

THE PLACE OF HUMAN CAPITAL FORMATION THEORY IN THE CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

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Abstract

Human capital formation aims at improving the productive capacity of the workforce through training. The pre-service training specifically prepares teachers for the teaching profession in order to lead learning in schools. The skills, knowledge and pedagogical techniques necessary for the discharge of their responsibilities are expected to be updated via the in-service training from time to time. The article discusses the tenets of the human capital formation theory as well as how it influences the development of teachers. It is argued that teacher training does not end with certification and registration as a professional teacher. There is a constant need for continuous professional development through mentorship, coaching, personal development and other strategies that could strengthen teachers to remain current and relevant to the system. Being a derived demand, professional development of teachers assists students to obtain improved performance. Suggestions were made to assist teachers at every level of education to belong to a learning professional association of that level so that their training and re-training can continue to renew them for the teaching services.

Keywords: Teachers, professional development, mentorship, coaching, personal development, training.

Introduction

Adam Smith in his classic; **Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations** promoted the idea of stock of physical resources such as land, machineries, plants and minerals as the wealth of a nation. Even though labour was recognized as a factor of production

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not much attention was given to its education. The value of labour was to the extent that it could be utilized to explore or extract the physical resources. The classical notion of labour was that it was capable of doing manual work which required little knowledge but much of physical strength which they felt almost everyone was endowed with. However, the works of the classical economists such as Adam Smith and Alfred Marshall laid the foundation for the Human Capital Theory to emerge later because they maintained that labour could improve its productivity.

The Tenets of the Human Capital Formation Theory

From the second half of the 20th century, scholars began to pay more attention to the training of humans in order for them to boost their productive capacity. Humans are the change agents that turn the other factors or resources into useful end. Schultz (1961), and Becker (1962) did some serious works to develop the Human Capital formation theory. Gary Stanley Becker popularized the idea of the Human Capital Theory through series of articles and books on the subject matter. Humans take charge of all economic activities such as production, consumption, investment and transactions. Therefore, they are the active agent who organizes all other resources whose values were of little or no importance until humans discover, refine and deploy them into utilitarian values (Imakpokpomwan, 2014). The proponents of the human capital theory theorized that as people invest in new plants, equipment or technology in order to increase productivity and better returns, so also individuals, firms and nations should invest in the education of the workforce so that humans' performance capacity can be boosted. Thus, investment in education, training, health and information promotes individual's chances for making better choices which in turn leads to improved earnings, higher productivity and national development (Usman, Agenyi & Matthew, 2015). Educated workforce is an asset to themselves, firms and the nation. If the people are not developed, nothing else will. This is so

because; humans are the change agents whose efforts transform other resources into economic value. Therefore, investment in form of time, money and energy in pursuit of training or education of the teaching workforce is to improve their pedagogical skills, knowledge and techniques both in content and context. It enhances their capacity to respond to new challenges arising from evolving innovations in curriculum, globalization, and technology. Training and retraining enhance teacher capabilities for effective discharge of their responsibilities in line with modernization.

How Human Capital Formation Theory Influences the Development of Teachers

Teachers, being humans, are the organisers of inputs and therefore, the change agents among educational resources because they influence the utilization of all other inputs in education. They are professionally trained to transform the potentials in learners who themselves are change agents too. Teachers may not be able to respond to the demands of the present generation learners with the skills learnt in the previous era (Imakpokpomwan, 2015). The transformation of the learners today positions them for enhanced opportunities unfolding and extending into the future. To be able to do so effectively, teachers themselves must be educated and continuously undergo improvement training from time to time to perfect the techniques needed to undertake the teaching activities in response to the ever-changing variables such as curriculum, technology, job demands and the like. By so doing, they boost their own productive capacity and earning potentials individually and collectively.

Teachers leading roles in the teaching-learning process is pivotal and very fundamental for successful education production functions. It is aptly stated in the National Policy on Education that ‘no education system may rise above the quality

of its teachers' (FGN 2004). Therefore, teacher education covers the content and context of specific areas of focus so that they can be well prepared for the task of leading learning in the schools. Knowing what to teach and how best to inculcate the knowledge is the basis for teacher training programmes. Human society is dynamic and so also is technology. Hence, there is every need for constant update of the skills, knowledge and techniques required by teachers in responding to the needs and exigencies of the society. Continuous professional development enhances the creation of innovative ideas, new competences and skill development which in turn aids teachers productivity (Nwachukwu, Iheanaetu and Elezuo, 2020).

The Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) is the minimum teaching qualification in Nigeria (FRN 2013). NCE holders teach in basic education (i.e. primary and junior secondary schools) in the country. The bachelor degree of education (B.Ed) is required for teaching in the senior secondary classes. Both the NCE and the B.Ed qualifications are obtainable from the regular (full-time) and the sandwich (part-time) programmes. These could also be obtained from open distance learning programmes offered in teacher training institutions. Irrespective of the qualification desired in the field of education, teacher education should be qualitative and quantitative enough to meet the aspiration of the country. According to the specification in the National Policy of Education, the goals of teacher education should be to

- (a) Produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- (b) Encourage further the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers,
- (c) Help teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.

- (d) Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situation.
- (e) Enhance teachers commitment to the teaching professions (FRN, 2013).

Human capital formation theory emphasizes the idea that investments in education, training and skills development improve individual and societal productivity. When applied to teachers' professional development, this theory highlights the following influence:

- (1) Skills and Knowledge Enhancement: Human capital formation underscores the importance of continuous learning and development for teachers (Usman *et al.*, 2015). Professional development programs, such as workshops, certifications and advanced degrees, are viewed as investments in a teacher knowledge and skills, which ultimately enhance their ability to improve student outcomes (Nwachukwu, 2024).
- (2) Increased Teacher Effectiveness: The theory suggests that teachers acquire new knowledge and pedagogical techniques in the classroom increases, professional development, driven by human capital theory, aims to equip teachers with updated methodologies, new techniques, and improved assessment strategies (Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2020, Ayeni 2020).
- (3) Economic and Social Benefits: By investing in teachers' professional growth, societies can improve educational quality, leading to long-term economic and social benefits. Teachers with higher levels of human capital formation are more likely to foster better learning environments and contribute to overall societal advancement (Idoko *et al.*, 2015).
- (4) Attraction and Retention of Teachers: The focus on professional development can help attract high-quality individuals to the teaching profession and retain experienced teachers (Oyalabu *et al.*, 2023). Teachers are more likely to stay

in the profession if they feel their skills are being recognized and developed through meaningful professional development opportunities.

- (5) Lifelong learning: Human capital theory stresses that learning should be ongoing. Teachers who engage in lifelong learning through professional development initiatives are better positioned to adapt to changing educational landscapes, whether through new curricula, technology or evolving students' needs (Unachukwu, 2021).

Rationale for Teachers continuous Professional Development

Teacher education equips the aspiring teachers to be qualified and certificated to be employed for the teaching job. Even then, degree qualification is not enough guarantee for a teacher productivity through-out his working life. Teachers require further training often referred to as continuous education or professional development. Demand for professional development is a derived demand because it is for the purpose of helping students to obtain improved performance. The society and its needs are dynamic hence teachers' competence must not remain static. Ayeni (2020) in a study finds significant relationship between staff continuous professional development and teacher productivity in Ondo State, Nigeria. Some teachers could move to a new district, assume new positions and responsibilities which calls for continuous professional development to fit in and also improve on their performance.

Teacher professional development is obtainable through Pre-service and In-service training opportunities. Capacity building supports teachers with the knowledge to implement instruction that is designed to increase student outcomes (Brown, 2016).

- **Pre-service** training is the education would-be teachers receive in the teacher training institution before certification and employment. It prepares one in the

foundations and rubrics of pedagogy in theory and practice leading to the award of the Nigerian Certificate of Education obtainable from the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and the Bachelor of Education degree obtainable from the universities. However, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education is a conversion programme for those whose first-degree background was obtained from outside the Faculty of Education but wishes to obtain a teaching qualification to become a professional. In recent times qualified teachers are expected to obtain a professional qualification from the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) for certification as a qualified teacher. Despite the qualification and certification to teach, teacher knowledge may become irrelevant to the system if they do not constantly subject themselves to gaining new knowledge. That is the kernel of the Human Capital Formation theory encouraging the workforce to periodically undergo training through the working life of a teacher.

➤ **In-service** teacher training is the continuous education teachers receive while in active service which is geared toward further professional competence and development as a serving teacher. According to the National Policy on Education, in-service training shall be an integral part of teachers continuing teacher education (FRN 2913). Continuous professional development refreshes teacher quality, updates and upgrades the intellectual competence as a teacher in line with emerging realities. Teacher professional competence can be continuously developed via any of the outlets discussed henceforth;

❖ **Mentorship:** This approach allows an experienced teacher (called mentor) to willingly guide newly qualified and inducted teachers (called mentee or protege) so that he gains the confidence and stability for the professional discharge of his/her responsibilities. The one being mentored is the pupil teacher who is undergoing a sort of professional ‘cutting of wings before he could fly’. It is necessary for the

schools or the education institutions to provide experienced mentors to guide the new teachers, in the early years of their professions, which can help the teachers develop their competences as well as personal development (Li 2018).

Mentoring is a deliberate relationship between the mentor and the mentee. It has a start date and must also end some other days especially if the mentee has gained stability or experience through the relationship. The goal to be achieved must be well defined while communication or relationship generally between the mentor and mentee must be kept at professional level. The mentee is expected to gain some experiences from the mentoring programme which will enable him become a better teacher. It is expected to be a symbiotic relationship as both are expected to benefit from the relationship. Mentors benefit tremendously as they see themselves contributing towards the growth and success of other people at work and being a role model to the new/young teacher (Alabi 2017). Miske and Sogunro (2024) in a study, found enhanced academic and career planning, strengthening relationships between mentors–mentees through enhanced communication and trust building, enhanced research skills, development of mentorship skills, development of intellectual curiosity, and improved academic outcomes. The scope of mentoring covers wide range of teachers professional activities such as lesson note preparation and delivery, community relations, administration, record-keeping, classroom management, assessment and reporting, school plant management, use of technology for teaching and other pastoral duties of the teacher. The main aim is to enable the mentee-teachers gain confidence, develop a professional edge in the discharge of their responsibilities and find joy in his duties as a teacher. In future, the mentee having received so much support could also become a mentor to the younger persons coming into the teaching profession.

In recent time, a new dimension of mentoring referred to as E-mentoring has emerged. E-mentorship which is mentorship through the tele-communication is advocated to bridge the distance between the mentor and mentee (Li 2018). Thus, irrespective of location of the mentor and the mentee, mentorship can still occur through the telecommunication especially the internet. According to Polat *et al* (2023), E-mentoring can also be referred to as electronic mentoring, virtual mentoring and online mentoring. Thus, e-mentoring can be done via technology such as telephone, video conferencing, blogging, online discussions and chats. The social media outlet such as zoom, whatsapp, google meet can be explored for the success of teacher mentorship.

❖ **Coaching:** Lofthouse (2018), believed that coaching can be seen as collaborative work between professionals, as such might extend the concept of collective efficacy, as in the collective belief of teachers in their ability to positively affect students. Coaching is not about subordinate/coordinate relationship as in instructional supervision. It is a professional approach at collaboration in support of students learning and outcome. Wood *et al.* (2016) discussed two types of coaching viz: Supervisory coaching and side-by-side coaching. As discussed, supervisory coaching occurs when a more experienced teacher observed a teacher implementing a new strategy. They put down their data which they would discuss with the coachee so that he could improve. The Side-by-Side coaching is when the teacher implements a strategy which the coach now intervenes to provide an improved way of doing it. At the end of the class, the less experienced teacher and the coach meet to discuss the merit or other wise of the new experience. Coaching as a professional development strategy provides a practical approach to the learning needs of the teacher. Lofthouse (2016) agreed that coaching often includes lesson observation while it is designed to be clinical. It is not departmentally restricted but instead

coaching cuts across the departments and subject areas. The main objective is for colleagues to gain some new approaches to teaching their classes or subjects in order to improve on students understanding and performance. No doubt, coaching offers the opportunity to improve the classrooms experience of learners by strengthening their teaching skills. Experience is very important in every human activity. But it is more so, in the classroom as parents and teachers may come into conflict if classroom relations with their children/learners are not well handled by the teacher. For example, the incidence of parents attacking teachers has increased since the start of COVID (Skliou & Papakonstantinou 2023, Walker, 2022). It is not that teachers directly offend they parents, but conflicts arise because of how they perceive the way the teacher handled their children. There is the need for professional ways to handle such conflict associated with classroom activities that could extend beyond the classroom to the parents. Coaching, therefore is a form of assistance to strengthen a teacher toward up-grading the classroom instructional experience for an improved professional development in the teaching profession.

❖ **Personal development:** Teachers cannot know enough as knowledge multiplies so soon. They have to develop appetite to learn something new. This is a deliberate effort for the teacher to improve on their present level of knowledge. Teachers can improve on their professional competence through many outlets. Becker (1962) believed that workers who subject themselves to training and development would not go unrewarded. As their services improve over time, the over-all productivities of the organization they work for also improves. In turn, an improved worker is bound to obtain some pecuniary or non-pecuniary benefits. A teacher can also get improvement through personal private study. There would always be something new to learn by reading, listening and discussing quality issues. One may want to learn a better way to handle a class or new insight into discipline

of the children without offending their parents (Imakpokpomwan, 2024). It could also be learning short presentation on school plant maintenance. Maybe, the approach could be to develop a vocational skill such as learning the use of the computers and ICT generally that could assist in providing better teaching services to his students to the satisfaction of parents and school management. Acquiring some new skills enable teachers to be on top of their professional callings. A teacher who stops learning cannot guarantee the currency and relevance of their contribution to knowledge because new improvement keeps occurring in all human endeavours from time to time. Through subscriptions to professional journals, e-mails professional web sites, blog and association and membership of professional bodies a teacher can learn new strategies that can improve his instructional and other academic activities that may support him to do his work better (Hasan *et al.*, 2023). Video recording offers opportunities for a teacher to self-critique his instructional delivery and crave for an innovative approach to improving on the existing practice. There is always a room for improvement, so teachers should walk out of the box to improve on their professional activities.

❖ **Seminars and workshops:** Seminars and workshops provide opportunities for current developments to be disseminated for the professional development of the workforce. During seminars teachers gather in person or through virtual/online/electronically (often called webinar) to discuss issues of relevance and topical to an aspect of the field of education. It could be in area of educational administration, planning, evaluation, technology, instructional delivery or any other area in the field of education. It involves experts sharing the ideas they have generated empirically or through theoretical perspective on an issue. Most often, seminar involves questions and answers section to clarify any grey area. Workshop on the other hand, also calls for experts in the field of education to practically engage

the participants on new or innovative ways of handling specific issues. For example, workshop on educational supervision provides opportunity for managers of education to acquire skills, ideas and information from experienced practitioner through practical section of how modern instructional supervision are conducted. No teacher can remain relevant in the teaching profession if they dispense obsolete knowledge.

❖ **Open and Distance Learning Opportunities:** Teacher qualification programmes are being delivered in Nigeria through the distance learning outlet such as Nigerian Teachers Institute (NTI) and the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). They utilize information and communication technology outreach to equip learners with the professional qualification required in the country. Over time some Nigerian conventional universities began to offer distance learning programmes in the teaching field in the country. Awe (2014) stated that the National Universities Commission has approved the following universities as dual mode learning institutions: University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Maiduguri and Federal University of Technology, Yola. They too offer qualification programmes for the professional development of teachers in the country. More conventional universities are increasingly offering distance learning programme. University of Benin is one of them. Massive open online course (MOOC) provides rear privileges for in-service teachers to keep learning without leaving their places of primary assignment, Offering cheap or even free courses. Thematic scheme are handled as short courses or stand-alone course or may actually be accepted as equivalent to part of a full-time course. Coursera, for instance has been a top provider of MOOC courses globally (QS 2024).

❖ **Peer tutoring:** Peer tutoring is a situation where a professional seek out opportunity to learn a skill, value or some form of improved approach to practice

that could improve on the discharge of duties from a colleague or peer. One could decide to let his peer watch him teach and ask for a critique. Such a person can point out areas to further strengthen in the discharge of their responsibilities. We should not be afraid of criticism or challenges. However, if you must criticize, let it not be destructive but creative to bring out the best in one. Stokes and Singh (2023) established the benefits of peer-tutoring in a medical school. According to them, 80% of participants in the research reported satisfied, 85% agreed they have learnt new skills, 88% felt they hold a better grasp of the curriculum. Professionals must aim to support one another because ‘I need you and you need me’ to further improve on professional growth and development.

Conclusion

The article has discussed the place of the Human Capital Formation theory in the professional development of the teaching workforce. If teachers must be relevant to the system, they must undergo both pre-service and in-service training. In service training outlets such as mentoring, coaching, personal development and peer tutoring can assist teachers to continue to learn and remain relevant throughout their work life. Therefore, Continuous Professional Development goes beyond the pre-service education. The term Continuous demonstrates that it is progressively extending into the future. Certainly, no end to it unlike a college degree programme. Thus, after college degree, there is still more to learn and teachers being ambassador to the future must develop themselves continuously and professionally.

Suggestions

- Schools have for long been teaching organization. It should henceforth become a learning organization. By this, it is supposed that every school should create opportunities for all teaching staff to learn something new frequently. For example, schools can organize mentorship programmes for its teachers to assist the

young members of staff. By this, we mean a deliberate learning approach to strengthen in-house staff by more experienced staff. School management must not wait for the Ministry of Education to organize a seminar. They can organize one.

- Coaching is said to be growing in the advance world. It has not been so visible in the less developed countries like Nigeria. Experts in the field of education may have to expose more professionals to the nitty-gritty of coaching the inexperienced teachers.

- All teachers at every level of education should belong to a professional association of the level. Such as History Teachers of Nigeria, Early childhood teachers of Nigeria or Association of Teachers of Literature of Nigeria or Mathematics Teachers Association of Nigeria and the like at basic education or secondary education level. Here is not referring to a trade association or trade union sort of, whose main interest is merely the check-off dues from members. The goal of the professional association is to provide opportunity for members of the association to share ideas and experience with one another through regular publications, lectures and workshops. Such publications, lectures or workshops should not be a one-off thing nor a public jamboree where members of the association would have to be on a match parade on workers day but rather engage in intellectual engagement with members. Some can encourage the growth of the association through online presence in e-message, blogs, and features designed to build up one another in the teaching of the subject of common interest.

- Should educators learn in secret? No. Every educator is wired to disseminate knowledge. If otherwise, that knowledge dies with the custodian. It is not sufficient to be knowledgeable about a concept and hold on to it to show off that you are the only professional in that field in Nigeria. That is the failure of such a fellow. If you know it all alone, you remain in your world - a lone ranger. Replicate

yourself through lectures, discussions and publications. Encourage other professions to grow and develop their potentials. In due time, those you inspire can become strong to support and celebrate you. By so doing, you will become the ‘banana tree’ of your profession, surrounded by many ‘suckers’ to continue the journey you started.

- Teachers should also imbibe the concept of ‘you need me, I need you’. With that synergy we cannot assume the role of an indispensable element. Peer tutoring, attendance at workshops, seminars and conferences are designed for peers to learn from one another.

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