

TRANSFORMATIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR RIVERS STATE TEACHERS' CAPACITY BUILDING IN A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Dr. LONGJOHN, Dagogo Alu

Institute of Education
Rivers State University,
Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
dagogo.longjohn@ust.edu.ng

&

Dr. LONGJOHN, Ngozichi

Department of Educational Management,
Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
ngoziichi.longjohn@iaue.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigated the influence of transformative professional development (TPD) on the capacity building of public secondary school teachers in Rivers State, Nigeria, within the context of a globally competitive learning environment. Specifically, the study examined continuous professional learning and reflective practice as key dimensions of TPD and their effects on teachers' pedagogical competence, instructional effectiveness, and professional growth. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and targeted a population of 381 teachers across the three senatorial districts of Rivers State. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, and reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha ($\alpha = 0.87$). Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to address the research questions, while one-way ANOVA tested the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that continuous professional learning significantly facilitates teachers' capacity building, enhancing instructional delivery, classroom management, and adaptation to evolving educational standards. Similarly, reflective practice was found to improve teachers' professional competence, promoting critical evaluation of instructional practices and fostering continuous improvement. ANOVA results indicated no significant differences in teachers' perceptions across Rivers East, Rivers West, and Rivers South-East senatorial districts regarding the impact of both continuous professional learning and reflective practice, suggesting uniform recognition of the relevance of these professional development strategies across the state. Based on these findings, the study concluded that transformative professional development is essential for strengthening teachers' capacity in public secondary schools, providing the skills and competencies necessary for effective teaching in a globally competitive context. Consequently, it recommended the institutionalization of sustained professional learning programmes, formal integration of reflective practice, establishment of school-based professional learning communities, alignment of professional development with global competency standards, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of teacher development initiatives. The study contributes to the discourse on teacher capacity building in Nigeria and offers practical insights for policymakers, educational administrators, and teacher education planners.

Keywords: *Transformative Professional Development, Continuous Professional Learning, Reflective Practice, Teacher Capacity Building, Public Secondary Schools*

Introduction

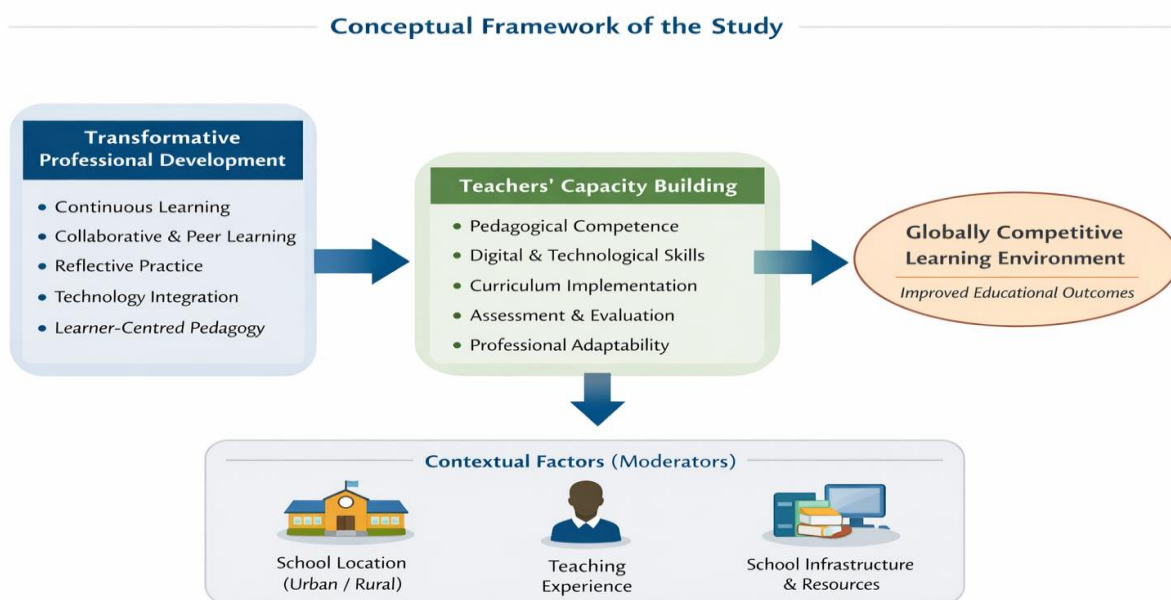
Education remains a fundamental instrument for social transformation, economic development, and global competitiveness. In an increasingly interconnected and knowledge-driven world, nations are under growing pressure to develop education systems capable of producing globally competent citizens equipped with critical thinking skills, technological literacy, creativity, and adaptability. At the centre of this educational transformation agenda are teachers, whose professional capacity largely determines the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of teaching and learning processes (UNESCO, 2021). Consequently, the development of teachers' professional capacity has become a strategic priority for governments and educational stakeholders across the globe. Historically, teacher professional development in public secondary schools in Rivers State has been dominated by traditional in-service training programmes, workshops, and seminars that are often episodic, centrally organized, and weakly connected to classroom realities. While such programmes aim to update teachers' knowledge, they have been criticized for their limited impact on sustained instructional improvement and teachers' professional growth (Desimone & Garet, 2015). As a result, there is growing advocacy for transformative professional development approaches that promote deep professional learning, reflective practice, and continuous capacity enhancement among teachers.

In recent decades, globalization, rapid technological advancement, and shifting labour market demands have redefined the expectations placed on teachers. Teachers are no longer viewed merely as transmitters of knowledge but as facilitators of learning, curriculum innovators, digital content designers, and mentors who prepare learners for participation in a globally competitive learning environment (OECD, 2019; Schleicher, 2018; Kayii & LongJohn, 2027). This evolving role requires continuous upgrading of teachers' skills, professional values, and instructional practices, making professional development an indispensable component of educational reform.

Public secondary schools in Rivers State appears to operate within an increasingly complex educational environment shaped by curriculum reforms, technological advancement, globalization of knowledge, and rising expectations for educational quality. Teachers in these schools are expected to deliver learner-centred instruction, integrate digital tools into classroom practice, implement competency-based curricula, and nurture critical thinking and problem-solving skills among learners. However, concerns persist regarding teachers' preparedness, pedagogical competence, and adaptability to global educational standards, particularly within the public school system where resource constraints and limited professional learning opportunities remain prevalent (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2020; Akpan, 2021). Also, the education sector has continued to grapple with challenges related to instructional quality, teacher preparedness, digital competence, and alignment with global best practices. Despite several policy initiatives and training programmes introduced by government and development partners, concerns persist regarding the effectiveness of conventional professional development approaches, which are often characterized by short-term workshops, limited follow-up, and weak integration into classroom practice (Oladele, Adegoke & LongJohn, 2020). These limitations have necessitated a shift towards more holistic and transformative models of professional development capable of producing sustainable changes in teachers' capacity and performance.

Transformative professional development (TPD) has emerged as a contemporary and globally endorsed approach to teacher learning that emphasizes deep, reflective, and practice-oriented professional growth. Rooted in transformative learning theory, TPD focuses on changing teachers' professional beliefs, attitudes, competencies, and classroom practices through critical reflection, collaboration, and continuous learning (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Unlike traditional professional development, which often emphasizes attendance and certification, transformative professional development is learner-centred, context-sensitive, and aligned with real

classroom challenges, making it particularly relevant for teachers operating in complex and dynamic educational environments. Transformative professional development (TPD) represents a shift from compliance-driven training to a holistic and learner-centred approach to teacher learning. It emphasizes sustained engagement, collaborative learning, critical reflection, and practical application of new knowledge within real classroom contexts (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). In the context of public secondary schools in Rivers State, transformative professional development is particularly relevant, as it aligns with the need to empower teachers to address diverse learner needs, integrate emerging technologies, and adopt innovative pedagogical practices that meet both national and global educational expectations.



Source: Researchers' Creative Conceptualization (2026)

The arrows indicate the hypothesized direction of influence from TPD to teachers' capacity building. The components of TPD represent specific interventions or indices expected to drive change. The components of teachers' capacity building represent outcomes or dependent variables. Contextual factors (moderators) are external influences that may strengthen or weaken the relationship.

In this study, transformative professional development is conceptualized as the independent variable, while teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment constitutes the dependent variable. Transformative professional development is operationalized through several interrelated components that reflect its transformative nature within public schools. These components include *continuous professional learning*, which involves ongoing and sustained professional growth activities rather than isolated workshops; *collaborative and school-based professional learning*, such as peer mentoring, team teaching, and professional learning communities within public schools; *reflective practice*, which encourages teachers to critically examine their instructional strategies and learner outcomes; *technology-integrated professional development*, which focuses on enhancing teachers' digital competence and capacity to use instructional technologies in resource-constrained public school settings; and *learner-centred*

pedagogical innovation, which promotes instructional strategies that actively engage learners and develop 21st-century skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The relevance of these components is underscored by the growing demand for teachers who can operate effectively within a globally competitive learning environment. Such an environment is characterized by international benchmarking of educational outcomes, integration of global perspectives into curricula, adoption of digital teaching tools, and emphasis on 21st-century skills development (OECD, 2019; World Bank, 2020). Teachers who lack access to transformative professional development opportunities are often ill-equipped to meet these demands, thereby limiting students' preparedness for global participation.

Teachers' capacity building, refers to the systematic enhancement of teachers' professional competencies and instructional effectiveness within public primary and secondary schools in Rivers State. Capacity building in this context encompasses pedagogical competence, including mastery of subject content and teaching strategies; classroom management and instructional delivery skills, which are critical for large and diverse public school classrooms; digital and technological competence, reflecting teachers' ability to integrate available technologies into teaching and learning; curriculum implementation capacity, which relates to teachers' ability to effectively deliver the national curriculum and adapt it to local contexts; and professional adaptability and global orientation, which reflect teachers' readiness to align instructional practices with global best practices and emerging educational trends (Schleicher, 2018; UNESCO, 2021).

A globally competitive learning environment, as applied to secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria refers to an educational setting that prepares learners with foundational skills, values, and competencies required to compete academically and economically in a globalized society. This includes exposure to digital literacy, problem-solving skills, collaborative learning, and global awareness, all of which are mediated through teachers' instructional practices. Teachers who lack adequate professional capacity may struggle to create such learning environments, thereby limiting learners' global competitiveness.

Public secondary schools in Rivers State, occupy a strategic position in Nigeria's education system, as they serve as the bridge between foundational primary education and higher education or entry into the labour market. At this level, students are expected to acquire advanced cognitive skills, technological awareness, critical thinking abilities, and competencies that prepare them for participation in a globally competitive knowledge economy. Achieving these expectations, however, is largely dependent on the professional capacity of teachers who implement the curriculum and shape classroom learning experiences.

Empirical evidence from international and local studies suggests a strong relationship between effective professional development and teachers' capacity building. Desimone and Garet (2015) found that professional development programmes that are sustained, collaborative, and content-focused significantly improve teachers' instructional practices. Similarly, OECD (2019) reported that teachers who engage in continuous and transformative professional learning demonstrate higher levels of professional confidence, instructional innovation, and student engagement. However, studies in sub-Saharan Africa indicate that many professional development initiatives have failed to achieve transformative impact due to inadequate design, limited resources, and weak policy implementation frameworks (Akpan, 2021; World Bank, 2020).

In Rivers State, Nigeria where educational institutions are expected to produce graduates capable of competing both nationally and internationally, the need for transformative professional development is particularly critical. Teachers' capacity building remains a key determinant of learners' academic success, workforce readiness, and global competitiveness. Yet, there is limited empirical evidence on how specific components of transformative professional development influence teachers' capacity building within the Rivers State, Nigeria educational context. This gap in

knowledge necessitates a focused investigation that links transformative professional development practices to teachers' capacity outcomes.

Despite the critical role of teachers in public secondary schools, concerns persist regarding the adequacy of their professional capacity to meet contemporary educational demands. Reports and empirical studies have indicated challenges such as limited pedagogical innovation, inadequate integration of instructional technologies, weak alignment with learner-centred approaches, and difficulties in implementing curriculum reforms within many public secondary schools in Rivers State (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2020; Akpan, 2021). These challenges have implications for students' academic performance, skill acquisition, and readiness to compete in national and global contexts. Thus, this study focuses on transformative professional development for capacity building of teachers in public primary and secondary schools in Rivers State within a globally competitive learning environment. By empirically examining the relationship between the components of transformative professional development and teachers' capacity building, the study seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform educational policy, professional development planning, and school-level practices aimed at improving the quality and global relevance of public education in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Public secondary schools in Rivers State are expected to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to function effectively in a globally competitive learning environment. However, concerns persist regarding the professional capacity of teachers in these schools, particularly in areas such as pedagogical innovation, integration of instructional technologies, and adaptation to contemporary global teaching standards. These challenges have continued to affect the quality of teaching and learning in public secondary schools.

Professional development programmes available to teachers in Rivers State public secondary schools are often characterized by short-term workshops and periodic seminars that are largely theoretical and disconnected from classroom practice. Such traditional approaches have shown limited capacity to produce sustained improvement in teachers' professional competence and instructional effectiveness. Consequently, many teachers remain inadequately equipped to respond to the increasing demands of globalization and technological advancement in education.

Although transformative professional development has been identified as an effective approach for enhancing teachers' capacity through continuous learning, collaboration, reflection, and practice-based engagement, there is limited empirical evidence on its influence within public secondary schools in Rivers State. This lack of context-specific evidence constrains informed policy decisions and effective planning of teacher professional development programmes. Therefore, the problem of this study is the insufficient empirical understanding of how transformative professional development contributes to teachers' capacity building in public secondary schools in Rivers State within a globally competitive learning environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which transformative professional development promotes Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the extent to which continuous professional learning facilitates Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment.
2. Determine the extent to which reflective practice improves Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent can continuous professional learning facilitate Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment?
2. To what extent can reflective practice improve Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of public secondary school teachers in Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South-East on the extent to which continuous professional learning can facilitate Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of public secondary school teachers in Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South-East on the extent to which reflective learning can facilitate Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for investigating the current status of phenomena and describing the relationship between variables as they naturally occur without manipulation (Creswell, 2014). The descriptive design enabled the researcher to gather data on teachers' perceptions of transformative professional development and its influence on their capacity building in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This design is particularly suited to educational research where attitudes, opinions, and practices are observed across large populations (Best & Kahn, 2016). The population of this study comprised all public secondary school teachers in Rivers State. According to the Rivers State Ministry of Education (2023), there are approximately 11,947 teachers employed across 380 public secondary schools in the state. The breakdown of the population is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Population Distribution

S/ N.	Local Government Area	Population of Students	Population of Teachers	10% of Teachers' Population
1.	Port Harcourt	897,000	1,239	123.9
2.	Obio/Akpor	772,000	1,066	106.6
3.	Khana	488,388	675	67.5
4.	Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni	472,000	652	65.2
5.	Abua/Odual	471,742	651	65.1
6.	Degema	416,778	577	57.7
7.	Etche	417,978	578	57.8
8.	Ahoada West	415,725	574	57.4
9.	Gokana	389,135	538	53.8
10.	Okrika	370,000	512	51.2
11.	Emohua	335,081	464	46.4
12.	Eleme	317,133	439	43.9
13.	Ikwerre	315,240	437	43.7
14.	Andoni	364,054	502	50.2
15.	Asari-Toru	367,694	508	50.8
16.	Bonny	359,682	497	49.7

17.	Ahoda East	277,105	383	38.3
18.	Akuku-Toru	269,244	372	37.2
19.	Opobo-Nkoro	255,000	352	35.2
20.	Oyigbo	209,000	289	28.9
21.	Tai	173,000	239	23.9
22.	Omuma	167,000	231	23.1
23.	Ogu-Bolo	125,000	172	17.2
	Total	8,644,979	11,947	1,194

Source: Rivers State Ministry of Education (2023).

These teachers vary in age, years of professional experience, and career stage, making them suitable for investigating the influence of age and tenure on morale. This figure provides a comprehensive representation of teacher distribution across public secondary schools and ensures that the study captures diverse perspectives from the teaching workforce within the state's educational system. The sample size for this study was determined from the total population of 11,947 public secondary school teachers in Rivers State using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination. The formula is considered appropriate for studies involving finite populations and ensures adequate representativeness at a 95% confidence level.

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (11,947)

e = level of precision (0.05)

Thus, a total of 381 public secondary school teachers constituted the sample size for the study. This sample size was considered adequate for generating reliable and generalizable findings for the population under investigation. The study adopted a proportionate stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of public secondary school teachers across Rivers State. Stratified sampling was considered appropriate because public secondary schools in Rivers State are distributed across distinct administrative and geographical zones, which may influence teachers' professional development experiences. The state is divided into three senatorial districts, namely: Rivers East Senatorial District, Rivers West Senatorial District, and Rivers South-East Senatorial District. These senatorial districts constituted the strata for the study. The total sample of 381 teachers was proportionately allocated to each stratum based on the estimated distribution of teachers across the districts. This approach ensured that each district was fairly represented in the study in line with its relative size within the population.

Table 2: Proportionate Allocation of Sample

S/ N.	Senatorial Districts	Sample Allocation	Estimated Percentage of Teachers
1.	Rivers East	133	35%
2.	Rivers West	126	33%
3.	Rivers South-East	122	32%
4.	Total	381	100%

Source: Research Data (2026)

Within each senatorial district, simple random sampling was employed to select the required number of teachers from public secondary schools. Lists of teachers were obtained from school administrations, and random selection techniques such as random number tables were used to select respondents. This method ensured that every teacher within each stratum had an equal

chance of being selected, thereby minimizing sampling bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

Data for the study was collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and anchored on the study's objectives. The instrument was titled: "Transformative Professional Development and Teachers' Capacity Building Questionnaire (TPDTCBQ)". The questionnaire consists of two sections: Section A: Demographic information of respondents and Section B: Items measuring components of transformative professional development and teachers' capacity building. Items on the questionnaire will be presented using a five-point Likert scale (Very High Extent= 5; High Extent=4; Moderate Extent=3; Low Extent= 2; Very Low Extent= 1), allowing for quantification of teachers' perceptions and self-reported practices.

To ensure content and face validity, the draft questionnaire will be subjected to review by experts in Educational Management and Measurement & Evaluation from universities in Rivers State. Their feedback will guide revisions to ensure clarity, relevance, and representativeness of the instrument items. The reliability of the questionnaire will be established through a pilot study, administering the instrument to a small subgroup of public secondary school teachers not included in the main study sample. The reliability of the scales will be computed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α), which is widely recommended for assessing internal consistency of survey instruments. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above will be considered acceptable for the purposes of this study.

Upon approval from relevant educational authorities and school principals, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the selected teachers in their respective schools. Data collection was scheduled over a defined period, ensuring adequate response rates and minimizing disruption to the instructional activities of the schools. Data collected was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

For the research questions, responses were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to determine the extent to which teachers perceive the components of transformative professional development and its impact on their professional capacity. Mean scores were interpreted based on predetermined criteria (e.g., 2.50 as the cut-off point for agreement), while standard deviation were used to understand the variability in responses. To test the formulated null hypotheses, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed. ANOVA is appropriate for determining whether there are statistically significant differences in the dependent variable (teachers' capacity building) across groups defined by categories of the independent variable (transformative professional development implementation levels or demographic factors such as years of teaching experience). Where significant F-values are found, post-hoc comparisons will be conducted to locate specific differences at the 0.05 level of significance (Field, 2018).

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent can continuous professional learning facilitate Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Responses on Continuous Professional Learning (n = 381)

S/ N.	Continuous Professional Learning Items	n	Mea n(X)	SD	Decision
1.	In-service training improves instructional competence	381	3.21	0.71	High Extent
2.	Workshops enhance modern teaching skills	381	3.08	0.74	High Extent
3.	Regular retraining improves curriculum delivery	381	3.15	0.69	High Extent

4.	Seminars support global teaching standards	381	3.02	0.76	High Extent
5.	Continuous learning enhances classroom effectiveness	381	3.18	0.68	High Extent
6.	Professional courses improve adaptability	381	3.11	0.72	High Extent
7.	Training improves assessment skills	381	3.06	0.77	High Extent
8.	Learning programs improve ICT competence	381	2.97	0.81	High Extent
9.	Ongoing learning improves lesson planning	381	3.13	0.70	High Extent
10.	Professional learning enhances student outcomes	381	3.17	0.66	High Extent
Grand Mean/SD			3.11	0.72	High Extent

Source: Research Data (2026)

The grand mean of 3.11 exceeds the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that continuous professional learning facilitates teachers' capacity building to a high extent in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The relatively low standard deviation (0.72) suggests consistency in teachers' responses across senatorial districts.

Research Question 2: To what extent can reflective practice improve Rivers State teachers' capacity building in a globally competitive learning environment?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Responses on Reflective Practice (n = 381)

S/ N.	Reflective Practice Items	n	Mea n(X)	SD	Decision
1.	Reflecting on lessons improves teaching quality	381	3.14	0.70	High Extent
2.	Self-evaluation improves pedagogical skills	381	3.09	0.73	High Extent
3.	Reflection enhances classroom management	381	3.02	0.78	High Extent
4.	Reviewing teaching methods improves learning outcomes	381	3.11	0.71	High Extent
5.	Reflection promotes innovative teaching	381	3.06	0.75	High Extent
6.	Reflective journals improve instructional planning	381	2.98	0.80	High Extent
7.	Peer feedback improves teaching effectiveness	381	3.07	0.74	High Extent
8.	Reflection improves alignment with global practices	381	3.01	0.77	High Extent
9.	Reflective practice improves student engagement	381	3.10	0.69	High Extent
10.	Reflection enhances professional growth	381	3.16	0.67	High Extent

Grand Mean/SD**3.07 0.73****High
Extent**

Source: Research Data (2026)

The grand mean of 3.07 indicates that reflective practice improves teachers' capacity building to a high extent. Teachers largely agree that reflective practice supports professional growth and instructional effectiveness required for a globally competitive learning environment.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of public secondary school teachers in Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South-East on the extent to which continuous professional learning facilitates teachers' capacity building.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on Continuous Professional Learning

Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.24	2	0.62	1.87	.156
Within Groups	125.67	378	0.33		
Total	126.91	380			

Source: Research Data (2026)

Since $p = 0.156 > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is not rejected. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers across Rivers East, Rivers West, and Rivers South-East senatorial districts regarding the influence of continuous professional learning on capacity building. This suggests a uniform perception among teachers irrespective of location.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of public secondary school teachers in Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South-East on the extent to which reflective practice facilitates teachers' capacity building.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on Reflective Practice

Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.09	2	0.55	1.62	.199
Within Groups	127.53	378	0.34		
Total	128.62	380			

Source: Research Data (2026)

Since $p = 0.199 > 0.05$, the null hypothesis is not rejected. The result indicates no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions across the three senatorial districts on the role of reflective practice in capacity building. Reflective practice is therefore seen as equally relevant and effective across Rivers State public secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings**Continuous Professional Learning and Teachers' Capacity Building**

The findings of this study revealed that continuous professional learning facilitates teachers' capacity building to a high extent in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Teachers reported that sustained professional learning activities such as workshops, seminars, in-service training, and retraining programmes enhance their pedagogical competence, instructional delivery, assessment

skills, and adaptability to emerging educational demands. This finding underscores the importance of continuous learning as a core component of transformative professional development in a globally competitive learning environment. This result is consistent with studies conducted in the Nigerian context. Akinyemi and Abayomi (2021) found that teachers who regularly participate in professional development programmes demonstrate improved instructional effectiveness and higher professional competence in public secondary schools. Similarly, Eze and Obidike (2020) reported that continuous professional development significantly improves teachers' pedagogical competence and classroom practices, emphasizing that professional learning must be sustained rather than episodic to produce meaningful outcomes.

The finding also aligns with Ibukun and Oyewole (2019), who observed that continuous professional development programmes enhance teachers' job performance and professional confidence in Nigerian public secondary schools. In the context of Rivers State, where teachers are expected to respond to curriculum reforms, ICT integration, and global educational standards, continuous professional learning provides opportunities for skill renewal and professional relevance. Furthermore, the result supports the position of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), which emphasizes continuous professional development as a mechanism for improving teacher quality and achieving national educational goals. Overall, the high extent observed in this study suggests that continuous professional learning remains a critical pathway for strengthening teachers' capacity to function effectively in a competitive global educational landscape.

Reflective Practice and Teachers' Capacity Building

The findings further revealed that reflective practice improves teachers' capacity building to a high extent in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Teachers acknowledged that engaging in reflective activities—such as self-evaluation, peer feedback, review of teaching methods, and reflective journaling—enhances instructional effectiveness, classroom management, and professional growth. This finding is supported by Maduewesi and Ezeugbor (2018), who found that reflective teaching practices significantly improve instructional quality and teaching effectiveness among Nigerian secondary school teachers. Reflective practice enables teachers to critically examine their instructional approaches, identify areas of weakness, and adopt more effective strategies for improved learning outcomes.

Similarly, Okeke and Dike (2021) reported that reflective practice contributes positively to teachers' professional growth by fostering self-awareness, innovation, and continuous improvement in teaching practices. In the Nigerian school system, reflective practice serves as an important mechanism for teachers to adapt their methods to learners' needs and changing educational demands. The present finding also aligns with Nwafor and Ibe (2022), who emphasized that reflective professional learning supports teachers' capacity building by promoting lifelong learning and adaptability in a rapidly changing global educational environment. In Rivers State public secondary schools, reflective practice therefore plays a crucial role in enabling teachers to align their instructional practices with both national expectations and global standards.

Discussion of Hypothesis One: Difference in Teachers' Perceptions on Continuous Professional Learning Across Senatorial Districts

The result of the ANOVA analysis showed no significant difference in the mean responses of public secondary school teachers across Rivers East, Rivers West, and Rivers South-East senatorial districts regarding the extent to which continuous professional learning facilitates teachers' capacity building. This indicates that teachers across the state share similar perceptions about the value and importance of continuous professional learning. This finding is consistent with Olorunsola and Bello (2020), who reported that teachers in different locations within Nigeria tend to have comparable

views on the relevance of professional development when such programmes are guided by uniform educational policies and standards. The uniformity in perception may be attributed to the centralized nature of teacher training policies and professional development frameworks in Nigeria, as stipulated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). The absence of regional differences suggests that continuous professional learning is perceived as equally relevant across Rivers State, regardless of senatorial district. This implies that teachers across the state recognize continuous professional learning as a universal requirement for professional effectiveness and capacity building in contemporary education.

Discussion of Hypothesis Two: Difference in Teachers' Perceptions on Reflective Practice Across Senatorial Districts

Similarly, the ANOVA result revealed no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers across Rivers East, Rivers West, and Rivers South-East on the extent to which reflective practice facilitates teachers' capacity building. This finding suggests a shared understanding among teachers that reflective practice is a valuable professional development strategy irrespective of geographical location. This result aligns with the findings of Maduewesi and Ezeugbor (2018), who observed that reflective practice is widely applicable and beneficial across different school settings in Nigeria. Reflective practice is largely driven by individual and collaborative professional experiences, making it less dependent on location or school type. Okeke and Dike (2021) also emphasized that reflective practice transcends contextual boundaries, as it relies on teachers' willingness to evaluate their practices and learn from experience. The consistency in perceptions across senatorial districts in Rivers State therefore highlights reflective practice as a universally accepted approach to teacher capacity building.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of transformative professional development on teachers' capacity building in public secondary schools in Rivers State, focusing on continuous professional learning and reflective practice. The findings revealed that both components significantly enhance teachers' professional competence and instructional effectiveness within a globally competitive learning environment. Continuous professional learning was found to support sustained improvement in pedagogical skills, curriculum delivery, and adaptability to emerging educational demands. Similarly, reflective practice enabled teachers to critically evaluate and refine their instructional approaches, thereby promoting professional growth and improved teaching quality. These practices were widely perceived as relevant and effective across public secondary schools. Furthermore, the absence of significant differences in teachers' perceptions across the three senatorial districts indicates a shared recognition of the value of transformative professional development throughout Rivers State. Overall, the study concludes that sustained and reflective professional development practices are essential for strengthening teachers' capacity and advancing educational quality in Rivers State public secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Rivers State Ministry of Education should institutionalize structured and continuous professional learning programmes for public secondary school teachers through regular workshops, in-service training, refresher courses, and professional learning communities. This will help to ensure that professional development moves beyond ad hoc interventions to a sustained system that supports ongoing teacher growth.

2. Reflective practice should be formally integrated into professional development policies through activities such as peer observation, reflective journaling, mentoring systems, and collaborative lesson reviews. Formalizing reflective practice will encourage teachers to systematically analyze their instructional practices and adopt evidence-based improvements.

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