
Beyond Training: How Professional Development Transforms K-12 Teachers' Job Satisfaction, Networking, and Social Mobility

Dominic Siami Egure
Oklahoma State University
USA

Katherine Curry
Oklahoma State University
USA

ABSTRACT: Since 2010, technological advancements have revolutionized teachers' professional development (PD), increasing its accessibility and flexibility. This shift reflects a growing emphasis on lifelong, personalized learning that addresses educators' unique contexts and challenges. This qualitative case study explores Nigerian teachers' perceptions of a PD program designed to support their professional growth. Findings reveal key themes, including enhanced job satisfaction, expanded social networking, strengthened human capital, and opportunities for upward social mobility. The study also identifies barriers to PD participation, offering insights into how educators engage professional learning. These results underscore the transformative potential of PD in empowering teachers and advancing educational equity.

KEYWORDS: Professional development, value creation, ECHO Education Nigeria, social learning space, problem of practice

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In recent years, new technologies and fresh ideas in social learning have paved the way for more meaningful professional growth opportunities for teachers. Traditional professional development, often limited to centralized workshops or one-time training sessions, is now transforming into flexible, participant-driven, and dynamic spaces that encourage ongoing, collaborative learning. New forms of professional learning that have gained prominence include revised mentoring

techniques (Lashway, 2003), peer sharing and support (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004), professional learning communities (Stoll et al., 2006), and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2011). These opportunities for professional learning for educators reflect a dramatic shift from passive and intermittent forms of learning to active and consistent professional development that is embedded in educational contexts and supported by peers (Stewart, 2014). Stewart (2014) explains that professional learning communities (PLCs) and communities of practice (CoPs) have become the “norm” for enhanced professional growth, and evidence suggests that they thrive “when all participants are invested in the work they are doing” (p. 28).

Most recently, collaborative learning through CoPs or PLCs has moved to online virtual learning environments as rapid technological advancements have catapulted opportunities for social interaction in virtual spaces (Harris et al., 2024). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2020) advance the term “social learning spaces” to capture the learning that occurs in these virtual spaces. Their conceptualization of “value creation” helps to explain the progression of learning that occurs (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020) and, unlike traditional CoPs, which typically involve in-person interactions in set locations, social learning spaces use digital tools to connect educators who may be miles apart. This structure enables rich exchanges of expertise, resources, and support across previously restrictive boundaries (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). By creating a shared space around common interests, these social learning spaces encourage teachers to engage in ongoing, intrinsically motivated learning, allowing them to better respond to the evolving demands of teaching in diverse contexts (Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). This approach shapes professional development into a more tailored and sustained experience, offering a support system that adapts to teachers’ needs rather than limiting them to one-size-fits-all approaches that may overlook the unique challenges educators face.

One such example of this innovative model is ECHO Education Nigeria, established in 2021 to support educators across Nigeria in their journeys toward professional growth. ECHO stands for Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes and originated as a telementoring model in the health sector. Designed as a social learning space, ECHO Education Nigeria aims to cultivate an environment where educators from various regions, backgrounds, and school contexts can engage in meaningful PD that fosters continuous improvement and shared problem-solving. This initiative is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where challenges such as limited access to high-quality resources, infrastructural barriers, and disparities between urban and rural educational settings create unique hurdles for professional growth. Through ECHO, educators are given the opportunity to engage in cost-effective, technology-enabled PD that aims to empower them with knowledge and practical skills that are directly applicable in their classrooms. However, while ECHO Education Nigeria holds great promise, a critical gap remains in understanding the nature of the value it creates for its participants and how educators perceive this value in terms of its impact on their professional practices. There is a need to explore the dimensions of value that participants experience (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020).

to understand how participation in this learning opportunity transforms education across Nigeria. Understanding how participants perceive value within ECHO Education Nigeria is essential not only for evaluating its effectiveness for the professional growth of educators in Nigeria but also for informing the design and implementation of future ECHO Education Nigeria sessions. Therefore, the broad research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are participants' perceptions of the value created in ECHO Education Nigeria, and how does this value impact their professional practices?
2. What barriers do participants face in engaging with ECHO Education Nigeria, and how do these barriers impact their experience and professional growth?

Literature Review

Recent research highlights the growing importance of professional development (PD) in supporting teachers' evolving roles, particularly as educational contexts confront increasing technological, organizational, and instructional complexity. Studies show that high-quality PD contributes not only to improved instructional practice but also to greater teacher job satisfaction and professional engagement (Smet, 2022). At the same time, the rise of digital and networked learning environments has expanded how teachers access and experience PD, with evidence demonstrating that online professional learning networks can meaningfully support collaboration, knowledge sharing, and ongoing professional growth. Building on these contemporary insights, the brief review examines foundational and emerging perspectives on effective teacher PD and explores the theoretical frameworks that illuminate how value is created within social learning environments.

The Notion of Effective Professional Development of Educators

The notion of what constitutes effective professional development is varied and complex, with differing criteria used to assess program effectiveness across contexts and educator needs (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2003; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020). Guskey (2003) underscores that the impact of professional development can differ widely based on contextual factors, as well as the experience level of educators, with early-career teachers benefiting differently than more experienced colleagues. Moreover, there remains an ongoing debate regarding the structure and responsibility for professional development, with some researchers advocating for institutionally-led, school-centered initiatives to increase teacher capacity (Fogarty & Pete, 2004; Isenberg, 2007), while others assert that educators should have greater control over their own professional learning (Knowles, 1968; Randi & Zeichner, 2004). Additionally, little consensus exists regarding the mandatory versus voluntary nature of professional

development, highlighting a need for further research on whether programs should allow for voluntary participation or if obligatory participation is essential to yield consistent benefits across the profession (Roberts & Sampson, 2011).

Value Creation Framework

The Value Creation Framework, established by Wenger et al. (2011), offers a structured method to assess the value generated in PD opportunities, social learning spaces, or communities of practice. Originally designed to analyze how engagement in shared activities leads to collective improvement, the framework has since expanded to track nuanced, measurable cycles of value that emerge through participants' interactions, ranging from immediate connections to transformative changes (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). Wenger's early concept of the "community of practice" (1998) emphasized the role of shared social environments in fostering learning and advancing knowledge within organizations. Communities of practice were defined by three key attributes: mutual engagement, a shared goal, and a repertoire of practices. Wenger posited that these communities facilitate "situated learning" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), wherein practitioners learn organically through workplace relationships rather than formal instruction. Over time, Wenger reconceptualized communities of practice by advancing the term "social learning spaces." Social learning spaces are defined as "an event of mutual engagement in learning" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020, p. 19). This space emerges when individuals, each motivated to understand how to accomplish something significant to them, recognize and engage with one another as learning partners. Such spaces can form spontaneously or be intentionally created, occurring in various settings and circumstances (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2020) recognized the need to evaluate the tangible impact of these social learning spaces, leading to the development of the Value Creation Framework in 2011 as a structured assessment tool.

The Cycles of Value Creation

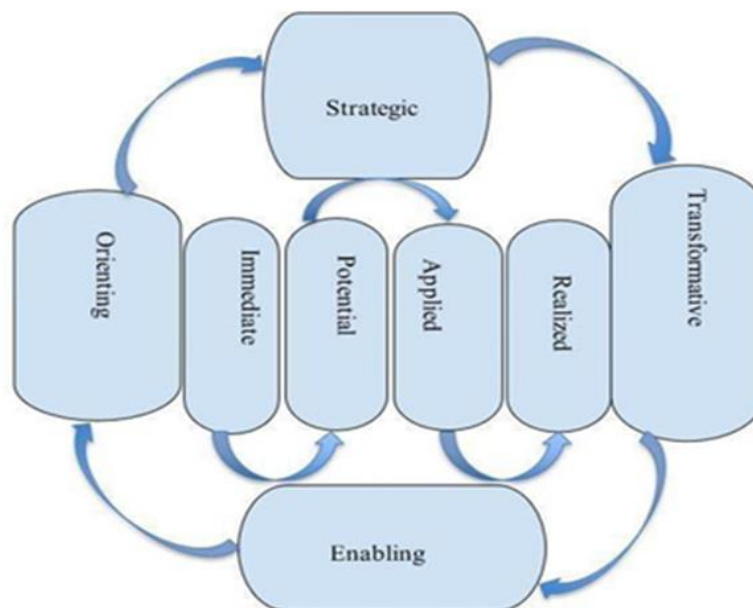
Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner's (2020) framework identifies eight iterative value cycles (Figure 1, below) that trace value creation from initial engagement through deeper organizational transformation:

1. **Immediate Value:** The foundational level, focused on participant experience and engagement within the community. This value answers, "What is the experience like?" and is characterized by recognition, inclusion, and enjoyment from interaction.

2. **Potential Value:** Captures knowledge capital gained from interactions that may be beneficial in the future. It addresses, “What can I gain from this?” and includes resources, insights, and network connections.
3. **Applied Value:** Emphasizes practical application, where participants leverage gained knowledge to meet real-world needs. It answers, “What am I learning in action?”
4. **Realized Value:** Documents tangible outcomes and improvements resulting from applied knowledge. This cycle asks, “What difference does it make?” and involves measuring actual achievements.
5. **Enabling Value:** Examines the elements that support effective engagement, such as leadership, resources, and logistical support, addressing, “What makes this possible?”
6. **Strategic Value:** Explores alignment with strategic goals and engagement with key stakeholders, posing the question, “How does this support broader objectives?”
7. **Orienting Value:** Considers the broader impact of social learning spaces beyond the immediate community, answering, “How does this fit into a wider landscape?”
8. **Transformative Value:** The final cycle, which tracks lasting, systemic changes enabled by the community, asking, “Does this effect reach beyond the immediate scope?”

Figure 1

Value Creation Cycles in the framework. Adopted from Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2020).



Research Context

This study is situated within the emerging landscape of technology-supported professional development initiatives in Nigeria, where access to sustained, collaborative learning opportunities for educators remains limited. Against this backdrop, ECHO Education Nigeria (EEN) serves as a compelling case through which to explore how virtual, community-based models can support educators' growth and problem solving.

ECHO Education Nigeria (EEN)

Recognizing the need for transformative educational support, the ECHO Education Nigeria (EEN) initiative was established in 2022. EEN adapts the internationally renowned Project ECHO telehealth model (Arora et al., 2007) for the Nigerian education context. Originally designed to support healthcare professionals by fostering mentorship and knowledge-sharing, the ECHO model utilizes a "Hub and Spoke" framework. In EEN, this model links educational leaders and teachers, providing them with a network of support and resources to tackle educational challenges. EEN leverages the Zoom video conferencing platform, a widely accessible and user-friendly tool, to facilitate interactive sessions among its members. Zoom's capabilities allow for real-time sharing of multimedia resources such as presentations, videos, and documents, enriching the session experience. By using teleconferencing technology through Zoom, EEN mitigates the barriers associated with travel costs and logistics, thus enabling a broader range of participants, particularly those in rural areas, to benefit from the program's resources without incurring additional expenses. This virtual medium significantly enhances the reach, efficiency, and inclusivity of EEN's programming.

EEN Model: A Collaborative Approach to Educational Leadership

The EEN model represents an innovative, interactive, and collaborative framework for professional development. This model's design integrates knowledge-sharing with practical problem-solving, creating a transformative learning experience through three key components:

1. **Problem of Practice:** Real-life school issues, presented anonymously, allow participants to gain a practical understanding of common challenges in education. This method grounds discussions in context, enabling participants to explore diverse strategies and solutions relevant to their specific situations.
2. **Expert Presentations:** Short, targeted didactic presentations introduce current research and best practices to the group. These insights contribute

to evidence-based understanding, empowering participants to apply contemporary solutions to their educational contexts.

3. **Dialogic Engagement:** The model emphasizes an open dialogue that includes Spoke Site educators and Hub Team members, facilitating an exchange of ideas, experiences, and strategies. This collaborative element is crucial, as it democratizes expertise and fosters mutual learning among participants.

Through these activities (see also Table 1), the EEN model fosters a continuous cycle of knowledge exchange and peer support. It goes beyond traditional professional development models, positioning itself as a sustainable framework that empowers participants to address real-world educational challenges through practical, innovative solutions.

Table 1

Bi-Weekly Agenda for ECHO Education Nigeria

Minute(s)	Facilitator
Five	Introductions & Welcome Address
one	Housekeeping
Fifteen	Didactic
Five	Clarifying Questions
Five	Case Presentation
Ten	Clarifying Questions
Five	Recommendations
Five	Wrap Up

EEN Participants and Engagement

ECHO Education Nigeria has a diverse participant base, comprising both the Hub Team and Spoke Site members. The Hub Team consists of seven professionals, including education specialists, school leaders, and academic faculty from higher institutions. These experts are responsible for curating session content, leading discussions, and ensuring that each session is productive and engaging. Their presence as facilitators anchors the sessions, providing a stable foundation of guidance and expertise. The Spoke Site members include approximately 28 voluntary participants, primarily educators and school leaders based across Nigeria. Their contributions are invaluable, bringing local insights, contextualized challenges, and unique perspectives to the discussions and learning. Active participation from both the Hub Team and Spoke Site members creates a dynamic, enriching environment where each participant can learn from one another and collectively enhance their approaches to educational leadership. EEN has established a collaborative platform where educators share experiences, address dilemmas of practice, and develop actionable strategies for their classrooms and communities. This model exemplifies a transformative approach

to professional development in Nigerian education, supporting a culture of continuous improvement and empowering educators to create meaningful impacts in their schools and communities.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study design to deeply explore participant perspectives on the value created through the EEN program. Quantitative data were collected to provide an understanding of the broader participant demographic and to support the selection of information-rich cases for qualitative analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam (1998) underscores the suitability of qualitative case study approaches in research that seeks to capture the nuances of a bounded phenomenon by examining the intricate interactions of factors within a specific context. Merriam (1998) elaborates, "By concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (the case), the researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon. The case study focuses on holistic description and explanation" (p. 29). This method is particularly appropriate for this study, as it provides the means to investigate the dynamic value creation within the unique, context-bound environment of EEN.

Data Sources and Sampling

This case study utilized a value creation survey. The value creation survey (Harris et al., in press) consists of 26 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale. The survey's main objective was to assess participants' perceptions of the value generated within ECHO Education Nigeria, with data collected from 33 respondents across the Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 semesters. Findings from descriptive statistical analysis informed the selection of participants for subsequent interviews. The survey framework was based on Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner's (2020) value creation cycles, though it deliberately excluded the "orienting value" cycle. This cycle, typically applicable to the initial phases of community formation when participants align their goals and expectations, was considered outside the study's scope.

Seven Spoke Site members, consisting of a school administrator and six teachers who rated EEN highly on the value creation survey, were selected for in-depth interviews. Additionally, one Hub Team member who scored highly on the survey was also invited for interviews (Table 2). This selection method allowed the researchers to capture detailed insights from participants who demonstrated a strong perceived value from EEN engagement. The interview questions were adapted from the suggestions of value creation questions of Wenger-Trayner and Wenger Trayner (2020). These value creation questions are of two styles: personal narratives and value creation stories. Based on the initial survey results, the interview questions were adjusted slightly to elicit deeper responses, with

interviews structured to be minimally directive and open-ended, in alignment with Merriam's (1998) recommendations for qualitative interviews.

Table 2

Interview Participants

Participant	EEN Role	Job Role
1	Hub Team member	Secondary School Head of Department
2	Spoke Site member	Secondary School/Consultant
3	Spoke Site member	Secondary School/Head of Department
4	Spoke Site member	Secondary School Teacher
5	Spoke Site member	Secondary School Teacher
6	Spoke Site member	Elementary School Teacher
7	Spoke Site member	Secondary School Teacher
8	Spoke Site member	Secondary School Teacher

Data collection also involved prolonged observation of EEN sessions. Observations were conducted throughout the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters, capturing both verbal and non-verbal engagement among participants. Observations were documented using field notes (Merriam, 1998), and reflective memos were prepared immediately following each session. Each EEN session was also video recorded, allowing the research team to review and further analyze session dynamics and interactions. Observation data provided contextual insights that enriched the interpretation of data from interviews and surveys, contributing to a more holistic analysis. This triangulated approach strengthened the validity of the findings by allowing patterns and themes to emerge across different forms of evidence rather than relying on a single method.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through a constant comparative approach, where data collection and analysis occurred concurrently, allowing findings to emerge iteratively (Merriam, 1985). Descriptive statistics were calculated for survey responses, providing an overview of participant demographics and their perceptions of value within the EEN program. The survey included 26 items utilizing a 6-point Likert Response set ranging from Strongly Disagree (coded as "1") to Strongly Agree (coded as "6") as participants rated their learning across the seven cycles of value creation. Survey scores ranged from 65 to 160 across the sample, and eight participants who scored high were selected for interviews to provide deeper insights. The scores of these selected participants were as follows: 152, 152, 152, 149, 160, 160, 145, and 144. Qualitative data were collected, including interview transcripts, observational notes, and related documents; all of which were systematically coded. Documents that were coded included didactic

PowerPoint presentations, transcripts of participant engagement in the chat feature of Zoom technology and WhatsApp social media, as well as the ECHO Education Nigeria (EEN) curriculum and session schedules. These documents provided valuable contextual and content-specific insights, allowing for a deeper understanding of how participants interacted with the learning materials and engaged in discussions. Analyzing these documents alongside other data sources helped to identify key themes, reinforce findings, and offer a comprehensive perspective on the value participants derived from EEN and the barriers they encountered. An initial open coding process identified preliminary concepts, which were then refined through axial coding to explore relationships between these concepts. The data were then grouped into categories and, through further refinement, key themes emerged, offering insights into the mechanisms of value creation within EEN.

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the data analysis, established procedures from qualitative case study methodology were followed (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2017). The study addressed dependability and confirmability through a detailed audit trail that recorded data sources, collection methods, and analytical steps (Yin, 2017). This audit trail enabled triangulation across data sources, survey data, interview data, and observation data, bolstering the reliability and coherence of the analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Additionally, peer debriefing sessions were conducted throughout the data analysis process, facilitating external validation of findings and ensuring a robust interpretation (Stake, 2005). To further support the credibility of findings, “thick descriptions” were employed (Merriam, 1998), providing detailed, context-rich accounts of participant experiences within EEN.

Recognizing that the researchers are stakeholders within EEN, reflexivity was actively practiced to identify and mitigate any potential biases. Reflexive practices included personal reflections and discussions regarding the researcher’s roles and perspectives to ensure a balanced interpretation of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). These reflective practices contributed to a more nuanced and credible representation of findings, strengthening the scholarly rigor of this study.

Findings

Findings reveal several key themes that highlight the experiences and perspectives of participants in EEN. These include job satisfaction, social networking among participants, perceptions of human capital, the facilitation of upward social mobility, barriers to participation in the professional development opportunity, and the progression of value perception over time. Each theme offers valuable insights into how participants engage with EEN and the broader impact it has on their professional lives and growth.

Job Satisfaction

The theme of “Job Satisfaction” was evident in participants’ comments. Participants shared how proud they were to be identified as teachers and ECHO Education Nigeria participants. When hub teams from the USA visited Nigeria, the EEN participants convened for a brief ECHO session. Seeing that EEN participants were assembled, other teachers became interested and curious about the potential of EEN in the country. This gave EEN participants a sense of pride and belonging. According to a participant, “That event [the gathering of EEN participants to welcome and celebrate the presence of the hub team from the United States] brought satisfaction to my teaching profession.” Another participant shared that she is much more interested in improving herself through EEN. Connecting self-improvement through EEN to teaching satisfaction, she said that she is happy to remain a teacher who utilizes opportunities like the EEN to improve herself:

You know, you are satisfied where you are, and you are improving yourself where you are to become better. Not necessarily moving to another place [job] to feel better. Because some people – I ask them: Why did they move? They didn't have any reason to move. They could have stayed where they were and improve themselves. But most times some people look at the financial implications. And at the end of the day, see it, I don't even see the financial implication in that manner. But, like we all know, individuals are different.

This statement comes from a teacher who feels warm and contented being a teacher and is equally satisfied with the opportunities she receives from attending EEN sessions. She equally does not see any good reason why a teacher would be seeking to move from one school to another. Even though there was no direct interview question on job satisfaction, responses from participants jointly point to the satisfaction they enjoy having an opportunity, like the ECHO education Nigeria, that better positions them in their jobs. One participant was convinced that she currently has what she needs to be a good teacher, and so “there is no need to change my teaching job as of now.”

Social Networking among Participants

As participants discussed the opportunities in EEN, they stated how they had been positioned to connect with educators that they would not have been able to meet otherwise. For example, at every ECHO Education Nigeria session, classroom teachers have access to principals and university professors, and vice versa. Therefore, the EEN became a potential platform for networking. An activity carried out by EEN participants specifically led to the networking of participants. In a bid to easily disseminate information and reinforce learning, the hub team created a WhatsApp social media group. One of the activities participants engaged in the WhatsApp group was to identify a participant they would like to meet and

share ideas. This was specifically planned to encourage continued learning and sharing of ideas and not to limit learning to EEN sessions alone. Participants found this as an opportunity to get to know each other better. For example, a participant said, "I've been able to connect with one of the participants... once in a while, we do share ideas together on WhatsApp." Another participant reiterated that she attends EEN often because "...I'm always passionate to connect with those people that will help me to be better in life." This participant made a great remark on how she likes to relate with people who can contribute to her professional growth and career. Referring to the new friend she has made in EEN, she said, "...we greet each other, yeah, share experiences.... We are friends. I can call her my friend now."

Cordial relationships are important for participants. When asked what they would do differently if they were the coordinators of EEN, most suggestions were about reaching out to participants through phone calls to know how they were doing. One participant pointed out, "I called her to ask why she did not attend the session." This value of relationship started gradually and deepened as time went on. One participant explained, "Mr. XX is a unique teacher. He's a unique leader. As I continued to attend EEN, I was able to recognize his voice, *na so e reach*" [*na so e reach* means "to that extent"]. Additionally, when complex cases are presented, participants tend to interpret and share their opinions on how to resolve them. Participants whose ideas align with each other tend to continue the conversation even after the session, thereby strengthening their relationship.

Human Capital

Findings indicate that EEN is a virtual community where rich and reliable information is shared among participants, thereby equipping participants with educational resources and ideas. Participants became resource persons who were consulted in their schools. For example, a participant said, "When they see that I am always bringing ideas from EEN, they tend to want to consult me. They say, 'Call her; let's hear from her.'" Another participant, referring to how her colleague perceives her, said,

Sometimes, maybe we meet in [sic] morning, and I greet her. Aside the normal greeting, she would want to tend to engage in longer conversations with me cause she sees value in whatever I'm saying, whatever contribution that I'm bringing. So, this brought me closer to her...

Another teacher participant recounted how her relationship with her school principal deepened because she shared one of the treated cases from EEN with the principal. This teacher, who was "never known in the school" became prominent because, according to her, "just one little idea from EEN that I shared in my school sold me out, and she [principal] became my friend." Lastly, a participant indicated that, due to the insights gained from EEN sessions and the manner in which she shared her experiences from EEN in her school, she automatically

became the favorite of the school administrator. This teacher explained that, “sometimes when they say the principal is calling me, my friends will say ‘your mama, dey call you’” [your mama dey call you means – your mom is calling you]. All of these instances point to the notion of human capital that participants shared.

Upward Social Mobility

Participants shared how their impact in schools distinguished them from their colleagues. Evidently, as participants kept sharing ideas and knowledge gained from EEN, they gained more recognition in their schools. A participant was promoted to the Head of the Department of Social Sciences in her school. Another participant became one of the school’s administrators, and a third participant was acclaimed as the best teacher in the state. Sharing what led to her being awarded the best teacher in the state, the participant recounted what made her stand out among other nominees. She said,

You remember that didactic presentation given by Dr. Oseremi Kayode on mission and vision? I used the template to do my own vision and mission for myself and my class. When it was time for nominees to make presentations, I discovered that my presentation was good. This is how I started... I used that didactic template. My presentation was different, and people were impressed.

The participant who became the head of a department shared that the school administrators noticed that she was “scared” to become the head of department. According to this participant, she wanted to decline the position. However, she accepted because the administrators told her that she had grown so fast in the past few months in administrative skills and that there was no other teacher who could better occupy the position. Also, the awardee of the best teacher in the state felt less qualified to participate in the competition in the first place because she was just in her second year as a teacher. At the same time, the nominees were supposed to have spent a minimum of five years on the teaching job. However, her contribution to their schools made her stand out. These narratives indicate how participation in EEN enhanced the upward social mobility of participants.

Barriers to Participation in EEN

Despite the strengths of the EEN model and participants’ overall enthusiasm for the program, several obstacles limited full and consistent engagement. These barriers stemmed largely from contextual realities that shaped teachers’ daily work lives, access to technology, and alignment between the program’s content and participants’ individual needs. The following sections outline the primary challenges that affected participation and shaped educators’ experiences within the EEN program.

Inconvenient Timing

While participants acknowledge interest in EEN, the primary obstacle they face is finding time for it in their already packed schedules. Unfortunately, the demands of teaching and other personal business consume a considerable portion of teachers' energy, attention, and mental capacity. This issue underscores the major reason why some participants do not attend EEN regularly and others come later. A participant recalled that during one of the sessions, she went to work and returned exhausted. She vaguely remembered being assigned to different rooms at the session and, at some point during the session, she dozed off. She said, "When I woke up, they had already returned to the main room. I realized I must have been sleeping." Another participant said that she had often joined the EEN session when returning from work. Most school work ends at 4 PM, while the EEN sessions took place from 6 PM to 7 PM. Evidentiary reports show that some workers, on a typical day, usually get home around 6 PM, while others are yet to get home at 6 PM. Due to this timing, participants always needed to adjust their schedules to attend EEN sessions; sometimes, this could be inconvenient. One of the participants shared that she often stayed at her place of work on the days of EEN sessions so she could attend from that location.

Infotech

The average number of participants during EEN sessions was 35. However, many more participants attempted to join the Zoom meeting but were not able to do so due to disrupted Internet connectivity. Some others who were able to join kept getting "kicked out" of the sessions due to the same Internet problems or low phone quality. In one of the EEN sessions, one participant logged in and logged out of the session four times and finally could not attend the session. Attendance of EEN sessions is sometimes disrupted due to Internet connectivity issues. Poor Internet connection and low-quality phones cause delays, lag, and sometimes complete disconnection from the session. This has made it challenging for some participants to engage effectively and receive the intended benefit from EEN.

Focus Area of EEN Curriculum

Participants were asked to identify educational issues they felt would be beneficial if addressed in the ECHO Education Nigeria (EEN) program through either a didactic presentation or a case study. A survey was distributed to gather these insights, and the results were used to shape the EEN curriculum (Table 3). While the resulting curriculum included topics relevant to both school leadership and classroom instruction, the didactic presentations ultimately tended to focus more heavily on issues pertinent to school leaders, with the case presentations

also proving to have a stronger impact on school administrators than on classroom teachers. One participant noted, "You know, we have focused on school administrators. I hope to utilize the ideas [from EEN] when I become a school administrator." Another participant expressed a desire to gain strategies for more effectively conveying chemistry lessons to her students but felt that this specific instructional goal was only addressed indirectly within the EEN framework. This suggests that, while the program provided valuable insights and strategies, it may have emphasized the needs of school leaders over the distinct challenges and goals of classroom teachers.

Table 3*3 Months Curriculum of EEN*

	Date and Time	Didactic Topic
0	Thursday, October 6th, 2022	Mock
1	Thursday, October 13th, 2022	Tone setting
2	Thursday, October 27th, 2022	Wellbeing in schools
3	Thursday, November 10, 2022	Technology integration Barriers.
4	Thursday, November 24, 2022	Leading Change in 21st Century Nigeria Schools
5	Thursday, Dec 8, 2022	Evaluation/feedback
6	Thursday, January 26th, 2023	Learning communities based on core values
7	Thursday, February 9th, 2023	Designing in E-learning
8	Thursday, February 23rd, 2023	Emotional Intelligence for School Leaders /Teachers
9	Thursday, March 9, 2023	Augmented and virtual reality
10	Thursday, March 23rd, 2023	Empathetic Listening-Understanding before acting

Progression of Value Perception in EEN

The survey results on participants' perceptions of "immediate value" to "transformative value" within ECHO Education Nigeria (EEN) reveal a pattern of decreasing levels of agreement as value categories progress. For instance, within the "potential value" category (items 1-4), agreement rates were notably high, with 72% to 96% of participants responding "completely agree." This strong consensus indicates a shared recognition of the value of acquiring new skills and knowledge through the EEN program. In contrast, agreement rates decrease in subsequent categories. For "applied value" (items 9-10) and "realized value" (items 11-14), the percentage of respondents marking "completely agree" dropped to between 52% and 56%. This reduction suggests a moderate level of consensus regarding the practical application and impact of these skills in areas such as service to stakeholders, collaborative decision-making, empowerment, and resource stewardship. Further down in the value spectrum, agreement diminishes in the

"enabling value" category (items 15-17), with "completely agree" responses ranging from 16% to 44%. These responses reflect a limited agreement concerning EEN's capacity to foster sustainable development and long-term support for its participants. Finally, within the "transformative value" category (items 22-26), the percentage of "completely agree" responses remains low, indicating a limited perception of transformative outcomes. Here, agreement levels reflect uncertainty or hesitation about shifts in power dynamics, newly defined metrics of success, the establishment of innovative policies and practices, and the evolution of new norms and narratives in educational leadership. Overall, the survey findings underscore a general trend in which participants perceive immediate, potential benefits strongly but feel a progressively diminished sense of value as these outcomes advance from applied and realized effects to enabling and transformative impacts.

Discussion

Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner's (2020) value creation framework provides a lens through which we can comprehend participants' perceptions of the value created in the EEN PD platform. This framework provides a comprehensive view of the various dimensions of value that participants derive from participating in EEN. According to the value creation framework, participants perceive multiple value dimensions due to their participation in EEN. These include immediate value, potential value, applied value, actual value, enabling value, strategic value, and transformative value. Findings from the survey are consistent with these dimensions, providing evidence of the value they perceive in various program components. As outlined in Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner's (2020) value creation framework, the transformative value dimension denotes the long-term influence and direction resulting from participants' participation in a professional development program. It includes factors such as shifting power dynamics, new definitions of success, new policies and practices, and the emergence of new norms and narratives. Compared to other dimensions of value, our findings suggest that participants experienced low transformative value in EEN. This could suggest that participants have not yet encountered significant shifts in power dynamics, new policies, or new norms and narratives within their educational contexts. It is also a possibility that the EEN curriculum lays emphasis on immediate and potential value, such as knowledge acquisition and skill development, rather than the long-term value of transformation. In addition, the study's timeframe may have prevented the complete realization of transformative outcomes, typically occurring over an extended period.

Research on effective professional development programs emphasizes the importance of supportive environments, continuous learning opportunities, and collaborative engagement for the professional development of educators (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009). EEN provides a professional learning and networking opportunity on a regular, bi-weekly basis, free of charge, using a cost-effective and accessible medium. Participants acknowledged the

program's significant impact on their professional development as educators. They emphasized how the program helped them acquire confidence and develop a stronger sense of purpose and grit in their roles. They equally attributed their enhanced satisfaction and professional success to the knowledge, skills, and networking opportunities provided by EEN. These findings are consistent with the literature on effective professional development, which emphasizes the need for programs that address the specific needs of teachers, offering ongoing support and promoting a sense of efficacy and empowerment (DeSimone, 2009). Additionally, research on career advancement emphasizes the importance of continuous learning, networking, and access to resources for educators' professional development and upward mobility (Colbeck et al., 2000; Kyndt et al., 2016). This research demonstrates how professional development programs like EEN can equip educators with the tools, knowledge, and connections they need to advance their careers and positively impact their respective positions.

In the context of the Nigerian educational system, the findings of this study highlight the significance of investing in effective professional development programs. Participants' positive opinions and satisfaction with EEN demonstrate the program's capacity to meet its expectations and objectives. However, infrastructure issues in Nigeria hinder educators' participation in such a social learning space. In Nigeria, frequent outages and unreliable electricity infrastructures hamper access to online resources. Access to dependable Internet connectivity is equally a major obstacle in Nigeria. While urban areas may have relatively greater access to the Internet, rural and underserved areas frequently lack consistent high-speed connections. In some instances, participants must deal with intermittent or sluggish Internet access, which hinders their ability to engage with EEN sessions.

Additionally, the price of data plans can be prohibitive for individuals with limited finances. It is essential to clarify that, although EEN's initiatives are considered cost-effective, they are not entirely free for participants. Findings indicate that participants frequently incur costs associated with Internet access, data utilization, and the acquisition of necessary technological equipment. In the Nigerian context, where financial resources are limited and expenditures must be prioritized, these expenses can become particularly burdensome. Therefore, this nuanced comprehension of accessibility highlights the need for an all-encompassing strategy to address the multifaceted challenges that EEN participants may face. It emphasizes the need to consider the broader financial implications of digital participation. It also highlights the need for EEN and similar organizations to investigate innovative solutions and partnerships that mitigate these barriers, ensuring that valuable learning and networking opportunities are genuinely accessible to all, regardless of their financial situation.

Limitations

This study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of EEN participants; however, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The fact that the ECHO education model is relatively new and its implementation in the context of education in Nigeria is still evolving is a limitation of this study. As a result, existing research and literature on the specific outcomes and effects of the ECHO model in educational settings are limited. This limitation made it difficult to compare the findings in this study to those of prior research or to develop a comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of EEN. However, this limitation presents an opportunity for additional research and exploration of the ECHO model's unique contributions in a social learning space.

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Author Contact

Dominic Siami Egure, dominic.egure@okstate.edu

Katherine Curry, Katherine.curry@okstate.edu