IMPACT OF TEACHERS' TRAINING IN REFORMING QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES IN AWGU LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY OF ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

Professional development of teachers is a continuous program teachers undergo to improve and keep up with the new trend in the teaching profession. This study was carried out to find out the impact of Teachers Training in Reforming Quality Professional Development of Teachers in Early Childhood Education Centers in Awgu Local Government Education Authority Enugu State. . This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 231 early childhood teachers in the 77 Government owned early childhood centers in Awgu LGEA, Enugu State. The sample size was 150 teachers selected using simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected using a 22 items structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Teachers Training in Reforming Quality Professional Development of Teachers in Early Childhood Education Centers (ITTRPQDTECEC). Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument which yielded an overall co.-efficient of 0.80 which was considered reliable. Mean was used for data analysis. Findings revealed that teachers that undergo training have better classroom management skills, trained teachers has better communication and positive relationships with pupils and parents and help teachers learn new and effective teaching practices among others. Also, challenges facing professional development of teachers are no leave permission, limited time, inadequate resources and lack of ongoing mentoring and coaching, lack of personalized professional development plan and insufficient content. The possible solutions to the challenged facing the professional development of teachers are; teachers should be allowed to go on study leave, adequate financial support should be made available for teachers, also provision of high quality content and professional development program should be provided for the teachers Based on the findings, it was recommended that study leave should be granted to teachers to enable them to go and update their professional knowledge among others. In conclusion, this study examined the impact of teachers training in reforming quality professional development of teachers in early childhood education. Based on the findings of this study ,it was revealed that teachers training is beneficial to the teacher as it helps them gain confidence in their ability to impact knowledge in the classroom, pupils who are taught by trained teachers have easy understanding of the concept been taught. More so there are challenges hindering the Professional development of teachers in early childhood education center in Awgu LGEA. These challenges have kept some teachers stagnant for some time making it seem impossible to attain the peak of their profession. Meanwhile, solutions were proffered to the challenges which if implemented will have a great impact on the professional development of teachers.

Key Words: Teacher training, professional development, teachers, reforming, early childhood education

Introduction

All children have the right to learn or be taught in a conducive environment and in a system that works best and in the best possible childhood education. According to Federal Government in her National policy on Education (2013), education is an instrument 'par excellence' which equips an individual with the right skill, knowledge, abilities, competence, attitude, behavior and values in order to function effectively in the society. Formal education is the type of education that is official, planned, regulated and organized by public organization or recognized private institution and involving definite stages (Yang, 2017).

Early childhood education is the classroom based education which is provided by trained teachers. Formal education settings differ from nation to nation with regards to what pupils are taught and how they are taught. In Nigeria, the national education programs and its description include; pre-primary education, Basic education (9years), which is compulsory and universal. From the ongoing, one can easily see that education is broad in meaning with slight difference as a result of difference in discipline. Every discipline has the process of attainment; education is not excluded. For anyone to be a certified teacher in education he/she must have undergone teachers training in a certified Tertiary institution.

Teacher training consists of all kinds of training giving to individual in other to become effective educators. Teachers training consists of educational activities to enhance teachers' knowledge including their teaching skills and all other professional skills. Teacher training is the ongoing process of professional development and learning that helps teachers stay up-todate with the latest teaching methods and technologies. Kennedy (2020) proposed a model of teacher learning that involves collaboration, inquiry, and reflection, and provides examples of successful teacher training programs that have adopted this model. Grossman (2019) highlights the need for teacher training programs to be aligned with current research on effective teaching practices, and to provide ongoing professional development to teachers throughout their careers.

Teacher training includes content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and professional knowledge, and suggests that effective teacher training must be ongoing and responsive to the needs of individual teachers (Zeichner, 2019). The researchers' defined teacher's training as the process of preparing individuals to become effective educators, typically through formal programs and courses. The goal of teacher training is to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to create a positive learning environment for their pupils and help them succeed academically. Effective teacher training programs can lead to the provision of high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers which can improve the quality of care provided to children.

Professional development of teachers is the continuous program teachers undergo to improve and keep up with the new trend in the teaching profession. According to Lee and Choi (2020), quality professional development for teachers can have a positive impact on both the teachers themselves and the Pupils. The study revealed that teachers who received quality professional development reported increased confidence in their abilities. Morris, Wong, Wan, Hsu and Hamblin (2021), posited that training programs leads to improvements in the teacher's communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and ability to work as part of a team. In order to ensure that quality professional development programs are effective, it is important to use evidence-based practices and to regularly evaluate the outcomes of the training (Zhang, Meit, English, Pinto-Martin, & Guevara, 2020). This can involve using standardized measures to assess changes in knowledge and skills, as well as soliciting feedback from both teachers and pupils. Meanwhile, according to Chen and Kellett, (2018), quality professional development for teachers is a planned and structured program that includes ongoing training, coaching, mentoring, and other forms of support to improve the knowledge, skills,

and abilities of teachers. It should also be tailored to the unique needs and preferences of the teachers and the children they are taking care of. The program should include measurable outcomes to assess the effectiveness of the training and its impact on the quality of care provided by the teachers. The researchers' defines quality professional development of teachers as a comprehensive and ongoing process that comprises evidence-based training, skill-building workshops, collaborative learning opportunities, and continuous support aimed at enhancing the knowledge, competencies, and practices of teachers in the field of early childhood care and education. Quality professional development of teachers in early childhood education can enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide developmentally appropriate care and education for young children.

Early childhood education refers to the developmentally appropriate education and care of children from birth through age eight. (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2021). According to OECD (2021), early childhood education is a phase of education that focuses on the growth and development of young children from birth to eight years old. It is aimed at providing children with the tools and skills necessary for lifelong learning, as well as promoting their social and emotional development. Also, American Educational Research Association, (2021) defined early childhood education as a field of study that focuses on the cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development of children from birth to eight years old. Early childhood education encompasses a range of services, including early education and care, parenting support, and health services, aimed at promoting children's learning and development in the early years of life (UNESCO, 2021).

Early childhood education refers to the formal and informal education of children from birth to eight years old, with a focus on the holistic development of children through play, exploration, and inquiry (World Bank, 2021). Teachers training has a positive impact on reforming the quality of professional development for teachers in early childhood education. Therefore, this study seeks to ascertain the impact of teachers training in reforming quality professional development of teachers in Early Childhood Education Centers in Awgu Local Government Education Authority, Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Early childhood education is critical for the development of young children, and the quality of teacher's professional development training is a significant factor in ensuring highquality education. Despite this, there is a significant shortage of qualified and trained teachers in many regions. The lack of proper training and professional development opportunities for teachers in early childhood education can lead to inadequate care and education, which can have a detrimental impact on children's development. Therefore, the study seeks to investigate the Impact of Teacher Training in Reforming Quality of Professional Development for Teachers in Early Childhood Education in Awgu LGEA ,Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims at ascertaining the impact of teachers training in reforming quality professional development of teachers in early childhood education centers in Awgu Local Government Education Authority. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the;

1. benefits of teachers training on pupils in Early Childhood Education Centers in Awgu LGEA.
2. challenges facing professional development of teachers in Early Childhood Education Centers in Awgu LGEA
3. possible solutions to the challenges facing professional development of teachers in Early Childhood Education Centers Awgu LGEA

Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide the study

1. What are the benefits of teachers training on pupils in Early Childhood Education centers in Awgu LGEA?
2. What are the challenges facing professional development of teachers in Early Childhood Education center in Awgu LGA Enugu State?
3. What are the possible solutions to the challenges facing professional development of teachers in Early Childhood Cducation centers in Awgu LGEA Enugu State?

Methods

Descriptive research was adopted for the study. The research was conducted in Awgu Local Government Area Enugu State. The population of the study comprised 231 teachers in the 77 Government owned early childhood centers in Awgu LGEA Enugu State. The sample size of this study was 150 respondents selected using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Impact of Teachers Training in Reforming Quality Professional Development of Teachers in Early Childhood Education Centers (ITTRQPDTECEC). The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one expert in Educational Foundation (Measurement and Evaluation), in the Faculty of Education, all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The reliability test co-efficient value obtained was 0.82, showing that the instrument is reliable. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of three research assistants who were duly informed on how to politely administer the questionnaire to teachers in early childhood education centers in Awgu Local Government Education Authority selected for this study. Data collected was analyzed using mean. A mean cut off point of 2.50 was used to make the decision rule. The decision rule states that any item that obtain a mean score of 2.50 and above were regarded as positive response, while items that scores less than 2.50 were regarded as negative response.

Results

Research Question One: What are the benefits of teachers training on pupils in early childhood education center in Awgu LGEA?

Table 1: Mean score response on the impact of teachers training on pupils in early childhood education centers.

S/N	Benefits of teachers training on pupils in early childhood education center Awgu LGEA	Mean	Decision
1	Teachers that undergo training have better classroom management skills.	3.16	Agree
2	Teachers training have positive impact on pupils academic achievement by helping them score higher than pupils with untrained teachers.	3.26	Agree
3	Trained teachers have better communication and build positive relationship with pupils and parents.	3.28	Agree
4	Teachers training help teachers learn new and effective teaching practices.	3.08	Agree
5	It helps teachers learn how to engage pupils effectively which leads to increased Pupils motivation.	3.19	Agree
6	It help boost teachers confidence in their ability to teach.	3.16	Agree

Table 1 above shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 have the mean scores of 3.16, 3.26, 3.28, 3.08, 3.19 and 3.16 respectively which indicates that the respondents agreed that they are all benefits of teachers training on pupils in early childhood education centers in Awgu LGA.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges facing professional development of teachers in early childhood education centers in Awgu LGA.

Table 2: Mean score response on the challenges of professional development of teachers.

S/N	What are the challenges facing professional development of teachers in early childhood education centers Awgu LGA	MEAN	DECISION
7	Financial constraints is a challenge facing professional development of teachers	3.16	Agree
8	Insufficient content	3.34	Agree
9	Limited time is a challenge to teacher's professional development as teachers have busy schedule.	3.12	Agree
10	Inadequate resources	3.20	Agree
11	Lack of ongoing mentoring and coaching can hinder the professional development of teachers.	3.29	Agree
12	Lack of personalized Professional Development plan.	2.50	Agree
13	Lack of permission/no leave	3.26	Agree
14	Lack of seminars conferences and workshop to update teachers on current development concerning teaching	3.52	Agree

Table 2 above shows that items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 , 13 and 14 have mean scores of 3.16, 3.34, 3.12, 3.20, 3.29, 2.50 ,3.26 and 3.52 respectively which shows that the respondents agreed that they are challenges facing professional development of teacher.

Research Question Three: What are the possible solutions to the challenges facing professional development of teachers in early childhood education centers in Awgu LGEA.

Table 3: Mean response on the possible solutions to the challenges of professional development of teachers in early childhood education centers.

S/N	Possible solutions to the challenges facing professional development of teachers in early childhood education centers Awgu LGEA	MEAN	DECISION
15	School centers can adopt flexible scheduling options and leverage technology for professional development of teachers	3.04	Agree
16	Providing differentiated professional development program for teachers can help progress teachers development programs	3.32	Agreed
17	Support and Collaboration	3.12	Agree
18	Teachers Professional Development programs should prioritize high-quality content and Instruction	3.47	Agree
19	Adequate resources should be provided for the professional development of teachers.	3.33	Agree
20	Adequate financial support should be provided for teachers Professional Development programs.	3.45	Agree
21	Teachers should be allowed to go on study leave.	3.41	Agree
22	Government and schools should organize seminars, conferences and workshop to update teachers on the latest development concerning teaching.	3.52	Agree

Table 3 above shows that items15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 have mean scores of 3.04, 3.32, 3.12, 3,47, 3.33, 3.45, 3.41 and 3.52 respectively which shows that the respondents agreed that these are possible solutions to the challenges facing teachers professional development in early childhood education centers in Awgu LGA.

Summary of Findings

1. The benefits of teachers training are; Improved classroom management skill which enables pupil's achievement, enhance better communication between teachers, pupils and parents.,

help boost teacher's confidence which also boost pupil's confidence and help them learn effectively.

2. No leave permission, limited time, inadequate resources, lack of ongoing mentoring and coaching, lack of personalized professional development plan and insufficient content are challenges facing professional development of teachers .
3. Possible solutions to the challenges facing professional development of teachers are, support and Collaboration, teachers should be allowed to go on study leave, adequate financial support, provision of high quality content and differentiated professional development programs should be made available to help make teachers Professional development programs easy and accessible to teachers.

Discussion of the findings

Findings revealed that teachers training have positive impact on pupils in early childhood education which set the standard for all other educational level an individual may attain, this is in line with a research by Anderson (2019), which reveals that early childhood education plays a pivotal role in setting the standard for all other educational achievements of pupils, emphasizing its long-term impact on cognitive, social, and emotional development, which forms the foundation for future academic success.. Most pupils who are doing well in their higher education are those taught by teachers that underwent teachers training. Enhances home school partnership thereby breaching the gap of communication. This is in line with Smith and Johnson (2022), which states that effective home-school partnership communication is crucial for fostering pupil success and should include regular updates on academic progress, opportunities for parental involvement, and channels for open dialogue between parents and educators.

Findings from the study revealed the challenges facing the professional development of teachers in early childhood education centers in Awgu LGEA which includes lack of ongoing mentoring and coaching, lack of quality content, lack of personalized professional development plan and so on, these challenges hinders the Professional development of teachers and indirectly affect the Pupils negatively, this is line with the findings of Smith and Johnson (2022) ,who stated that the challenges encountered in the professional development of teachers have been found to have a direct and significant impact on pupils' academic achievement, as evidenced by lower test scores and reduced pupil engagement. Also Ying (2025) opined that limited funding, insufficient profession growth, and limited time allocated to professional development poses a significant obstacle.

Findings of the study revealed that the possible solutions to the challenges are as follow; provision of adequate financial support, integration of personalized professional development plan among others. When these challenges are eradicated, there will be increase in teacher's professional development which will also be of great benefit to the teachers, pupils, parents and the society at large. Brown and Davis (2023) posits that the successful eradication of challenges facing professional development of teachers not only leads to improved academic performance and increased engagement among pupils, but also fosters stronger partnerships between parents and educators, resulting in a positive impact on student well-being, educational equity, and overall societal development.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of teachers training in reforming quality professional development of teachers in early childhood education. Based on the findings of this study it was revealed that teachers training is beneficial to the teacher as it helps them gain confidence in their ability to impact knowledge in the classroom, pupils who are taught by trained teachers have easy

understanding of the concept been taught. More so there are challenges hindering the Professional development of teachers in early childhood education center in Awgu LGEA. These challenges have kept some teachers stagnant for some time making it seem impossible to attain the peak of their profession. Meanwhile, solutions were proffered to the challenges which if implemented will have a great impact on the professional development of teachers. The findings of this study has therefore made the researcher to conclude that the provision and implementation of the resources and contents lacking in the professional development of teachers in early childhood education centers will make early year's education favourable to pupils under Awgu LGEA

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Federal, State and Local Government should invest in effective teacher training which can lead to improved educational outcomes and lifelong benefits for children in their formative years.
2. The federal government should provide adequate financial support for teachers Professional Development programs.
3. Occasionally, study leave should be granted to teachers in other for them to go and improve their knowledge.

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