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## School-Based Teacher Professional Development Framework (SBTPDF): A Blueprint for School Principals in Nigeria

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**Abstract.** There is a growing body of knowledge on effective Teacher Professional Development (TPD), with a consensus that skews in favour of decentralised, school-based and teacher-centred approach to TPD as opposed to the centralised, traditional and top-down approach. On the contrary, developing countries such as Nigeria still practise a centralised education system where traditional top-down TPD remains the norm, with the attendant consequence of professionally deficient teachers in the classroom. This situation has left a deficiency in centralised district/cluster-based teacher development. This study explored teachers' and school administrators' perceptions on the existing effectiveness TPD, with a view to developing a school-based TPD framework that caters for teachers' professional needs. The study was a qualitative multiple-case study informed by the interpretivist paradigm. The study used, as its lenses, two complementary theories: Distributed Leadership Theory (DLT) and Adult Learning Theory (ALT). Three schools were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Four participants were selected from each school using a combination of purposive and snowball techniques. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using the Thematic Analysis (TA) procedure. The findings revealed that one-size-fit-all centralised schools cluster TPD no longer meet the professional needs of teachers. The result also showed that participants preferred school-based teachers' professional development to centralised approach. Hence, the study proposed a data-informed and theory-driven model known as School-Based Teacher Professional Development Framework (SBTPDF) as a blue-print for the implementation of school-based TPD for school administrators.

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**Keywords:** Adult learning theory; distributed leadership; School-Based Teacher Professional Development Framework (SBTPDF); teacher professional development; adult education

## 1. Introduction

In the face of rapid technological advancement characteristic of the education system, the quest for quality education driven by qualified and seasoned school administrators and teachers heightens (Avidov-Ungar & Reingold, 2018; Akramov & Muzaffar, 2021; Karakose et al., 2021). Suffice it to say continuous teacher professional development would play a pivotal role in attaining quality education (Ajani, 2018).

Teacher professional development is essential in pursuing national and international imperatives regarding providing quality education. In the 21st century, research influences every sphere of human endeavour (social, economic and education) at an unprecedented pace (Ramos et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2019; McCowan, 2019). By implication, the development of any nation reflects the dynamics of its education sector because education is a driver of development. No nation can develop beyond its level of educational attainment. (Ajani, 2018; Guo et al., 2019; Agbedahin, 2019). That explains why the United Nations, in its 17 points of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, features “Quality Education” as the fourth item. This is otherwise known as SDG4, which further features ten objectives: the supply of quality teachers and life-long learning (UNESCO, 2016; Agbedahin, 2019). At the continental level, the United Nations SDG4 finds expression in the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 for education via Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) objectives among which is revitalisation of teaching profession with a view to ensure and sustain quality and relevance at all levels (African Union, 2023). Worthy of note is the fact that SDG4 and AU 2063 agenda for education both converge at the provision of quality, relevant and life-long education, as well as the supply of well-trained teachers.

In Nigeria, the national objectives for teacher education, as provided for in National Policy on Education 2013, include providing teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment, making them adaptable to changing conditions as well as enhancing their commitment to the teaching profession (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Unfortunately, the reality of teacher professional development in Nigerian secondary schools is far from the intended objectives, with the attendant negative impact on students' learning outcomes (Ajani, 2018; Ajani, 2019). Failure to attain the intended objective on teacher professional development in Nigeria has been linked to several factors. One of the main factors is the lack of funding for professional development programs (Ajani, 2021). This leads to scarce resources and opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge. Additionally, there is shortage of professional academic staff, which further hinders the implementation of effective professional development initiatives (Ogunode & Edokhamhen, 2020). Furthermore, challenges such as poor policy implementation, lack of continuity in commitment to policy implementation,

and institutional corruption affect the effectiveness of professional development programs (Usman, 2020).

Notably, the obligation to provide professional development to teachers rests with the Ministry of Education and pro-education organisations in centralised education systems. However, extant literature reveals that many TPDs' contents are at variance with teachers' professional needs. Such trainings adopt the *knowledge banking* approach known as pedagogy rather than andragogy. They lack need assessment components to establish teachers' professional needs; and fail to meet teachers' needs. Despite the traditional TPD organised by the Ministry of Education (MoE), teachers' professionalism falls below expectations. This is where the roles of school principals become essential. Ideally, school administrators should provide professional development support to teachers at intervals and at a close range (Leithwood et al., 2006; Bush, 2021).

On the contrary, we observed that this is not the reality in many Nigeria secondary schools, as school principals concentrate on administrative activities at the expense of their professional support responsibilities. Speculations exist in the public domain on the association between the decline in school efficiency and lack of professionalism among teachers (Özgenel & Mert, 2019). Lack of professionalism among teachers has also been linked with inadequate TPD and poor school leadership owing to lack of pre-principalship leadership training among school principals (Oladipo et al., 2016).

Historically, the challenge of teacher professional incompetency has been a protracted, permeating the length and breadth of the Nigerian school system. It is a phenomenon that runs from the north through the southern region of Nigeria. For instance, the outcomes of competency tests conducted for teacher, headmasters and school principals by Ekiti State Ministry of Education in 2012 (Southwestern Nigeria) and Kaduna State government (North Central Nigeria) in 2021 were disheartening. The Ekiti State Competency Test was conducted in 2012 to evaluate the basic literacy and numeracy skills of teachers and school principals in the state's public primary and secondary schools (Channels Television, 2012). The test was administered to approximately 19,000 teachers and 1,300 principals. The result revealed that only 3% of the teachers scored at least 75%, while 82% scored below 50% (Channels Television, 2012). Thereafter, several school administrators in Ekiti State were demoted to classroom teachers based on their poor performance in the test. The results sparked controversy and criticism from various stakeholders, including the Nigeria Union of Teachers, who condemned the test as a ploy to dismiss teachers and undermine their dignity (Francis & Oluwatoyin, 2019). However, the Ekiti State Government defended the test as a necessary measure to improve the quality of education and ensure accountability in the sector related to organisational behaviour and leadership in secondary schools, as these factors have been found to correlate with teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Ekitistate.gov.ng, 2012; Channels Television, 2012; Ekundayo et al., 2018).

Similarly, in December 2021, out of over 30,000 teachers who participated in the competency test conducted by the Kaduna State Ministry of Education, 2,192 fell below the competency benchmark, and were relieved of their jobs. Still in

Kaduna State, 2,357 teachers were laid off in mid-June, 2022 by the Kaduna State government because of poor performance in a competency test conducted by Kaduna Universal Basic Education Board (KADSUBEB) (Nwachukwu, 2022). This explains the clamour for training and re-training of schoolteachers and administrators among other education stakeholders to foster the requisite professional competency (Arikewuyo, 2009; Oluwagbohunmi & Osalusi, 2013; Iyunade 2017; Oyewole, 2013; Francis & Oluwatoyin 2019).

There has been a sustained outcry among education stakeholders on the low achievement levels among students in their external examinations such West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) (Arikewuyo, 2009; Iyunade, 2017; Francis & Oluwatoyin, 2019). In some quarters, the low performance has been linked to inadequate site-based leadership professional support. Given that *leadership* has been associated with school effectiveness (Hesbol, 2019), inadequate professional support from school leaders (the principal, vice-principals, and Heads of Departments (HODs) has also been associated with professional deficiency among teachers, and poor learning outcomes among students. These school leaders are trusted with the responsibilities of planning, organising, leading and implementing educational policies and practices in schools (Omotere & Nwangwa, 2019). Sadly, it has been observed that many school administrators are lacking concerning teachers' professional support in their schools (Oladipo et al., 2016). This was corroborated by Makhasane (2019) who noted that school effectiveness is, to a great extent, the function of the school administrators. This implies that ill-equipped school administrators cannot support teacher professional development.

Previous studies have linked principals' failure to promote teacher professional development to lack of well-thought-out criteria for appointing school principals. For instance, principalship in many African countries, including Nigeria, is mainly based on years of experience and political affiliations (Ofoegbu et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2016; Oladipo et al., 2016); lack of pre-principalship and in-service training in school leadership (Cowie & Crawford, 2007); failure to strike a balance between principal administrative and professional roles; non-provision for school administrators training in National Policy on Education and poor school funding (Bush, 2018).

Notably, extant literature reveals that a sizeable number of studies have been carried out on teacher professional development in Nigeria. Specifically, many studies correlated teacher attendance in professional development programmes with teachers' efficiency (Althausen, 2015; Gröschner et al., 2018). Many of the previous studies in Nigeria investigated school administration and leadership in relation to teacher job performance but not on teacher professional development. This could be attributed to the over-emphasis placed on school administrators' roles as administrators rather than being both administrative and professional leaders. Olaleye (2013) argues that many secondary school principals in Nigeria lack serious professional training in educational management and school administration, making them less effective in performing administrative tasks

such as planning, organising, directing, and budgeting. The appointment of principals is often based on politics and mass promotion than on administrative professionalism. This compromises effective secondary school administration. Unfortunately, up to the time of this study, there is dearth of studies on leadership roles of school administrators in teacher professional development at secondary school level in Nigeria. Despite the enormous resources committed to teacher professional development in Nigeria, the effect on teacher professionalism is far from expected. The input-output incongruence vis a vis TPD is potentially associated with the disconnect between the traditional Teacher professional Development (TPD) in vogue and the actual teachers' needs. Hence, we advocate a theory-based school-based TPD framework characterised by distributed leadership and adult learning principles in this study. The framework proposes contextualised TPD that takes cognisance of teachers' professional needs within their domain.

Given the above background and the identified gap, the objective of the study is to explore teachers' and school administrators' perceptions of centralised TPD organised by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with International Development Partners (IDPs), as well as school-based approach to TPD as an alternative or complementary approach. Drawing from the Distributed Leadership Theory and Adult Learning Theory principles, we propose a theory and data-driven framework for school-based TPD.

## 2. Theoretical Underpinning

This study was underpinned by a blend of Distributed Leadership Theory (DLT) and adult learning theory (ALT). The application of Distributed Leadership (though not coined as Distributed Leadership) dates back to the mid-13th century (Oduro, 2004). Scholars acknowledge Gibbs (1954) as its progenitor in the mid-20th century (Gronn, 2000; Richard, 2011). However, the movement remained unpopular until the early 21st century. Distributed Leadership Theory is relatively new in the education sector but started gaining prominence among scholars in the early years of the 21st century (Bush et al., 2018). The theory evolved as a buildup or/and improvement on instructional leadership theory, which was criticised for its principal and teaching-centric nature. Given the various schools of thought/conceptualisations of distributed leadership theory, and for clarification purposes, this study was specifically unpinned by the Spillane distributed leadership theory (2005). The rationale is that the Distributed Leadership Theory proposed by Spillane has gained prominence in the field of school leadership (Johnston, 2015). It is considered a new way of thinking about leadership in schools, and has been recognised as a powerful tool for transforming leadership practice (Harris, 2009).

Historically, adult learning theory was pioneered by Malcolm Knowles. In his book titled *Adult learner: A neglected species*, Knowles (1973) asserts that adult learning theory is an offshoot of *andragogy*; a construct derived from the Greek word *aner*, meaning man (as distinguished from boy). By implication, the adult learning process differs from the adolescent learning process. The adolescent teaching-learning process is top-down, where teachers are viewed as authorities whose instructions and views should not be challenged by students. On the

contrary, in the adult learning process, past experiences, reflective thinking, instruction-filtering, and the ability to construct knowledge are brought to bear.

### **2.1 Distributed Leadership Theory (DLT)- The Spillane's Perspective**

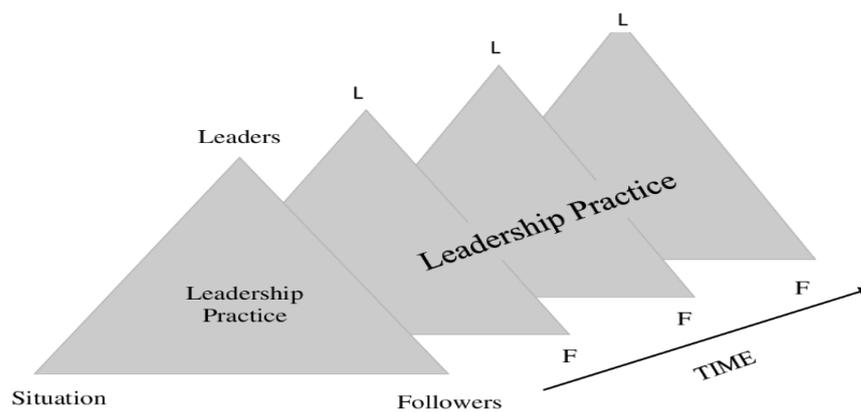
Spillane's (2005) Distributed Leadership Theory (DLT) is the first framework that gave distributed leadership its incipient shape in school leadership. It has been adjudged as the sixth most cited framework/theory in education administration literature in the last three decades (Diamond & Spillane, 2016). According to Spillane (2005), the distributed leadership model emphasizes the importance of interactions over actions when it comes to individuals in both formal and informal leadership positions. This model primarily focuses on leadership practices and how they impact the improvement of organisations and instruction. He further argues that one of the factors that necessitates DL is the contextual social situation and its complexities. This conceptualisation of leadership is at variance with orthodox dualism – a top-down leadership approach. The theory opposes heroic leadership by emphasising the importance of leadership practice (rather than roles), situation/context, and followers.

### **2.2 Assumptions of distributed leadership theory**

According to Spillane, the theoretical underpinning of Distributed Leadership hinges on the elements of leader(s), situation, and followers. We unravel these elements in this section.

**Leader:** This assumption holds that leadership centres on *activities* and *practices* involved in discharging leadership responsibilities, otherwise known as "Leadership practices", rather than formal positions (Spillane, 2014). Leaders carry out their tasks through social interactions, which requires people skills, otherwise known as social capital. Leadership practices are woven into the social interactions that occur among leaders, followers, and their contexts/situation while performing tasks (Spillane et al., 2004; Harris, 2004). This includes both formal and informal leaders who distribute leadership practices collaboratively, collectively, and in a coordinated manner (Spillane, 2005).

**Situation:** Situation is an essential element of leadership activity, and includes organisational structures, language, tools, and other particulars that shape leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2004). Every organisation has its unique situation that influences leadership practices, and no two organisations are the same, even if they have the uniform resources (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). In a school context, the situation includes routines, tools, and structures such as meetings, professional development, assessment, instructional materials, and laboratory equipment (Spillane et al., 2004; Spillane, 2019). Situation shapes and is shaped by leadership practices over time, spread across leaders, followers, and the situation itself. An organization's leadership, management, structure, and configuration differ based on its situation (Diamond & Spillane 2016).



**Figure 1: Constituting elements of leadership practice of Spillane (2005).**

**Followers:** Unlike the *heroic* genre of leadership; where leadership connotes unidirectional influence on followers, this leadership style holds that followers can go a long way to influence leadership practices in an organisation (Spillane et al., 2004). One of the core elements in distributed leadership continuum is *agency*. Followers are part of an agency in an organisation. Agency connotes members of an organisation, whose duties, actions, inactions, will, decisions, influence and dispositions or otherwise to organisations *modus operandi* affects his/her job and that of others in the organisation (Tian, 2016). Followers in organisations (as part of an agency) influence things. Bøje and Frederiksen (2019) argues that school leaders and leadership are deeply embedded in the broader social, cultural, and political contexts in which they operate, and cannot be understood in isolation.

### 2.3 Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy)

Malcolm Knowles is considered the father of andragogy (Rachal, 2002; Greene & Larsen, 2018). His work sparked a re-awakening in Europe and popularised Andragogy in the United States (Abdullah et al., 2021). In 1973, Knowles authored "*Adult Learners: The neglected species.*" The book's core and his subsequent work emphasise that adult learning differs from children's learning. According to Malcolm Knowles, adults are self-directed, bring valuable experience to the learning process, and are motivated by practicality and relevance. It suggests that effective adult learning should be learner-centered, experiential, collaborative, and tailored to address the specific needs and goals of adult learners. Specifically, the assumptions of Knowles's Theory of Adult Education hinge on the characteristics of adults in relation to learning. These assumptions include the need to know, self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and motivation. These form the core adult learning principles of Adult Learning Theory (ALT).

### 2.4 Adult Learning Theory Assumptions

Over the years, the assumptions of Adult Learning Theory (ALT) have evolved from four to six (Velardi et al., 2021) due to critique from learning theorists and educators. Nevertheless, the principles of andragogy still serve as the foundation

for many adult education programmes worldwide. Discussed next are the key assumptions of ALT, as proposed by Knowles between 1973 and 1990.

***The need to know:*** This assumption holds that adult learners are motivated to learn when they understand the reasons behind acquiring new knowledge. They are driven by the potential benefits, such as improved performance or promotion; or by the negative consequences, like demotion or inefficiency if they do not engage in learning. In cases where learners are unaware of this need, facilitators are responsible for raising their consciousness about the importance of acquiring the knowledge (Findsen, 2007).

***The learners' self-concept:*** This assumption holds that adult learners perceive themselves as responsible for their own decisions, actions, and lives. They have shifted from being dependent learners to becoming self-directed learners. However, it's important to note that not all adults are self-directed learners. Some may still require guidance. Hence, the level of control in program design should consider learners' autonomy and previous knowledge while developing TPD (Dasoo, 2020; Shinta Sari et al., 2020; Govender & Ajani, 2021).

***The role of learners' experiences:*** This tenet holds that adults accumulate a reservoir of experiences that shape their perspectives and attitudes. These experiences can pose challenges in adult education, as they may lead to biases and prejudices. Adult educators should incorporate and leverage learners' diverse experiences by using experiential teaching techniques, such as group discussions and problem-solving activities, to create meaningful connections (Knowles et al., 2005).

***Readiness to learn:*** This assumption holds that as individuals mature, the biological drive to learn decreases, but the pressure to learn emanates from social roles. Adult learners are naturally inclined to acquire new knowledge if it helps them fulfil their social roles effectively. In cases where learners are not naturally ready to learn, facilitators can stimulate their interest through exposure to superior performance models, career counselling, or highlighting the consequences of falling behind (Knowles et al., 2005).

***Orientation to learning:*** According to this tenet, adult learning should be problem-centred and relevant to their social roles. Training should address ongoing challenges faced by adults, enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities. Adult educators should design training content that is applicable and practical for adults (Knowles et al., 2005).

***Motivation:*** This assumption holds that adult learners are driven by intrinsic motivation, such as job satisfaction, self-esteem, additional responsibilities, and improved quality of life. Adult educators should develop programme content that aligns with and satisfies these intrinsic needs (Knowles et al., 2005).

The justification for adopting two-prolonged theoretical framework in this study is twofold. First, the assumptions of distributed leadership theory (DLT) enable school administrators to leverage the latent leadership capacities and expertise of their subordinates (vice-principals, heads of departments and subject heads)

to foster and implement teacher professional development (TPD). Second, it is based on the appropriateness of the ALT principles in the operationalisation of effective TPD. The two theories of DL and ALT are complementary in repositioning school administrators' leadership roles in promoting teachers' professional development.

### **3. Research Method**

This study was viewed through an interpretive paradigm. A paradigm is a researcher's framework/blueprint that guides a study. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) conceptualise a paradigm as a combination of beliefs that inform action. Central to the interpretive paradigm or philosophical assumption is that there is no absolute truth – individuals construct and make meaning of a given phenomenon based on their personal beliefs, perceptions, values, and experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). It also emphasises the need for researchers to avoid bias in the data collection and analysis process. Epistemologically, interpretivists maintain that knowledge does not exist out there, but is socially constructed. (Cohen et al., 2011; Henning et al., 2004). According to interpretivists ontology, there are multiple realities (Crotty, 1998) and knowledge subjectively resides with research participants. The rationale for adopting an interpretive paradigm hinge on the appropriateness of its philosophical assumptions, ontology and epistemology that enabled us to elicit participants' opinions and their lived experiences concerning the realities of TPD in Nigeria.

This study adopted a qualitative research approach which enables a researcher to understand a phenomenon through the eyes and based on the understanding of participants who live the reality of such phenomenon (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Cadena, 2019; Aspers and Corte, 2019). Qualitative approach was considered appropriate as it afforded the researchers insight into the lived experiences of the participants in relation to TPD.

We adopted a multiple case study design due to its suitability for exploring significant problems of practice and deepening the understanding, interpretation, and observation of a given phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). This study was a multiple case study of three selected secondary schools in Nigeria. Unlike a single case study design, multiple-case design "shows numerous sources of evidence through replication rather than sampling logic" (Zaidah, 2007:2). It then follows that a multiple case study design is suitable for establishing commonalities or variances of a phenomenon of interest across contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). We employed multiple case study design because it allows for comparing and contrasting realities in multiple contexts, while seeking answers to the research questions; an approach that we believe gives credence to the study's findings.

The study used a qualitative research-compatible sampling technique to select few participants to gather in-depth views (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Three schools were selected based on accessibility, proximity, and convenience, and participants were selected through purposeful and snowballing sampling techniques. The total number of participants was twelve. One school

administrator (school principal) was selected from each school. Three classroom teachers were also selected as participants using snowballing sampling. School administrators referred the researcher to teachers who fit predetermined criteria and had spent at least three years in the school. The assumption was that three years was enough time for a teacher to be aware of the school administrator's efforts towards teacher professional development (Shank, 2006).

We used semi-structured interviews to collect data on participants' perceptions of the existing teacher professional development (TPD). The semi-structured interviews served as guides for moderating participants' responses to open-ended questions (Al Balushi, 2016) in a manner that ensured relevant and in-depth data collection. Braun et al.'s (2019) Thematic Analysis procedure informed our data analysis. First, we familiarised ourselves with the data and identified initial codes. Then, we compiled, disassembled, and reassembled the data to identify overarching themes. Next, we interpret the data to draw meaningful interpretations. Finally, we conclude the analysis by preparing a final report (Braun et al., 2019).

It is worthy of note that this study is a subset of a larger study, hence, the researchers adhered to laid-down procedures concerning research ethics at the University of the Free State (UFS). The ethical approval for conducting the research was approved by the university and denoted as number UFS-HSD2020/1304. It should be noted that the names ascribed to schools and participants in the study were fictitious to conceal their real identities.

## 4. Result

Having analysed the data, two distinct themes emerged: Teachers Perception of Ministry of Education-organised TPD and Teachers' Preference for School-Based TPD.

### 4.1 Teachers Perception of Ministry-organised TPD

The participants' perceptions vis-a-vis the effectiveness of centralised TPD informed this theme. Perceptions in this context means the observation, importance and value attributed to centralised TPD by the teachers. The data revealed that many teachers were dissatisfied with centralised TPD by the Ministry of Education and its allies due to observed shortcomings. The results are presented below.

Noting the absence of suitable facilitators in the organisation of centralised TPD, Mr. King, the vice-principal of Kingdom School, spoke on the need for the organisers to incorporate experienced education practitioners as facilitators. According to him:

*This has been made known to them in the ministry. I mean, the need to incorporate on-the-job facilitators in teacher professional development at the level of the states. The administrators at the Ministry of Education had once taken to this correction and we appreciate them for that. I have had the opportunity of calling the attention of the Ministry of Education to this issue. That there is a need for them to involve experienced education practitioners either on the job or retired in TPD. These people have the experience, and*

*they know what is obtainable in the classroom and the school in general.*

Mr Blessing from Kingdom School also expressed his displeasure with the lack of full representation of teachers and overcrowding in centralised TPD. This is because few teachers were selected from all schools to assemble in a single venue, thereby constituting a large crowd, a practice that impacted negatively on TPD:

*Although this type of training has its own shortcoming for me because not all teachers are represented...government organised training with a large number of attendees.*

Sharing similar views with Mr Blessing, Mrs Olajide from Up Hill School noted that overcrowding in centralised TPD led to participants' loss of focus. According to her:

*Personally, I think school-based teacher professional development will be more effective when compared with what is obtainable in the general or ministry training. Facilitators in general training do not have sufficient information regarding the realities in the classroom. Many teachers do lose focus during training that are organised by the ministry. When they get there, they embark on different or personal agendas leaving behind the purpose of such training.*

Mrs Folarin in Up-hill school shared the same concern. She noted that government-organised TPD lacked facilitators familiar with classroom realities. According to her:

*Those who are part of the system and are aware of what goes on within the system should be the facilitators. There should be the involvement of experienced teachers and principals in the planning and execution of such training to make it effective.*

Looking at the effect of crowding at ministry-organised TPD, Mrs Adebare in Church School commented:

*School-based teacher professional development is better than Ministry-organised training with a large crowd (Ministry-organised TPD) where you have about 1,000 trainees, such trainings are not always effective. That is why I prefer school-based teacher professional development.*

Overall, data on participants' perception of centralised TPD revealed shortcomings that characterised training, such as non-engaging appropriate facilitators, inadequate teacher representation, overcrowding and loss of focus. This theme suggests that teachers prefer School-Based teacher Professional Development (SBTPD) to traditional TPD.

#### **4.2 Teachers' Preference for School-Based TPD**

Informed by participants' perception of centralised/traditional TPD vis-a-vis the deficiencies that characterised it as indicated in the previous theme, this sub-theme included data on teachers' disposition towards SBTPD. This theme emerged from responses to one of the interview questions, "How do you compare ministry-organised training to school-based teacher professional development?" The data set revealed that the rationale for participants' preference was the manageable size of participants, real-time collegial support during training, presence of community of practice, availability of suitable facilitators, and the alignment of SBTPD with teachers' professional needs.

While responding to the question, Mr Blessing from Kingdom School spoke about the negative effect of overcrowding in centralised TPD. He remarked:

*I will suggest that the government encourage all schools to embark on school-based teacher professional development. This will enhance teachers' professional development. It will be more effective than government-organised training. This is because teachers will be few in number and that makes the management of training very effective as opposed to the government-organised training with a large number of attendees.*

The view of Mrs Adebare resonated with that of Mr Blessing. In addition, she emphasised the need for collegial support during training which was absent in the centralised training. According to her:

*School-based teacher professional development is a good idea because teachers tend to learn better. It is better than the one held in a large crowd. During school-based teacher professional development, teachers can easily ask questions, and share knowledge within themselves, but when it is an outside seminar with about 1,000 trainees, such training are not always effective. That is why I prefer school-based teacher professional development.*

Juxtaposing centralised TPD and SBTPD, Mrs Folaranmi in UP Hill School shared the same sentiment:

*Personally, I think school-based teacher professional development will be more effective when compared with what is obtainable in general or ministry training. ...During such training, teachers are able to ask questions and they will have a better understanding. As for me, I prefer school-based teacher professional development.*

Mrs Grace from Kingdom School spoke from the community of practice point of view, where both the facilitators and the teachers were practitioners in SBTPD as opposed to a centralised TPD where the so called "experts", who could not relate to typical class contexts, were hired as facilitators.

*Yes, I prefer school-based professional development because it will be an assembly of professionals and teachers to gain much better than what they will have gained in the training organised by the Ministry of Education.*

This view was upheld by Mrs Folarin in Up-hill school. According to her:

*.. Such a program (TPD) should also be done within the school because it will be more effective at school levels. The teachers who do things at their own levels will ask questions from facilitators and peers and that will make them understand things better.*

Mr Badmos from Church School preferred SBTPD to centralised TPD because he believed some schools had in-house resource persons capable of anchoring such programmes.

*It is possible, but it all depends on individual principal. It depends on their willingness to do it. There are lot of potential resource persons among the teachers. In this school, we have many Masters and PhD holders who are capable of leading teacher professional development training sessions.*

Teachers' needs-oriented TPD and interactivity during training were the basis for Mr Ade's (from Up Hill School) preference for SBTPD.

*I prefer school-based teacher professional development. The principal knows the areas of need of each teacher. He will tailor the programme towards their needs. This is preferred to government or ministry-organised teacher professional development. It will be more interactive and people who gain a lot from it as opposed to the government-organised ones.*

The data set that informed this theme depicted that teachers preferred SBTPD to centralised TPD. This disposition cut across all the selected schools for various reasons thereby suggesting that centralised TPD has lost its significance among teachers. The next session unpacked and proposed a data-informed and theory driven school-based framework for TPD.

### **1.3 School-Based Teacher Professional Development Framework (SBTPDF)**

The proposed framework for school administrators to implement School-Based Teacher Professional Development in their schools is tagged "*School-Based Teacher Professional Development Framework*" (SBTPDF). The ideation of this framework emanated from 3 sources: 1) the responses from the participants with regards to their views on how best SBTPDF can be organised at the school level; 2) the principles of the two theories adopted in this study – Distributed Leadership Theory and Adult Learning Theory and how these principles can be adopted to deploy SBTPDF in schools; and 3) drawings from extant literature on SBTPDF. School administrators are expected to leverage the assumptions of Distributed Leadership Theory to coordinate the programme and Adult Learning Theory principles to design the programme in a manner that take cognisance of the school context. The components that constitute SBTPDF are unpacked in the next section.

### **4.4 Components of SBTPDF**

Various components that make up for SBTPDF are described next.

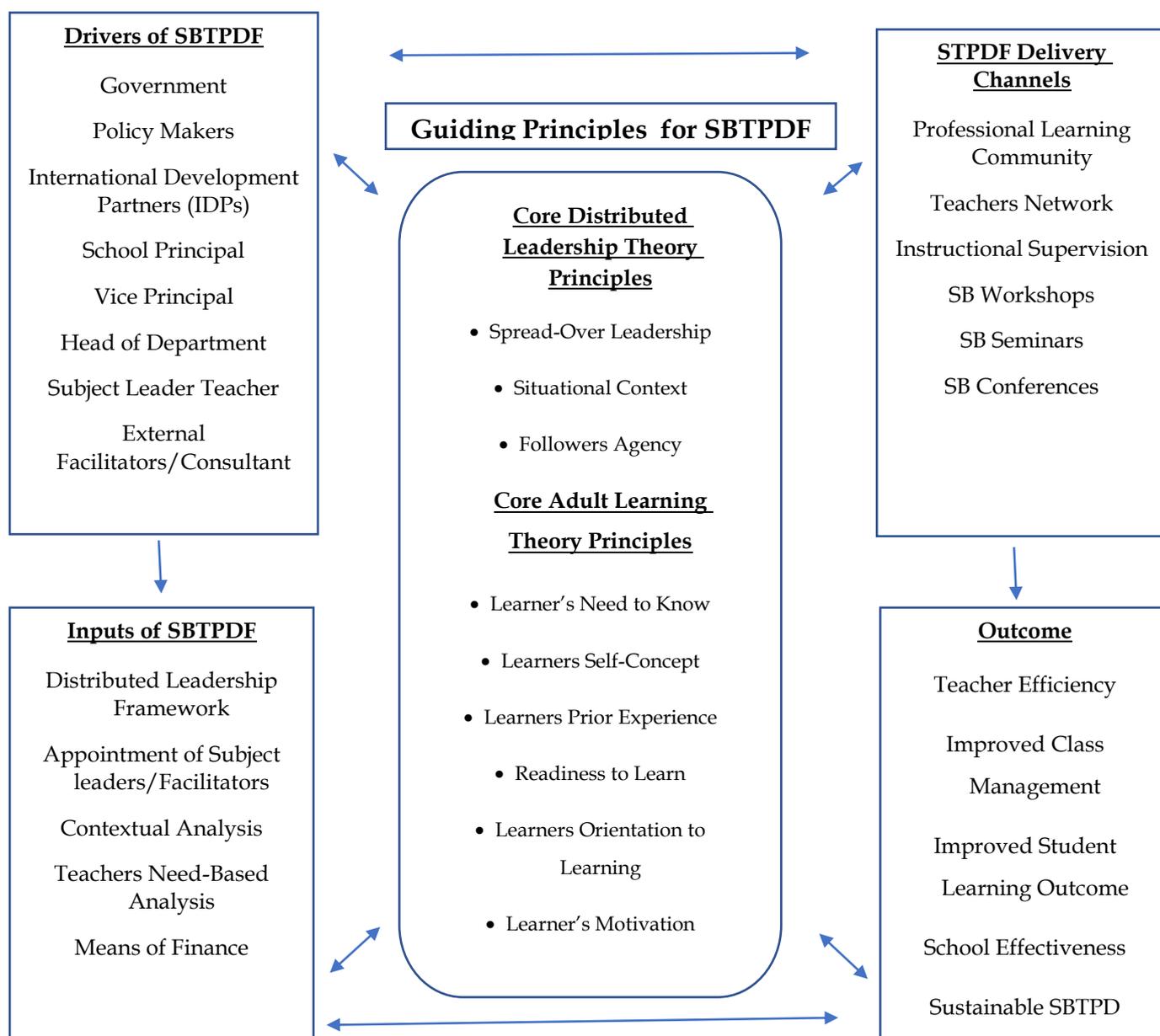
***Drivers of SBTPDF:*** Given that schools are owned, funded, and guided by government policies on education; the role of policy makers cannot be undermined in the operationalisation of SBTPD. Hence, for SBTPDF to be effective, it has to be driven by education stakeholders such as government, policymakers, International Development Partners (IDPs), school principal, vice principal, head of department, subject leader teacher, and external facilitators/consultant. Their roles range from policy formulation to the implementation stage.

***Inputs of SBTPDF:*** Drawing from the theories and responses from respondents, the inputs that constitute STPDF are the following: distributed leadership framework, appointment of subject leaders/facilitators, contextual analysis, teachers need-based analysis, and means of finance.

***Guiding Principles for SBTPDF:*** The core of SBTPDF is a function of the blend of the principles of DLT and ALT, as explained in the subsequent session.

***STPDF Delivery Channels:*** For SBTPDF to translate from Theory to practice, it must find expression through events and the formations of teachers into professional groups for effective collegial relationships. Some formations and programmes are professional learning community, teachers' network, instructional supervision, workshops, seminars, and conferences.

***Outcome:*** All things being equal, effective implementation of SBTPDF should yield the following outcome: teacher efficiency, improved class management, improved student learning outcome, school effectiveness and sustainable SBTPDF.



**Figure 2: School-oriented Teacher Professional Development (SBTPDF)**

### **The nexus of Distributed Leadership Theory and SBTPDF**

DLT stands on three basic components, according to Spillane (2006), namely; Leader, Follower and Situation. SBTPDF is a programme that comprises these three components.

**Leader:** The principle of *leadership* in DLT states that leadership should be *spread-over* subordinates in their areas of strength. Leadership should be a practice rather than a position. Hence, school administrators are expected to identify and coordinate resource persons within and from outside the school who can facilitate training sessions in their schools. As indicated in the result, participants agreed that each school had competent teachers (some of whom are PhD holders in the subjects they teach) who could serve as resource persons. It is the duty of the school administrators to assign leadership roles to teachers who possess the requisite abilities across all departments and subjects, both to serve

as coordinators and facilitators. For instance, each Head of Department or Subject can serve as a coordinator, while experienced and competent teachers within the department can serve as facilitators. In coordinating SBTPDF, school administrators also need to leverage the collaborative, coordinated and collective principles of leadership distribution. By so doing, they can galvanise the contributions of all teachers (including coordinators, facilitators and the teachers) towards achieving a sustainable SBTPDF. Moreso, they would be able to coordinate the programme effectively and bring all activities to focus on achieving an effective school.

**Follower:** The tenet of *follower* holds that followers serve as the agency through which activities that culminate in the actualisation of the institution's vision are carried out. Leadership, vision and resource may not translate to vision actualisation without the agency of followers. In view of this, school administrators are to galvanise the necessary resources and tools that would make for effective SBTPDF through the followers (teachers). For instance, pilot needs-assessment activities could be organised for the teacher to ascertain their areas of needs, which will inform a tailor-made SBTPDF. More so, followers' (teachers) participation in planning, implementation and attendance in training are very germane.

**Situation:** This principle holds that aspects such as routine, artefacts, and tools mediate task execution in schools. SBTPDF is not an exemption in this regard. Regular SBTPDF should be part of school routine in order to achieve sustainability as opposed to one-shot traditional TPD, as suggested by some participants. Requisite artefacts and tools such as teaching aids should be put in place to facilitate such a programme. It is noteworthy that inherent in the situation is the school context. Previous studies on TPD show that one-size-fits-all TPD are ineffective majorly because such training does not take cognizance of the diversities in contexts and peculiarities of the participants' schools. For SBTPDF to be effective, such a programme must take cognizance of the school context (Fischer et al., 2018).

#### 4.5 The nexus of Adult Learning Theory and SBTPDF.

**The need to know:** This principle holds that adults are aware of their needs to learn, and if they are not, the training organiser (in this case, the school administrator) should bring them to awareness of the need to know through a "consciousness-raising exercise" which could be a need-assessment exercise.

**The learners' self-concept:** This principle holds that adult learners expect their learning to be self-directing and non-overdependent on the teacher (facilitators). This implies that SBTPDF ought to allow teachers' involvement rather than a top-down lecture delivery method.

**Readiness to learn:** This principle holds that, despite the declining willingness to learn new concepts among adults, the pain and the gain motivation associated with their social roles prompt them to learn. Teachers must be made aware of the benefits and pains associated with professional development as it relates to their personal development and professional expectations.

**Orientation to learning:** This assumption is otherwise known as the principle of relevance. Contents of SBTPDF should be relevant to teachers' ongoing challenge(s), hands-on, and practical. It should be characterised by a problem-solving and an informative approach.

**Motivation:** It is believed that adult learning is intrinsically motivation driven. School administrators and SBTPDF should take cognisance of the resultant effect of job satisfaction, enhanced self-esteem recognition and job enlargement and how they can be enhanced during training.

## 5. Discussion

The development of TPD programmes based on identified professional development needs can enhance teachers' competence in instructional design, learning goals, and feedback to students; leading to improved student learning outcomes (Kārlis et.al., 2021; Huang, 2021). However, the attainment of these objectives would remain elusive if teachers' perception in relation to TPD is not factored into the planning, content, and implementation of such training. When asked, *"What is their assessment of the existing TPD organised by the government through the Ministry of Education?"* participants indicated that the existing TPD largely failed to cater to teachers' professional needs. Teachers asserted that traditional TPD content was incongruence with teachers' professional needs. This could be attributed to the lack of synergy among the organisers, facilitators, and the attendees (the teachers) vis a vis training contents and how they address teacher professional needs. The finding is consistent with Valiandes and Neophytou's (2017) result in a study that investigated best practices in teachers' professional development in the United States. They found that providing teachers' professional needs - oriented TPD programme focused on content and pedagogical knowledge was a critical component of effective TPD. Similarly, the finding by Soodmand and Doosti (2022), in a study that focused on *"Implementing and evaluating a peer-coached EFL teacher professional development programme"*, was confirmed. The researchers found that teachers were more satisfied with an interactive workshop that enabled them to negotiate the content and implementation of the programmes. More importantly, such training had a positive influence on their classroom practices. It was therefore, deduced that teacher involvement in the development of TPD training content was essential.

From a theoretical perspective, the above notion (the need to align teachers' professional needs with TPD contents) is upheld by *"the need to know"* and *"previous knowledge"* principles of adult learning theory. According to these principles, training for adult should prioritise adults' motivation for learning, and link the training content with their previous knowledge. The principle of previous knowledge is also key when enacting TPD. This resonates with Knowles' submission that andragogy (adult learning) design should help connect experience with reflection and action (Khadka, 2020). Teacher professional development should therefore, be seen as a means of facilitating *"teachers' learning"* and not *"teachers' change"* as change could be difficult to achieve if teachers did not see the need to change their practices. The result also revealed that centralised traditional TPD trainings are characterised by

overcrowding. Notably, Ekiti State (where the research was located) comprises 16 local government areas/municipalities made up of 130 towns and villages with over 80 per cent of these towns and villages, with at least one secondary school. This has made the operationalisation of TPD in the state cluster-based with hundreds of teachers congregating for training at few centres. Some of the training centres lacked adequate facilities for conducive learning environment. Many participants in such training centres lacked comfortable seats while some peeped through the windows to catch a glimpse of training sessions. This result confirms the findings of Mumhure et al. (2020) in a qualitative study that investigated subject panels as a sustainable approach to replace the orthodox teacher professional development. The authors found that overcrowding at the seminar venue made it difficult for facilitators to address the concern of participants, thereby rendering such training ineffective.

It can be deduced from the findings that teachers are not satisfied with the organisation of TPD and the misalignment between the teachers' need and the content of the existing TPD. Hence, for TPD to be effective, the organising bodies should evaluate these training and consider other dimensions of teachers' professional development.

Teachers are adults who are fully aware of their professional needs. Literature shows that one-size-fits-all TPDs that accommodate teachers of varying levels of experience, subject areas, and professional needs are ineffective (Hunzicker, 2011; Bush, 2018). The result of this study suggested that the participants preferred tailor-made school-based TPD to the one-shot traditional ones.

The result of the current study also revealed that participants preferred School-Based TPD (SBTPD) approaches in forms of seminars, workshops, and conferences to traditional TPD. This could be attributed to the fact that such training takes cognisance of individual teacher needs, school context, and peculiarity, and its implications on teaching-learning process. During school-based TPD, the core components of ideal professional development are featured. For instance, some of the participants suggested that experienced and competent teachers in each subject area could be assigned as facilitators during such training. Previous studies have shown that SBTPD engenders collaboration and cross-fertilisation of ideas among teachers. This finding aligns with the results of a study conducted by Valiandes and Neophytou (2017). The study focused on examining how teachers' professional development programmes for differentiated instruction in mixed-ability classrooms influenced the academic achievements of both teachers and students. They found that effective TPDs are school site-based, respond to teachers' content and pedagogical needs, are held over a considerable length of time, comprise initial and follow-up components, as well as give room for collaboration with experts and colleagues.

The result also showed that teachers suggested establishment of Professional Learning Community (PLC) in each school. For instance, during an interview, one of the teachers in the Department of Mathematics indicated that teachers in the department were on the verge of proposing a Professional Learning Community to the school management. This was intended to be a teacher forum comprising teachers who taught the same subject to support one another.

Similarly, one of the school administrators mentioned that team teaching among teachers was a usual practice in her school. This idea would go a long way to enable teachers who teach the same subject to cross-fertilise ideas and teaching skills, which would influence teachers' professional development. Also, in one of the selected schools, school administrators served as supervisors in the school Lesson Note Writing Forum.

This result is in consonance with Aksoy's (2018) result in a study titled "Developing a school-based professional development program for improving technological skills and andragogical knowledge of teachers in private night high schools." He found that teachers saw SBTPD as an opportunity and avenue to formally express their teaching challenges coupled with the fact that such training took cognisance of their school context. The study affirmed that SBTPD is highly beneficial to teachers as opposed to one-shot and one-size-fits-all government/district-organised TPD.

These results indicated that teachers prefer SBTPD enacted through seminars, workshops, conferences, professional learning community, and team teaching. This could also be associated with benefits of existing social relations, loyalty, trust, awareness of teachers' needs, freedom to ask questions and participate during such training, the possibility of practical sessions, and post-training evaluation.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study problematised and investigated perception of teachers and school principals on the existing teacher professional development in Nigeria, with a view to proposing a framework for a school-based teacher professional development. In doing this, we adopted DLT and ALT as lenses and benchmarks for the enactment of suitable SBTPD in schools. Appropriate research methodology was adopted, while Thematic Analysis was also adopted to make sense of the data. The result of the study indicated that the existing centralised and one-shot TPD failed to meet the professional needs of teachers and that teachers preferred SBTPD. To ameliorate the situation, we developed and advanced a School-Based Teacher Professional Development Framework (SBTPDF) as an alternative to traditional TPD. Drawing from the interpretation of the data and the explication of the principles of DLT and ALT in relation to contextualised SBTPD, the study concluded that effective SBTPD could be a game changer for teacher professional development.

## **7. Limitation and Recommendations**

This study is not insulated from some of the limitations of qualitative research studies. One of these limitations is that the findings are based on a small sample, and cannot be generalised. Secondly, the study relied on self-reporting instrument for data generation, which is subject to participants' memory recall and bias unlike the multi-informant approach.

Based on the findings in this study, we recommend that education policy makers, in conjunction with Ministry of Education, formulate and enact policies on SBTPD as depicted by our model (SBTPDF) as an alternative to the traditional

TPD. Moreso, this study could be replicated in many states in Nigeria and other countries using the quantitative research approach, with a view to further validating and generalising the findings.

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