

The Role of Experiential Learning in Teachers' Professional Development for Enhanced Classroom Practices

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Received: April 4, 2023

Accepted: June 12, 2023

Online Published: August 15, 2023

doi:10.5430/jct.v12n4p143

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v12n4p143>

Abstract

The main objective of this article was to explore how experiential learning theory can be adopted into teachers' professional development, as an effective approach to engaging teachers in classroom-enhanced activities. The inclusion or design of various experiential learning activities will promote pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills that can enhance classroom practices. The theoretical framework of experiential learning enables effective classroom instructional delivery for all learning experiences in different contexts. The study purposefully selected 10 teachers, teaching Economics, from 10 high schools in Lagos, Nigeria. These teachers were observed in different classroom settings/teaching of selected topics from Economics, before and after a 3-day experiential learning-based professional development workshop. The teachers were further engaged in a focus group interview after the final observation. Findings revealed that experiential learning theory is critical to teacher professional development, as it enables teachers to learn better when engaged in experientially designed professional development, which can impact their classroom teaching thereafter. The study, therefore, encourages teacher educators or government bodies responsible for content design for teachers' professional development to integrate or structure the contents of teachers' professional development with experiential learning initiatives, to improve teachers' classroom pedagogies and teaching competencies for quality education.

Keywords: classroom practices, experiential learning, professional development, content delivery, teacher education

1. Introduction

Adopting experiential learning in professional development activities has impacted the classroom practices of teachers, especially in developed countries where teachers' professional development is purposely designed to enhance the content-delivery of various subjects in the education system, based on studies on experiential learning theory (Clark, Threton, & Ewing 2010). According to the US National Council on Teacher Quality (2017), the professional development of teachers over the years has been designed to provide teachers with knowledge, skills, and teaching methods through high-quality interactive experiences. It is focused on how to enhance classroom practices, which is a concern for the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Soslau and Rath (2017) aver that only entry-level knowledge and skills cannot sustain teachers' classroom practices in a dynamic society, but regular professional development can appropriately support the modern education system. Teaching experiences from the initial teacher education they join the profession with are insufficient to maintain quality in education, studies have established that teachers are often confronted with efficient delivery of curriculum and materials development (Sarıçoban, 2010).

This article explored experiential learning theory as the basis for designing professional development activities, which can enhance their pedagogical content knowledge and their professional responsibilities. The integration of experiential learning theory is to make their professional development experiential learning-based activities and allow the teachers to construct learning experiences for their learners as transformative learning experiences (O'Dowd & Dooly, 2022; Ilyas, Siddiquah, & Batool, 2023). which can be contextualized to learners' situational needs (Kolb, 2015). According to Kolb, experience is significant to the learning and development of new knowledge. Kolb (2015) affirms that the role of experience is to provide learners with concrete and transformative experiences, which can be regarded as the source of learning. Kolb (2015) in his experiential learning framework, describes the

experience as significant in his four-stage learning and development cyclical process. The four-stage model comprises Abstract Conceptualization, Active Experimentation, Concrete experience, and Reflection. Kolb avers that learners experience first-hand knowledge and skills during active engagement in learning activities, observe others in actions, and engage in self-reflection on the activities to conceptualize learning in their assimilation as abstract concepts. Kolb (2015) further agrees that learning is a continuous approach to gaining knowledge and skills, and thus, learning is a reconstruction of learning experiences. This implies that learning is re-learning, which demands learners' abilities to draw learning from pre-existing knowledge, beliefs, concepts, and skills, integrating these into new, innovative, or refined concepts. So, learning is the product of interactions or integration of reflection into action, and between what can be felt or thought. Seemingly, Gao (2015) in his longitudinal study posits that it is beneficial for learners to work in groups for them to be actively engaged in various experiential-based activities. According to Gao (2015), these groups should consist of few learners to allow active participation of each member of the group and:

1. Learners can learn, understand and identify the contributions and needs of each member.
2. Working in small groups enables the learners to analyze their situational issues to construct relevant learning from such.
3. The learners can collectively put together practical solutions to their situational needs and issues.
4. Learners can prove their proposed solutions for general adoption.

Hence, the adoption of experiential learning activities into teacher professional development is the aim of this article. So that teachers can significantly enhance their classroom practices (O'Dowd & Dooly, 2022; Steckley & Steckley, 2022). The study explored the role of experiential learning in various teacher professional development activities.

2. Theoretical Framework

Learning is described by constructivists as interactive activities that occur between learners and their socio-cultural environment, leading to new understandings or knowledge in the learners, aided by learners' prior knowledge and beliefs (Vygotsky, 1978). Seemingly, experiential learning is viewed as a philosophy of education rooted in various theories of sociocultural experiences and active interactions (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). However, the Association for Experiential Education {AEE} (2012) opines that experiential learning is an approach to guide learners' acquisition of knowledge and skills through their reflections to develop new knowledge, develop relevant skills, critique values, and develop learning concepts that make them fit in into the societies. According to De Miranda (2004:69), experiential learning activities are "ways of knowing are strongly connected to the social, cultural and physical situations students experience in learning". Sociocultural constructivism as a learning theory is about what is learning, who is a learner and why does a learner need to learn? This learning is known as an experiential learning experience.

This study adopts Kolb's experiential learning theory based on its social constructivism, which emphasizes learning through active participation in creating new knowledge through the process of transformation of the learning experience (Kolb, 1984). Furthermore, Kolb and Kolb (2012:42) argue that experiential learning theory is a "holistic theory that defines learning as the major process of human adaptation involving the whole person". According to Ajani (2020), the theory promotes learning through various experiential-based activities such as scavenger hunts, field trips, and many others. Experiential learning activities provide learners with rich opportunities to discover learning even outside the classroom context, thereby increasing their abilities to conceptualise learning from their engagement in various experiential learning activities (Ernst, Buddle, & Soluk, 2014; Kolb, 1984). This implies that the engagement of teachers in professional development programmes that are experiential learning-based enables the teachers to learn significantly in their own ways and to integrate the learning into their classroom practices. The teachers' active engagement in professional development exposes them to the Four-cycle learning cycle below:

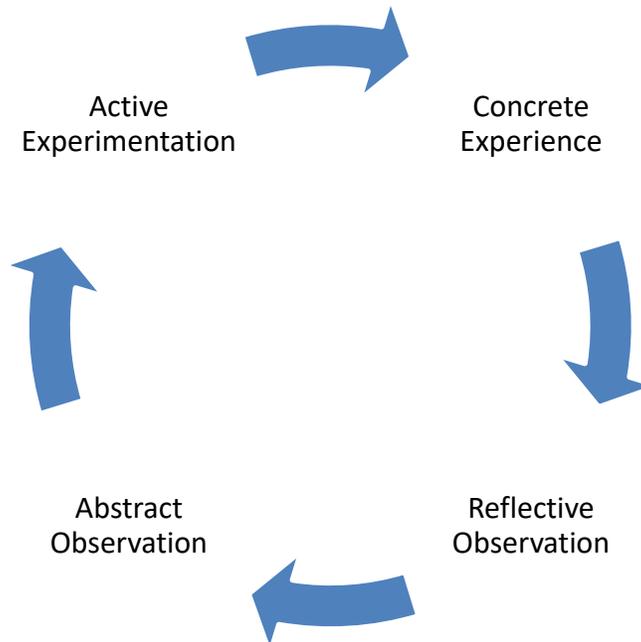


Figure 1. Experiential Learning Model (*adapted from Kolb, 1984*).

Extant studies conducted by various scholars (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1966; Kolb, 1984, 1992; Ajani, 2019, 2021; O'Dowd & Dooly, 2022) have advanced the assertions of constructivists on the significance of experiential learning. Integrating experiential learning theory is described differently as "Dewey's philosophical pragmatism, Lewin's social psychology, and Piaget's cognitive developmental genetic epistemology" (Kolb & Kolb, 2012: 2). According to Kolb, learning is a transformative cycle of learning experiences that are actively conceptualised into what learners can understand and apply based on their reflection. The cycle follows a four-stage cycle, with the **Active Experimentation** stage as the first stage, where a new concept or learning experience is introduced to learners. The learners' participation shapes and drives how the learning experiences are actively translated into the stage of **Concrete Experiences**. The learning experiences come in various forms of **abstract concepts**, which learners need to understand through their own constructs of new knowledge, problem-solving tasks, or role-playing. A clear understanding of the concepts is expressed by learners in discussing, analyzing, and reflecting on their active learning experiences, to relate the present learning experiences to past learning experiences, and successfully share the learning results, classroom observations, as well as learners' reflections with the learning peers during the **Reflective Observation**. Conversely, learners engage in discussion and application of the new learning experiences to relate to different or common situations, at a stage of **Abstract Conceptualization**. However, according to Kolb, the learning experiences process can be initiated at any stage but must advance through the four cycles to attain learning at its peak.

2.1 Experiential Learning in Practice

The study was aimed at establishing the impact of experiential learning in a professionally developed workshop for 10 teachers from randomly selected schools. The aims are: (1) to enable teachers to develop teaching and learning resources for their lessons, and (2) to provide teachers with pedagogical knowledge and skills for classroom instructional delivery using Kolb's (2015) four-stage cyclical experiential learning process. Selected topics from Economics were chosen for the teachers based on the teachers' challenges in the effective delivery of these topics (Gordon & Harshbarger 2003; Moats 1999; Petraki & Hill 2011). Their quest for effective classroom practices for their subject necessitates an experiential learning approach PD for effective lesson planning and delivery. Thus, the workshop for these teachers highlighted the existing gap in the contents and designs of diverse professional development programmes for teachers in developing Africa and there is an urgent need to redesign and restructure teachers' professional development, to position teachers as empowered agents of change.

Ten Economics teachers teaching Senior Secondary School class 3 in selected Lagos schools were engaged in a 3-day experiential learning-based workshop on the subject under the supervision of one of the authors, who is also a

specialist in the subject. All ethical procedures as well as the informed consent of the participants were obtained from the participants, the participating schools, and the educational authorities. Two subject specialists also guided the study. Using experiential learning design as framed by Kolb (2015), the Concrete Experience provided the authors with the participants' concrete experiences as observed in the pre-workshop, to determine the participants' concrete experience in teaching selected topics from Economics in actual classroom instructional delivery. The pre-workshop observation was for 4 weeks (2 lessons per teacher). The participants were brought together after the pre-workshop classroom observations, in a 3-day experiential learning workshop. The first day of the workshop was used for lesson study; the subject specialists delivered some pedagogical skills and delivered some lessons on the observed topics during the pre-workshop observations. Self-reflections were encouraged among the participants.

The second and third day was designed for teachers to deliver lessons on selected topics, one by one. The participants were made to reflect on their classroom instructional delivery in the workshop every day, they were made to reflect on their diverse teaching experiences in each lesson study (Reflection stage). The teachers were also encouraged to collaboratively make lesson plans as well as instructional materials that could help learners' comprehension of the selected topics for diverse learners' cognitive development. A critical evaluation of each lesson study was done to provide the necessary feedback for effective classroom practices after assimilation from their reflections (Abstract Conception) to adjust their subsequent lesson plan and delivery. The presentation of lesson plans and delivery was repeated to establish how their lesson delivery improved. The active Experimentation stage enabled the participants to try new and improved lesson plans and delivery after the workshop in their selected schools to evaluate maximum practicality. They were also supported with further revision based on the received feedback. Teachers were finally engaged in a focus group interview and were encouraged to disseminate acquired knowledge and skills among their colleagues in the schools.

2.2 Teachers' Views on Experiential Learning-Based Professional Development

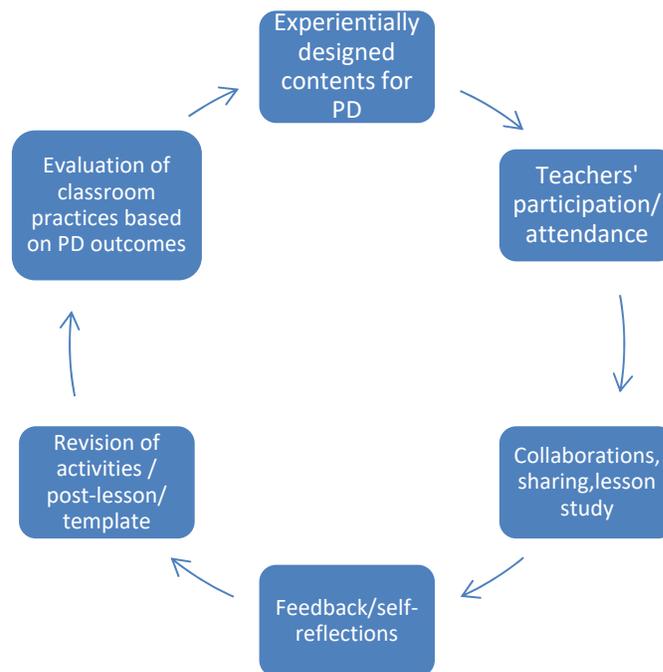


Figure 2. Proposed Experiential Learning-Based Teachers' Professional Development Model

The participants in this experiential learning-based workshop for Economics teachers affirmed that the experience from this workshop changed their teaching vision and placed confidence in them as Economics teachers with clear learners' understanding. Abdullahi (pseudonym) changed his perceptions of teaching Economics after the workshop. To this participant, learning is a life-long learning process for teachers, and it requires constant access to reflect and revise lesson plans and delivery to cater for diverse learners' needs: According to him "I learnt a lot on how to modify lesson plans and instructional materials to suit learners and topics, I also know which aspect to focus on

while preparing my lesson plans. For example, designing learners' activities to attain the learning objectives, and most importantly, the practicality of my lesson plans in real classroom contexts. When selecting learning materials, I must consider the suitability of these materials to my learners' diverse needs. In real contexts, some of these materials may need to be adjusted or modified to suit a particular topic or group of learners. The materials will need to be revised from time to time to meet the needs of the lesson plans, instructional delivery, and diverse learners' interests.

The participants distinguished the experiential learning-based workshop from the mandatorily available professional development programmes. They affirmed their appreciation of the need for collaboration of teachers to design lesson plans and instructional materials, and self-reflection on every lesson delivered to revise the strategies and improve classroom instructional delivery (Ajani, 2022). They hoped-for experiential learning-based PD to support their classroom practices. The participants complained of the inability of existing professional development programmes to provide experiential learning opportunities; neither do these programmes allow facilitated collaboration and constant supervision by the subject specialists or experienced teachers. Comments such as these:

“Experiential learning provides opportunities for teachers to continuously reflect on classroom instructional delivery and learning resources. In these experiential learning programmes, teachers need to plan lesson materials and lesson plans and receive feedback for improved classroom feedback. It is good that teachers attend experiential learning-based PD to enhance lesson plans and delivery” (Susan).

“After each instructional delivery, I reflect on my lesson plans, lesson delivery, and resource materials. I sometimes ask my colleagues to observe and give constructive comments that can improve my classroom teaching. I also collaborate to design lesson plans and instructional resources based on the experiences from the experiential learning-based workshop” (Haroon).

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore experiential learning in professional development programmes. The use of this approach is to enable the researchers to gather rich and in-depth data from the participants' lived experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2019). Teachers were observed in classroom practices before they attended the experiential learning-based workshop for 3 days, after which they were also observed in their classroom instructional delivery. A Focus group interview was also conducted with these 10 participating Economics teachers. The interpretive paradigm was adopted to understand teachers' sociocultural perspectives which were based on their diverse constructivist experiences in the learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978). The holistic understanding of the participants' diverse experiences and perspectives was qualitatively collected. Thematic analysis of the collected data was systematically carried out for presentation and discussion of findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016). All ethical considerations were strictly adhered to in this study while pseudonyms have been used for excerpts from the participants for confidentiality (Kumar, 2014).

3.1 Context of the Study

The context of this study is a selected ten high schools in a suburban city. The aim is to create awareness of experientially based professional development programmes. The schools are public schools where teachers attend various professional development programmes. The Ministry of Education, NGOs, and SMTs organize professional development activities for teachers to enhance their classroom practices. The study provided the participants with a 3 day-workshop which was experiential learning based in which the participants were actively engaged in collaborative activities. The workshop provided a lesson study daily to the teachers, as well as feedback for self-reflection. The 4 cyclical-process of the experiential learning model by Kolb (1984) was explored during the workshop. Teachers were encouraged to design lesson plans and teaching resources for diverse learners (Govender, Ajani, Ndaba & Ngema, 2022). Selected topics were chosen from the SS3 Curriculum for Economics. Teachers were observed before the 3-day workshop and were also observed after the workshops. The semi-structured focus group interview was conducted with the participants. Participants were given constructive feedback after each pre-workshop observation, lesson study, and post-workshop observation. The participants for this study were 10 Economics teachers from 10 selected public high schools in Nigeria. Five female and five male participants.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

An observation sheet was used during the pre-and post-workshop observations of the participants. Two subject specialists from a university in Lagos were used as facilitators for the 3-day workshop. These facilitators also validated all the instruments for the data collection. A 60-minute focus group interview was held with the

participants at the end of the post-workshop observations to gain in-depth insight into the participants' lived experiences. Thematic analysis was adopted for the analysis of the collected data for the study.

4. Discussion of Findings

Findings from the participants have been presented and discussed with excerpts from the transcripts. Pseudonyms have also been used to protect the identity of the participants. The following themes have been generated for this study:

4.1 *The Significance of the Professional Development*

This study sought to determine the significance of professional development among the participating teachers. The main objective of designing professional development for teachers is to improve their classroom instructional delivery. Participants revealed that their willingness to participate in any professional development programme is motivated by what they stand to benefit from such a programme.

"We do not just want to attend any workshop or training. We always want to know how the workshop can be of benefit to us" (T6)

Another participant expressed:

"Most times when we go for training, we find out that we don't really gain anything because they only talk about issues and not practical things that can be adopted into our classroom practices" (T3).

"Sometimes, when I attend some workshops and it turns out that we review school certificate results from some years ago, I simply wonder why I have to leave my school to listen to the review of results when I can always do that on my own" (10).

"In our subject cluster, our" subject advisor always teaches or explains to us how we can teach or prepare our students for examination, but she has never made classroom practices practical in those workshops. It is better if we watch ourselves teach" (T2).

Participants indicated their main reason for attending professional development programmes was to improve their classroom teaching. Ajani (2018) affirms that the main purpose of pulling teachers out of schools should be to empower them with knowledge and skills that can facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools. Teachers need regular empowerment to engage their learners in modern-day education (Ajoku, 2013; Ajani, 2019; Ayeni & Sadiqu, 2020; O'Dowd & Dooly, 2022). Ajani, Govender, and Maluleke (2018) also concur with the finding that when designing professional development, the focus should be on how to improve the instructional delivery of every participating teacher. Kolb's (1984) cyclical model aims to provide teachers with four basic steps to improve their classroom practices. At every stage, teachers have goals to focus on. Thus, every phase of cyclical experiential learning ensures that the significance of every professional development activity that is experientially based is to improve classroom instructional delivery to both teachers and learners (Steckley & Steckley, 2022).

4.2 *Experiential Learning Experience*

As mentioned by the participants that the significance of any workshop is what motivates their attendance. Findings revealed that practical experiences from workshops that are experientially based are easily adopted into their classroom practices.

"I have learnt a lot from this workshop. Observing others while teaching and the feedback after my teaching have made me see my weaknesses in the classroom, and what or how I need to plan every lesson for my learners" (T5).

"Some of the topics that are challenging to some of us in the classrooms, have been practically made easy. I now know how to contextualize my teaching resources to achieve learning objectives" (T1).

"This kind of workshop is what teachers need regularly. It provides real-life experiences that can be adopted into our instructional delivery. We also learn that a learning environment can be varied to attain learning" (T10).

"The lesson study shows that we can have diverse teaching approaches to deliver our subject to different learners. Everything was practical and we were all engaged in the activities. Which shows that we can always involve all our learners" (T3).

"Learning as a group to plan our lessons and to design or choose appropriate resources to teach builds the spirit of teamwork. And we can also encourage that in our learners. The practical experiences from the workshop showed that we can do all those things in our classroom situations, we only need to plan" (T7).

Participants affirmed that experiential learning in professional development workshops can provide the knowledge and skills that can enhance teaching and learning. According to the participants, experientially-based workshops provide opportunities for teachers to promote experience-based activities for their learners. To attain learning objectives, learning must be concrete for the learners (Piaget, 1966). Kolb (2012) posits that the experiential learning model enables learners to acquire learning experiences that can improve their academic performance. Thus, Kolb (1984) avers that concrete experience allows learners to generate new concepts, which are needed for active experiments in the learning environment. The finding concurs with Kolb (1992) that the experiential learning system places much emphasis on collaborative or group activities that can give first-hand experiences.

4.3 Constructive and Prompt Feedback from PD Activities

Findings revealed that the participants enjoyed prompt and constructive feedback that can help their lesson plans and instructional delivery in the classroom. Teachers need to know their strengths and weaknesses in designing lesson plans as well as how they deliver their lessons.

"I was so pleased to know what I had done wrong in delivering my lessons, as this enabled me to re-strategize my lesson plans and to see how learning experiences can be effectively delivered" (T4).

"Most times when we teach, we don't bother to reflect on each of our lessons. This workshop has made it known to us why we need to observe ourselves in the classrooms to assist our professional development" (T10).

"Our subject advisors do not provide us with constructive feedback most times, they mostly condemn us or find faults in what we do. Unlike, the workshop that provided us with opportunities to observe our teaching, identify weaknesses or lapses and propose the way forward" (T7).

Participant T3 opined that constructive feedback can only be given by more experienced teachers or experts in the subject:

"As we know that there are some topics that we struggle with, though we teach these topics in our own understanding, with self-reflection on the topics, we see how we need to design the lesson plans for each topic and how to effectively deliver these topics" (T9).

The study affirms the need for constructive and prompt feedback from teachers to enhance their classroom practices. This supports Ajani's (2019) claim that effective professional development provides teachers with the necessary support, that can improve their classroom instructional delivery. The 4 cyclical processes of the experiential learning model by Kolb (1984) affirm that there is a need for constructive feedback to improve learning experiences at every phase of the experiential model. According to Ajani and Govender (2019), subject advisors should regularly visit schools to observe teaching and learning in real classroom contexts to determine the professional needs of teachers. Seemingly, Ayeni and Sadiku (2020) opine that regular observation of teachers' classroom teaching will enable teachers to employ diverse teaching approaches to meet learners' individual needs. Workshops and training that motivate teachers to yearn for more knowledge and skills to deliver lesson content. However, Okobia (2013) avows that some teachers do not want to be corrected as they believe they have spent several years on the job. Akpan and Ita (2015) concur with Ayeni (2011) that initial teacher education does not provide adequate and concurrent entry knowledge and skills needed for daily classroom practices in the dynamic education system. This implies that knowledge and skills are dynamic in the education system, and teachers need to be regularly updated to effectively deliver learning content (O'Dowd & Dooly, 2022; Muthala, Govender, Kutame, & Ajani, 2022).

4.4 Lesson Plans/ Teaching Resources Design

The preparation of lesson plans and the selection of teaching resources are critical to instructional delivery (Ajoku, 2013, Ajani, 2022). Teachers need to design an appropriate lesson plan and select appropriate teaching resources to deliver the lessons. Participants affirmed the benefits of experiential learning theory, which includes the knowledge of deciding on appropriate, diverse teaching approaches.

"Apart from the lesson plans that we struggle to plan, we are always challenged on how to select or design appropriate materials that can help our learners" (T10).

"The experiential-based workshop provided us with the opportunities to deliberate and collaborate on the best teaching materials that are appropriate to our different classroom instructional delivery" (T2).

"One of the challenges of instructional delivery is knowing how to write a lesson plan for every topic in such a way that all the diverse learners in your class benefit from your lesson. I have seen now that we don't just need a workshop or training as teachers, but we need those workshops and training that will give us practical examples or give us the skills and knowledge that can help different teachers prepare for different topics to achieve learning objectives in the classrooms" (T1).

"We were trained in the experiential-based workshop to understand that those same topics in different schools require different approaches. We also observed from the lesson studies there that we can vary our teaching resources to accommodate our diverse learners; this has given me the idea that I can engage my learners to design different materials for the same topics, which will go a long way to facilitate learning experiences in my learners" (T9).

According to Okobia (2013), Mphahlele, and Rampa (2014), preparation for lessons does not end with beautiful and well-written lesson plans but entails what resources a teacher can appropriately select to deliver the lesson contents to achieve learning in learners. This concurs with Ayeni and Sadiku's (2020) that successful implementation of the curriculum lies in the ability of a teacher to design and deliver subject contents effectively, using appropriate learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) in the classrooms. This implies that the curriculum delivery revolves around teachers' ability to integrate all teaching and learning resources in a systematically designed classroom instructional delivery. However, Akpan and Ita (2015), Mphahlele (2014), and Okobia (2013) opine that some teachers do not realize the importance of diverse instructional resources as an effective approach to attaining learning. According to Desimone, Smith, and Ueno (2014), when teachers cannot use diverse teaching approaches and materials according to classroom situations, learning objectives will be difficult to attain for some learners. According to Omotuyole and Okudo (2014), it is part of teachers' creativity to design appropriate LTSMs that suit learners' needs. Classroom situations are not the same for learners in every subject, location, or age. Desimone, Smith, and Ueno (2014) declare that the school management team members should provide adequate support for teachers in this regard. O'Dowd and Dooly (2022) argue that the school management teams' responsibilities include adequate support for teaching and learning, which includes the provision of funds to teachers to acquire the necessary LTSM needed for classroom instruction.

4.5 Inclusive Classroom Practice

Educational policies stipulate an all-inclusive education system (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria [TRCN], 2010). The education system should accommodate diverse learners, learners with learning disabilities, and vulnerable learners. Findings revealed that any teacher professional development that is not experientially based cannot encourage teachers to cater for all learners.

"We teach in different schools where we have different learners with different learning disabilities or challenges. Our education policy encourages all learners to access education. This is known as 'education for all kids'. However, if you look at learners' performances in different schools, you will notice that some of them are struggling to learn, while some have even dropped out of schools. Government authorities have been blaming teachers for this. But the question is, are they helping us to overcome this problem? We need professional development that we attend practically to our classroom needs" (T4).

"We attend most times 'one-size-fits-all' workshops. These workshops do not help us at all. How can you bring together teachers of Mathematics, English Language, Biology, or Integrated Science together to train? We don't have the same subject contents and we don't experience the same classroom challenges. Government authorities do these to save costs, without thinking of the impact on teaching and learning. Bring teachers of the same subjects together in practical workshops that can be adopted into their classroom practices" (T1).

According to the participants, subject-based workshops are most appropriate for teachers to enhance their subject knowledge and skills. Participants expressed non-fulfillment in one-size-fits-all workshops that do not benefit classroom instructional delivery. This confirms Kolb's (1984) emphasis on the practical involvement of every learner in the learning process to attain concrete learning. According to Ajani & Govender (2019), clustering teachers according to their subjects for professional development not only enhances teachers' classroom performance but also improves learners' academic performance. Seeming, Mphahlele, and Rampa (2014) in their study affirm the effectiveness of cluster-based workshops to have improved the attainment of learning objectives and providing appropriate support to teachers. Professional development of teachers according to their teaching subjects promotes specialized knowledge and skills needed by the teachers from experienced subject teachers, advisors, or subject experts (TRCN, 2010; Ajoku, 2013; Ajani, 2019). These specialized workshops provide first-hand information,

knowledge, skills, and ideas that can be easily adopted into real classroom situations. Kolb (1984) avers that each learner can conceptualize learning from his own perspective according to his experiences. The subject clusters also enable the teachers to collaborate and deliberate on appropriate LTSM materials that can make learning accessible to every learner.

4.6 Enhanced Learners' Activities

Accordingly, the participants enumerated experiential-based professional development activities to include improvement of learners' performance in various learning activities. The participants affirmed that the classroom should be an interactive learning system that allows or encourages every member to be actively involved in the learning process.

"I strongly believe that classroom should be learner-based. It is the learners that want to learn, so teachers should be able to provide activities that can engage learners in the learning process" (T3).

"When you attend experiential-based training as a teacher, you learn many things. You are actively involved in the learning process. So, why won't you be able to do the same in the classrooms?" (T2).

"As teachers, we are being professionally developed to improve our classroom practice, which in return will improve learners' academic performance. So, lessons must be designed to provide learners with the opportunities to participate in learning experiences. Their active participation makes learning to be easy and concrete for them" (T10).

"My experience in this very workshop has repositioned my classroom practices. I have learnt why and how I can design various learners' activities to engage my learners in every interactive lesson for my subject" (T7).

Teaching in a modern education system is no longer teacher-centred but learner-centred (Ravhuhali, Kutame & Mutshaeni, 2015). So, teachers are saddled with the responsibility to ensure learning is attained by learners. According to Piaget (1966), the importance of learning attainment in the education system has shifted the focus of the process of learning to learners. Kolb (1984) opines that the purpose of any education system is to impact learners. This implies why Vygotsky (1978) opines that whatever learning activities will ensure learning experiences in learners should be promoted by teachers in classroom instructional delivery. Designing various professional development activities for teachers should focus on how, why, and what activities can be adequately employed by teachers to improve learners' disposition of knowledge and skills (Ajani, Govender & Maluleke, 2018; O'Dowd & Dooly, 2022). However, Ayeni (2011), Omotuyole and Okudo (2014) affirm that the failure of teachers to improve academic performance can be traced to inappropriate use of teaching approaches, lack of effective professional development, lack of teaching resources, inadequate teaching, and learning activities and teacher-centred lesson plans. Thus, the promotion of concrete experiences for the abstract conceptualization of knowledge in learners (Kolb, 1984).

Conversely, Ayeni (2011) calls for the regular empowerment of teachers through appropriate professional development activities that will provide teachers with dynamic knowledge and skills that can be practically adopted into their classroom practices to attain learning objectives. The learning objectives are designed for learners' achievements in the education system. Hence, O'Dowd and Dooly (2022) assert that learning experiences should be practical to learners, and various learning activities will be evidence of enhanced learners' activities in classroom practices.

5. Conclusions

Observations of teachers before the 3-day workshop showed that teachers lacked some essential classroom skills to deliver their lessons. Findings from these observations were used to design the contents of the workshop. The professional development of teachers is critical to the effective classroom performance of the teachers. Education is dynamic, and it requires teachers to be appropriate and regularly trained to deliver the much-needed knowledge and skills that learners need to survive in their dynamic environment. Most of the time, workshops and training are designed for teachers to fulfill their professional needs. However, the structure of these workshops does not present teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge in practical situations. Hence, teachers have nothing to transfer or adapt to their classroom practices. However, with experiential learning-based workshops and training for teachers, they can gain practical experiences that can be transferred into their classrooms, engage their learners in collaborative activities, design lesson plans that can achieve learning objectives, and ensure the participation of all learners. Thus, effective teaching and learning are made possible. Pratton and Hales (2015) agree that

experientially-based activities can positively influence learners' achievement. This is the concrete experience that learners need for an abstract conceptualization of new knowledge. Post-workshop observations showed improved classroom practices from the participants. Hence, the study established that the experiential learning theory is capable of improving teachers' classroom practices, especially when the contents of various professional development activities are embedded in the experiential theory.

6. Implications of the Study

Teachers learn better when they are regularly capacitated with appropriate professional development activities, which accommodate their classroom needs. Thus, professional development is significant to quality education. The quality of the teachers is one of the factors influencing the quality of education in any nation. Teachers learn more when they experience learning which can influence teaching and learning. The study recommends some strategies that can enhance teacher professional development.

Teachers should be assessed before any workshop or training is designed for them. The assessment will enable the professional needs of the teachers to be identified. Assessments will enable teachers with the same professional challenges to be grouped for workshops. All workshops and training should be experiential learning-based, where teachers can practically collaborate and engage in diverse activities in their disciplines.

Teachers should be monitored and evaluated after every workshop they attend, to determine the impact of such workshops on their classroom practices. The results of the monitoring and evaluation can be used to decide the next training for teachers. Teacher educators should be made to design experiential learning-based workshops and training that provide teachers with diverse activities and materials for collaborative group works that can be integrated into classroom situations. These activities should be based on or integrate Kolb (1984)'s four stages of experiential learning theory to enhance classroom learning experiences. Adequate assessments, monitoring, and evaluation should be provided to identify barriers to effective teaching and learning. Identified barriers should be addressed in learning environments through collaborations.

Professional development is a lifelong investment in teacher development. This implies that experiential learning-based workshops and training for teachers should be regular and appropriately designed for every teacher every term if possible.

7. Limitations to the Study

This study was limited to only 10 Economics teachers in ten selected high schools in Lagos, Nigeria due to financial implications and time. Further research can be conducted to accommodate more teachers, more schools, and other geographical locations. Also, a mixed-method or quantitative research approach for the large-scale survey can be employed for further research.

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