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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA IN THE ERA OF AI: LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Dr. Nwakoby, Chidimma Stella
Department of Commercial and Property Law,
Faculty of Law,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University,
Igbariam Campus, Anambra State
E-Mail: cs.nwakoby@coou.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study examined the professional development for educators in tertiary institutions in Nigeria in the era of artificial intelligence (AI) with particular reference to the legal implications. In the first place, the study examined professional development for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The importance of professional development in Nigerian tertiary institutions were examined. The current state of professional development in Nigerian tertiary institutions was also discussed. The role of technology in professional development and government and institutional support for professional development were discussed. The legal and ethical considerations in professional development and AI and professional development in Nigerian tertiary education were also discussed. The legal implications of AI in education include data privacy and protection, intellectual property issues, and ethical considerations. The challenges of professional development for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions were discussed.

Keywords: Professional Development; Educators; Tertiary Institutions; Era of Artificial Intelligence; Legal Implications.

Introduction

The landscape of education is constantly evolving, influenced by advancements in technology, societal changes, and shifting pedagogical approaches. In Nigeria, tertiary institutions have increasingly adopted new technologies in both teaching and learning processes. One of the most transformative technological advancements in recent years is Artificial Intelligence (AI), which has brought both opportunities and challenges to the educational sector (Iloka & Nwakoby, 2025). Iloka and Nwakoby stressed that AI is changing the way educators deliver content, engage students, and assess learning outcomes, prompting a need for continuous professional development for educators. However, as AI's role in education expands, legal implications emerge, particularly regarding data privacy, intellectual property, and ethical considerations (Okaforcha & Okeke, 2019). This paper provides a background study of the role of professional development for educators in Nigerian

tertiary institutions in the era of AI, examining the legal issues related to AI integration in education.

Professional Development for Educators in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Professional development (PD) is crucial for educators in any academic setting, as it helps to enhance their skills, knowledge, and effectiveness in delivering quality education (Ojimba, 2020). In Nigerian tertiary institutions, where higher education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future workforce, Okoye (2021) reported that PD for educators is essential to maintain a high standard of teaching and learning. However, the approach to PD in Nigeria's higher education system faces several challenges and requires a more structured and comprehensive framework to meet contemporary demands (Okeke, Okaforcha & Ekwesianya, 2019).

The Importance of Professional Development in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

The role of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is becoming increasingly critical, as they not only educate future professionals but also drive research, innovation, and national development (Osegbue, 2019). As a result, educators must be well-prepared to meet the ever-evolving needs of their students. According to Anushiem and Anushiem (2023) PD is necessary to:

1. Enhance Teaching Skills: Educators must constantly update their teaching methodologies to cater to diverse learning styles and evolving educational trends. PD helps educators acquire new teaching strategies and incorporate technology effectively in their teaching.
2. Improve Research Capabilities: Tertiary education in Nigeria is also about research and innovation. Educators who are professionally developed are better equipped to engage in high-quality research, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in various fields (Anthony, 2019).
3. Promote Lifelong Learning: PD encourages educators to become lifelong learners, which is essential in an era of constant technological and pedagogical advancements. Lifelong learning among educators also reflects the same value to students, motivating them to continue learning throughout their careers.
4. Improve Student Outcomes: Effective PD programs directly correlate with improved student outcomes, as educators who are well-trained are more likely to engage students and deliver quality instruction that meets their needs.

Current State of Professional Development in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

In Nigerian tertiary institutions, Onyekwelu, (2024) asserted that PD opportunities for educators are not always structured or

adequately supported. Many educators lack access to continuous training programs that are relevant to their needs. Some key challenges related to PD for Nigerian educators according to Ofozoba and Ofozoba, (2022) include:

1. Limited Funding: Many tertiary institutions in Nigeria operate with limited financial resources. The scarcity of funding affects the ability of institutions to organize regular and meaningful PD programs. Often, professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, and conferences are underfunded or not prioritized (Onyekwelu & Adinna, 2022).
2. Lack of Structured PD Programs: While some institutions offer PD programs, they are often irregular and not systematically integrated into the academic calendar. There is a lack of a formal, institutionalized framework for PD, which results in inconsistent participation and coverage. Furthermore, PD opportunities are often disconnected from the needs of educators.
3. Resistance to Change: In many instances, educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions are resistant to new ideas or innovations in teaching and learning. This resistance is often rooted in factors such as a lack of motivation, limited awareness of the benefits of PD, and a preference for traditional methods over newer, more innovative approaches.
4. Limited Access to Technology: The rapid advancement of technology in education presents both opportunities and challenges. However, many Nigerian educators face barriers in accessing the tools and resources needed to engage in tech-based PD programs. This technological gap limits educators' ability to adapt to digital teaching and learning environments (Enwezor & Chukwunonye, 2021).
5. Lack of Incentives: In some Nigerian institutions, there is little emphasis on incentivizing educators to participate in PD programs. Without tangible rewards, such as promotion opportunities, salary increments, or academic recognition, educators may not see the value in engaging in PD activities.

The Role of Technology in Professional Development

In the current digital age, technology according to Anushiem (2023) offers significant opportunities to enhance PD for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Technology-enabled PD can bridge the geographical and financial barriers that often limit access to quality professional development opportunities (Ugwaka & Igbokwe, 2023). Azubuike (2024) argued that online courses, webinars, and virtual conferences can provide educators with the flexibility to engage in PD without the need for extensive travel or significant financial investment.

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For example, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are increasingly used to provide affordable and accessible PD opportunities. MOOCs, according to Ekwesianya (2022) offer a wide range of topics, including courses on pedagogy, research methods, and even the integration of AI in education. With the widespread use of mobile devices and improved internet access, Nigerian educators can take advantage of these online learning platforms to improve their skills (Okeke, Okaforcha & Ekwesianya, 2019).

Additionally, learning management systems (LMS) can serve as platforms for PD by offering courses, resource materials, and peer collaboration tools (Adinna & Onyekwelu, 2021). Educators can interact with colleagues from other institutions and engage in collaborative learning to solve common challenges.

Government and Institutional Support for Professional Development

To ensure that PD is more effectively integrated into Nigerian higher education, Okaforcha (2021) opined that both the government and individual institutions must take proactive steps. The Nigerian government, through agencies like the National Universities Commission (NUC), should play a key role in establishing and monitoring a national framework for PD. This framework, according to Ekwesianya (2025) should:

1. Establish Clear Guidelines: The government can set clear guidelines for PD programs, ensuring that all institutions adhere to a minimum standard of professional development for their educators.
2. Provide Funding: The government should allocate specific funds for PD initiatives and encourage public-private partnerships to sponsor PD programs.
3. Create National Accreditation Systems: An accreditation system for PD programs would ensure that educators receive high-quality training and are recognized for their development. This could also include certification that contributes to career advancement.

Individual institutions, according to Ezeaku and Okoye (2025), on the other hand, should:

1. Establish Formal PD Structures: Universities and other tertiary institutions should set up dedicated PD units that regularly organize workshops, seminars, and courses tailored to the needs of their educators. These units should also offer ongoing support for those seeking to improve their skills and knowledge.
2. Encourage Peer Learning and Collaboration: Educators should be encouraged to share their knowledge and experience with colleagues. Peer learning groups or faculty development committees can foster a culture of continuous improvement.
3. Create Incentives: Institutions should provide incentives such as promotion, funding, or recognition for educators

who actively engage in PD activities. This can motivate educators to prioritize their professional growth.

Legal and Ethical Considerations in Professional Development

As Nigerian tertiary institutions embrace more digital and AI-based learning tools, Okechukwu (2025) reiterated that educators must also be equipped with knowledge of the legal and ethical implications of these technologies. According to Osegbue (2021), professional development programs should address issues such as:

1. Data Privacy and Security: Educators should be trained on the importance of safeguarding student data when using digital tools and AI-driven platforms. They need to be aware of national regulations such as the Nigerian Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) to ensure compliance.
2. Intellectual Property: PD programs should include training on intellectual property laws, ensuring that educators understand the ownership of digital content, AI-generated materials, and collaborative research outputs.
3. Ethical Use of AI in Education: As AI becomes more prevalent in Nigerian tertiary education, it is vital to address ethical concerns, such as bias in AI algorithms, fairness in assessment, and the implications of automated decision-making. PD programs should help educators develop an understanding of how to ethically use AI in teaching and research.

Therefore, Professional development for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions is essential for improving the quality of teaching and learning, as well as fostering a culture of continuous improvement in the academic community (Ezeamama & Ofozoba, 2023). Despite the challenges, such as limited funding, resistance to change, and inadequate institutional frameworks, Okoye and Ezeaku (2025) stated that there are significant opportunities to enhance PD through technology and government support. To fully realize these opportunities, Ibe (2022) posited that Nigerian tertiary institutions must prioritize PD by establishing formal structures, encouraging lifelong learning, and addressing legal and ethical issues related to emerging technologies like AI. By doing so, Nigerian educators will be better equipped to navigate the evolving educational landscape and contribute to the country's development (Azubuike, 2025).

AI and Professional Development in Nigerian Tertiary Education

The role of professional development (PD) in education cannot be overstated, as it enables educators to improve their knowledge, skills, and effectiveness in the classroom (Sims, 2021). In Nigerian tertiary institutions, Ezeaku (2025) noted that the rapid integration of AI tools in educational practices necessitates regular training to equip educators with the skills required to navigate new technologies effectively. AI

technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and automated systems are increasingly used for administrative tasks, teaching assistance, and student assessments (Onyekwelu, 2021).

AI-based platforms, such as learning management systems (LMS), have been adopted by many Nigerian universities to streamline course delivery, improve student engagement, and provide data-driven insights into student performance (Okechukwu, 2025). These platforms, according to Onyekwelu, (2024) often incorporate AI algorithms that analyze student behavior, predict academic outcomes, and suggest personalized learning paths. However, these tools are only effective if educators are adequately trained to use them. In this context, professional development programs focused on AI in education are essential (Enwezor & Obi, 2022).

Professional development for educators in Nigeria needs to align with global trends in AI, ensuring that teachers and administrators are proficient in using these technologies for enhanced teaching and learning outcomes (Brown & Adams, 2020). This includes not only technical training on AI tools but also discussions on the broader ethical, legal, and social implications of AI in the educational context (Ucheagwu-Okoye, 2025).

The Need for Continuous Professional Development

As AI continues to reshape the educational landscape, it is imperative that educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions receive continuous professional development in AI literacy (Abonyi, 2021). This is not only about understanding the technicalities of AI but also addressing the broader societal and legal issues related to its use. In many parts of Nigeria, Osegbue and Nnubia (2020) noted that the adoption of AI in education is still in its nascent stages, and educators often face challenges in integrating new technologies into their teaching practices. Lack of adequate training, limited access to technology, and resistance to change are common barriers to AI adoption in many institutions.

A study by Akintoye and Oyediran (2022) found that Nigerian educators often lack sufficient training in emerging technologies such as AI, which limits their ability to effectively integrate these tools into their teaching methods. Furthermore, professional development programs in Nigeria are often not tailored to the specific needs of educators in the AI era, leading to an ineffective use of available resources (Ucheagwu-Okoye. 2025). This underscores the need for targeted and continuous professional development programs that address both the technical and legal aspects of AI integration.

Legal Implications of AI in Education

While AI presents vast potential for improving educational outcomes, Izuchukwu, Ugwaka, Arazu and Ezechi (2023) noted that it also brings with it a host of legal challenges that must be addressed. The primary legal concerns surrounding AI in education are related to data privacy,

intellectual property, and ethical considerations.

Data Privacy and Protection

One of the most significant legal implications of AI in education is the issue of data privacy and protection. AI tools in education, according to Ekwesianya, Okaforcha and Okeke (2020) often require the collection and processing of large volumes of personal data, including student performance data, learning behaviors, and other sensitive information. In Nigeria, the legal framework for data protection is still developing, and the introduction of AI tools in education presents a significant risk to student and educator privacy.

The Nigerian Data Protection Regulation (NDPR), enacted in 2019, provides some guidelines for protecting personal data, including provisions for data collection, storage, and processing. However, the enforcement of these regulations in the educational sector remains limited. Educators and institutions must be trained to understand the legal implications of collecting and using student data in AI systems. Furthermore, professional development programs should emphasize the need for compliance with both national and international data protection laws, particularly in light of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which has set global standards for data privacy (Ibrahim, 2020).

Intellectual Property Issues

Another legal challenge related to AI in education is intellectual property (IP). AI technologies can generate content, including educational materials, assessments, and even research outputs. This raises questions about the ownership of such content (Ucheagwu-Okoye. 2025). In Nigerian tertiary institutions, many educators use AI to create course materials or automate grading systems. However, it remains unclear who owns the rights to the content produced by AI systems—whether it is the educator, the institution, or the developers of the AI software.

Intellectual property laws in Nigeria, such as the Nigerian Copyright Act, do not yet fully address the complexities of AI-generated content. Enwezor (2021) asserted that this lack of clarity can lead to disputes over the ownership and use of AI-generated materials, especially when such content is used for commercial purposes or shared across multiple institutions. Professional development programs for educators in Nigeria should include training on IP issues related to AI-generated content and the importance of establishing clear ownership agreements when using AI in educational contexts (Oluwaseun, 2021).

Ethical Considerations

The use of AI in education also raises a host of ethical concerns (Obumse & Egenti, 2021). One of the most pressing issues is the potential for bias in AI algorithms. AI systems are only as good as the data they are trained on, and if the data is biased, the

system's outputs will also be biased (Ojimba, 2024). In education, this could lead to unfair grading, biased assessments, or exclusionary practices that disproportionately affect certain groups of students. Educators must be trained to recognize and mitigate these biases in AI systems to ensure that all students are treated fairly and equitably.

Moreover, there are ethical concerns related to the over-reliance on AI for decision-making in education. While AI can provide valuable insights, it is crucial that educators retain agency in making pedagogical decisions and that AI tools are used as supplementary resources rather than replacements for human judgment (Clark, 2021). Ethical training should be an integral part of professional development programs for educators, ensuring that they understand the potential risks and benefits of using AI in their classrooms.

In conclusion, the integration of AI into the educational sector in Nigeria presents significant opportunities for improving teaching and learning outcomes in tertiary institutions (Nwakoby, 2025). However, it also introduces several legal challenges related to data privacy, intellectual property, and ethics. Enwezor and Obi (2022) opined that professional development for educators is essential to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate these challenges. Training programs must go beyond technical competence and address the legal implications of using AI in education. Nwakoby and Iloka (2025) suggested that by fostering AI literacy among educators and ensuring that they understand the legal, ethical, and social implications of AI, Nigerian tertiary institutions can effectively harness the power of AI to enhance educational outcomes while mitigating potential risks.

Challenges of Professional Development for Educators in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Professional development (PD) for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions is crucial for improving the quality of education and ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to meet evolving pedagogical and technological demands (Enwezor, 2021). However, despite the importance of PD, there are several challenges that hinder its effective implementation and utilization in the country. These challenges, according to Okeke and Okaforcha (2025) include limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, resistance to change, lack of incentives, and a shortage of relevant, high-quality programs. Each of these issues presents barriers that must be addressed to ensure the successful development of educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Limited Funding and Resources: One of the most significant challenges facing PD for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions is the lack of sufficient funding and resources (Okeke 2022). Many universities and colleges struggle with budget constraints, and PD programs often receive little financial support. Nwabachili, Iloka and Ucheagwu-

Okoye (2022) reiterated that without adequate funding, institutions are unable to organize regular, high-quality PD activities such as workshops, seminars, and conferences. Additionally, resources such as books, equipment, and access to technology are often scarce, making it difficult for educators to engage in modern, technology-driven PD opportunities.

As a result, many institutions rely on occasional, externally funded programs or short-term initiatives that may not be sustainable in the long term. This leads to a lack of continuity in PD efforts, leaving educators without consistent support for professional growth.

Inadequate Infrastructure and Access to Technology: Another challenge is the insufficient infrastructure and access to technology, which further limits the effectiveness of PD programs. In an era where technology is central to both education and professional development, access to digital tools and platforms is essential (Nwankwo & Ezeibe, 2021). Unfortunately, many Nigerian tertiary institutions according to Abonyi (2020) face challenges such as unreliable internet connectivity, outdated computer systems, and inadequate learning management systems (LMS). This lack of modern infrastructure prevents educators from engaging in online courses, webinars, and other digital PD opportunities that could be beneficial.

Moreover, in regions with limited access to electricity or where the infrastructure is particularly poor, even offline PD activities can be hindered. These technological limitations mean that PD opportunities, particularly those that involve e-learning or virtual collaboration, may not be accessible to many educators in Nigeria (Abonyi, 2022).

Resistance to Change and Traditional Teaching Methods: There is also considerable resistance to change among some educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Many educators have been teaching for years using traditional methods and may be hesitant to adopt new approaches, especially those involving technology (Okaforcha and Okeke, 2020). This resistance is often due to several factors, including a lack of awareness about the benefits of modern teaching techniques, fear of technology, and a preference for familiar, traditional methods of instruction (Ezeaku 2019).

In some cases, educators may feel overwhelmed by the idea of using new tools, such as AI or learning management systems, because they may not have the technical skills or training necessary to integrate them into their teaching practices (Ethelmary, Nwankwo & Aroh, 2019). This resistance to change, according to Obumse (2022) can impede the success of PD initiatives and prevent educators from fully benefiting from opportunities to improve their teaching methods.

Lack of Structured and Continuous Professional Development Programs: The absence of a well-defined, structured, and continuous PD framework is another challenge facing Nigerian tertiary institutions. Nwankwo (2022) noted that PD

initiatives are often ad hoc, sporadic, and not systematically integrated into the academic calendar. While some institutions organize occasional workshops or seminars, these programs tend to be one-off events rather than part of a long-term strategy for professional growth (Martin, 2022).

The lack of continuity in PD programs means that educators may only receive training in certain areas on a limited basis, rather than engaging in a comprehensive, ongoing process of professional improvement. Furthermore, Osegbue (2022) noted that PD programs are often not aligned with the specific needs of educators, meaning that they may not be directly relevant to their teaching contexts. A structured, well-funded, and ongoing PD system that is personalized to the needs of educators is essential for creating a sustainable culture of professional growth (Okaforcha & Iloka, 2025).

Inadequate Recognition and Incentives: In many Nigerian tertiary institutions, there is little recognition or incentive for educators to engage in PD activities. Ethelmary, Nwankwo and Aroh (2019) noted that Participation in PD programs is often not linked to career advancement, salary increases, or other professional rewards. Without clear incentives, educators may not see the value of investing time and effort in PD.

In some cases, educators may be required to participate in PD programs as part of their contractual obligations, but these programs may not be formally recognized in promotion criteria or salary reviews. Without a clear connection between PD and career progression, educators may be less motivated to engage in these programs, leading to low participation rates and a lack of sustained interest in professional development.

Shortage of Quality, Relevant, and Tailored Programs: Another challenge is the shortage of high-quality PD programs that are relevant and tailored to the specific needs of educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions. PD programs in many cases are generalized and do not take into account the local context, teaching styles, or the specific challenges faced by Nigerian educators. For example, many PD programs focus on generic teaching skills, but fail to address the specific technological needs of educators, particularly when it comes to integrating digital tools into teaching.

Furthermore, there are often few PD programs that are specifically focused on emerging trends in education, such as the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), data analytics, and online learning platforms. This lack of specialized programs means that educators are not being adequately prepared to navigate the modern educational landscape, which is becoming increasingly reliant on technology and innovation.

Limited Collaboration and Peer Support: Professional development thrives in environments where educators can collaborate and support each other. However, in many Nigerian tertiary institutions, there is limited collaboration and peer support when it comes to PD. Educators often work in isolation, with few opportunities to share ideas, exchange best practices, or engage in collaborative learning.

The absence of a collaborative culture in PD initiatives can limit the impact of these programs. Educators who work in silos may not be exposed to new teaching methods or technologies that could improve their teaching. Additionally, collaboration fosters a sense of professional community, which can increase motivation and engagement with PD activities.

Cultural and Language Barriers: Nigeria is a diverse country with various ethnic groups and languages, which can present challenges in the delivery of PD programs. While English is the official language of instruction in tertiary institutions, many educators and students may come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This can create barriers in terms of communication and the effective delivery of PD programs, especially if materials or training are not culturally sensitive or linguistically accessible.

Moreover, certain cultural practices or attitudes toward education and professional growth may hinder the widespread adoption of PD activities, particularly if they conflict with the values or priorities of specific ethnic groups or communities.

Therefore, the challenges facing professional development for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions are significant but not insurmountable. Addressing issues such as limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, resistance to change, lack of structured PD programs, and insufficient incentives requires concerted efforts from both the government and individual institutions (Ezeaku 2019). By developing a robust and sustainable PD framework that incorporates modern technology, fosters collaboration, and addresses the specific needs of educators, Nigerian higher education institutions can create an environment that promotes continuous learning and improvement for their educators (Ethelmary, Nwankwo & Aroh, 2019). This, in turn, will improve teaching quality and contribute to the overall development of the education sector in Nigeria.

Suggestions for Improving Professional Development for Educators in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

To address the challenges associated with professional development (PD) for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions, a multifaceted approach is required. The following suggestions aim to improve PD opportunities, make them more accessible, and ensure they are more aligned with the evolving demands of education, technology, and society. By addressing these areas, Nigerian universities can foster a culture of continuous professional growth that will improve the quality of teaching, research, and student outcomes.

Increase Government and Institutional Funding for PD Programs: A significant barrier to PD is the lack of funding. Both the Nigerian government and individual tertiary institutions must prioritize PD by increasing the allocation of resources. The government can support PD through national funding programs, grants, or partnerships with international organizations focused on education. These funds can be used to cover the costs of workshops, seminars, conferences, and other PD initiatives,

especially for institutions with limited resources.

Additionally, universities should consider creating dedicated PD budgets to ensure that continuous professional development is integrated into the academic calendar. Allocating sufficient funds will allow institutions to invest in both in-person and online PD activities, bringing in experts from various fields to ensure that educators are exposed to the latest research and teaching methods.

Expand Access to Technology and Infrastructure: In light of the growing role of technology in education, it is essential that Nigerian tertiary institutions invest in upgrading their infrastructure. This includes improving internet connectivity, upgrading computer labs, providing access to e-learning platforms, and equipping classrooms with the necessary tools for digital teaching. Institutions should partner with technology companies to provide educators with access to modern tools and resources.

Moreover, universities should ensure that educators are trained to use these technologies effectively, especially in fields like Artificial Intelligence (AI), learning management systems (LMS), and data analytics. Facilitating access to technology will not only improve PD opportunities but also help educators integrate these tools into their teaching, creating more engaging and effective learning environments for students.

Establish Structured, Continuous PD Frameworks: Nigerian tertiary institutions should establish formal and structured PD programs that are aligned with the academic calendar. These programs should be comprehensive and cover a range of topics that are relevant to the specific needs of educators, including pedagogy, research skills, technological tools, and industry trends.

To ensure continuity, PD should be an ongoing process rather than one-off workshops. Institutions can create PD modules that are spread across the academic year, providing educators with regular opportunities for development. These PD programs should be part of an institutional policy, where participation in PD is encouraged or required for career progression, tenure, and promotions.

Integrate Digital and Online PD Options: Given the challenges related to access to physical PD programs, universities should integrate online learning platforms and digital resources into PD strategies. This can include offering MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), webinars, online workshops, and virtual conferences. These online programs are often more affordable and flexible, allowing educators to participate from remote locations and at their own pace.

Incorporating digital PD options can also help reduce the barriers posed by geographical location, as educators in rural areas or smaller institutions may have limited access to in-person PD events. Moreover, online PD programs can be easily updated and accessed by a larger number of educators, ensuring that they have access to the latest developments in teaching and learning.

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Provide Incentives for Participation in PD Programs: To encourage educators to actively engage in PD programs, institutions should offer clear incentives. These incentives can be both tangible and intangible, such as:

- Career Advancement: Institutions can link PD participation to career progression, promotions, and tenure. Educators who actively participate in PD can be given preferential consideration for promotions or other career advancements.
- Financial Rewards: Offering financial incentives, such as research grants, travel funding for conferences, or stipends for PD-related activities, can motivate educators to engage in PD programs.
- Public Recognition: Publicly recognizing educators who complete PD programs or contribute to the development of PD initiatives can encourage a culture of learning. Such recognition can be in the form of awards, certificates, or acknowledgment during institutional events.

Incentivizing PD will not only encourage participation but also help create a culture of continuous professional growth and development.

Foster a Culture of Collaboration and Peer Learning: Collaboration among educators is essential for effective PD. Nigerian tertiary institutions should encourage the formation of peer learning groups, departmental seminars, or faculty development committees. These groups provide opportunities for educators to share their knowledge, best practices, and resources. Peer learning fosters a collaborative environment where educators can learn from each other, offer constructive feedback, and stay motivated.

Additionally, mentoring programs can be established, where senior educators can guide and support younger or less experienced faculty members. These mentoring programs can help new educators adapt to the academic environment and understand the importance of continuous learning and development.

Offer Customized PD Programs Tailored to Specific Needs: It is crucial that PD programs are not one-size-fits-all. Educators in different disciplines face different challenges and need different skill sets. PD programs should be tailored to meet the unique needs of various departments, faculties, and individual educators. For example, while a science faculty may benefit from PD related to laboratory research and data analysis, a language department may focus on teaching methodologies and curriculum design.

Furthermore, specialized PD programs on emerging trends like AI, digital learning tools, and e-assessment should be offered to keep educators abreast of technological developments in their fields. Ensuring that PD content is relevant and contextualized to the specific academic disciplines will make the programs more engaging and impactful.

Develop Collaborative Partnerships with International Institutions: Collaborating with international institutions can help Nigerian

tertiary institutions access world-class PD resources and expertise. Partnerships with universities abroad, international education bodies, and organizations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) can bring in global perspectives and practices.

These collaborations could involve faculty exchanges, joint workshops, and access to international training programs. Nigerian educators would benefit from exposure to best practices from around the world, while also contributing their unique experiences and insights.

Focus on Legal and Ethical Training for Educators: Given the growing use of technology, particularly AI, in education, PD programs should include training on the legal and ethical implications of digital tools and data management. Educators must understand issues related to intellectual property, data privacy, copyright, and the ethical use of AI in education.

Nigerian tertiary institutions can develop specialized PD modules that address these legal and ethical concerns. Educators should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to handle sensitive information responsibly and to navigate the evolving landscape of educational technology in a legally compliant and ethically sound manner.

Conduct Regular Evaluations and Feedback on PD Programs: To ensure that PD programs are effective, institutions should regularly evaluate the success and impact of these initiatives. Feedback from educators should be collected to assess the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of PD activities. Evaluations can be in the form of surveys, interviews, or focus groups.

Institutions should also track the long-term benefits of PD, such as improvements in teaching quality, student outcomes, and research productivity. This data can be used to improve future PD initiatives, ensuring that they continue to meet the needs of educators and align with institutional goals.

Therefore, improving professional development for educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions requires a comprehensive approach that addresses challenges such as funding, access to technology, resistance to change, and lack of incentives. By investing in structured and continuous PD frameworks, integrating digital platforms, fostering collaboration, offering targeted incentives, and ensuring that programs are relevant to the needs of educators, Nigerian institutions can enhance the quality of teaching and learning. In doing so, they can better prepare educators to navigate the demands of the 21st-century educational landscape and contribute to national development.

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