

Professional Development and Leadership

OREDEIN, Afolakemi O.¹ and OBADIMEJI, Chinenye C.²

^{1,2}Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Abstract

Teachers' professional development and leadership is a career that focuses on the growth of teachers' knowledge and skills, among other things. As a result, teachers are more knowledgeable, keep them up to date, and help teachers develop. Teachers are also required to learn and relearn. The government should raise public awareness about teacher professional development.

Keywords: Teachers, professional development, Leadership, Teacher's participation

Introduction

The only constant factor in this era is change. Change is inevitable in our society. The societal yearnings for change and development that every individual and sector need to seek. Development in the educational sector implies positive change among the educational stakeholders such as the school administrators, leadership, teachers, methodology, professional development, learners' improvement, and maturity among others. A teacher is a professional who impacts knowledge to the learners. This paper shall be discussed under the following subheadings:

- i. Professional Teachers
- ii. Professional Development
- iii. Teacher engagement
- iv. Teachers Participation
- v. Learners Engagement
- vi. Learners Progress on a Specific Subjects
- vii. Leadership
- viii. Learners' Satisfaction
- ix. Innovation
- x. Teachers Social Responsibility
- xi. Behavioral Leadership Theory

- xii. Applicability of the Theory
- xiii. Implication to the Educational Sector
- xiv. Summary
- xv. Way Forward

Professional Teachers

Every individual seeks a livelihood and a job to make a living in all sectors. They grow and reach new heights in their knowledge of their job through education, which can be formal or informal. Individuals who have gone through the fundamentals of teaching and learning are known as teachers in the educational sector. They are professional teachers, not just teachers. A professional is someone who is qualified in a specific field. Professional teachers are individuals who impart knowledge to their learners. They are individuals who have not only gone through the fundamentals of teaching and learning activities but have also obtained teaching certifications such as a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) or even a Doctorate (PhD), among others. They are people whose goal is to instill knowledge in their learners at various levels of education such as kindergarten, primary schools, secondary schools, and tertiary institutions. A professional teacher is an individual (teacher) who has attained the position of being paid to impart knowledge to learners. They are also known as teachers who represent their profession's best and set the highest standards for best practice (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). Tichenor and Tichenor (2005) define professional teaching as an advanced and complex undertaking. Professionalism in education is a process that takes time to master. A professional teacher is defined as anyone who has obtained professional knowledge in teaching and can apply it during teaching and learning activities (Umana, 2022). According to Umana (2022), a professional teacher is a tool that can help with the successful implementation of the educational system. Thus, Gagon (2019) suggests that such individuals have the following characteristics: collaboration, good communication skills, adaptability, listening, empathy, and patience. Strong communication skills, including verbal, nonverbal, oral, and written communication, are essential for effective teaching and learning processes. Another essential skill for a professional teacher is the ability to listen. Professional teachers who are skilled in the act of listening and observing usually take up nonverbal cues such as anxieties.

Professional teachers also collaborate through symposiums, seminars, conferences, and workshops. This act established and advanced the teaching profession. A good skill for a professional teacher is adaptability. The ability of a teacher to change his or her teaching and learning methodology is referred to as adaptability. They say that change is inevitable. A teacher's ability to adapt to new situations aids the teacher in the teaching and learning process. According to Oredein and Obadimeji (2022), during the COVID-19 lockdown in the year 2020, most teachers needed to think outside the box to impart knowledge on their learners. This was due to the COVID-19 meeting such a group of teachers unprepared, and teachers being who they are, they were required to engage their learners. As a result, becoming a digital teacher and teaching through application software became necessary. However, despite the aforementioned qualities, such a group of teachers must prepare for the tasks and roles that lie ahead of them.

Professional Development

Professional development is the positive growth in an individual's career development. Teachers' development is a continuous act of teachers developing and empowering themselves in the field of teaching; it is an act of improving their profession. It is no surprise that Awodji, Ogbudinkpa, & Agharanya (2020) believe that professional development entails learning how to keep a professional credential. They also describe it as a collaborative and intensive stage that should include an evaluative component. They believe that it is the systematic approach that causes positive changes in teachers' classroom settings in terms of attitude, skills, knowledge, and beliefs, as well as in learners' learning outcomes. They also see professional development for teachers as a technical process that enables teachers to provide better teaching and learning activities to their learners. It is said to be the ingredient that connects the needs of the individual teacher with the challenges of the job. As a result, the need for teachers to remain learners and teachable throughout their chosen careers ensures teacher accountability in the classroom (Awodji et al, 2020).

Even-Zahav, Widder & Hazzan (2022) considers teacher professional development to be the process by which other educators review, renew, and extend their commitment as change agents to the ethics of teaching, as well as the process by which they acquire and develop knowledge skills planning and practice with their learners in the classroom setting. The professional growth of teachers is a change in teachers' qualities that occurs gradually from novice to expert: that is, teachers' professional development emerges from various stages such as "novices, advanced

beginner, competent, proficient, and experts" (Even-Zahav et al, 2022). Teachers' professional development in this context includes teachers' engagement, participation, learner engagement, and progress on specific subjects (Sims Fitecher-wood, O'Mara-Eves, Cottingham, Stansfield, van Herwegen & Anders, 2021).

Teachers' Participation. Teachers' participation necessitates teachers' involvement if any professional development system is to be successful. It entails teachers becoming involved in the acquisition of new skills, methodologies, and strategies for making teaching and learning activities meaningful. For example, before the COVID-19 lockdown, teaching and learning activities were conducted in the traditional mode (physically, with teachers having one-on-one contact with their learners in the classroom). During the COVID-19 lockdown, however, teachers were required to learn specific skills, methodologies, and strategies for virtual teaching-learning activities. But from experience, teachers were able to achieve the national education goals outlined in the National Policy of Education by doing so.

Teachers' Engagement. This is a multi-dimensional motivational construct (model) that reflects a teacher's decision to devote energy resources to their work. This includes teachers' cognitive, emotional, and social engagement with colleagues, as well as teachers' social engagement with learners (Tucker, 2021). Teachers' cognitive engagement is a measure of how attentive and invested they are in their work. Teachers' social interactions with their colleagues. This refers to how teachers interact with their colleagues, which affects their motivation to perform their duties. Teacher emotional engagement refers to teachers' feelings about their level of commitment to and emotional response to their work. Teachers' social engagement with learners refers to how teachers interact with their learners and how this affects their feelings of energy or exhaustion at work.

Learners Progress on a Specific Subject. This displays each learner's progress in a specific subject. It denotes the learners' level of acquisition of specific knowledge. An increase in the learners' knowledge acquisition level indicates progress on a specific subject. Consider a learner who has a pass (P) in mathematics as a subject in the first term of a school session in a primary school and is said to have progressed in the same subject at the end of the next term of the same

session, if such learner has a credit (C). Learners' progress on a specific subject is an excellent indicator of teachers' professional development. It is accomplished by converting new knowledge, skills, and methodologies acquired during training into teaching-learning activities. This could be in a general class or a specific subject like mathematics, physics, or geography, among others. This implies that the teacher's new knowledge could be used to assess learners' progress in certain subjects. For example, a mathematics teacher who has gained new skills in mathematics teaching could apply those new skills in teaching-learning activities that would improve learners' progress in mathematics as a subject.

Learners Engagement. When learners participate in teaching-learning activities, they are engaged. This is also known as learners' participation in teaching-learning activities. According to Fruzsina & Al-Hoories (2022), Learners' engagement is a measure of learners' attention, interest, optimism, curiosity, and passion during teaching and learning activities, which may increase their motivation to learn and progress in their education. It refers to the interaction between learners and other educational stakeholders. Learners' social engagement can be cognitive (learners' level of investment in learning such as solving complex problems and participation), emotional (learners' extent in nature of positive and negative reactions to teachers and other educational stakeholders), or both. It describes learners' feelings and behaviors) and behavioral engagement (learner participation in social, academic, and extracurricular activities). It refers to visible indicators of cognitive and emotional engagement.

Leadership

Every teacher is a leader in the classroom. He takes on leadership responsibilities such as leading, directing, influencing, and coordinating. A leader is someone who performs the aforementioned roles to ensure that the organization's goals are met. In an organization, leadership is the act of influencing the behavior of subordinates. A teacher is a leader in the classroom; he directs and influences the behavior of his or her learners to achieve the set goals. It is a process in which an individual inspires and motivates others to achieve the desired goals and objectives, which may be changed or added as needs and challenges change (Malik & Azmat, 2019). Teachers' leadership in this context includes social responsibility, learners' satisfaction, and innovation (LinkedIn 2022).

Learners' Satisfaction

Individual learners who participate in teaching and learning activities gain this satisfaction. This is also the quality or state of being fulfilled as a teacher while engaged in teaching-learning activities.

Innovation. This is the process of bringing about positive change in an individual, a community, an organization, or the world at large. It is the practical application of new ideas to effect the desired change. Teachers who are classroom leaders use the practical implementation of new ideas in their various subjects to achieve the lesson's desired objectives. This can be accomplished by teachers' teaching methodologies that make teaching and learning activities enjoyable and meaningful.

Social Responsibility. This is the ethical code of the teaching profession. It entails teachers' roles and responsibilities in ensuring the success of their learners and the achievement of the organization's goals. Assisting learners in teaching and learning activities, ensuring a relative change in learners' behavior, identifying learners' safety in the classroom and throughout the school, and breaking down the curriculum to facilitate learning are just a few examples. A behavioral leadership theory can be used to explain teachers' professional development and leadership.

Behavioral Leadership Theory

This leadership theory was created by Robert Blake and Jane Mutton in 1964 (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). According to the behavioral leadership theory, the success of a leader is determined by their behavior rather than by their inherent qualities. This theory believes that a leader's responses to a particular scenario should be observed and evaluated. According to this belief, leaders are created, not born. Proponents of this theory suggest that anyone who can learn and apply specific behaviors can become an effective leader.

Applicability of the Theory

According to the theory, professional teachers will serve as learners to gain the necessary skills to advance their professional development and leadership in the classroom. It means that teachers acquire various skills and knowledge to impact the learning on their learners. For example, a math's teacher who has identified poor learners' academic performance in mathematics will need to professionally develop himself/herself in the fundamentals and methodologies of teaching and

learning. This theory promotes the idea that teachers being leaders are capable of developing and acquiring knowledge by embracing positive behaviors and putting them into practice at work. The theory of behavioral leadership also urges teachers being leaders to be conscious of their behavior and understand how it impacts the output and morale of their learners.

Implication to the Educational Sector

Teachers' professional development and leadership is a career that focuses on the growth of teachers' knowledge and skills, among other things. It is a theory that defines how teachers specifically become learners in classroom settings to solve problems and achieve set goals. Professional development for teachers not only improves job performance but also makes teachers more knowledgeable, keeps them up to date, and helps teachers develop. It aids learners understanding on a specific subject. It makes learning meaningful and more enjoyable. It also aids in community development by allowing teachers to apply their newly acquired knowledge in the classroom which could reflect in the community.

Summary

Concerns have been raised about teachers' professional development and leadership. Teachers help to build nations. As a result, the need to learn and relearn will benefit teachers' professional development and leadership in the classroom. Professional development for teachers includes teachers' participation, teachers' engagement, learners' engagement, and learners' progress on specific subjects. A leader is someone who influences the behavior of others. Teachers are regarded as leaders in the classroom. During teaching and learning activities, teachers influence learners' behavior toward the achievement of a predetermined goal. Teachers' leadership in the classroom includes, among other things, innovation and social responsibility in the classroom and at school.

Way Forward

The following are some ideas for professional development and leadership for teachers:

1. The government should raise public awareness about teacher professional development and leadership.
2. School administrators should organize workshops and seminars to help teachers advance in their careers.
3. Teachers should participate in any organized teachers' workshops and seminars to improve their teaching profession.

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