

## Situational Analysis of Continuous Professional Development for enhancing Early Child Care and Education in Anambra State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*The study investigated the situational analysis of continuous professional development for enhancing early child care and education. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0 descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 21,876, comprising 675 teachers and 45 headteachers. Multistage sampling was used to select 720 teachers and headteachers for the study. The instrument for data collection was 13-item researcher-developed questionnaire, titled Continuous Professional Development Questionnaire (CPDQ), which was validated by three academic experts. Cronbach alpha was used for reliability test with coefficient alpha of 0.77. Data analysis was done using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test. The findings of the study revealed amongst others teachers within the private ECCE centres in Anambra State had fair awareness about CPD programmes and that the utilisation of CPD programmes among teachers was low. Based on the finding, it was recommended that there is a need for the Anambra State Ministry of Education to create awareness on the importance and the need for the introduction and implementation of periodic CPD programmes for teachers.*

Keyword: *Utilisation, Continuous Professional Development, Enhancing Early Child Care and Education*

### 1.1 Introduction

The existence of early child care and education (ECCE) is for the sole aim of producing individuals with abilities and skills necessary for effective participation in the society. Investments to improve a child's early learning experience promote learning; it also protects them from man-made learning difficulties so that they can attain to fullest potential as stated by the National Policy of Education (FRN, 2014). However, non-compliance with the prospects of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) within private ECCE centres may be associated with various factors including: headteachers and teachers' unawareness of the relevance of continuing professional development, challenges relating to financial involvement in carrying out CPD programmes and wrong perception towards CPD, among other challenges.

CPD according to Kloosterman (2014) is the process of maintaining and enhancing the knowledge, skills and experience related to one's professional activities following completion of his or her formal training. Within the education context, teacher continuous professional development is viewed as the process of retraining existing teachers in schools and equipping them with relevant experience, skills and competences to tackle the responsibilities of educational profession effectively (Okeke, 2012). Gulston (2010) concurred that CPD emphasises the participation of educators in development opportunities in order for them to be sufficiently equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills which they could impact on the students. This coincides with Armbrüster & Glückler (2017) who opined that CPD programmes are primarily concerned with providing methods and tools different from teachers' routines. Thus, CPD programmes comprise series of training activities made available to improve the working capacity of employees within an organization. Such programmes may include: in-service training, periodic workshops and seminars, conferences, short-term courses on area of specialisation, training on computer application, consultation, coaching, both peer coaching and expert coaching, peer observation/knowledge exchange, mentoring, job rotation, among others.

Through CPD programmes, serving teachers acquire the knowledge, skills and values to sustain the desired stimulation through continuing professional development. They also improve their quality of teaching and pupils' learning outcomes. Teachers who are lacking in continuous professional practice are not likely to help the pupils meet the challenges of learning (Ayeni, 2011). CPD is therefore a tool for curbing poor standard education and considering the view that Early Child Care Education (ECCE) is one of the most important and critical areas of education, CPD programmes for teachers is considered as necessary mechanism to enhance their capacities to understanding the psychological dispositions of children and how to develop them mentally. As teachers' career develops, the knowledge and skills they require progresses. Investing in early child care and education is investing in teachers' development (Sooter, 2013). Teacher development, leads to better education outcomes because improved skills, abilities and quality productivity narrow the geographic inequality gaps. ECCE, according to Okeke (2012) provides timely awareness for headteachers, and is a cost effective strategy for eliminating shortcomings. Basic principles and observations indicate that providing supportive conditions for ECCE is more effective and less costly than attempting to address the consequences of early adversity, later.

The significance of continuous professional development determines its demand in the society. Kapur (2018) pointed out that awareness is knowledge and knowledge is power. This means when we create awareness among people. We are also empowering them to face certain difficult situations and at the same time we are helping them to overcome these difficulties. Kapur (2018) further stated that awareness is the realisation of issues based on intellectual background and scientific basis, so it is a state of mind represented in the individual's realisation of the world mentally and emotionally. Iyunade (2017) pointed out that Headteachers in state schools in Abuja, claimed ignorance of available and relevant CPD programs, while headteachers of private schools admitted that there were more opportunities in bigger cities. Therefore creating awareness of the services of continuous professional development to headteachers serves as an intervention strategy to curb deficiencies in physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development of children. Information for development, in this context, is an indispensable tool to school owner and can only come when persons in such positions of authority pave way for accommodation and application of updates.

In England, there has been an increase in awareness of CPD programs in schools in the past decade (Iyunade, 2018). There has been high number of significant progress in raising the profile of CPD but research is still required to access whether there are regular opportunities to access CPD and to define the effectiveness of such programs (Iyunade, 2018). Government's policy and CPD strategies in England cause extensive awareness of CPD in schools. This has been adopted in both state maintained and independent schools. In recent years, there has been considerable research and significant developments in raising the profile of CPD in England (Adagiri, 2011). Some Nigerian teachers, in the private schools, appear to find it difficult to articulate definitions of CPD impact, discuss causal relationships between change in practice and change in pupil attainment (Ayesi, 2011). As a result, teachers fail to describe whether CPD encourages them to change their practice, or whether it was their personal desire that actually encouraged them to participate in CPD in the first place (Akpanobong, 2011). However, awareness of positive impact of CPD is known to increase teachers' enthusiasm to become more involved in the CPD process, therefore, the communication of impact is of crucial importance to take-up of CPD opportunities (Kapur, 2018).

Furthermore, it is necessary that teachers record what they are learning and the progress they make with CPD in order to keep track of the skills and knowledge they obtain. It is also important to set short-term and long-term objectives while implementing a structured learning plan as this would create more concrete awareness for others.

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

Teachers are the hinge on which all educational activity revolve. Early childhood period is when teachers are expected to lay basic foundation for imminent learning for all children. Obsolete teachers turn out to be detrimental to all-round development of pupils. And for ECCE teachers to be sufficiently prepared, they need to be re-oriented, continuously updated with knowledge and studies from professionals in the field. This was why the Ministry of Education in Anambra state deemed it fit that teachers ought to go through CPD programmes. Yet, no noteworthy enhancement had been observed, thus introducing uneven child development across the state of the federation. It is feared that the supposed meaningful learning experience is jeopardized due to high level of non-uniformity in ECCE programme, observed in the proliferation of ECCE.

Enforcement of CPD programmes would likely bring the expected results within the ambit of schools, to help teachers develop professional skills for ECCE practice. Nonetheless, if steps are not taken to address these concerns, more difficulties may arise; which could mar the objectives of the National Policy on Education and efforts of the Anambra State government which is ensuring quality education for children. It is therefore considered necessary to address these issues through orderly investigation to determine the utilisation of continuous professional development programmes for enhancing teachers within private ECCE in Anambra state.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to examine situational analysis of continuous professional development for enhancing early child care and education in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Assess teachers' awareness on the use of CPD programmes in private ECCE centres within Anambra State.
2. Find out the use of CPD programmes by teachers in private ECCE centres within Anambra State.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. Are teachers aware of the use of CPD in private ECCE centres within Anambra State?
2. How are CPD programme used in private ECCE centres within Anambra State?

### **1.4 Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teacher and headteachers awareness on the use of CPD programmes in private ECCE centres within Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and headteachers on how CPD programmes are used in private ECCE centres within Anambra State

## **2. Method**

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This is because the researcher was interested in generating data on the current status of CPD in order to describe its characteristics within the context of the study area. The population of this study is 21,876. The area of study is Anambra State. Anambra state is one of the five states in the South-East geopolitical zones of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The population of the study was 21,876, comprising 675 teachers and 45 headteachers. A sample size of 720 teachers and headteachers was drawn for the study through multi-stage sampling. In stage one, simple random sampling was used in selecting three out of the six LGAs in the state for the study. In stage two, from each of the three selected LGAs, three local government areas were selected through simple random sampling. In stage three, purposive sampling was used in selecting five private schools each from the LGAs, which are forty-five private schools from nine LGAs. In stage four, from this forty-five selected schools purposive sampling was used to select the forty-five headteachers as a whole. Fifteen teachers per school were also selected at this stage to arrive at 675 teachers. This brought the total target sample size to 720.

Data for the study were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled “Continuous Professional Development Questionnaire” (CPDQ). The questionnaire was face and content validated by experts; two from the department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation, Educational Foundation Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established using a pilot study of twenty (20) teachers and headteachers in Oji-river Local Government Education Authority in Enugu State. The reliability coefficient for the clusters were: Cluster I = 0.76, Cluster II = 0.78 within an overall reliability value of 0.77 which indicates a high reliability coefficient of the instrument

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. For the descriptive aspect of the analysis, mean score was used to analyse data related to the two (2) research questions and standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity of the respondents’ means score. The mean score were interpreted using the scale ratings. A four (4) point scale, 2.50 was adopted as the criterion value for accepting or rejecting any of the given items. This implies that any item that scored below 2.50 was rejected and treated as negative response, while any item that scored above 2.50 was accepted and treated as positive response. On the other hand, the inferential statistics involved the test of the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using the t-test statistical tool.

### 3. Results

**Research Question 1:** Are teachers aware of the use of CPD in private ECCE centres within Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation of the teachers on awareness of CPD programmes

S/N	Items on Awareness of CPD Programmes	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision Level
1.	I have clear understanding of what CPDs means	3.93	0.86	Agree
2.	I am aware that CPDs are carried out by educational experts	1.80	0.91	Disagree
3.	I am aware that CDPs are meant to develop the teacher professionally	3.77	0.93	Agree
4.	I am aware that CDPs are included in the national policy for education	3.76	0.96	Agree
5.	I am aware that there are private CPD experts across the education zones	1.72	1.01	Disagree

6.	I am aware that CDPs are very important for professional knowledge in ECCE	3.54	1.12	Agree
7.	I am well informed about available CPD programmes I can engage in particularly for ECCE	1.76	0.93	Disagree
<b>Mean Response</b>		<b>2.90</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>Agree</b>

In table 1, three items including item 2, 5, & 7 scored below the criterion value of 2.50 – implying that the respondents disagreed on these items. All the other four items including items 1, 3, 4 & 6 scored above the criterion value of 2.50 – implying that the respondents were affirmative on these items. Meanwhile, the grand Mean was 2.90 and standard deviation of 0.96, which also implies that the respondents indicated being aware of CPD programmes for ECCE centres in Anambra State.

**Research Question 2:** How are CPD programme used in private ECCE centres within Anambra State?

**Table 2:** Mean and standard deviation for the responses of teachers on the utilisation of CPD programmes

S/N	Items on Utilisation of CPD Programmes	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
8	Periodic conference and seminar organised by the school headteachers	2.82	0.67	Fairly Much
9	Short-term course on ECCE organised by the school management	2.25	0.53	Not Much
10	External training/workshop organised by the school management	2.21	0.46	Not Much
11	Professional training courses sponsored by the school management	2.31	0.55	Not Much
12	Mentoring classes	2.47	0.80	Not Much
13	Peer group knowledge exchanges	2.62	0.60	Fairly Much
<b>Mean Response</b>		<b>2.45</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>Not Much</b>

Result of data analysis as contained in table 2 shows that with the exception of items 8 and 13, all other items including items 9, 10, 11 & 12 scored below the criterion value of 2.50. This implies that the respondents only had a fair utilisation of periodic conferences and seminars organised by the school headteachers and peer group knowledge exchanges, as means for CPD. All other aspects of CPD measured using the items were not utilised. Also, the grand mean recorded a value of 2.45 and standard



deviation of 0.60, which indicates that in the overall, the use of CPD programmes among teachers within private ECCE centres in Anambra state was low.

### Hypothesis 1

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teacher and headteachers regarding awareness of CPD programmes by teachers within private ECCE centres in Anambra State.

**Table 3:** *Levene's t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of teachers and headteachers on awareness of CPD programmes by teachers within private ECCE centres.*

GROUPS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	df	Sig.
Headteachers	113	27.83	6.44	6.826	376	.000
Class Teachers	265	22.63	6.92			

The Levene's t-test analysis was performed to test if a difference exists on the level of awareness about CPD programmes between teachers and headteachers in within private ECCE centres in Anambra State. Result of the test shows that headteachers scored statistically significantly higher in the level of awareness about CPD programmes ( $M = 27.83$ ;  $SD = 22.63$ ) compared to the class teachers ( $M = 22.63$ ;  $SD = 6.92$ ),  $t(376) = 6.826$ ,  $p = .000$ . Based on this result, the stated null hypothesis is rejected; implying that a significant difference exists between the mean ratings of teachers and headteachers regarding awareness of CPD programmes within private ECCE centres in Anambra State.

### Hypothesis 2:

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and headteachers on the utilisation of CPD programmes by teachers within private ECCE centres in Anambra State.

### Table 4:

*Levene's t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of teachers and headteachers on utilisation of CPD programmes by within private ECCE centres.*

<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (SD)</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Headteachers	113	24.95	5.45	5.990	376	.000
Class Teachers	265	20.80	6.44			

The result of t-test analysis as contained in table 6 shows that the headteachers scored statistically significantly higher in their mean ratings ( $M = 24.95$ ;  $SD = 5.45$ ) compared to the classroom teachers ( $M = 20.80$ ;  $SD = 6.44$ ),  $t(376) = 5.990$ ,  $p = .000$ . Consequently, the null hypothesis stated in this direction is rejected. This implies that a significant difference exists in the mean ratings of teachers and headteachers regarding the utilisation of CPD programmes within private ECCE centres in Anambra State.

#### **4. Discussion of Findings**

Efforts were made in this study to establish the awareness of CPDs among teachers within the private ECCE centres in Anambra State. The results indicated that teachers to an appreciable level are aware of CPDs. The result particularly showed that: teachers have clear understanding of what CPDs means; teachers are aware that CDPs are meant to develop the teacher professionally; teachers are aware that CPDs are included in the national policy for education; teachers are aware the CPDs are very important for professional knowledge in ECCE centres. However, the respondents showed lack of awareness: that CPDs are carried out by educational experts, that there are private CPD experts across the education zones, about available CPDs they can engage into – particularly for ECCE.

In the overall analysis, the result showed that the mean score for the overall items measuring teachers' awareness of CPD was slightly above the criterion value of 2.50, which implies that the teachers had fair level of knowledge about CPD programmes within the private ECCE centres in Anambra State. The result of the hypothesis stated in line with this research objective indicated that headteacher showed higher level of awareness on CPD programmes as compared with the class teachers. The finding on teachers' awareness of CPD programmes are supported by Okonkwo, Odogwu, Ogwu, Chinweuba and Osuma (2015) who found in their own study that the teachers sampled in their study were all aware of CPD programmes for teachers. It makes sense to confidently agree that the teachers within the present study area are aware of CPD programmes.



The result of data analysis showed that CPD programmes utilisation among teachers within the private ECCE centres in Anambra state was not impressive. Among the seven dimensions of CPD programmes given, the data analysis showed that the teachers utilised only periodic conferences and seminars and peer group knowledge exchanges. All the other five dimensions were not utilised by the teachers. With the grand mean of 2.45 in all the seven items measuring teachers' utilisation of CPD programmes, it became evident that CPD programmes utilisation within the private ECCE centres in Anambra State was low. Test of hypothesis in this regard however shows that the headteachers had higher mean ratings about the utilisation of CPD programmes within the private ECCE centres compared to the teachers. This could be as a result of the view that headteachers have the more tendencies to protect the image of their schools; while the teachers have the more likelihood of expressing themselves openly to see areas of adjustment to favour them.

These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted in other geographical and organisational contexts. For instance, Nduka (2014) found in his study that teachers' utilisation of CPD programmes was very low. This also goes with Iyanade (2017) who equally found that teachers' use of CPD as well as preparation for the universal basic education was relatively low. Yet the study conducted by Ofojebe and Chukwuma (2015) also gave the impression that teachers' utilisation of CPD programmes remains low, judging from the context of the higher education in Nigeria.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study was conducted with the view to examine CPD programmes utilisation among teachers within private ECCE centres in Anambra State. This was done with considering the view that teachers are key agents in achieving the goals of educational institution in the society. Based on the findings obtained through both descriptive and inferential data analysis, it is concluded in this study that there is reasonable knowledge of CPD awareness by teachers within private ECCE centres in Anambra State. Perhaps this knowledge is based on the fact that CPD is enshrined in the national policy for education in Nigeria and documented in the policies and regulations of different schools in Anambra State. Meanwhile, the challenge is not on the awareness of the programmes, but on utilisation. It is one thing to become aware of a programmes and another to take full part in utilising the programmes. Taking into

account the findings of this study regarding teachers' utilisation of CPD programmes, it is concluded that there seem to lower utilisation of the CPD programmes by teachers within the context of private primary schools in Anambra State and this is associated with various factors prevailing within the context of private ECCE centres in Anambra State, which need to be addressed through various measures identified in this study.

## **6. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and areas of gap in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a need for the Ministry of Education in Anambra State to create more awareness on the importance and the need for school headteachers to introduce and implement periodic CPD programmes for their teachers.
2. There is the need for the Ministry of Education to formulate a policy which will mandate all primary school administrators within private schools to include CPD programmes within their academic curriculum.

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