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PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS IN UYO

Dr. Uduakobong Aniebiat Okon (Asso. Professor)

Department of Agricultural Education

University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Abstract

The general purpose of the study was to ascertain the need for personnel development to improve the performance of Agriculture Teachers in public secondary schools in the Uyo Education Zone in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study investigated the needed areas of personnel development to enhance teachers' performance in agriculture lesson delivery. The population of the study comprised all the Agriculture Teachers in public secondary schools in Uyo Education Zone. The sample size of 99 subjects was randomly drawn from the fourteen (14) secondary schools in Uyo Education Zone, all offering Agricultural Science, Fishery, and/or Animal Production. The researcher structured and validated instrument with 15 items that was used for data collection. The split-half method was used in determining the reliability of the instrument and a reliability index of 0.86 was obtained. Mean statistics was used in answering the -research questions, one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing the null hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed the needed areas for Agriculture Teacher professional development to enhance lesson delivery, including; 'Professional Training Seminar on emerging lesson delivery strategies' with the highest mean at 3.97, seconded by 'Short courses on contents of emerging Agricultural Trades and Entrepreneurial Practices' with a mean of 3.95 and thirdly, 'Workshop participation in the use of computer-aided agricultural teaching aids' with the mean at 3.86 among others. There was no significant difference in the mean response of respondents. From the findings, it is recommended that government should host regular and periodic training and re-training of secondary school teachers to equip them on the indicated need areas.

Keywords: Teacher, Development, Performance

Introduction

Education is an instrument for national development and social change vital for the promotion of processive developments. Quality education constitutes one of the major concerns in educational

development. Quality education is reflected in its philosophy, policy, its implementation mechanism (strategy), and machinery (Personnel/Instructors /Teachers). The mechanisms and machinery play vital roles in the achievement of quality education. Indeed the quality of teachers needs considerable attention.

Teachers' performance as in all other professions is of global interest whether in the public service or private sector, the need to enhance staff productivity attracts severe attention. Performance could be defined as a way of getting things done in their proper perspectives, with the intent of generating better result from the worker in any firm or organization (Obikoya, 1996). Personnel development is the improvement in the quality of personnel or upskilling of workers to advance their work competencies. Personnel development with regards to teaching involves enhancing the capability of teachers in imparting appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to students which could be achieved through special training or retraining in technical and pedagogical competencies, which could be regarded as professional training or development. For the agriculture teacher, personnel development is seen as manpower development to enable him or her to show growth in pedagogical performances and in the output (Sampson, 2004).

The impact of teachers' performance on quality lesson delivery and the education process, in general, can't be overemphasized. Pius. (2014) opined that performance is synonymous with achievement, accomplishment, implementation, competence or fulfillment. It is therefore pertinent, for teachers' potentials and knowledge to be developed to meet current trends in teaching methods and new advancements in agriculture. In line with this thought, Teacher development is viewed as a systematic way of retaining teachers to improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to aid them to perform adequately in accordance to the degree of changes and innovations arising from advancement in technology, scientific innovation, and new

legislation. Due to the state of the art development in technology and scientific discoveries in pedagogy, the development of teachers to meet these new trends is inevitable. To this end, Inyang and Silas (2014), stated that teachers' development cannot be ignored, there is a need for their training and retraining, should any authority expect maximum productivity of their teachers. Communication skills enhance teachers' performance in no small magnitude and at the long run improve lesson delivery. It is considered as a veritable tool for effective teaching and learning. George (2014) stated that communication is the art of "passing on" or exchanging information, ideas or feelings with another or sending information to a destination through the use of language, gestures or communication on tools, such that the receiver can reproduce and benefit from the information. Abifarin (2004) viewed communication as the connecting rod for effective lesson delivery and the learning process; hence both verbal (oral) communication and non-verbal (gestural) communications skills could be used by the teacher as an effective mechanism for classroom instruction. According to Brown *et al*, (1982) communication skills demanded for effective lesson delivery is classified as instructional communication. Instructional communication is a phenomenon which shows the continuous change in time. Due to such changes, several strategies and new (digital) communication tools have emerged. This calls for the retraining of teachers to be conversant with current societal developments with regard to communication in lesson delivery.

In Nigeria, agriculture is one of the subjects taught to students in secondary, It is thought as science in the subject "Agricultural science" which is a blend of many the basic pure and applied sciences, for example, botany, zoology, chemistry, and genetics among others. It deals with the application of scientific principles to the growing of crops and the rearing of animals for man's use.

The Nigerian secondary school system has undergone a lot of changes in recent times for optimal performance and relevance to society. One of such is the current introduction of Agricultural Trade and Entrepreneurship Subjects, to enhance agricultural entrepreneurship skills acquisition, boost self-reliance, and national development. The trades and entrepreneurship subjects introduced include Fishery and Animal Husbandry. The vocations in animal husbandry include, Poultry Production, Snail Production, Rabbit production, Goat Production, Grasscutter rearing, Piggery, beekeeping. The teaching of agricultural trades implies teaching of agriculture as a vocation in secondary schools

The teachers who teach agricultural science are still the ones teaching agriculture as a trade or enterprise. The mode of lesson delivery for science is different from teaching the same subject as a trade or an enterprise. The same teachers have serious need for retraining for upskilling in agricultural entrepreneurial skill delivery. Since the communication skills needed at the instance of teaching agriculture as science are certainly not the same in teaching the subject as a trade or vocational studies, the agriculture teachers' professional development on the relevant communication and delivery skills become pertinent.

In the field of education, the term professional development, staff development and teacher development have been used interchangeably and have been defined in a number of ways. Let us highlight that of O'Sullivan, Jones and Reid (1988) who believe that staff training programmes are conscious institutional efforts particularly in relation to teaching in order to improve the capability of teachers to enable them perform their roles effectively. suggest that the process of teacher development is a well-planned route to enhance teachers' professional skills in order to increase the quality of student learning. It is important to note that staff development is inextricably linked to school development (O. Sullivan, Jones & Reid, 1988)

The statement of the problem

Agriculture education especially at the secondary school levels is confronted by problems such as non-stimulation and non-sustainable of interest in agriculture by students due to poor modes of lesson delivery and the learning, process. The teaching lacks basic knowledge and practical skills, exposure to agricultural occupations, and opportunities. Often, sufficient information and observation that over the years, the governments at various levels have formulated several policies and curricula to boost teaching and learning in the school systems but the effort is confronted by poor implementation. Teachers are the major actors in the implementation of any curriculum the success and failure of any school curriculum depend on the teacher as the curriculum implanter. The agriculture teachers thus must be well trained and retrained to update knowledge and skills for effective lesson delivery. The use of outdated strategies for communication must be discouraged and the new methods taught to them through retraining programs. Teacher professional upskilling could be achieved through workshop participation, seminar, organization, conference attendance, short courses or long courses, etc.

Theoretical Framework: Goal Theory

In the course of searching for solutions to the lingering problems of unproductive manpower and falling standard of the educational system, different scholars from various fields have proposed theories to help ameliorate the situation. This study leans on the Goal Theory. Goal theory was proposed by Edwin Locke and Latham in 1960. Goal theory is also referred to as the theory of goal setting. The basic premise of the goal theory is that people's goals or intentions play an important part in determining behavior (performance at work). In fact the theory propounded demonstrated that goals and intentions play important role in determining people's behavior, attitude, values, and belief in any real-life situation. One strong idea behind goal theory is that a

goal serves as a motivator because it causes people to compare their present capacity to perform with that which is required to achieve the goal. To the extent that when people believe that they have fallen short of a goal, they would feel dissatisfied and work harder to attain it, so long as they believe it is possible to do it. When people's skills are related to the goals they set, and feel competent and successful (Locke and Latham, 2006). Having goals enhance performance largely because the goal defines the type and level of performance that is expected (Greenberg and Barron, 2000).

The practical implication of the Goal theory on the performance of the agriculture teachers is that the proposition of goal-setting would provide the basis for better understanding especially as the job of Agriculture Teachers are always goal-oriented. The goals assigned to the teachers in this circumstance is the students' acquisition of functional and transferable skills in Agricultural trades or entrepreneurship for self-reliance. The Agricultural science teachers would seek to achieve scientific knowledge, understanding, theories, and skills needed for explorations agricultural career and furtherance of education in an agricultural or related discipline. With the realization of their goals, the teachers would gear their efforts towards the set goal achievement and this would positively influence their teaching performance. Setting specific challenging goals for employees are the best things employers can do to improve performance (Rubenstein2003).

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to ascertain the need for personnel development on performance on agriculture teachers in public secondary schools in Uyo education zone. The study more specifically investigated the needed areas of personnel development to enhance teachers' performance in agriculture lesson delivery

Research Questions

Based on the objective, the study will provide answers to the following research question. What are the need areas of personnel development to enhance Agriculture Teachers performance in lesson delivery in public secondary schools in Uyo Education Zone

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was be tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of agriculture teachers by years of job experiences on the need areas of personnel development on lesson delivery.

Research Method

It was a survey study employing a comparative research design. The population of the study comprised all the Agriculture Teachers in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government. The sample size of 61 subjects constituting 60% of the total population was randomly drawn from nineteen (14) public secondary schools in Uyo Education zone, offering, Agricultural Science, Fishery, and or Animal Production. The Researcher structured and validated an instrument with 15 items titled “Personnel Development and Agriculture Teacher’s Performance (PDATP) questionnaire, was used for data collection.. Split-half was used in determining the reliability of the instrument and a reliability index of 0.86 was obtained. The mean statistic was used in answering the four research questions, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Shows the Demographic Distribution of Respondents by Years of Job Experience.

Years of Experience	Number	Percentage %
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0 - 15 years	15	21.5.%
16-25	25	41.0%
26-35	21	34.42%
Total	61	97%

Research Question

What are the needed areas of personnel development to enhance agriculture teachers' performance in lesson delivery in public secondary schools in Uyo Education Zone

Table 2: Mean Responses of Teachers on the Needed Areas of Personnel Development to Enhance Agriculture Teachers' Performance in Lesson Delivery (N = 61).

S/n	Needed Areas of Personnel Development to Enhance Agriculture Teachers' Performance in Lesson Delivery	\bar{x}	Remarks
1.	In-service training on Lesson content preparation	3.28	NPD
2.	Seminar participation on Smart Classroom	3.82	NPD
3.	Attendance of conferences with themes on teaching quality.	3.54	NPD
4.	Attendance of workshops on Classroom Management.	3.18	NPD
5.	Attendance of conferences with themes on Entrepreneurial Education and Practice for secondary school teachers.	3.95	NPD
6	Short courses on Agricultural Trades and Entrepreneurial research information adoption	3.66	NPD
7.	Training workshops on Communication skills	3.73	NPD
8.	Seminar on the need for teacher professional development	3.00	NPD
9.	Seminar on the sound student-teacher relationship	2.65	NPD
10.	Workshop on school farm management skills	2.98	NPD
11.	Professional Skills update on vocational guidance	2.50	NPD
12.	Seminar on Training on lesson preparation.	3.39	NPD
13.	Professional training on emerging lesson delivery strategies.	3.97	NPD

14	Workshop participation in the use of computer aided agricultural teaching aids'	3.86	NPD
15.	Seminar on Farm and students assessment record keeping	2.2	NPD
	Grand Mean	3.07	

NPD =Needed Personnel Development

Table 2 revealed the accepted needed areas of personnel development for Agriculture Teacher professional development to enhance lesson delivery. These include; 'Professional Training Seminar on emerging lesson delivery strategies' with the highest mean, at 3.97. seconded by 'Short courses on contents of emerging Agricultural Trades and Entrepreneurial Practices' with a mean of 3.95 and thirdly, 'Workshop participation in the use of computer-aided agricultural teaching aids' with the mean at 3.86 followed by 'Seminar participation on Smart Classroom with mean at 3.82, ' Training workshops on Communication skills' with mean at 3.73 and 'Short courses on Agricultural Trades and Entrepreneurial research information adoption' respectively by among others.

Discussion of Findings.

The relevance of personnel development in vocational and entrepreneurship programmes in supporting human capital for building the nation's economy is upheld by various national and international policies, yet the supply approaches and efforts of governments agencies in the programmes are not enough to yield the expected outcome. The rationale of this research and its findings is justified in the works of Wideen & Andrew (1987) who believed that to design an improvement program for staff, the lines of activities and areas for development should be first determined or designed.

Furthermore, the finding of the study on ‘ organization of Seminar on the need for teacher professional development’ agrees with Colby, Bradshaw and Joyner (2002) who stated that as a foundation for teacher development, purposes should be stated clearly, agreed on by all stakeholders and used to govern the design of the system. In addition, an understanding of these purposes is essential, not only for assessment need to be made explicit, but also teachers needed to perceive the development need as a process to help them improve their performance and to provide instructional design leadership.

The finding of the study on retraining of teachers on Lesson content preparation and delivery is in consonant with those of Arreloa, Theall, & Aleamoni (2003), who discovered that the content matter should be conveyed in such a way that arouses interest in students’ and boosts their learning. This can only be achieved with teachers’ competencies and master of the subject matter. They further remarked that agriculture teachers must have the ability to manage various routine tasks involved in managing both practical and vocational-oriented subjects, arrange and maintain laboratory and farm equipment, coordinate school field trips and all factors relevant for effective instructional delivery. One of the major roles of the teachers is to ensure that the content delivered has achieved the learning objective, which can be considered a key challenge. Despite the years of teaching experience, there is always room for improvement and innovation for the teachers to adapt as per their requirements. Demands and needs change time to time so the teachers should also undergo professional and personal development to benefit both, the students and themselves. Trends in teaching methods and tools used have changed drastically in recent years. Pedagogy is advancing with technological innovations, for which reason the results of the study indicated the need for Professional training on emerging lesson delivery strategies and Workshop participation in the use of computer-aided agricultural teaching aids’

Patrick, et al. (2001), examined how teacher-student interaction influences both classroom goal-orientation structures. They found that teachers' apparent support and enthusiasm toward students' progress and confidence in the teacher, positively influence the teaching and learning situation. Teachers' relationship with students is characterized by supporting students' academic engagement and facilitation of the learning process. It is with this understanding that agriculture teachers in the findings of this study indicate 'Seminar on the sound student-teacher relationship', as an aspect of the needed professional training.

The importance of school farm in skill development and acquisition of basic entry skills cannot be over-stressed (Osinem, 2008). In line with Osinem's statement, the teachers indicated 'Training Workshop on school farm management skills' as a needed aspect of professional development. Olaitan and Ogbazi (2008) in support of the above statement maintained that school farm provides an environment where theoretical aspects of agriculture taught in the classrooms are tried out and put into real life situation. The school farm is also recognized as a laboratory for teaching agriculture practical lessons. It means that teachers are supposed to possess skills required to its effective management. A study by Agbulu (2010) on the management of school farms for improvement of the teaching of Agriculture in Benue State, found that the school farms were not well managed for improving students skills acquisition. The findings also revealed that teachers taught only the theoretical aspects of the subject in the classroom due to a lack of certain skills in managing the school farm effectively. The school farm has been perceived as being vital for imparting manipulative, entrepreneurial and vocational skills, that are transferable to real-life enterprise experience. In achieving these, teachers require some level of competency in managing the school farm effectively.

Conclusion

The study was able to make various observations about the influence of personnel development and performance on Agricultural teachers in public secondary schools in Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State. More specifically the needed teacher professional development areas have

been revealed by the teachers. The findings of this study, therefore, reveal the needed areas to build the capacity of Agriculture Teachers, to enhance their performances in lesson delivery to achieve the expected outcome of students' agricultural competencies and skills acquisition, for self-reliance and nation-building. The study is in tandem with the national policy on Education which makes clear her intention to build Nigeria into a technologically developed and self-reliant nation through functional education and instructional delivery. In this study, teachers' need is determined for professional development to achieve functional education. The areas for personnel development as viewed by the teachers to improve their instructional delivery include organization of seminar, workshop, attending conferences and short courses for skills update in relevant agricultural contents and emerging instructional delivery tools and strategies.

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