

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PDE
IN FCE ZARIA**

BY

**Dr. Halliru Umar: English Department, Federal College of Education, Zaria;
E-mail: halliruumarzaria@gmail.com**

**Hannatu Babajo: Geography Department, Federal College of Education, Zaria;
E-mail: hannatubabajohh@gmail.com**

&

**Yakubu Bashir Liman: Geography Department, Federal College of Education, Zaria;
E-mail: liman-albashir@hotmail.com**

Abstract

Within the restructuring agenda of Nigeria, the National Educational Agenda's target was to upgrade and re-skilling teachers. This led to the conception of the Professional Diploma in Education (PDE). Within this programme, re-skilling of these educators was targeted to assist the educational department in implementing its new school curriculum. Although many cohorts in earth related courses such as geography have graduated from the programme, questions are still being asked of the programme's effects on them. This study therefore assessed the Impact of Professional Diploma in Education PDE in FCE Zaria. The objectives are to; ascertain the effects of Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) on teacher's personal life, investigate the effects of PDE on teacher's professional life, assess the contributions of PDE on teacher's efficiency, ascertain the extent to which PDE improve student's academic performance and evaluate how qualified graduates of PDE programme contributes to the academic achievements of their students. Data were Purposive collected from 85 respondents who are graduates of the FCE Zaria PDE programme, using the kobo toolbox. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as Mean, Standard deviation were employed for data analysis using SPSS on the other hand inferential statistic T-test was used to test the hypothesis of the study. The findings of the study provide noticeable change in the personal and professional lives of graduates teachers' in areas of: teaching methodology, classroom management, provision of teaching aids, confidence boost. It recommended that more emphasis should be made on school based tasks (teaching practice) because it gives educators an opportunity to experiment what has been learnt in the contact session and also salary and allowances of the PDE enrollees should be increased etc.

Keywords: Professional, Diploma, Education, Teaching and Skills

Introduction

The National Educational Agenda's which targeted in upgrading and re-skilling teachers and in view of the provision of section (8) of the national policy of Education (2004) which provides that "All teachers in tertiary institutions shall be required to undergo training on the method and techniques of teaching." The professional Diploma in Education (PDE) was approved for implementation by the teacher's registration council of Nigeria (TRCN) via a letter Ref: No TRC/PO/OE/47/2 dated Feb, 24, 2005. The TRCN board after careful observations and inputs by a wide range of stakeholders had reached the conclusion that Diploma shall be deemed qualified for registration by the council on which basic institutes of education are free to run the programme. The professional diploma in education (PDE) originated from a decision taken by the senate of Ahmadu Bello in 1991 in view of the quality of the students coming up directly from secondary schools. Senate concluded that there was need to train its lecturers on teaching methods. Institution of education of Ahmadu Bello University was mandated to design and implement a suitable programme. Unfortunately and for various reasons including resistance to such a programme not much was achieved. With a strong commitment to the project however, the effort was sustained resulting eventually in the professional diploma in education programme.

The process included developing suitable theoretical trials in seven primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Zaria and Kaduna state, as well as workshop at three centers on behalf of the Kaduna State ministry of education. Accepted by the teacher’s registration council of Nigeria as containing the relevant knowledge and skills to produce professional teachers, the contents were streamlined and approved at a meeting with Deans and Directors of faculties and institutions of education of other universities. The programme was further scrutinized by the board of teachers registration council whose membership include among others, NUC, NCCE, NUT, NBTE, Nigerian Academy of Education and Hon. Commissioners of education one from each of the geo political zones. The outcome of that scrutiny was the approval given by the board for implementation of PDE. Shortly after the approval, the senate of the Ahmadu Bello University also approved the PDE to be run by the institute of education. Quickly as well, many colleges of education started running the programme while the number of the universities and colleges that wish to take on the programme remains on the increase.

The earliest Colleges of Education to start running the programme include the Federal College of Education, Kano; Federal college of Education, Zaria; African thinkers community of inquiry college of education Enugu; Kaduna state college of education; GidanWaya; Niger State college of education Minna, Federal College of education (Technical) Asaba etc. the door is therefore open for all universities and colleges of education in Nigeria to take advantage of the PDE to clear the backlog of unqualified teachers in their various states and to sustain the training of candidates of other fields who wish to become teachers. In view of the above, determining the contributions of the PDE programme on geography teacher’s personal and professional life become paramount.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher’s education is the process which nurtures prospective teachers and updates qualified teachers knowledge and skills in the form of continuous professional development. Teacher’s education revolves around the policies and procedures designed to equip perspective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behavior and skills required in the performance of effective duties in classrooms and in other social gatherings. Teachers stand out as one of the most important factor determining the quality of education and its contribution to national development at every level , people who go to school look on to their teachers for the acquisition of the necessary skills to enable them become what they want to be. Thus, students often look on to their teachers personal and educational qualities as well as their professional competence which are rewarding to learners. It is on this note that the research tends to conduct an impact assessment on Professional Diploma in Education to ascertain its effectiveness on teachers personal and professional life and how it’s impact on student’s academic achievements. Quite a number of researches have been conducted on teacher’s personal and professional life as well as student’s academic achievements see the works of Aina and Olanipekum(2015), Akiba, Tender and Scribner (2007), Akinfe, Oofinniyyi and Fashiku (2012), Aliyu, Yashe and Adeyeye (2013), Darling-Hammond (2005), Hollins (2011), strong, Ward and Grant (2011). Since the creation of the PDE programme in 2005, a lot of teachers have patronise and graduated from the programme. The study therefore fills a knowledge gap as it assesses the impact and effects of Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) by assessing the contributions of PDE on teacher’s efficiency and evaluate how qualified graduates of PDE programme contributes to the academic achievements of their students, this and many more the paper intends to provide possible answers to.

Methodology

The combination of qualitative and quantitative data were use for the research to overcome weaknesses associated with qualitative and or quantitative data as well as build on the strengths of the two to have a balanced form of data. The data were collected using kobo toolbox which is an online application used in collection of data. The Yemane’s formulae was used in select the sample population for the study. The formulae is expressed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n= Sample size

N=Total population

e= Merging of error at 5%

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select targeted respondents for the qualitative data. These respondents come from FCE Zaria, Kaduna State Nigeria. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the results in tabular form showing frequency and percentages of the responses collected. Similarly, the research uses inferential statistical tool with the aid of SPSS software to determine the extent of the contributions of the PDE programme to teachers personal and professional life.

Results

This section present the analysis on how PDE programme positively impacted on the professional and personal behaviour of teachers in the secondary schools. Data collected through the means of a questionnaire and interview on the sample drawn from selected secondary schools in Zaria metropolis. In order to determine the impact of PDE programme on its graduates, teaching in secondary schools. Out of 106 respondents initially sampled for the study 85 copies of questionnaire were properly filled and returned accounting for 80% of the sampled population and this was deem adequate for analysis and reporting. The findings on how the PDE programme influenced the personal and professional lives of these previously under-qualified teachers is presented in this section based on the objectives of the study.

According to the study findings, students had high and wide ranging expectations from the PDE programme Table 1 presents a summary of the expectations of students from the PDE programme. The range of expectations includes personal achievements (in the form of improved qualifications and obtaining confidence) to professional achievements of, for example, teaching their subjects better.

Table 1: Expectations of the students from the PDE programme

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Improvement of their qualifications	7	8.2
To gain knowledge about teaching methods and techniques	21	24.7
Improve teaching skills	42	49.4
More knowledge about the curriculum	9	10.6
To gain confidence while teaching	6	7.1
Total	85	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Graduates were asked about their expectations in doing the PDE programme. The programme was meant for upgrading qualification for under-qualified teachers to meet the needs of the new school system. Hence it is not unexpected that their expectations would resonate with the programme's objectives. In addition the graduates had largely positive feelings about doing the PDE programme. The other intention was also to upgrade educators to the minimum M+3 qualification. This study then explored the intentions of educators in enrolling in this programme. As presented in Table 1, about 8% of the respondents revealed that to improve their qualifications is the reason why they enrolled into PDE programme. That is to say, they wanted to move from being under-qualified to being professionally qualified educators. Furthermore 24.7% of the respondent reported that to gain knowledge about teaching methods and techniques as against 50% of the participants who chose PDE programme in other to improve teaching skills. Educators in the new education system were challenged to be assessors, designers, facilitators and many other skills that educators needed to have including skills on handling big classes when teaching. About 35% of the respondents reported that to gain knowledge about the changes in the education system as the reason why they enrolled into the programme. There was an introduction of new subjects/learning areas like technology; com-orientation and others qualified educators. That was a challenge educators wanted to meet.

As only 10% of the participants who want to gain confidence while teaching enrolled themselves into the programme. Educators were required to teach within a new system of school education as an educational transformational agenda. Educators were uncertain about the new skills and knowledge of the new education

system. Even the terminology of learning areas, outcomes, continues assessment and others were new to them. It was revealed that PDE had an impact in the personal lives of educators:- By personal in this case, referred to issues like confidence, as a human being outside classroom, status outside the classroom, better lifestyle, engagement in community, family, life and other interest. The finding in Table 2 revealed that out of the respondents, only about 5 of the respondents pointed out that they have gained a better lifestyle because of the PDE. After submitting their PDE certificates, their annual salary changed to higher amount. They now earn better salaries than before they had obtained the PDE. Salary has a lot of implication because the lifestyle of a person is influenced highly by the income of that person, about 13 of the respondents pointed that they were promoted to higher positions, again the salary increases. That is another big answer on the study "yes the PDE had a lot of impact in educators personal lives".

Table 2: Personal gains by the PDE graduates

Gains	Repondents
Nothing	0
Promotion	13
Confidence in teaching	12
More status as a teacher	10
Recognition by peers	10
Recognition of school manager	12
More knowledge about teaching and learning	15
More knowledge about new education system	13
Better lifestyle	5

Source: Field survey, 2023

There were also personal gains outside the school. On personal gains, some participants pointed out their engagement in community development. Among other roles emphasized in the PDE programme, One role emphasizes the active role to be played by an educator in the community. Research shows that when educators apply for promotions there is always a question on community development. So it is vital for educators to develop the community outside the school. It might be conducting campaign on drugs, violence, computer literacy etc. therefore it is quite interesting to hear that graduates engage themselves in community development after undergoing the PDE programme. Of significance here is that the gains by the graduates were largely in the professional domain of their lives (confidence in teaching, more subject knowledge, recognition by peers and managers, more educational system knowledge) rather than on the personal lives as revealed in Table 2 and Figure 3. The finding of the study also revealed that, PDE graduates became actively involved in their school after completing the programme.

Table 3: Activities engaged in after completing the PDE programme

Actively engaged in	Frequency	percentage
Enrolled for other programmes	27	31.7
Became active in teaching development in your school	49	57.6
Took leadership role in your school	2	2.4
Taken on additional responsibilities at school	6	7.1
Nothing	1	1.2
Total	85	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

A large number of graduates (51 out of the 85) enrolled in other programmes, including interest in their professional careers as revealed in Table 3, one of the intentions of the PDE upgrading programme was to afford under-qualified teachers access to higher studies. By enrolling in other programmes, like advanced certificate in education (ACE), student would be able to access mainstream academic studies in education (i.e. honors, masters and doctoral programmes in education) an alternate access route to the higher level of study on the national qualification framework. This finding suggests that the PDE is not only a means to upgrade but also acts as a

catalyst to stimulus for further studies. Although beyond the scope of this study, it would have been interesting to know why these teachers enrolled for further studies. One can only conjecture on the reasons for engaging in further studies. For example, the PDE programme may have given an insight into what possibilities exists for teachers both personally and professionally, should they continue with further studies. They have seen the impact that it had on their lives, personally through better lifestyle and professionally in the confidence in their teaching abilities. If they engage in further studies, they may expect to get more of what they experienced through the PDE.

A higher number of graduates became active in teaching development in their schools as revealed by 57.6% in Table 3, signaling and triangulating their claim of being recognized by peers and managers in their schools for their competence and contribution they gained as educators in their schools. Because of the qualification they obtained, they took leadership roles in their schools in different activities, Confidence has boosted their morale and the way they look at themselves. Some teachers were very passive and they also feel inferior because of the lack of knowledge. The PDE programme provided them with the knowledge and confidence to become active in school activities. They gained respect and recognition by their colleagues in their schools. In addition to laying claim of their recognition and contribution to teacher development in schools 77% of the respondents agreed that all teachers should do the PDE programme irrespective of their qualification status. Recognizing the benefits of doing the PDE programme these graduates are now taking an agency role of influencing other teachers to do the PDE programme 15% of the respondents have taken leadership role in their schools. Others have been appointed as sports masters, HOD's, acting HODs and even class teachers. That comes with more responsibilities and more challenges. That is indicative that the staff and management of their schools have developed trust and confidence on the graduates after completing the PDE. 23% have taken additional responsibilities at school. As only few respondents indicated that they were not involved in anything after graduating from the PDE. That tells that majority of the participants are engaged in some activities in their school. The finding also revealed that PDE had an impact in the professional lives of educators.

Table 4: Rating on how PDE programmes developed the graduates in their professional competence.

	1	2	3	4	5
Content knowledge of the subject matter	1	0	3	4	8
Teaching skills	1	0	2	5	7
Curriculum development/planning skills	2	2	2	6	3
Understanding of your teaching context	1	0	0	8	5
In designing assessment for your learners	2	0	1	6	5
Ability to engage your learners meaningfully in your lessons	1	0	0	6	8
Developing learning materials/resources for your lessons	2	0	3	7	3

Source: Field survey, 2023

The figures presented within the rating columns are a count of the number of respondents that rated themselves within each rating scale as revealed on Table 4. This self reported data indicate that the PDE programme had made noticeable changes to their professional competence of being as revealed on Table 4. Professional development also covers a wide areas but within the scope of teaching which is our profession in this case. Those are areas like confidence as a teacher, status in teaching, recognition at school, knowledge about teaching, learning and new education system. Those are also areas that develop an educator in the teaching profession as a teacher. The improvement in the teaching was confirmed by my observations. I visited three schools with participants and observed new ways of teaching, grouping learners, providing learners with opportunities to perform activities. In my observation learners were brainstorming topics, discussing ideas, presenting research findings and their ideas very well expressed. That was showing me the profound impact of PDE in the professional lives of educators and above that, was also showing the impact of PDE in the lives of learners in the classrooms.

Table 5: Professional changes noted in graduates of the PDE programme

Change from	Change to
Not being confident	Being confident
Being told	Telling
Externally driven	Self agency
Being on the margins	Becoming part of the central force
Teacher telling	Teacher exploring
Use of limited teaching methods	Exploring new teaching methods
Limited assessment strategies	Exploring different assessment strategies
Using no resources	Making and using recourses developed from their Context

Source: Field survey, 2023

The changes to the confidence level of the graduates were remarkable and cannot happen without deep introspection, knowledge and practice by the teachers. The PDE programme interrogated the under-qualified teachers past practice, provided opportunities and exposure to learn new content and pedagogical knowledge, and through integrated assessment strategies were able to put into practice these new learning with the guidance and support of the lecturers, tutors and school based mentors. Through these extensive engagements over a period of two years, the graduates emerged confident in their teaching, their engagement in school, and their positive feelings about themselves clearly transformational in nature. The changes noted can be summarized as noted in Table 5. The PDE programme, therefore provided a stimulus for initiating teacher learning and the outcomes of the learning related to teacher confidence and trust, with some learning on teaching methodologies and subject content knowledge.

Table 6: T-Test Analysis on Professional changes noted in graduates of the PDE programme

Variable/Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	p	Remarks
Changes	58	29.41	5.02	68	28.6	0.01	Significant
No changes	27	13.09	3.90				

Significant at $p \geq 0.05$

From the result presented in Table 6, t-value observed was 28.6, while the p-value observed is 0.01 which is less than the alpha value. This shows that there is significant changes in the performance of those who are exposed to PDE programme using different teaching methodology when teaching in a class as reported by respondents. As a result, there is significant difference between the performances of male and female graduates exposed to different teaching methodology. However, the significant difference exists between the performances of male and female students who where exposed with different skills in favour of male graduates.

Conclusion

The delimitations of this study locates it within Zaria metropolis in Kaduna state. Hence, the findings may not be generalized to all graduates of PDE programme. However these findings may illuminate some important detail that may be worthy of further studies in this arca of teacher professionalization and teacher learning. The scale of this study precludes me from engaging in these areas of knowledge production. The finding of the study have shown that PDE programme had a positive impact in the lives of educators in secondary schools both personal and professional. The study also revealed that, there are unqualified teachers within the education system who really need the PDE. There are teachers who had their diplomas and other qualification long before the introduction of the new system. PDE programme is needed to train and retrain our teachers so that they can be reformed and refined to face the major challenges of education. Professionalization of teachers is needed for continue upgrading of knowledge by all teachers in Zaria metropolis.

Recommendations

The study recommends that even senior staff and other head of department and principals who do not have education background be made to undertake PDE to enable them be equipped with the necessary skills and recent background in their workplace when introducing new strategies in educational issues.

1. PDE programme should include school visits and school based task (teaching practice). It was found out that frequent and effective supervision during teaching practice will make the students better equipped.
2. The study further recommended that PDE programme should address the challenges facing education system especially in rural areas like shortage of teachers, lack of qualified teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials by a way of proffering solution to the government.
3. It recommended that more emphasis should be made on school based tasks (teaching practice) because it gives educators an opportunity to experiment what has been learnt in the contact session.

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