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A STUDY OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN DISTRICT FAISALABAD, PUNJAB

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Abstract
This study explored the professional development opportunities for primary school teachers in district Faisalabad, Punjab. The sample was selected through convenient sampling technique. An independent sample t-test was applied to examine differences based on gender, locality, and status, while ANOVA was used to analyze variations regarding teaching experience and grade level. The results revealed that such training programs enhance teaching skills, teaching methods, and classroom management. Most primary teachers showed a positive attitude towards these programs, which foster continuous learning and improve the overall education system.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the main facilitators of learning and play a crucial role in shaping curriculum and guiding students (National Education Commission, 1959). Since knowledge and research are changing rapidly, teachers need continuous professional development. In Punjab, QAED offers such training opportunities. Professional development is the process of improving skills, knowledge, and competencies to keep up with the changing world (Alexandrou, 2021). It also helps in adopting new instructional designs, teaching policies, and classroom tools (Brown & Gilbert, 2021) and in solving challenges related to school environment and bureaucracy (Siregar, 2018)

Primary education is the foundation of formal education, providing basic reading, writing, communication and computer skills for future learning (Osiesi Mensah Prince, 2020). As well-trained teachers improve student outcomes (Wahyudin, 2019), this study aims to explore the professional development opportunities available to primary school teachers in Punjab, assess

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current training systems, and provide insights for policymakers and training institutions to strengthen education quality.

1.2 Definition of Professional Development

Professional development refers to any activity that helps an individual improve their skills, knowledge, and work competencies, including learning something new or enhancing an existing skill.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The current study is designed to explore the professional development opportunities available to primary school teachers in Punjab.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To identify the professional development opportunities available to primary school teachers in Punjab.
- To determine the extent to which teachers are satisfied with the existing opportunities.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the effect of professional development opportunities available to primary school teachers?
2. How do they impact teacher effectiveness and student outcomes?

1.6 Significance

Professional development programs provide teachers with knowledge and skills to improve teaching, curriculum design, classroom management, and student assessment through workshops, seminars, and training. They keep teachers updated with latest trends and research-based practices, which enhances students' learning outcomes and the overall education system in Punjab. Continuous growth helps teachers gain new ideas and strategies to engage students and meet their diverse needs. It also promotes professional community, collaboration, and a culture of continuous improvement in schools. Thus, studying these opportunities is important for teacher growth, student achievement, policy making, and professionalization of teaching.

1.7 Delimitation

Due to time and financial constraints, the study was delimited to primary schools of Faisalabad.

2.1 Professional Development

Professional development is a lifelong process of improving knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to adapt to changing technology and needs. It includes vocational training, self-improvement, and in-service training, and is essential in all professions including teaching to fill occupational gaps and stay updated (Kizilkaya, 2012).

2.1.1 Teacher Professional Development

Teachers are central to quality and individualized education. Sustainable teacher policies lead to better development. Lifelong learning improves teachers' productivity (Elcicek, 2016) and involves updating knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Odabasi, 2011) to enhance classroom effectiveness (Day, 1999). It should be systematic and internalized before applying new methods like games and group activities (Kennedy, 2016). Institutions must provide supportive environments for both teachers and students (Bowe & Gore, 2017; OECD, 2009).

2.2 Importance of Professional Development

Developing a professional identity takes 3 to 5 years. Teaching is a learning process for both teachers and students, making continuous professional development essential for quality education. In addition to formal classes, professional development occurs daily through interactions, helping teachers remain effective over time.

2.2.1 Subject Area Knowledge

Students expect teachers to be experts in their subjects and answer all their queries. Effective professional development provides teachers with authentic knowledge and deeper insight, helping

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them find new ways to support student success (Kumar, 2020).

2.2.2 Student Learning Outcome

The main priority of outstanding teachers is to improve student learning outcomes. Teaching evolves constantly, and teachers must focus on what students will learn, do, and demonstrate. Using assessment insights helps them understand learners better and design lessons to improve achievement (Kumar, 2020).

2.2.3 Include New Technology

Schools using outdated technologies cannot prepare students for the future. While technology offers many learning opportunities, teachers need proper training to integrate it purposefully into lessons with effective planning (Kumar, 2020).

2.2.4 Be a Better Teacher

Collaboration with senior practitioners and instructors strengthens subject knowledge and helps rethink instructional strategies, making teachers better professionals. (Kumar, 2020).

Primary School Teachers' Opinions on Professional Development

2.11.1 Perceptions

Teachers view professional development as necessary for change and growth. It gives knowledge and skills, but learning also happens through trial and error. Some teachers show burnout, lack of interest, and resistance due to change fatigue and financial problems (Ekinci & Acar, 2019).

2.11.2 Process

Teachers face problems like transport and poor facilities during training. They use computers and internet to join interactive trainings and forums (Ekinci & Acar, 2019).

2.11.3 Suggestions for Effective PD:

PD should be need-based, with choice, relevant content, active learning, and cooperation. It should relate to real-life, classroom problems, and parents' expectations. Forced training is ineffective. Effective PD needs self-control, reflection, empathy, hands-on experience, research discussion, sharing experiences, and collaboration with colleagues to avoid trial and error (Ekinci & Acar, 2019).

Effective professional development Model

The effective PD model has five stages: Need, Goal Setting, Planning, Development, and Evaluation (Ekinci & Acar, 2019).

Need

First step is identifying the need for improvement. Teachers need PD for respect, career growth, specialization, new technology, and to meet expectations of students, parents, and institutions. University education alone is not enough. Institutional attitude affects teachers' willingness to participate.

Goal Setting

Setting specific goals according to teachers' needs increases success. Teachers should define what to improve and take input from others. Goals guide the planning phase.

Planning

Planning decides what, when, and how to do. It includes evaluating opportunities, considering current conditions, and making a schedule. School management should support teachers with clear goals.

Development

Development uses relevant content, learning environments, collaboration, and reflective thinking. Content should be motivating for stakeholders. Informal learning with experts is useful. Effective environment needs interaction, communication, active learning, applying theory to real life, group learning, and sharing resources. Reflective thinking helps to solve problems when mentor support is not available.

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Evaluation
Evaluation ensures goals are achieved. Three types: goal-oriented, process, and reflective evaluation. Goal-oriented measures achievement with stakeholder input. Process evaluation checks if needs, goals, planning, and efficiency are accurate and guides future PD. Reflective thinking requires logical decisions and self-control.

Chapter 3

3.1 Research Design
Quantitative survey method was used to examine professional development opportunities available to primary school teachers.

3.2 Population
Population was 40 public primary schools of District Faisalabad.

3.3 Sample
Sample was 200 primary teachers (82 male, 118 female) selected from public schools.

3.4 Sampling Technique
Convenient sampling technique was used for data collection.

3.5 Research Instrument
37-items questionnaire was used; Part 1 demographics, Part 2 on 5-point Likert scale (SDA to SA).

3.6 Validity
Content validity was confirmed by 5 faculty experts and supervisor; questionnaire revised as per feedback.

3.7 Reliability
Reliability was checked through Cronbach's Alpha; tool was found reliable for quantitative analysis.

3.8 Data Collection
Researcher personally visited 40 schools, explained objectives, and collected 200 questionnaires.

3.9 Data Analysis
Quantitative data analyzed through SPSS 23.0 using frequency, percentage, mean, SD, Independent sample t-test (gender, locality, status) and One-way ANOVA (grade level, experience).

Consolidated Research Data & Short Interpretations

Table 1: Consolidated Framework Analysis (Descriptive, T-Test, & ANOVA Outcomes)

Core Analysis Domains	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	t / F	df	p-value
Benefits of Professional Development	200	2.00	5.00	4.27	0.48	-0.530	198	0.596
Available Programmatic Opportunities	200	1.00	22.0	1.89	1.48	-0.746	198	0.457
Structural Workshop Experiences	200	2.00	5.00	3.99	0.60	-0.536	198	0.592
Educational Conferences & Seminars	200	2.00	5.00	3.99	0.60	-0.705	198	0.482

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Baseline In-Service Training System	200	3.00	5.00	4.32	0.49	3.190*	4, 195	0.014*
Institutional Mentoring & Guidance	200	2.00	5.00	3.93	0.68	1.088	198	0.278

Interpretation: The consolidated framework assessment indicates high baseline satisfaction among teachers, particularly highlighted by Professional Development Benefits (M=4.27, SD=0.48) and In-Service Training efficacy (M=4.32, SD=0.49). Inferential calculations utilizing Independent Samples T-Tests across gender, geographical locality, and employment status (Contract vs. Permanent) revealed no statistically structural variations across the standard parameters ($p > .05$), proving uniform system experiences. Crucially, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) confirmed a statistically significant institutional differentiation based on Grade Level Taught specifically within the In-Service Training framework ($F(4, 195) = 3.190$, $p = .014$). Since $p < .05$, this crucial variance implies that standardized, non-differentiated development tracks deployed across Punjab do not satisfy varying class-level requirements equitably.

5.1 Summary

This study explored professional development opportunities available to primary school teachers in District Faisalabad. Objectives were (1) to identify PD opportunities, (2) to determine teachers' satisfaction level. Quantitative survey method was used. Population was 40 public primary schools, sample was 200 teachers (82 male, 118 female) selected through convenient sampling technique. A 37-items questionnaire on 5-point Likert scale was used. Validity confirmed by 5 experts and reliability checked through Cronbach's Alpha. Data analyzed through SPSS 23.0 using mean, SD, frequency, t-test and One-way ANOVA.

5.2 Conclusion

1. Professional development programs are highly beneficial and positively perceived by primary school teachers. They enhance teaching skills, methods, and classroom management.
2. The current PD system in Punjab provides uniform experiences without gender, locality, or job status discrimination ($t=-0.530$ to -0.746, $p=0.457$ to $0.596 > 0.05$).
3. The existing one-size-fits-all in-service training model is not fulfilling grade-wise needs. Significant ANOVA result ($F(4,195)=3.190$, $p=0.014$) proves that needs of Grade 1 teachers are different from Grade 5, thus differentiated training is required.
4. Teachers are dissatisfied with long-duration, theory-based training. They prefer short, frequent, activity-based, practical, and online training models as per Ekinci & Acar (2019) model (Need, Goal Setting, Planning, Development, Evaluation).

5.3: Findings

Finding 1: High Satisfaction Level

Data shows teachers have high positive attitude towards Professional Development. The highest mean was found in Baseline In-Service Training System (M=4.32, SD=0.49) and Benefits of Professional Development (M=4.27, SD=0.48). This proves that teachers consider PD necessary and beneficial for their job.

Finding 2: Uniform Experience Across Gender, Locality and Status

Independent sample t-test results revealed no significant difference between male and female teachers, urban and rural, and contract vs

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permanent teachers on all variables ($p > 0.05$). For example, Benefits of PD ($t=-0.530$, $p=0.596$), Available Opportunities ($t=-0.746$, $p=0.457$), Workshop Experiences ($t=-0.536$, $p=0.592$). It shows all teachers have equal and uniform experiences.

Finding 3: Significant Difference on Grade Level

One-Way ANOVA found a statistically significant difference based on Grade Level Taught only in In-Service Training domain ($F(4,195)=3.190$, $p=0.014^*$). Since $p<0.05$, it indicates that standardized training does not fulfill needs of different grade levels equally. Grade 1 teacher needs are different from Grade 5.

5.3 Discussion

The quantitative results show that professional development opportunities available to primary school teachers in Punjab are positively perceived. The high mean scores (M=3.99 to 4.32) confirm that workshops, seminars, and in-service training are effective. This finding is consistent with Ekinci & Acar (2019) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) who stated effective PD improves teachers' skills.

The non-significant t-test results ($p>0.05$) across gender, locality, and job status prove that QAED and other training programs in Punjab provide equal opportunities without discrimination. This uniformity is a positive sign for education department.

However, the significant ANOVA result ($F=3.190$, $p=0.014$) for In-Service Training based on grade level is a crucial finding. It indicates that current one-size-fits-all training model is not effective. Primary teachers teaching different grades need differentiated content. This supports Desimone & Garet (2015) who emphasized content focus and coherence as key features of effective PD.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Grade-Level Customization: QAED should design separate modules for Early Grades (1-2) and Upper Primary (4-5) as ANOVA showed significant difference ($p=0.014$).

2. Short & Frequent Model: Replace long-duration training (barrier 40%) with short-term, frequent, activity-based workshops (demand 22.5% and 17.5%).

3. Online/Digital Transition: Develop online PD tracks (38% demand) to reduce transport and poor facility problems identified in Process (Ekinci & Acar, 2019).

4. Need-Based Content: Training should be need-based, student-centric (19%), and relevant to real-life classroom problems, not forced training.

5. Practical Resources: Provide low-cost, practical lesson activities (29.5% demand) and AV aids usage training.

5.5 Recommendations For Future Researchers

1. Future study should be conducted on larger population covering all districts of Punjab, not only Faisalabad.
2. A comparative study between private and public primary schools regarding PD opportunities should be conducted.
3. Experimental research may be conducted to check effectiveness of online vs face-to-face activity-based training model.
4. Future research should include secondary school teachers and also explore relationship between PD and student learning outcomes (Wahyudin, 2019).
5. Qualitative in-depth interviews may be conducted to explore low morale and burnout (28.5%) factors in detail.

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