2.32
History and social studies teacher can be retained in a particular school for not more than 5 years	18	32	32	7	7	3.46

Table IV above shows that majorly primary school teachers are of the opinion that history and social studies should be retained in the same schools but could be changed from one class to another with $X = 3.63$

Discussion of Results

From the result it can be seen that in service training enjoys prominence over others interns of provision for training programme with 92%, sandwich programme followed with 81% etc. The teachers are of the opinion that they sometimes benefited from the various sandwich programme in service programme and attendance at seminars and workshop are the most favoured.

In respect of impact of professional development on the teaching and learning situation. Improved learning environment topped the list with $X = 4.48$, improve method of instruction with $X = 4.19$ Respondents are also of the view that professional development might lead to improved personally ($X = 3.42$) which is in consonant with the findings of Aina and Omojemite 2023 and Okobia E.O 2018. On the retention of teachers, most teachers favoured the retention of history and social studies teachers in the same school but they could be exchanged from one class to another $X = 3.63$. This result is in consonant with the findings of Aina and Omojemite 2023 and Okobia E.O 2018.

Conclusion

Result from this study, primary school teachers share similar but divergent views on the training and retention of teachers. The study conclude that while primary school teachers in Ekiti State value professional development, the existing programmes are insufficiently structured to promote lasting professional growth and retention. There should be a pragmatic and deliberate teachers professional development policies that prioritize equal access, institutional assistance and improved the welfare of these teachers to make them at par with their other government workers in the state.

Recommendations

It is therefore suggested that well-organized and regular professional development of History and social studies teachers will lead to improve performance of the teachers. In-service training, vacation courses sandwich programme and distance learning programs should be encouraged as it will lead to an improved teacher's performance and a quality primary education in Nigeria.

Government and school authority should put in place a consistent regular, well-funded CPD activities that will impact positively on pedagogical innovations in History and Social Studies.

The need assessment activities should be carried out regularly to know the present situations of things in the various schools and to know where and how to improve on them.

The welfare of teachers should be improved upon considerably. This will serve as a means of motivating them and making them a happy person.

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