



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Professional development approaches and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State

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International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2024, 12(02), 1203–1210

Publication history: Received on 11 June 2024; revised on 23 July 2024; accepted on 25 July 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2024.12.2.1336>

### Abstract

The study examined professional development approaches and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo state. It specifically focused on the relationship between in-service and on-the-job training approaches of professional development and the teaching and research performance of business educators in tertiary institutions. A co-relational research design was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised 52 business educators in the two tertiary institutions currently running business education programme in Imo state. Data was collected from the respondents with the means of a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. Data collected for the study was analyzed with mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ). Analysis of the data collected revealed that both in-service and on-the-job training have a very strong positive relationship with business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions. Consequently, it was concluded that in-service and on-the-job training approaches of professional development play important roles in the performance of business educators in tertiary institutions. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that: government should come up with a compulsory policy that will coerce management of institutions to prioritize regular professional development of their employees; and Management of institutions should combine both in-service and on-the-job training approaches in the professional development of their employees.

**Keywords:** Professional Development Approaches; Teaching Performance; Research Performance; In-service Training; On-the-job Training

### 1. Introduction

The capability of every employee of an organization largely depends on the skills and knowledge acquired by the employee. Professional development is one of the means through which the said knowledge and skills are acquired. It refers to many types of educational experiences related to an individual's work. Doctors, lawyers, educators, accountants, engineers, and people in a wide variety of professions and businesses participate in professional development to learn and apply new knowledge and skills that will improve their performance on the job. Professional development is a career-long process within which, via diverse learning activities, professionals refine and augment their knowledge and skills and undertake personal professional supervision to enhance critically reflective practice. *Frederiksen (2016)* sees professional development as a mechanism that individuals use to learn, update, and improve skills, abilities, and behaviors over time, and that parent institutions or regulatory agencies may encourage, support, or require. Whether professional development is self-directed independent study or a more structured training plan, it is a continuous process for acquiring new knowledge and competencies related to a profession, job responsibilities, or work environment. It is intended to help equip employees with the tools and information they need to deal with rapidly changing information environments and technologies. Indeed Editorial Team (2023) sees professional development as

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improving employees' knowledge and skills through learning and training to advance their career. It is the skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement.

Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. It has been described as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluative stage. According to Amadi (2010), there are a variety of approaches to professional development, including conferences, workshops, seminars, consultation, coaching and communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision and technical assistance. According to Odia and Ehule (2024), these aforementioned approaches adopted by most employers are compressed into in-service training and on-the-job training.

In-service training aims at providing knowledge, skills and attitudes to employees, which will help them to be more successful, more productive and happier in their jobs. It entails continuous updating of employees' knowledge, skills and interests in chosen field through workshop, seminar and conferences. Amadi (2010) sees in-service training as a workshop for employed professionals, paraprofessionals and other practitioners to acquire new knowledge, better methods, etc. for improving their skills toward more effective, efficient and competent rendering of service in various fields and to diverse groups of people. The author further said that such a workshop is a training designed to benefit a specific group of workers at a particular organization. A good in-service training should, via workshop training improve the quality of programming for the development of employees in service. Asiyai (2016) posited that employees' in-service training can be described as a catalyst capable of driving positive changes in organization, boosting their morale and their job commitment. In a survey of employees who have benefitted from in-service training programmes, Ogunrin (2011) reported that employees generally believe that in-service training programmes are very useful to them in terms of professional development, capacity building and productivity.

On-the-job training is a training technique that involves training of employees during their everyday working in the actual working scenario. It is considered as most cost effective method. This is also called learning by doing. According to Nwankwo and Nzekwe (2013), on-the-job training is a method used by employers to develop the skills of a worker through hand-on experience. Under these methods new or inexperienced employees learn through observing peers or managers performing the job and trying to imitate their behaviour. These methods do not cost much and are less disruptive as employees are always on the job, training is given on the same machines and experience would be on already approved standards, and above all the trainee is learning while earning. There are different techniques or methods of training that fall under on-the-job training. They include coaching, mentoring, job rotation, apprenticeship, understudy, job instruction, committee assignment, and internship. On-the-job training plays significant roles in boosting the productivity of employees in organizations. For instance, a study conducted by Odia and Ehule (2024) on manpower training and employees' performance of local government in Edo Central Senatorial District revealed that on-the-job training has positive effects on the both task and contextual performance of employees in organizations.

According to Pulley (2014), on-the-job training has been developed in four distinct stages. The first stage according to the author was to identify and create a detailed breakdown of the skill requirements for a specific position and was called the job task analysis. The second stage was the cognitive perspective of the adult learner which is cognitive perspective as the focus of the adult learner on perception, insight and meaning. The third stage was the role of the trainer in the on-the-job training process, where the role of the trainer became paramount in helping to expand the needed skills that the new employee must develop. The last stage was the evaluation of the on-the-job training process and outcomes, where the effective trainers would have to react and make changes relevant to the individual needs while synthesizing individual efforts to meet common objectives.

Professional development is helpful to both employers and employees. To employers, it promotes higher employee retention rates. According to Vinesh (2014), statistics show that the cost of employee turnover is up to 16% of the employee's annual income. This means an employee earning \$ 100 000 per year will cost the employer \$ 16 000 if he or she quits. But employers who offer professional development will encourage employees to stay with their business. Just as it is useful to the employers, professional development is very important to the employees of any organization or institution. According to Khutale (2024), professional development can expose both young and experienced professionals to new ideas, solidify their knowledge, and increase their expertise in their field. It allows professionals to build confidence and credibility as they acquire new skill sets and professional designations. It offers both young and experienced professionals' opportunities to boost their earning potential and future hire ability by increasing their knowledge and updating their skill sets. Professional development opportunities allow professionals to branch out and meet other people within their industry who may be able to help them with career opportunities in the future. It is a great way to stay up-to-date on industry knowledge and trends, and can open the door to future career changes.

Despite the aforementioned benefits of professional development to both employees and organizations, most employers of labour or management of organizations in the course of saving cost exhibit lackadaisical attitude towards regular development of their employees. Osiesi, (2020), acknowledged that the causes of poor quality output of employees include: inability to attend workshops, seminars and conferences, unpreparedness in terms of skills update. He upheld that employees should be motivated towards attending professional development programmes as to enhance their quality outputs. Therefore, making available opportunities for employees' intensive and continuous professional development programme in any organization will enhance productivity. Considering the assertion of Osiesi (2020), there is no doubt that employee including business educators of tertiary institutions in Nigeria do not enjoy staff development programme due to many challenges. Hence the need to examine professional development approaches and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo state.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Professional development in an organization in no doubt plays significant role in the continuous growth of employees and the organization. It meant to improve employees' skills and knowledge so they can progress in their overall career path. While it's ultimately the individual's responsibility to own their professional development, it's to the employer's benefit to encourage continuing education by ensuring staff have access to both internal and external learning opportunities. Prioritizing staff development ensures that team members' skills evolve in accordance with industry trends and best practices. And employers who invest in additional education that complements an employee's career trajectory can see higher retention rates, more engaged staff, attraction of top job candidates, enhancement of productivity, helping employees to reach their full potential, and greater revenue.

Despite the positive role professional development plays in organizations or institutions, most management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria exhibit lackadaisical attitude in prioritizing the professional development of their staff, and few who considered the professional development of their staff end up utilizing cheap and unpopular professional development approaches. This attitude of most management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria has led to series of work challenges, as most educational institutions are confronted with the problems of workplace accidents, low level of staff morale, unprecedented staff absenteeism, poor job performance, high levels of work-related stress, reduction in workplace loyalty and engagement, and high rate of staff turnover. It is against this backdrop the study seeks to examine professional development approaches and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo state.

#### *Aim and Objectives of the Study*

The aim of the study is to examine professional development approaches and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo state. The objectives of the study include the following.

- To examine the relationship between in-service training and business educators' teaching performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.
- To examine the relationship between in-service training and business educators' research performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.
- To examine the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' teaching performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.
- To examine the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' research performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

#### *Research Questions*

- What is the relationship between in-service training and business educators' teaching performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?
- What is the relationship between in-service training and business educators' research performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?
- What is the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' teaching performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?
- What is the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' research performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

### **1.2. Hypotheses**

H01: There is no significant relationship between in-service training and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

H02: There is no significant relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

### 1.3. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was divided into three. They include content scope, geographical scope, and the unit scope. The content scope was limited to the specific objectives of the study. They include the relationship between in-service training and business educators' teaching performance, the relationship between in-service training and business educators' research performance, the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' teaching performance, and the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' research performance. The geographical scope was limited to tertiary institutions running business education programme in Imo State. The unit scope, which is microscopic in nature was limited to business educators in the tertiary institutions in the state.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Design of the Study

The study employed a co-relational research design. According to Boucaud (2017), correlational research design is a kind of research design that investigates or examines the possibility of relationships between two or more variables. Hence the study examined the relationship between professional development approaches and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

### 2.2. Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised the 52 (fifty-two) business educators in the 2 (two) tertiary institutions currently running business education programme in Imo State. The population distribution of respondents is presented in table 1 below.

**Table 1** Population Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Name of Institution	Population
1	Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri	33
2	Imo State College of Education Ihitte/Uboma	19
Total		52

Source: Department of Business Education of the two Institutions

### 2.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

The entire population of the study was used because the population size was manageable. Consequently, no sampling technique was adopted in the study.

### 2.4. Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The questionnaire contained a cover letter, section A, and section B. the cover letter was use to appeal for the maximum cooperation of the respondents. Section A contained the personal information of the respondents. While section B is made up of 9 (nine) structured items on professional development approaches and business educators job performance in a four likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

### 2.5. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by 3 experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation and it was found to have content, face and construct validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined with test retest. It was performed by administering the instrument to 20 respondents first. Two weeks later, same instrument was re-administered to same respondents. The results of the two tests were compared with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formulae. A coefficient of 0.82 was obtained which was suitable for the study.

## 2.6. Method of Data Collection

Data for the study was collected through physical contact with the respondents in their various institutions. The researchers ensured the questionnaires are correctly completed and retrieved on the spot. A hundred percent retrieval rate was obtained.

## 2.7. Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed with mean and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Mean was used to analyze the research questions, and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. Decision rule was based on the comparison of the calculated mean scores obtained in the analysis of each research question with the mean bench mark of 2.50. A calculated mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted. However, a calculated mean score less than 2.50 was rejected. The mean bench mark was obtained by dividing the sum of the scores of the rating scales (4+3+2+1) by the number of the scales (4). To test for significance, the results of the tested hypotheses were interpreted based on Dana 2001 correlation decision framework. The decision framework include: 0.00-0.19 (very weak relationship); 0.20-0.39 (weak relationship); 0.40-0.59 (moderate relationship); 0.60-0.79 (strong relationship); 0.80-0.99 (very strong relationship); and 1 (perfect relationship).

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Analysis of Research Questions

#### 3.1.1. Analysis of research question one

What is the relationship between in-service training and business educators' teaching performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

In response to the above research question, the researcher used items 1 to 3 and items 7 to 9 of the questionnaires administered to the respondents. The result of the analysis is presented in table 2 below.

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics for analyzing research question one

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Skewness
In-service Training	52	8	18	2.81	1.05	1.277
Teaching Performance	52	8	18	2.77	1.15	0.372
Valid Number	52					

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The first variable of the above table (in-service training) revealed a calculated mean score of 2.81, while the second variable (teaching performance) revealed a calculated mean score of 2.77. Since the two calculated mean scores exceed the criterion mean of 2.5 [(2.81 > 2.50) (2.77 > 2.50)], it is concluded that in-service training has positive relationship with business educators' teaching performance in tertiary institutions.

#### 3.1.2. Analysis of research question two

What is the relationship between in-service training and business educators' research performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

In response to the above research question, the researcher used items 1 to 3 and items 10 to 12 of the questionnaires administered to the respondents. The result of the analysis is presented in table 3 below.

**Table 3** Descriptive statistics for analyzing research question two

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Skewness
In-service Training	52	9	21	2.89	1.12	0.309
Teaching Performance	52	7	17	2.81	1.02	0.566
Valid Number	52					

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The first variable of the above table (in-service training) revealed a calculated mean score of 2.89, while the second variable (research performance) revealed a calculated mean score of 2.81. Since the two calculated mean scores exceed the criterion mean of 2.5 **[(2.89>2.50) (2.81>2.50)]**, it is concluded that in-service training has positive relationship with business educators' research performance in tertiary institutions.

### 3.1.3. Analysis of Research Question three

What is the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' teaching performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

In response to the above research question, the researcher used items 4 to 6 and items 7 to 9 of the questionnaires administered to the respondents. The result of the analysis is presented in table 4 below.

**Table 4** Descriptive statistics for analyzing research question three

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Skewness
On-the-job training	52	8	17	2.79	1.07	0.597
Teaching Performance	52	9	19	2.84	1.12	0.470
Valid Number	52					

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The first variable of the above table (on-the-job training) revealed a calculated mean score of 2.79, while the second variable (teaching performance) revealed a calculated mean score of 2.84. Since the two calculated mean scores exceed the criterion mean of 2.5 **[(2.79>2.50) (2.84>2.50)]**, it is concluded that on-the-job training has positive relationship with business educators' teaching performance in tertiary institutions.

### 3.1.4. Analysis of research question four

What is the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' research performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

In response to the above research question, the researcher used items 4 to 6 and items 10 to 12 of the questionnaires administered to the respondents. The result of the analysis is presented in table 5: below.

**Table 5** Descriptive statistics for analyzing research question four

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Skewness
On-the-job training	6	8	20	2.69	1.11	-0.838
Research Performance	52	8	18	2.81	1.05	-0.556
Valid Number	52					

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The first variable of the above table (on-the-job training) revealed a calculated mean score of 2.69, while the second variable (research performance) revealed a calculated mean score of 2.81. Since the two calculated mean scores exceed the criterion mean of 2.5 **[(2.67>2.50) (2.81>2.50)]**, it is concluded that on-the-job training has positive relationship with business educators' research performance.

### 3.2. Statistical Test of Research Hypotheses

#### 3.2.1. Test of hypothesis one

H01: There is no significant relationship between in-service training and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo state, Nigeria.

In response to the above research question, the researcher compared items 1 to 3 with items 7 to 9 of the questionnaires administered to the respondents to ascertain the significance of the relationship between the two variables. The summary of the result is presented in table 6 below.

**Table 6** Contingency Table for Testing Hypothesis one

Variables	N	DF	X	SD	r	r2	Result
In-service training	52	50	2.79	1.10	0.96	0.914	Very strong Significant Relationship
Teaching Performance							

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The above table of a sample (N) of 52 respondents and a degree of freedom (DF) of 50, revealed calculated mean score (X) of 2.79, standard deviation (SD) of 1.10, and correlation coefficient (r) of 0.96. With the application of Dana (2001) correlation coefficient framework, it was concluded that in-service training has a very strong positive significant relationship with business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo state.

#### 3.2.2. Test of hypothesis two

H02: There is no significant relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo state.

In response to the above research question, the researcher compared items 4 to 6 with items 7 to 9 of the questionnaires administered to the respondents to ascertain the significance of the relationship between the two variables. The summary of the result is presented in table 8 below.

**Table 7** Contingency table for testing hypothesis two

Variables	N	DF	X	SD	r	r2	Result
On-the-job training	52	50	2.81	1.09	0.97	0.94	Very strong Significant Relationship
Teaching Performance							

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The above table of a sample (N) of 52 respondents and a degree of freedom (DF) of 50, revealed calculated mean score (X) of 2.81, standard deviation (SD) of 1.09, and correlation coefficient (r) of 0.97. With the application of Dana (2001) correlation coefficient framework, it was concluded that on-the-job training has a very strong positive significant relationship with business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo state.

## 4. Conclusion

The study examined professional development approaches and business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions. It specifically examined the relationship between in-service training and business educators' job performance as well as the relationship between on-the-job training and business educators' job performance in the area of study. A co-relational analysis of the data collected revealed that both in-service and on-the-job training have very strong positive relationship with business educators' job performance in tertiary institutions. Consequently, it was concluded that in-service and on-the-job training approaches of professional development play important roles in the performance of business educators in tertiary institutions, as they are auxiliaries to their teaching and research ability.

### *Recommendations*

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

- Government should come up with a compulsory policy that will coerce management of institutions prioritize regular professional development of their employees.
- Management of institutions should combine both in-service and on-the-job training approaches in the professional development of their employees.

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### **Compliance with ethical standards**

#### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

#### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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