PROMOTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS STUDIES TEACHERS IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION DELIVERY IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL ERA IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the strategies for promoting the professional development of business studies teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 5,670 business studies teachers in public junior secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of the study comprised 122 business studies teachers. The instrument for data collection was a rating scale validated by three experts in the School of Business Education, NwaforOrizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State. The test of reliability on the instrument using Cronbach Alpha yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.88 and 0.82 for cluster 1 and 2 with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.84 indicating high internal consistency. Mean and standard deviation was used for the analysis of data. The finding of the study revealed that the factors hindering the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State are limited training opportunities, resistance to change among business studies teachers and inadequate financial resources to organize professional development programmers. Finding further revealed that the strategies for promoting the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State are provision of technological infrastructure, collaboration between business studies teachers, promotion of collaboration between government and private sectors on resource provision and expertise in the area of technology integration. It was therefore recommended among others that principals of junior secondary schools should create and conduct targeted training programmes and workshops to improve the digital literacy and pedagogical abilities of business studies teachers in Anambra State.

KEYWORDS: - Professional Development, Quality, Technology, Education, Business Studies.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental tool for fostering the development of a country's social, political, technological, and economic endeavors. It serves as the conduit through which the organized knowledge accumulated by past generations is transmitted to the current and future generations. The objective of education is to empower individuals with the necessary skills and competencies to navigate and thrive in the broader world (Oluwalola, 2019). In Nigeria, formal education is conducted at the pre-basic education, basic education, and senior secondary and tertiary levels of education. Basic education is the focus of this study.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defined basic education as the education provided to children aged 0-15 years. This includes Early Child Care and Development Education (0-4 years) and 10 years of formal schooling. Early Child Care and Development Education for ages 0-4 years are typically offered in daycare centers or creches, primarily managed by the private sector and social development services (Chinwuba et al., 2022). For the purpose of policy coordination and monitoring, the Federal Government established Universal Basic Education (UBE) with the following objectives:

a) Cultivating a strong consciousness for education and a firm commitment to its robust promotion across the entire populace.
b) Ensuring the provision of compulsory, free, and universally accessible basic education for every Nigerian child of school age.
c) Diminishing the rate of drop-out from the formal school system by enhancing relevance, quality, and efficiency of education.
d) Addressing the learning needs of young individuals who have had to interrupt their schooling due to various reasons through suitable complementary approaches to promoting basic education.
e) Guaranteeing the acquisition of essential levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative, and life skills, along with ethical, moral, security, and civic values necessary for establishing a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

The Nigerian basic education system typically consists of two major stages: Primary Education and Junior Secondary Education. Primary education usually spans six years and is designed to provide children with a fundamental understanding of subjects such as mathematics, English language, basic sciences, social studies, and religious and moral education. The primary education curriculum also emphasizes literacy and numeracy skills development. On the other hand, at the Junior Secondary Education comes primary education. It consists of three years schooling. At this stage, the curriculum becomes more diversified, incorporating subjects such as basic technology, introductory vocational skills, agricultural science, and civic education. The aim is to provide students with a broader knowledge base and prepare them for further academic pursuits or vocational training.

At the junior secondary school level in Nigeria, Business Studies is presented as a relatively integrated subject, intended to be taught as a unit rather than individual subjects. The components

of Business Studies typically include Keyboarding, Shorthand, Commerce, Bookkeeping, and Office Practice. Ahmed (2015) highlighted that business studies play a crucial role in vocational education, emphasizing the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical skills acquisition at the junior secondary school level. These subjects encourage students to engage both their intellect (head) and physical capabilities (hands) in acquiring specific practical training essential for success in business and industry. Business studies encompass subjects such as bookkeeping, commerce, office practice, shorthand, and typewriting at this level. As students progress to senior secondary school, these business studies subjects are offered as standalone courses, allowing students to explore career options and prepare for further professional training at the university level. Oluwalola (2018) affirmed the importance of acquiring technical, psychomotor, and critical thinking skills for effective learning of business studies in junior secondary schools. These skills enable learners to develop self-reliance and entrepreneurship, equipping them with the necessary competencies to succeed in the business world upon completion of their secondary education (Oluwalola, 2019). In essence, business studies are designed to impart relevant skills and knowledge to students that can be applied in real-world business settings. It is therefore imperative that business teachers are up-to-date with the changes in technology in the business environment. Hatlevik and Hatlevik (2018) argue that the increasing use of technology in teaching and learning demands teachers integrating technological tools to equip students with the skills required by today's technology-infused society and businesses. This suggests that teachers must not only have fundamental technical abilities, but also be capable of integrating technology to improve students' learning experiences. However, there is a growing requirement that business teachers integrate technology into their regular classroom activities (Tshelane, 2017).

The International Society for Technology in Education (2017) has developed new technology standards for teachers to promote the meaningful integration of technologies in instructional practices, aiming to engage learners in meaningful learning experiences. This underscores the increasing global attention dedicated to integrating technologies into teachers' instructional practices. Despite the emphasis on technology integration in education, existing studies indicate limited to no integration of technologies by business studies teachers. Several factors contribute to this lack of integration. These factors include the absence of technological infrastructure in schools (Chisango&Marongwe, 2021), insufficient ICT skills among teachers (Dlamini & Mbatha, 2018), and inadequate technology self-efficacy among teachers (Joo, Park & Lim, 2018). Many teachers still lack confidence in their ability to integrate technology effectively into their classrooms (Arhin et al., 2022). Bakar et al. (2018) stated that teacher' technology integration skills remain inadequate which hinders their confidence in utilizing technology in their classrooms. Chidiebere (2020) also found that the beliefs of business studies teachers regarding their ability to integrate technology significantly influence their decisions regarding technology integration in their classrooms. This emphasizes the need for professional development of business teachers.

Teacher professional development includes teaching and training experiences both inside and outside of educational institutions, with the primary purpose of preparing and developing future teachers for their jobs. Utami and Vioreza (2021) stated that teacher professional development comprises the accumulation of formal and informal learning experiences in a stimulating educational environment that is complex and dynamic. Teacher professional development consists

of organized activities aimed to improve and widen teachers' abilities, knowledge, ideas, attitudes, and behaviors, allowing them to fulfill the demands of the teaching profession (Weli&Ollor, 2021). Li and Choi (2014) discovered that the positive impact of professional development on teachers' pedagogical use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) was notably overshadowed by the influence of social capital, as measured in two key components. The first component pertained to the school climate and the level of trust within the school community, while the second component focused on the availability of networks for accessing new information. Similarly, recent research conducted in Cyprus suggests that despite teachers' belief in the transformative potential of ICT in education and their willingness to utilize it, minimal tangible changes are observed in schools (Vrasidas, 2014). The primary barriers identified include a shortage of time, inflexibility in the curriculum, and inadequate access to ICT resources and support. Vrasidas emphasizes the importance of systematic and systemic Teacher Professional Development (TPD), which should be conducted within schools and tailored to address the specific needs of the local context. De Clercq and Shalem (2014) stress the significance of comprehending the context within which teachers operate. They argue that disparities in the design of professional development initiatives contribute to inequalities within the ICT professional development sector and lead to ineffective utilization of ICT in teaching and learning. Criticism is directed towards ICT professional development programs for their lack of consistency and coherence. One-off workshops or brief training sessions often fail to bring about significant changes in teacher practice (Dlamini &Mbath, 2018). Instead, teachers require ongoing engagement in a process of ICT professional development. Dlamini andMbath (2018) advocated for professional development as a continuous process aimed at empowering frontline users, particularly teachers, to progressively attain expertise in their practice, rather than viewing it as a one-time event like a course or workshop. Thus, professional development should be perceived as a continuous and ongoing endeavor, rather than a one-time occurrence. The primary objective of ICT professional development for teachers is to enhance classroom practice, thereby improving student achievement. The prevailing perspective guiding this endeavor is that meaningful ICT teacher professional development necessitates systematic and comprehensive activities to help teachers develop the skills and competencies required for pedagogical innovation and confidence in adopting and integrating ICT into their teaching practices. It is against this background that the researcher determined strategies for promoting the professional development of business studies teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
In junior secondary schools across Anambra State, business studies teachers often face challenges when it comes to adapting to the use of technology in both their classrooms and professional lives. These challenges stem from various factors, including limited access to technological resources, inadequate training and support, and resistance to change. Firstly, many junior secondary schools in Anambra State lack sufficient technological infrastructure, such as computers, internet connectivity, and multimedia tools. As a result, business studies teachers may find it difficult to incorporate technology into their teaching practices due to a lack of access to essential resources. Without access to computers or the internet, integrating technology into lessons becomes a daunting task for these teachers. Furthermore, even when technological resources are available, many business studies teachers in Anambra State may lack the necessary training and support to effectively utilize

them in the classroom. Traditional teaching methods may have been ingrained in their practice for years, making it challenging to adapt to new technologies and teaching approaches. Without adequate training, teachers may struggle to navigate technological tools and software, hindering their ability to effectively integrate technology into their lessons. Additionally, there may be a resistance to change among some business studies teachers in Anambra State. Embracing new technologies requires stepping out of one's comfort zone and embracing unfamiliar methods of instruction. Some teachers may be hesitant to adopt technology due to fear of failure or concerns about their ability to effectively incorporate it into their teaching practice. This resistance to change can further impede the integration of technology in the classroom. Moreover, the lack of incentives or recognition for integrating technology into teaching may also contribute to the reluctance of business studies teachers in Anambra State to adopt technological innovations. Without tangible rewards or acknowledgment for their efforts, teachers may be less motivated to invest time and effort into incorporating technology into their lessons.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to determine strategies for promoting the professional development of business studies teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State. The study specifically determined:

1. Factors hindering the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State.
2. Strategies for promoting the professional development of business studies teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the factors hindering the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State?
2. What are the strategies for promoting the professional development of business studies teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State?

METHOD

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 5,670 business studies teachers in public junior secondary schools in the six education zones in Anambra State. The sample of the study comprised 122 business studies teachers. The multi-staged sampling technique was used to determine the sample for the study. At the first stage the researcher purposively selected two education zones; Ogidi and Onitsha education zones. This amounted to 1,215 business studies teachers. At the second stage, the simple random sampling technique was used to select 10% of the 1,215 amounting to 122 business studies teachers. The instrument for data collection was a rating scale titled, "Promoting Professional Development of Business Studies for Quality Education Delivery in the Technological Era Rating Scale (PPDBSQEDTERS)". The instrument was divided into two clusters. Cluster 1 contains 7 items on the factors hindering the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era.

Cluster 2 contains 10 items on strategies for promoting the professional development of business studies teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era. The instrument is structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The rating scale was validated by 3 business educators in the School of Business Education, NwaforOrizuCollege of Education, Nsugbe. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was tested on 10 business educators in Asaba Metropolis, Anambra State, who were not part of the study population. The Cronbach Alpha reliability method yielded coefficient values of 0.88 and 0.82 for cluster 1 and 2 with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.84 indicating high internal consistency. The researcher personally administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents with the assistance of three research assistants. Out of the 122 questionnaires distributed, 118 were returned, resulting in a return rate of 97%. Data analysis was conducted using mean and standard deviation. The mean values were used to address the research question, while the standard deviation was utilized to assess the consistency of respondents' ratings. The decision rule was based on the real limits of numbers on the 4- point rating scale as shown below;

Response	Values	Real Limit of numbers
Strongly Agree	4	3.5 – 4.00
Agree	3	2.5 – 3.49
Disagree	2	1.5 – 2.49
Strongly Disagree	1	0.5 – 1.49

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What are the factors hindering the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Factors Hindering the Professional Development of Business Teachers in Junior Secondary Schools for Quality Education Delivery in the Technological Era in Anambra State (N=118)

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Limited training opportunities	3.40	.79	Agree
2	Inadequate technological infrastructure	3.32	.74	Agree
3	Resistance to change among business studies teachers	3.38	.83	Agree
4	Inadequate time for training	3.18	.70	Agree
5	Inadequate financial resources to organize professional development programmers	3.37	.75	Agree
6	Lack of support from school administrators for business studies teachers to undertake professional development opportunities	3.28	.72	Agree
7	Poor curriculum alignment for technology integration in business studies	3.24	.80	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.31**		**Agree**

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents rated items 1-7 as the factors hindering the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State with mean ratings between 3.18 and 3.40. The standard deviation scores ranging between .70 and .83 indicate that the respondents' opinions were related. The grand mean of 3.31 indicate that the factors hindering the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State are limited training opportunities, resistance to change among business studies teachers, inadequate financial resources to organize professional development programmes, inadequate technological infrastructure and lack of support from school administrators for business studies teachers to undertake professional development opportunities.

Research Question 2
What are the strategies for promoting the professional development of business studies teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Strategies for Promoting the Professional Development of Business Teachers in Junior Secondary Schools for Quality Education Delivery in the Technological Era in Anambra State (N=118)

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
8.	Organizing training programmers for business teachers that is targeted at technology integration	3.49	.87	Agree
9.	Providing technological resources like interactive whiteboards in classrooms for learning	3.34	.76	Agree
10.	Providing access to internet infrastructure in junior secondary schools	3.43	.80	Agree
11.	Promoting collaboration among business studies teachers through the development of professional learning networks	3.42	.78	Agree
12	Establishing mentorship programmers pairing experienced business studies teachers proficient in technology integration with those seeking to improve their skills.	3.10	.74	Agree
13.	Providing ongoing support and feedback to business teachers as they integrate technology into their teaching practices	3.18	.71	Agree
14.	Recognizing business teachers who demonstrate excellence in integrating technology into their teaching practices	3.22	.75	Agree
15.	Collaborating with educational institutions, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private sector partners to access resources for professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing technology integration in business studies education.	3.45	.84	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.33**		**Agree**

Data in Table 2 reveal that the respondents rated items 1-7 as the strategies for promoting the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education

delivery in the technological era in Anambra State with mean ratings between 3.10 and 3.49. The standard deviation scores ranging between .71 and .87 indicate that the respondents' opinions were related. The grand mean of 3.33 indicate that the strategies for promoting the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State are organizing training programmers for business teachers that is targeted at technology integration, collaborating with educational institutions, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private sector partners to access resources for professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing technology integration in business studies education, providing access to internet infrastructure in junior secondary schools, promoting collaboration among business studies teachers through the development of professional learning networks and providing technological resources like interactive whiteboards in classrooms for learning.

DISCUSSION

The finding of the study revealed that the factors hindering the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State are limited training opportunities, resistance to change among business studies teachers, inadequate financial resources to organize professional development programmers, inadequate technological infrastructure and lack of support from school administrators for business studies teachers to undertake professional development opportunities. This finding is in agreement with De Clercq and Shalem (2014) who reported that the differences in the design of professional development initiatives contribute to inequities within the ICT professional development sector and result in inefficient use of ICT in teaching and learning. Dlamini and Mbath (2018) asserted that ICT professional development programmers are criticised for a lack of uniformity and clarity. One-time workshops or brief training sessions seldom result in major improvements in teaching practice. Vrasidas (2014) opined that the primary barriers identified include a shortage of time, inflexibility in the curriculum, and inadequate access to ICT resources and support.

Furthermore, the finding of the study showed that the strategies for promoting the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State are organizing training programmers for business teachers that is targeted at technology integration, collaborating with educational institutions, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private sector partners to access resources for professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing technology integration in business studies education, providing access to internet infrastructure in junior secondary schools, promoting collaboration among business studies teachers through the development of professional learning networks and providing technological resources like interactive whiteboards in classrooms for learning. This is in line with Dlamini and Mbath (2018) who called for professional development as a continual process aimed at enabling frontline users, notably teachers, to gradually gain knowledge in their practice, rather than perceiving it as a one-time event such as a course or workshop. Thus, professional growth should be viewed as a constant and continuing endeavour, rather than a one-time event. Vrasidas (2014) emphasised the necessity of systematic and systemic Teacher Professional Development (TPD), which should take place inside schools and be adjusted to the unique demands of the local setting.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that professional development of business studies teacher for quality education delivery in the technological era is hindered by factors relating to timing, resource availability and resistance to change among business studies teachers. It is therefore imperative that strategies like provision of technological infrastructure, collaboration between business studies teachers, collaboration between government and private sectors are put into consideration as a means for promoting the professional development of business teachers in junior secondary schools for quality education delivery in the technological era in Anambra State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. Principals of junior secondary schools should create and conduct targeted training programmers and workshops to improve the digital literacy and pedagogical abilities of business studies teachers in Anambra State. These programmers should concentrate on the integration of technology into teaching methods and meeting the demands of the technological age.

2. Government in conjunction with supervising agencies like Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board should design methods to provide continuing assistance, mentoring and feedback to business studies teachers as they use technology into their teaching practices. Principals should create a culture of continual development and professional progress by providing regular feedback and reflection.

3. Administrators of Junior secondary education should encourage partnerships and collaboration with educational institutions, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private sector partners to gain access to resources, expertise, and funding for professional development initiatives that aim to improve technology integration in business studies education.

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