



## INFLUENCE OF PRIMARY EDUCATORS (PED) AREA OF SPECIALIZATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGED MINIMUM STANDARDS IN NIGERIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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### Abstract:

It is a fact that one can only give what he or she has. This is applicable at our various levels of teaching and learning processes. It is more of the reason this paper focuses on influence of Primary Educators' area of specialization on the implementation of changed minimum standard in Nigerian Colleges of Education. It focuses on issues which influence (PED) educators implementing curriculum changes. In this paper two objectives were formulated which include: to examine the influence of PED educators area of specialization on the implementation of changed minimum standards in Nigeria Colleges of Education and to determine the extent to which changes in mode of teaching influence PED educators job performance in Nigeria Colleges of Education. The paper was guided by two research question sand two null hypotheses were tested which are: what is the influence PED educators' area of specialization on the implementation of changed minimum standards in Nigeria Colleges of Education? And to what extent has changes in mode of teaching influenced PED educators job performance in Nigerian Colleges of Education? This paper adopted ex-post facto research design with target population of seventy-seven thousand, three hundred and eighty six (77,386). A sample of 643 PED educators and PES students were selected for the study from the total of thirteen colleges which is made up of four federal and nine state Colleges of Education. The data for this study were analyzed using simple percentages while the hypotheses were tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance for acceptance or rejection. Finding from the study revealed that the area of specialization of PED educators have significance influence on the implementation of

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the changed PED minimum standard in Nigeria Colleges of Education. The paper therefore, based on the finding recommended that preference should always be given to educators with specialization in PED during recruitment and assignment of PED course for teaching. The paper also recommended that there should be continuous teaching orientation through seminars and workshops especially when changes in mode of teaching are required due to dynamism in knowledge.

**Keywords:** primary education educators, minimum standards, area of specialization, changes in mode of teaching

## **Introduction**

Primary school pupils have the right to be taught by competent teachers who give a clear understanding of how pupils imbibe instructions and such teachers must acquire appropriate skills and knowledge in terms of educational background and area of specialization to carry out their assignment. Primary education serves as the foundation level of all other educational levels by providing the children with a good preparatory ground for further education. In realization of the important role and the place of primary education in National development and globalization, there has been agitation for more functional, qualified and competent teachers to handle the teaching of basic education pupils across the nation.

However, at the global level, the United Nations came up with a target that all member states should seek to achieve the following goals on Basic education:

- i. Ensuring that by the year 2015, all children particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities should have access to a complete, free, compulsory and good quality primary education.
- ii. Ensure that the learning needs of all young people are in line with the MDGs.
- iii. Eradicate extreme illiteracy, poverty and hunger.
- iv. Achieve universal primary education by 2015 (Sofowora, 2010, p. 13).

For the above mentioned points to be achieved, the important point to note is the area of how to get quality teachers that will be able to teach the pupils and meet their individual educational needs and aspirations. It demands for teachers that are specifically trained to be able to inculcate quality skills and knowledge to the pupils being carefully considered. Then, the focus should be on production of qualified PES teachers and the need for continuous changes in minimum standard of the teacher training institutions.

Presently, there is the challenge of professionally qualified teachers (Sofowora, 2010). According to Egwu (2009), there are alarming difference between teachers

certified qualifications, most especially in PES departments, NCE Level; and their actual teaching competence and performance on the job. Statistics revealed that a large number (70%) of teachers having below the National Certificate in Education (NCE) abound in North-East and North West (Sofowora, 2010). Based on statistics obtained from Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (2004), the short fall in competent, certified and qualified teachers are: 969,078 for early childhood care development education, 338,147 for primary education, 581 for JSS, 1,580,000 for adult literacy and 12,329 nomadic education (Sofowora, 2010).

The types of changes carried out in a curriculum revolve round the spread of new knowledge, skills or techniques. Based on MacDonald (1991), there are two types of curriculum change, which are: top-bottom and bottom-top. In top-bottom, curriculum change, the nature of running the system is very prescriptive and therefore, denies subordinates the opportunity of making inputs in the administrative procedure; and this type of change is authoritative-based. It does not encourage teacher's collaboration in the curriculum development and review process. According to Iwovi (2006), this type of change in curriculum does not encourage teachers' collaboration in the curriculum development and review processes. The genesis of top-bottom pattern is often traced to the false thinking by policy makers that curriculum issues are too technical and compact for classroom teachers to make any meaningful input as well as the crave to wield power and authority around the top cadre in the system. This is one of the problems that has necessitated this study.

The bottom-top pattern according to Uwatt (2009), projects the fact that a yearning gap exists between the ideas and realities of curriculum implementation. The idea is the assumption that the curriculum has been reviewed, new ideas infused and sent down the main stream for implementation while the reality is that the key actors to implement the changes are battling with both the task of getting to know what the entire thing is all about and putting it aside when it seems to make no meaning to them.

This has to do with what the teacher understands and accepts as new knowledge or change as well as the value he places on the new ideas. Inevitably, the teachers' understanding of the new body of knowledge helps to give meaning and the attendant form/structure to pass on the ideas to learners, while acceptance engenders the commitment to execute the new ideas. Gap exists when in concrete terms, the new ideas or knowledge exist only on papers and not actualized in the classroom.

Macdonald (1991) is of the opinion that teachers' understanding, their sense of responsibility, their commitment to effective delivery of educational experiences to their learners, are significantly enhanced when they own the ideas and equally author the means by which ideas are translated into classroom practice. He further observed that

resistance comes when teachers are struggling with meaning of changes as well as the implications they have on the lives of the learners. Indeed, Macdonald encourages policy makers to put in place facilities to get teachers discover what is required of them, how they can share in the innovation and translate them into programming and classroom practice. The researcher will like to say here that teacher quality determines the sustainability of changes in minimum standard.

### **Concept of Teacher Quality**

Teacher quality and quality of teaching have long been identified as factors that are linked to students' achievements. Leigh (2007) opined that teachers' quality means the ability of teacher to raise students' performance on tests as well as skills; and also work well with other teachers and school administrators for the purpose of raising the performance of students. In line with the above definition, Amoor (2010) was of the view that, it is pertinent to say that teacher quality entails effective and excellent teaching that improves students learning and satisfaction.

Based on the above conceptions, a quality teacher therefore, means teacher mastering the subject he/she teaches and how to teach it to the students; understand how students learn and what to do when they are having difficulty, be able to use effective teaching methods for those who are learning easily as well as those who have special needs. Teacher quality is an important determinant of student learning outcome especially in PES with a programme that specially takes care of the foundation level of education.

Ferguson (1992) concluded from his research in Ghana that "*good teachers have distinguishable impacts on students' examination scores*". Sanders (1996) found that the single largest factor affecting academic growth of population of students is differences in effectiveness of individual classroom teachers. He further propounded that the higher a teacher is qualified, the higher his or her level of education in the teaching profession.

### **Teacher Quality and Job Performance**

The success of an organization depends on the effective performance of employees and such performance will depend to a large extent on their knowledge and skills and not necessarily on the modernization of work processes and procedures. According to Suleiman (2012), teacher job performance is one of the most important factors determining the quality of education. The entire education system will be shaky if the performance of teacher is weak and ineffective particularly the trainers of primary

school teachers. Therefore, effective job performance of teachers is imperative for any educational improvement.

There are several factors that contribute to a teacher's performance. In considering the quality of the teacher, that is, the professional qualities and personal qualities of the teacher, there must be correlation, in order for the teacher to be able to perform his job effectively. It is in line with the above that Suleiman (2012), elaborated on the knowledge bases needed for effective teaching to include content knowledge, pedagogical content, knowledge of education ends, purposes and values, curriculum knowledge including materials and programmes, knowledge of learners and characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts including characteristics of classrooms, schools, communities and cultures and general pedagogical knowledge including principles and strategies for classroom management and organization.

The roles of PES educators have been expanding as a result of continuous changes in PES minimum standard. To this end, they are expected to take up expanded roles and responsibilities including curriculum developers, action researcher, team leader, decision maker and member of management (Murphy, 1995) and as such lecturers are inevitably in need of continuous lifelong learning to update themselves with new knowledge, competence and attitudes to meet all these challenges. Numerous initiatives in teacher education and development aimed at improving teacher performance have been made but there is need for regular involvement of PES educators in minimum standard changing process if their effectiveness is to be maximized. Ferguson (2007) advocated that an inexperienced teacher can hinder student achievement. Based on this, they defined professional certification as being certified in the subject area. Their study concluded that teacher is likely to be more productive and effective in teaching depending on their area of specialization.

### **Factors that Determine Teacher Quality in School**

According to Dasko (2002), a teacher is a person that imparts knowledge to people, teach them how to read and write; and explains how problems are solved. A teacher guides the children and advices them about different matters in relation to the studies and life. Dasko (2002) also noted that a teacher is more than someone who passes on knowledge but also provides the interaction, relationship, understanding and encouragement to enable a person or a child to reach the full potential. An experienced teacher is the one who provides opportunities that allow the learners to learn by themselves, since learners do not learn by being told but by finding out for themselves, just like universities' students doing independent research.

An experienced teacher is the one that teaches, guides, instructs trains or helps another in the process of learning (Webster, 2013). A teacher is a key to the learning process of students in the classroom. Amoor (2010) added that the success of any educational reforms depend largely upon having good quality teacher. In regards to teacher experience, several studies by Darling-Hammond (1999) and Ferguson (2007) have found a positive relationship between teacher experience and student outcomes. There is definitely the need for PES teachers to be properly trained to enable them possess the right knowledge, skills and attitude which will qualify them to be professionally teachers and finally leads to effective delivery of the education system, especially primary education which is one of the most important level of education.

Professional training of PES staff is particularly important considering the objectives of teacher education as outlined by National Policy on Education (FRN, 2009, 4<sup>th</sup> edition) which include: to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of education system; to encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers; to help teachers fit into social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to National objectives; to produce good ground adequate for their assessment and to make them adapted to changes to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but also in the wider world; and to enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. In view of the foregoing discussion, it could be observed that through the policy statements, teacher training programme has been given high aspect and commitment, with the aim of imparting the quality education on teachers the effectiveness of teachers in the delivery process so as to raise and even maintain the standard of education as they are the bedrock of education development.

### **NCE/PES Minimum Standard**

The NCE/PES minimum standard was designed by the NCCE that is the National Commission for Colleges of Education, which was established by Decree No. 3 Act of 1989 which set up the commission (NCC, 2008). Since then, the commission has evolved a comprehensive curriculum process in response to both the changing periodic reviews to which the minimum standards are subjected every five years. This process entails the production of draft minimum standards arising out of broad-based stakeholder's consultative activities and development as well as critique workshops where the initial drafts are thoroughly reviewed and refined before the final drafts are presented to the Honourable Minister of Education for approval. The minimum standards thus, embody the highlights of the decisions of experts and stakeholders in the various disciplines that

are offered in the colleges of education on what should be the contents of the various NCE programmes.

This paper is of the view that a lot of changes have been occurring most especially on PES minimum standards. Base on the Act that establishes NCCE as a commission, the review or changes in minimum standards of colleges of education ought to be every five years. But presently the changes have got to a point that standard is changed more than once, so the point here, that, whether NCCE are even considering the challenges of PES educators on the basis of the continuous changes of the minimum standards. It has been discovered by the means of this study that the continuous changes of the PES minimum standards has touched different aspects of the PES minimum standard such as: Area of specialization and mode of teaching

### **Changes in NCE/PES Minimum Standard**

The term minimum standard is often used to refer to the former academic programme provided by higher institution of study as reflected in courses on the time-table. In this sense, it might also be used to refer to a particular course of instruction or syllabus (Giltig, Hoadley and Jansea, 2002:21). Change in minimum standard is an ongoing trend, which invariably mirrors change in the society at large.

According to Lovat and Smith (2003:194), any change means changing the “old” for the “new”. Those whose interests lie in the “old” can be expected to do anything to retain it. Those whose interests lie in the “new” can be expected to do everything to promote it. Changes in minimum standard places more emphasis on making or becoming different from the old or the former state of the course of study in a particular institution. Steyn and de Waal (2001:97) explains that minimum standard represents the different programmes and learning opportunities or teaching programmes that can provide the education needs of the target group. This means that it is important for the minimum standard of schools to change in order to address the need of the target group, in this case PES educators in Nigerian Colleges of Education. Change is a lifelong process, similar to learning, that is continuous an ongoing (McCombs and Whister, 1997:166). It is the duty of educators together with their supporters to see to it that the changed minimum standard is grown to full fruition no matter how laborious.

It is necessary to recognize that change is not always easy and that people may feel threatened by it. People need to be given the opportunity to talk about their fears and concerns, both in groups and individually (Readani, 2007:15). Even educators who are open to change feel uncertainty about what kind of changes will be most effective and how best to go about making them. Disquiet, frustration and despondency abound

as well as the sense that *"we are already doing so much how can we possibly do more?"* (Rendani, 2007:16).

Based on this study, the researcher is of the view that it is the responsibility of the PES educators to ensure that the various anxieties associated with changes in minimum standard are overcome since they have the power of making quite fundamental choices. Fullan (2001:1) believes if you ask people to brainstorm words to describe change, they come up with mixture of negative and positive terms. On the one side, there is fear, anxiety, loss, danger, panic; on the other, exhilaration, risk-taking, excitement, improvement and energizing. For better or for worse, change arouses emotions. Change raises hope because it offers growth and progress, but it also stirs fear of the challenge to competence and power. Despite their theoretical training, educators are often confused when faced with such radical changes in the curriculum and as a result, struggle to apply the new ideas in their classes (Jacobs, Valcalisa and Gawe, 2004:314) strategy for change must expect to deal effectively with peoples' feelings and perceptions.

Conclusively, Lovat and Smith (2003:210) opined that if change is to be successful, there should be a greater deal of emphasis and time spent on developing an explicit and shared perception of the problem and/or clearly identified and share reasons for the change.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is one thing to have a good plan on paper; it is another to see to the successful implementation of the plan. One becomes worried to see that curriculum plans take this shape. There is often disparity between policy pronouncements and policy implementations in Nigeria. The crux of basic education in Nigeria is the quality of teachers to implement the policy as innovations in education often take a lot of inputs and preparations before implementation. Adeshina (2004) pointed out that many innovations in education relied a lot on the preparedness of the teachers who are termed the curriculum implementers.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. Examine the degree of influence of PES educators' area of specialization on the implementation of the changed PES minimum standards in NCOE.
2. Determine if changes in mode of teaching as mandated in the minimum standard have any influence on PES educators' job performance in NCOE.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the influence of PES Educators' area of specialization on the implementation of the changed PES minimum standards in NCOE?
2. To what extent do changes in mode of teaching influence PES educators' job performance in NCOE?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested in the course of this study.

1. PES educators' area of specialization has no significant influence on the implementation of changed PES minimum standards in NCOE.
2. Changes PES mode of teaching have no significant influence on job performance of PES educators in NCOE.

### **Significance of the Study**

In most of the Nigerian colleges of education, there are number of unspecialized PES teaching staff earning government money in the name of salary at the end of the month; and yet destroying the future of young learners. This study will provide information for teachers and would be teachers on how to enhance competency in knowledge, attitude and skills with regard to basic education curriculum content.

### **Methodology**

In this paper, an ex-post facto correlation research design was used. According to Doza (2009), the main reason for utilizing ex-post facto design is due to the many cause and effect relationships in education that are not amendable to experimental manipulation. Ex-post facto design allows researchers to study the relationship where experimental manipulation is difficult or impossible. The target population for this study was seventy-seven thousand, three hundred and eighty-six (77,386) respondents. The population of this study was made up of all Colleges of Education in Nigeria located in the six geo-political zones. The total sample for this study was six hundred and forty-three (643) made up of four hundred (400) PED students, Two hundred and thirty eight (238) PED educators and five (5) NCCE officials. In selecting a sample, Nwana (1982) believes that there are no fixed percentages or number that is ideal rather, it is the circumstance of the study that determines what number of sample is to be taken. For this reason, the current study adopted (20%) as the sample size as supported by both Osuala's (2007) and Nwana's (1982) assertion.

Questionnaire was used in this study because it is relatively effective in administering and score and when carefully constructed, it gives an objective and

reliable information. This instrument as tagged “*Lecturers and Students Questionnaire (LSQTR)*” was used in collecting data from the PES lecturers and students to ascertain/confirm their level of academic involvement. It was scored using Likert Modified Four Point rating Scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD), Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor and Very Adequate, Adequate, Fairly Adequate, Not Adequate, respectively.

## Results

For the test of this hypothesis 1, the opinion of the respondents on the influence of educators’ areas of specialization on their performance in the implementation of the changed PES minimum standards in NCOE examined was tested. The test was carried out using Chi-square statistics.

**Table 1:** Summary of Chi-square on the influence of educators’ areas of specialization on their implementation of the changed PES minimum standards in NCOE

Influence of PES educators’ area of specialization on the implementation	SA	A	D	SD	Total
most PES academic staff in my department are not specialist in PES hence find it difficult to implement the changed curriculum	130	136	67	48	381
I observed that PES educators are employed with relevant qualifications hence the certainty of being able to implement the changed curriculum effectively	105.6	148.8	71.6	55	381
I have the conviction that with or without PES educators specializing in PES, they can confidently implement the changed PES minimum standards	96	199	55	31	381
since most of the PES educators are not PES specialists at either NCE, degree or masters level, they have been finding it difficult to fully implement the changed PES minimum standards	105.6	148.8	71.6	55	381
deployment of newly recruited PES lecturers to PES departments without foundation or background knowledge skill and competency in PES courses would only make difficult the implementation of the changed PES minimum standards	82	111	118	70	381
Total	105.6	148.8	71.6	55	381
	120	151	43	67	381
	105.6	148.8	71.6	55	381
	528	744	358	275	1905

Chi-square= 105.902, DF = 12, P-value = 0.000 (P < 0.05)  
(critical value = 21.0, P < 0.05)

From the result in the table 1, the respondents agreed that the educators' areas of specialization has significant influence on their performances in the implementation of the changed PES minimum standards in the Colleges of Education. This is indicated in table 1 by an observed chi-square value of 105.902 which is higher than the critical value of 21.0 at the 12 degree of freedom. Moreover, the observed significant level obtained in the test is 0.000 ( $P < 0.05$ ). With these observations, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant influence of PES educators' area of specialization on the implementation of changed PES minimum standards in NCOE is thus being rejected. The evidence from the test is that the educators' area of specialization plays a significant role in their performances with respect to the implementation of the changed PES minimum standards in colleges.

The changes in the mode of teaching resulting from the changed minimum standards on job performances of the PES educators in the colleges was examined. The scores of the respondents in the table were used in the test of this hypothesis with the aid of the chi-square procedure. The summary of the test is presented in Table 2. The expected counts are printed below the observed frequencies in the table.

**Table 2:** Summary of Chi-square on influence of changes in mode of teaching on job performance PES educators' in the Colleges of Education

Influence of implementation of changed PES mode of teaching on job performance	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Changes brought to schools on mode of teaching supports the use of modern methods of teaching such as computer assisted instruction	178	135	41	27	381
	102.17	158.17	80.0	40.67	
The traditional method such as discussion or lecture methods formerly in use more stable for the adoption of the new minimum standard	90	173	80	38	381
	102.17	158.17	80.0	40.67	
Change in mode of teaching is somehow expensive for teachers to undertake with/without the support of the school	91	168	88	34	381
	102.17	158.17	80.0	40.67	
The methodological change adopted in the new minimum standard is less stressful for PES educators	78	149	97	57	381
	102.17	158.17	80.0	40.67	
PES educators' attitude and opinions towards the changes in mode of teaching of the new minimum standard is encouraging	84	157	100	40	381
	102.17	158.17	80.0	40.67	
The proposed mode of teaching at this level will not allow teachers to explore their potentials and hasten wide coverage of course contents/outlines	92	167	74	48	381
	102.17	158.17	80.0	40.67	
Total	613	949	480	244	2286

Chi-square = 117.973, DF = 15, P-Value = 0.000

Critical Value is 25,  $P < 0.05$

The result in table 2, clearly signifies that the changed PES mode of teaching has significant influence on the job performance of PES educators in the colleges. The observed chi-square (117.973) at 15 degree of freedom is higher than the critical value of 25.0 at the same degree of freedom (DF). Therefore, the null hypothesis which says that Implementation of changed PES mode of teaching has no significant influence on job performance of PES educators in NCOE is thus rejected. The result showed that changes in the mode of teaching induced by the minimum standard have significant influence on the job performances of the PES educators in the colleges.

### **Summary of Findings**

The major findings from the analysis of the data and test of hypotheses of the study are summarized below:

1. PES educators' area of specialization has significant influence on the implementation of the changed PES minimum standards in Nigerian Colleges of Education. (Chi-square = 105.902, DF = 12, P = 0.000 (P<0.05) Critical value = 21.0, DF 12 and at 0.05).
2. The changes in the mode of teaching orchestrated by the PES changed minimum standards have significant influence on PES educators' job performance in Nigerian Colleges of Education. (Chi-square = 117.973, DF = 15, P = 0.000 (P<0.05) Critical value at 15 DF and at 0.05 = 25.0)

### **Discussion of Findings**

The influence of PES educators' area of specialization on their implementation of the changed PES minimum standards in the colleges was tested in hypothesis I. The result revealed that the influence was statistically significant. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. From the items within the variable, it was observed that specialization enable approach in the implementation towards better result orientation among such educators. The finding here agrees with Ferguson (2007), who suggested that the reason for increased student achievement in specific content areas was because of "subject-specific training, rather than the teacher ability that leads to these findings. The report further identified the major factors that make high performance in school to include past students' performance areas in which the teacher received training rather than seniority or teacher preference.

Hypothesis II tested the significance of the influence of the changed PES mode of teaching on job performance of PES educators in the implementation of the curriculum

in the colleges. The result of the test revealed that the changed mode of teaching has significant influence on the job performance of the PES educators in their implementation of the curriculum.

In terms of the mode of teaching, it was observed that lecture method was the most commonly used method of teaching. For this reason, the job performed by PES educators may not be satisfactory to them as a response to objective No. 2 which states that to determine if changes in mode of teaching have any influence on PES educators' jobs performance in NCE.

A close look at teachers' specialization, mastery of knowledge, punctuality and provision of reading materials suggest few of them are specialist as long as they secure employment into PES department. They however, learn on the job and somehow moved out the department if they feel there is no job satisfaction anymore.

## **Conclusions**

Effective Job performance by educators is one of the basic requirements for improving the teaching and learning and thus raising the standard of education in the country. This paper has identified some indices for improving the teaching and learning of PES through the improvement of the PES educators' job performances in the Nigerian Colleges of Education. Improving the educators' performance means improving the performances of the teachers they are training which will in turn improve the standard of teaching and learning in Nigerian primary and secondary schools.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings from the analyzed data, the writers hereby recommended that:

1. Preference should always be given to educators with specialization in PES in the recruitment and assignment of PES course for teaching.
2. There should be continuous teaching orientation through seminars and workshops especially when changes in mode of teaching is required or occur in the colleges.

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