

Exploring the Perception of Secondary Schools' Teachers Regarding Professional Development Trainings and Challenges Faced

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Teacher professional development (TPD) is an important factor that prepares teachers with the latest knowledge, teaching methods, and self-confidence to improve classroom activities and student learning achievements. This study examined: (a). the perceptions of teachers regarding professional development trainings and, (b). the challenges faced in attending and implementing these in Rawalpindi.

Methodology: A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire with 20 closed ended items and 3 open ended questions from 45 teachers, including Elementary School Teachers (EST), Trained Graduate Teachers (TGT), Secondary School Teachers (SST) and Vice Principals (VP), of secondary schools in Rawalpindi, who had previously participated in departmental professional development training programmes. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS 25.

Findings: Teachers generally viewed professional development positively, seeing it as beneficial for improving instruction, motivation, and professional growth. They were eager to participate in training aligned with both their teaching needs and global education demands. However, some challenges were noted, including heavy workloads, difficulty covering syllabi on time, limited funding, poor technology, and long training hours.

Conclusion: The research highlighted the need to address key barriers to ensure successful professional development, including proper funding, ICT provision in schools, scheduling training during vacations, and reducing syllabus loads for exam classes to support activity-based learning. These insights can guide policymakers and administrators in designing more effective and sustainable programs that enhance teacher performance and institutional quality.

Keywords: Professional Development, Teachers' Perception, Training, Challenges, Instructional Improvement, Secondary Education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional development (TPD) is critical in improving teaching and school performance. According to Avalos (2011), the process of professional development depends on teacher learning and the ability to transform the knowledge into classroom practice. Professional development opportunities equip teachers with new pedagogical materials, recent knowledge and confidence, thus enhancing the classroom achievement and institutional performance. This paper was developed in an attempt to examine the perceptions of school teachers concerning professional development trainings besides the challenges experienced during the process of attending and implementing them.

In addition to enhancing the instructional practice, TPD trainings can be regarded as a driver of greater educational change through matching teacher competencies with the current curricular standards and student requirements. Darling-Hammond, Hylar, and Gardner (2017) believe that a quality of professional development must be maintained and be content-based and practice-oriented, where teachers do not only learn but also demonstrate the obtained knowledge in real classrooms. TPD, when ingrained into a positive school culture, enables learning communities, improves teacher motivation and eventually leads to systemic increases in student learning outcomes.

Secondly, the high rate of technological progress and the requirements of the 21st century skills necessitate lifelong learning in the profession as never before. OECD (2019) emphasises that continuous professional development helps teachers with the digital skills, innovation, and adaptability that would enable them to equip students with knowledge expertise to be ready to work in the global economy that relies on knowledge. Equally, Guskey (2002) emphasizes that the efficient professional development should focus not only on teacher learning but also on the shift in teaching practice to be able to impact student achievement in a significant manner. Investment in structured and need-based TPD, therefore, becomes essential in making sure that the teachers do not become inert to changing educational environments and learners with different profiles.

With the view to these positions, it is important to explore the attitudes of the teachers themselves against professional development activities and what impediments they face to successfully engage in the activities. Being aware of these factors will not only assist in the designing of relevantly and need based training programmes that are contextual but also enhance the overall effectiveness of TPD on the teaching practices.

1.1 Problem Statement

To improve the quality of teaching, professional skills, and discuss international educational demands, professional development (TPD) is required. In Pakistan, and more so in Rawalpindi, the teachers do not overlook the role of such programs in enhancing pedagogy, motivation and learning on the part of students. Such factors as overworking, syllabus delays, the lack of resources, insufficient funding and long-term training courses however undermine their performance. Moreover, there is the gap between the training design and the contextual requirements of the teachers generating the question of their effectiveness and viability. Otherwise, these issues may limit the outcomes of TPD by placing the teachers in unsustainable position and hindering the success of students. In this regard, there is need to explore the perception of the teachers in secondary schools, and the kind of challenges they go through in order to influence improved policies and practices.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This paper can be of use to policymakers and school administrations since it determines the perceptions of teachers towards teacher professional development (TPD) and challenges faced by them in practice. The findings can be applied to make more responsive, need based and contextually open training programmes therefore improving teaching and classroom practice, and student achievement. The study is also important academically because such very little literature exists on professional development in Pakistan; it relates global paradigms of sustained, collaborative, and practice-based professional learning with local

realities and fills the gap between theory and practice as well as informs policy change and academic debate.

The research paper will be able to contribute to the field because it will provide empirical support on the attitudes and issues of teachers to professional development regarding Secondary Schools, and it will bring about the worldview of effective practices in professional development and the reality of practice to form a positive contribution to the scholarship and policy domain.

The research article emphasizes on the awareness of teachers about professional development (PD) in schools. It presents significant problem areas in PD such as workload, scarcity of resources, inadequate ICT facilities and the long training periods. It gives evidence-based suggestions on how to enhance the relevance of training, sustainability of training, and institutional support. It also facilitates the ability to bridge both the global models of effective PD with local realities into scholarship literature as well as policy reform in secondary education.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study sets out with the following objectives:

1. To identify teachers' perceptions regarding professional development trainings.
2. To explore the challenges faced by teachers in attending professional development trainings.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are secondary school teachers' perceptions regarding professional development trainings?
2. What challenges do teachers face in attending professional development trainings?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Professional Development and Instructional Improvement

Professional development (PD) encompasses both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout a teacher's career (Grangeat & Gray, 2007; Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Lüdtke, & Baumert, 2014). While novice teachers benefit from peer observation and informal dialogue, experienced teachers gain more from structured workshops and training sessions. PD was found to enhance methodologies of teaching, lesson planning, classroom management and collaboration (El Afi, 2019). Nevertheless, some obstacles still present a problem in its utilization because of high workload, poor resources, and lack of technological resources in most settings (Muzaffar & Malik, 2012). Short-term PD programs may lead to instant changes, but the sustainability and institutional support are needed in the long-term (Lauer, et al., 2014).

2.2 Collaborative Professional Learning

PD also empowers school cultures to work together as it encourages mutual learning and invention. PD ought to be shared, long-term, and directly linked to the work of teachers (Desimone and Garet, 2015). On the same note, Opfer and Pedder (2011) emphasize the fact that teacher learning is most effective when it is placed within professional communities whereby reflection, peer mentoring and collaborative problem solving is encouraged. These structures will boost motivation, create coherence within the classrooms and eventually lead to better institution performance.

2.3 Technology and 21st-Century Skills

The 21st century skills demand has widened the PD scope to incorporate technology integration and adaptive pedagogy. Teacher professionalism also includes a rather vital aspect of digital competence nowadays (Tondeur et al., 2017). However, single workshops are not always effective. Technology-related PD should be meaningful and that is, continuous, curriculum-aligned, and contextually relevant (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The PD can never achieve its potential of closing the digital divide and

equip students with the knowledge needed to respond to the knowledge economies without long-term investment.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

In this research, teacher professional development (TPD) is considered as a driving force towards improving instruction and student performance in cases where it is in tandem with teacher requirements and local situations. The framework relates three fundamental aspects:

1. **Teachers' Perceptions of PD:** The awareness by the teachers on the relevancy, worth, and applicability of the training effects their wish to contribute. Favourable perceptions lead to active involvement and unfavourable ones lead to decreased involvement.
2. **Challenges in Attending and Implementing TPD:** Teachers are often limited by heavy workloads, insufficient support of the institution, inadequate resources, and generic training designs in order to get full advantages out of PD.
3. **Effective PD Outcomes:** PD results in better teaching practices, teacher confidence and increased student achievement when perceptions are met and issues are resolved.

This model implies a reciprocal interaction: the perception of teachers and situational issues have a direct impact on PD performance. The policymakers and administrators can thus enhance results by formulating CPD programs that are context sensitive, accessible and sensitive to the professional needs of teachers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a quantitative research design that involved investigating the perception of teachers in the secondary schools about the professional development trainings and the difficulties that arise in the implementation of such trainings. The instrument used to gather the required data was a structured questionnaire that consists of 20 close-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale and 3 open-ended questions to get more information. The SPSS version 25 was used to perform data analysis using descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, percentages, and means scores). The dependability of qualitative responses to the open-ended questions was analyzed using thematic analysis to determine shared issues and opinion.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design, which is suitable for exploring teachers' perceptions and self-reported experiences. This design enabled the systematic collection of data from a defined group of teachers and provided a clear picture of how professional development trainings are perceived and implemented at the secondary level.

3.2 Participants

The participants included teachers from secondary school in Rawalpindi, namely ESTs, TGTs, SSTs, and VPs who had attended departmental training programmes.

3.3 Sample

Total 45 teachers of different cadre were selected through snowball sampling from secondary schools in Rawalpindi.

3.4 Research Instrument

A questionnaire comprising of 20 close-ended and 3 open-ended questions was developed.

3.5 Data Collection

Questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms through WhatsApp.

3.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used for quantitative data analyzed and narrative passage technique was used to analyze the open-ended responses.

4. RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Statistics

Demographics Statistics of the Respondents		N	% age
Gender	Male	34	76%
	Female	11	24%
	Total	45	100%
Designation	VPs	01	02.22%
	SSTs	15	33.34%
	PTIs	01	02.22%
	TGTs	14	31.11%
	ESTs	14	31.11%
	Total	45	100%
	Age	25 – 35	10
	36 – 45	14	31.11%
	46 – 55	19	42.22%
	56 and above	02	04.45%
	Total	45	100%
Teaching Experience	0 to 10	12	26.37%
	11 to 20	20	44.44%
	21 to 30	11	24.44%
	More than 30	02	0.05%
	Total	45	100%
Academic Qualification	BA/BSc	04	08.89%
	MA/MSc/BS	35	77.78%
	MPhil/MS	06	13.33%
	Total	45	100%
Professional Qualification	B.Ed	23	51.11%
	M.Ed	19	42.22%
	MA Education	02	04.45%
	BS Education	01	02.22%
	Total	45	100%
Types of Trainings Attended	Central	20	44.44%
	Regional	13	28.89%
	Hybrid	03	6.67%
	School Based	07	15.55%
	Educational Conference	01	2.22%
	Online free course	01	2.22%
	Total	45	100%

Table 1 shows demographics of respondents. There were 34 male (76%) and 11 female (24%) respondents. Maximum respondents were SSTs (f = 15, 33.34%) followed by TGTs (f = 14, 31.11%) and ESTs (f = 14, 31.11%). While the least participating staff members were VP and PTI with f = 01 and %age = 02.22% each. Mostly participants (f=19) have age bracket of 46–55 years, followed by 36–45 years (f=14) and 25–35 years (f=10), while the least (f=2) were with 56 and above. Teaching experience of respondents, mostly (44.44%), the participants were with 11–29 years of teaching experience and the least (0.05%) experience was above 30. Table illustrates that maximum numbers of teachers (f=35,

77.78%) have MA/MSc/BS as academic qualification, 6 teachers have MPhil/MS degree, while 4 have BA/BSc. Table illustrates that maximum numbers of teachers (f=23, 51.11%) have professional qualification as B.Ed, 19 teachers (42.22%) have M.Ed and 2 teachers (4.45%) have MA Education, while one teacher (2.22%) has BS Education. Table shows that mostly teachers have attended central trainings (20) followed by face-to-regional trainings (f=13 for each), 7 teachers attended school-based training. While the least number of teacher (f=1) attended educational conference and one attended online free courses.

4.1 Analysis and Results

4.1.1 Analysis of Closed Ended Items

Closed ended items are analyzed by descriptive statistics using mean and standard deviation, shown in the form of tables and interpreted.

Table 2: *Perceptions on the Importance of Professional Development*

Item	Mean	SD
I understand the significance of professional development trainings	4.18	0.61
I am willing for my professional development as a teacher	4.27	0.65
I am satisfied with overall quality of professional development trainings	3.51	1.16

Table 2 showed that teachers largely acknowledged the importance of professional development (M=4.18), expressed strong willingness for their own development (M=4.27), but reported lower satisfaction with the overall quality of trainings (M=3.51).

Table 3: *Impact of Professional Development on Schools and Students*

Item	Mean	SD
Professional development (PD) trainings enhance school performance	4.00	0.95
PD trainings are helpful in SLOs based teaching-learning process	4.13	0.79
Provided PD trainings match with latest trends in global education	3.93	0.99
PD trainings improve students' achievement	4.16	0.74
PD trainings help to analyze strong and weak areas of teaching	4.07	0.72

Table 3 highlighted that the teachers agreed professional development improved school performance (M=4.00), supported SLO-based teaching (M=4.13), enhanced student achievement (M=4.16), and helped in analyzing strengths and weaknesses (M=4.07). However, alignment with global trends was rated slightly lower (M=3.93).

Table 4: *Motivation and Institutional Support*

Item	Mean	SD
Teachers are motivated for professional development at school level	3.98	0.94
School environment is supportive for professional development of teachers	3.71	1.14
Incentives are given to all teachers attending trainings	3.73	1.19
Teachers are evaluated after professional development trainings	3.80	0.92

Table 4 indicated relatively high teacher motivation (M=3.98), but moderate institutional support in terms of environment (M=3.71) and incentives (M=3.73).

Table 5: *Challenges in Implementing Professional Development*

Item	Mean	SD
It is difficult to balance professional development with other job duties	3.96	0.80
PD trainings are complex to apply practically at school level	3.96	0.85
PD trainings are ambiguous to apply practically at school level	3.87	0.87

Professional development trainings affect timely completion of syllabus	3.89	1.03
PD trainings increase workload on fellow teachers	3.84	1.09
A lot of time is wasted in professional development training activities	3.20	1.38

Table 5 revealed challenges such as balancing professional duties with CPD (M=3.96), complexity in applying training (M=3.96), syllabus disruptions (M=3.89), and workload increases (M=3.84). Time wastage in trainings received the lowest score (M=3.20).

Table 6: *Resource and Technology Constraints*

Item	Mean	SD
Insufficient funds are allocated for professional development trainings in school	3.82	0.96
There is insufficient access of technology for PD of teachers	3.98	0.84

Table 6 pointed to systemic constraints, including insufficient funding (M=3.82) and lack of technology access (M=3.98).

4.1.2 Analysis of Open-Ended Questions

There were three open-ended questions in the questionnaire for the in-depth study. Their thematic analysis is described in the form of frequencies tables.

4.1.3 Themes and Sub-themes Regarding First Open-Ended Question

Table 7: *Suggested New Professional Development Activities*

Theme	Sub-themes	f
Pedagogical Skills	Communication skills	5
	Training on stress management	4
	Demonstration-based activities	2
	Face-to-face trainings	3
	Need-based trainings	2
	New syllabus training	3
Student-Centered Approaches	enhancing loving behavior,	6
	keeping students' needs in mind	6
Technology & Modern Trends	Latest PD activities	2
	Global needs	2
	ICT integration	4
Training Frequency / Structure	Six monthly	2
	Annual training	2
	Topic-focused trainings	2

In table 7, the reactions to Open-Ended Question 1 revealed the different areas of improvement and new professional development (PD) activities where teachers recommended their contribution. The themes and sub-themes indicate concerns of the teachers, the changing atmosphere of the classroom, and the demand for contextually suitable PD programs.

1. Pedagogical Skills

The educators brought to the forefront the necessity for the enhancement of teaching techniques. Under this aspect, the ability to communicate effectively (f=5) was recognized as the first and foremost need, whereas the second one was behavioral management training (f=4), and the third one was the training for the new curriculum (f=3). Besides, suggestions for on-site trainings (f=3), demand-based (f=2), and

model (f=2) were also given, which means that teachers like to have learning opportunities that are interactive, practical, and aligned with the context.

2. Student-Centered Approaches

The replies definitely highlighted the necessity of giving learners the priority. Besides taking care of behavior that shows love, considering students' needs was also often referred to (f=6 each). This indicates that staff members appreciate the assistance offered through professional development that allows them to develop a positive relationship with their students and create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom that is good for the overall development of the students.

3. Technology & Modern Trends

Teachers also emphasized the need of line up PD with scientific and global educational leanings. ICT incorporation (f=4) was the most highlighted sub-theme, while modern professional development activities and global needs (f=2 each) reflected teachers' awareness of international benchmarks and the evolving digital learning landscape.

4. Training Frequency and Structure

The participants were asking for the structured and permanent training courses. The proposals were of trainings twice a year and once every year (f=2 each), and training sessions by topics (f=2). This indicates a choice of organized and ongoing professional development over occasional workshops. In general, the results indicate that the teachers want the complete professional development programs which include among others strengthening of pedagogy, student-centered approaches, the use of technology and the like along with organized training. The focus on communication, ICT, stress management, and student-centered practices reflects a move towards professional development that is practical and meets the needs of the classroom while still being in line with the global trends.

4.1.4 Themes and Sub-themes Regarding Second Open-Ended Question

Table 8: Challenges Faced During Professional Development

Theme	Sub-themes	f
Instructional Disruptions	Classes suffered	10
	Syllabus completion	2
	Disturbance in teaching hours	3
Resource Constraints	Shortage of staff	4
	Lack of funds	2
	No honorarium	2
	No incentives	2
Training Quality Issues	Lengthy duration	7
	Lack of Q/A sessions	3
	Poor sound quality	2
	Methodology	2
Technological Challenges	Use of technology	4
	Poor online system	2

In the table 8, the open-ended question 2 responses broke the ice and displayed the several problems that teachers were facing during the professional development (PD) programs. Those problems were categorized into four major themes: instructional disruptions, resource constraints, quality of training issues, and technology problems.

1. Instructional Disruptions

The most significant issue that stood out was the adverse effect of the trainings on the normal classroom functions. The most common case reported was classes suffered (f=10), then came disturbance in teaching hours (f=3) and difficulties in syllabus completion (f=2). This shows that there is a deep concern among teachers that professional development activities frequently clash with their teaching responsibilities, thus, impacting the continuity of teaching and the covering of the curriculum.

2. Resource Constraints

Teachers have shown their discontent about the support for PD being inadequate by the institution. Staff shortage (f=4) was the most mentioned problem regarding resources, which made the remaining teachers work even more during training periods. Other problems were lack of funds (f=2), no honorarium (f=2), and absence of incentives (f=2). All in all, these comments point to the fact that lack of financial and administrative support is the main reason for the PD initiatives being unsustainable and less effective.

3. Training Quality Issues

Concerns were also raised regarding the design and delivery of the trainings. The lengthy duration of sessions (f=7) was the most frequently reported issue and it indicated that prolonged training formats are viewed as ineffective or really tiring. Moreover, the other apprehensions contained of lack of Q/A prospects (f=3), bad sound quality (f=2), and issues with teaching methods (f=2). These results specify that teachers like to have shorter, collaborating, and well-facilitated training sessions.

4. Technological Challenges

In fact, teachers went as far as to describe the technologies employed in the professional development as a negative factor. They pointed out the technologies used (f=4) as the main challenge the companies having limited digital skills or being poorly prepared to handle that kind of situation. Poor online systems (f=2) were somewhat of a supporting point, as they indicated the infrastructural and technical weaknesses that limit the efficiency of online trainings and eventually unfold the whole training process. To sum up, the results show that in the existing form professional development is excessively time-consuming for teachers due to conflicts, resource and incentive shortages, poor-quality training design, and technology barriers. The solution consists of aligning PD with the academic calendar better, providing adequate funding and incentives, adopting interactive and shorter training formats, and strengthening ICT infrastructure along with teacher digital skills.

4.1.5 Themes and Sub-themes Regarding Third Open-Ended Question

Table 9: *Suggestions for Improving PD*

Theme	Sub-themes	f
Timing & Scheduling	Trainings during vacations	12
	Not during class hours	3
	Every six months	2
	every four years	1
Content Relevance & Global Trends	Aligned with global needs,	6
	Focused on one topic at a time	3
	Student-centered content	3
Incentives & Motivation	Incentives for teachers	3
	Recognition	2
	Motivational strategies	1

Effectiveness & Continuity	Multiple sessions on one theme	2
	Outcome-oriented	4
	Avoid excessive training load	2

According to Table 9, a variety of proposals were made by the teachers for improving the professional development programs in terms of effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability. These proposals were classified into four main categories: timing and scheduling, content relevance and global trends, incentives and motivation, and effectiveness and continuity.

1. Timing & Scheduling

The most commonly highlighted suggestion was to conduct trainings during holidays (f=12), reflecting teachers' preference for minimizing the disruption to class time. Some others cautioned against conducting trainings during class hours (f=3) and suggested bi-annual six-monthly sessions (f=2). Few of them suggested every four years (f=1), reflecting a preference for long-term planning. Together, this implies that teachers like PD activities to be conducted in an orderly fashion without disrupting their teaching duties.

2. Content Relevance & Global Trends

Instructors placed excessive importance on the orientation of PD content with the needs of the world (f = 6), thus making sure that the training is in line with the international educational trends. Additionally, they advised to take one subject at a time (f = 3) and to include student-centered content (f = 3). This points to a classroom-centered, relevant, and practical training material that links global innovations with the realities of the classroom being the preferred type of training material.

3. Incentives & Motivation

Motivation was a theme that kept coming up. Incentives (f=3), recognition (f=2), and other motivational strategies (f=1) were suggested by the teachers to keep the participation and engagement going. These reactions mean that in case of no appropriate rewards or acknowledgment teachers might get diverted and thus unable to stay committed to professional development activities.

4. Effectiveness & Continuity

Educators underlined the necessity of enhancing the impact of the training. The proposals put forward were: making the PD more oriented to the results (frequency = 4), having several sessions on the same topic for the purpose of reinforcing learning (frequency = 2), and not overloading the training (frequency = 2). This feedback indicates that teachers consider the effectiveness of the training, learning opportunities that last over time, and workloads that can be easily managed as their respective values. Considering the recommendations by the teachers, the characteristics of PD programs in the future would be: strategic scheduling, global relevance, motivation, and focus on outcomes. The most important aspect was the timing of the trainings during holidays to prevent any disruption of the instructional process, and then the alignment of the content with the world's needs. PD programs addressing these points will become more teacher-friendly and practical and what is more, the changes will be sustainable since they will lead to better teaching methods and consequently, better student performance.

5. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

5.1 Discussion

This current research observed teachers' sights, concerns, and needs regarding the CPD at secondary school level. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings offers rich understanding rights into the value that teachers attribute to CPD and the structural and practical obstacles that detract from its value. This dialogue puts the findings within discourse of extant literature and theorization and indicates implications for domains of policy and practice.

5.1.1 Teachers' Perceptions and Importance of CPD

Teachers acknowledged the crucial role of professional development with a strong emphasis ($M = 4.18$) and also showed a high level of self-improvement eagerness ($M=4.27$). Their understanding corresponds to the principles of adult learning theory (Knowles, 1980), which are founded on adults' intrinsic motivation and readiness to learn, especially when the development opportunities are directly relevant to their professional roles.

Contrarily, the feeling of delight with the quality of PD trainings was rather weak ($M=3.51$). The qualitative portion of the study also uncovered that the interviewees were unhappy with the training layout, lack of interaction, and limited contextual relevance. Their dissatisfaction aligns well with Desimone's (2009) framework, which proposes that to be effective, PD should be content-focused, active, sustained, and aligned with teachers' needs. The difference between the willingness and the satisfaction levels suggests that teachers are still motivated, but the flaws of the system are diminishing the effect of the trainings.

5.1.2 Impact of CPD on Schools and Students

Most of the teachers agreed that professional development (PD) had a positive effect on school performance, student achievement, and SLO-based teaching. The evidence from this research defers to the line of previous studies (Guskey, 2002; OECD, 2019) which identify PD as the key factor to instructional changes and student learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, the agreement with global educational trends was rated as quite low ($M=3.93$). Also, the survey responses in the open-ended format, from those participants who had an opportunity to share their views, spoke loud about the need for globally informed content that is technology-driven and student-centered. It corresponds with what Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) identifies, i.e., PD dealing with 21st-century skills, global competencies, and digital literacy. The discrepancy between local practices and global standards pinpoints the demand for local education policies to synchronize with international CPD frameworks.

5.1.3 Motivation and Institutional Support

Teachers were highly motivated internally ($M=3.98$), however, the support given by the institution in terms of the school environment and incentives was only at a moderate level ($M=3.71$; $M=3.73$). The open-ended responses mainly pointed to the need of more financial rewards, recognition, and supportive environments. This corresponds to Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory (1959), which states that while intrinsic factors (professional growth) are the main sources of motivation, extrinsic supports (incentives, recognition) are necessary to maintain a high level of engagement. Lack of adequate institutional mechanisms may result in disengagement, thus, there may be a risk that teachers, though willing to participate in PD, will not be engaged.

5.1.4 Challenges in Implementing CPD

Both quantitative and qualitative research pointed to the challenges that significantly impacted the areas of teaching and learning.

1. As a consequence of very long trainings, classes and syllabus completion get affected.
2. The professional development trainings that have been provided are complicated in terms of application through classroom practice due to the fact that the syllabus is lengthy.
3. The shortage of teaching staff, funds and lack of incentives is a situation that has been going on in some schools.
4. A few schools have limited access to ICT.

These obstacles are consistent with the results of Avalos (2011), who observed that PD in developing contexts frequently encounters problems of overloaded schedules, limited resources, and weak integration

into school systems. The issues of training duration and methodology raised by the participants also point to the view that one-off, lengthy workshops are less effective than ongoing, practice-based, and collaborative models (Borko, 2004).

5.1.5 Resource and Technology Constraints

Educators throughout the year have claimed that the schools are not adequately funded and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructures of the schools have been quite limited, which have highly contributed to the low integration of the use of modern teaching tools and methods in the classes. This result is in line with what is stated by UNESCO (2021) that being digitally ready is a condition that must be met before any other to still have a meaningful CPD in the 21st century. It is said that if any resources are lacking, all the good training initiatives will have a hard time becoming the new practices that teachers will use in their classrooms.

5.1.6 Consolidated Insights

The research, in general, indicates that educators consider continuing professional development (CPD) as a valuable and positive experience, but they are limited in its execution due to issues of structure, lack of resources, and ineffective design. Teachers' determination to take part in CPD activities is therefore a major potential which can be exploited: if training programmes correspond more closely to the principles of adult learning, the model of reflective practice (Schön, 1983) and the international standards, CPD can be a powerful instrument for educational quality enhancement.

5.1.7 Implications for Policy and Practice

- i. The trainings of professional development ought to be implemented during non instructional hours or during vacation time so as not to disrupt the lessons.
- ii. Short interactive outcome oriented training should be subject specific and should be an outcome of the training with mentoring.
- iii. Enhance reward systems, appreciation, and professional based rewards.
- iv. Assign adequate budget, honoraria and improved ICT infrastructure.
- v. Bring 21 st -century skills, digital literacy, and student-centered pedagogy to professional development programs.

The results are consistent with the international sources that consider PD as a problem and an opportunity. The eagerness of teachers is a sign of change readiness, and the weaknesses in the system, in form, resources, and support measures do not allow impact. By fixing the problems, not only will the teaching standards be enhanced, but also, PD in Pakistan will be more in line with the world trends in education, as well as the local contextual space, and eventually, student learning outcomes will be improved.

5.2 Findings

The researchers examined closed-ended survey questions and open ended answers in order to measure the perceptions of teachers, challenges, and recommendations of professional development (PD). The synthesis of quantitative and qualitative results gives an in-depth insight into the existing conditions of the PD practices at the secondary school level.

5.2.1 Perceptions and Importance of Professional Development

Table 1 demonstrates the results of close-ended questions that revealed teachers attach much importance to PD and are strongly willing to develop. But, the quality of trainings on PD was not highly satisfactory. This was supported by open-ended results (Table 7) that indicated the necessity of communication abilities, stress management, syllabus training, and ICT integration. The teachers also insisted on student-

centered methods that were an indication of their acknowledgement of the significance of PD but were not satisfied with the existing formats.

5.2.2 Impact of Professional Development on Schools and Students

The quantitative analysis (Table 3) showed that PD was believed to improve school performance, facilitate SLO-based teaching, improve student achievement, and assist teachers in analyzing strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, PD orientation towards global trends was lower. These findings were also supported by qualitative responses because teachers highlighted global educational requirements, ICT integration, and student-centered content as the required elements of the PD programmes in the future (Table 8).

5.2.3 Motivation and Institutional Support

The quantitative analysis (Table 3) showed that PD was believed to improve school performance, facilitate SLO-based teaching, improve student achievement, and assist teachers in analyzing strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, PD orientation towards global trends was lower. These findings were also supported by qualitative responses because teachers highlighted global educational requirements, ICT integration, and student-centered content as the required elements of the PD programmes in the future (Table 8).

5.2.4 Challenges in Implementing PD

The quantitative outcomes (Table 4) demonstrated that there were a number of difficulties: it was hard to balance PD and other commitments, the application itself was difficult to use and ambiguous, syllabus was also disrupted, and workload was increased. The same was reflected in qualitative data (Table 7), in which teachers mentioned instructional disruptions, extensive training sessions, absence of questions-answer opportunities, shortage of resources, and technological hindrances. Collectively, these outcomes highlight the systemic inadequacies in the PD execution.

5.2.5 Resource and Technology Constraints

In the quantitative data (Table 5), the teachers reported a lack of funds and lack of access to technology to be a major barrier. These issues were proved by qualitative results, as teachers indicated that the sufficient ICT infrastructure, stable internet connection, and orientation toward global technological trends are required (Table 5 to 8).

- I. In both the open-ended and closed-ended answers, there was a common tendency:
- II. Educationists have a positive view of PD and are ready to engage in the process.
- III. PD affects the school performance, student achievement and teaching practice positively.
- IV. Problems in training design (duration, quality, approach), scheduling (interference with teaching time), and implementation (inability to execute, delays in the syllabus, workforce deficiency) continue to exist.
- V. There are existing resource and technology gaps to prevent effective PD delivery and sustainability.
- VI. Teacher motivations are motivated, although institutional backing, incentives, and acknowledgements are more important.
- VII. The desired PD programmes provided by the teachers are student-centered, globally focused, ICT based, outcome focused and contextually based, which should be introduced in a systematic manner during vacation period or when there is no teaching.

The synthesis of quantitative and qualitative results proves that teachers do understand the paramount value of professional development; still, they are also aware of its existing weaknesses. By filling these gaps with an enhanced timing, increased content relevance, institutional support, incentives, allocation of resources and technological integration, the PD programmes will be more effective, sustainable, and responsive to the local educational realities and global trends.

6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the first objective, the study found that teachers are also quite aware of the significance of professional development (PD) and show an apparent desire to engage in activities that can improve their professional development. They recognized PD as a tool of improving the school, teaching through the SLO, and student success, but they were not happy with the quality, content, and training delivery modes. The educators emphasized the necessity of student-centered, interactive, and globally oriented PD programmes that embrace ICT and that meet the subject-specific needs. These lessons prove that motivation in teachers is high though the impact of PD is determined by their relevance, design and context-sensitivity to classroom realities.

In anticipation of the second objective, the findings were obtained to outline some of the barriers that influenced the participation and utilization of PD fruits by teachers. The most significant of them were the interruptions of the teaching process that led to the loss of the classroom time and delay of the syllabus, as well as the resources barrier that comprised the inadequacy of funds, motivation, and insufficient staff. Moreover, the low quality of the training was also discussed by teachers, specifically, the lengthy sessions, lack of interaction, and inadequate methodologies, and simultaneously, they also cited technological issues such as poor online systems and the inability to access ICT as one of the issues that influenced the quality of the training. These issues demonstrate the high demand in order of systematic planning, proper institutional backing, and the sustainable resourcing of PD initiatives so that they can be not only available but also practically implemented in the classroom settings.

In general, the results reveal that teachers are well-motivated and open to professional development, but the structural, resourceful, and technological challenges diminish the effect of the existing programmes to a great extent. To fill these gaps, a holistic CPD model should be utilizing which would reduce the instructional disruption, provides sufficient funding and ICT infrastructure, includes teacher-centered and globally informed content, and institutionalizes incentives and follow-up support. This is because by taking PD initiatives in line with the perceptions of teachers and also the challenges that they encounter, policy makers and institutions will be able to develop a more effective, sustainable, and contextually relevant system of professional development that can boost teaching quality and enhance student learning outcomes in the secondary school level.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The improvement of the professional development of teachers is also necessary using short, subject-specific, interactive, and student-centered training based on mentoring, follow-up, and rehearsal.
2. The modernization of the instruction process should include the use of ICT equipment, smart boards, digital platforms and AI applications by teachers, as well as the improvement of infrastructure, internet connection and digital literacy.
3. The schedules of trainings ought to be arranged during vacations or when not teaching in order to minimize disruptions in classes, equal distribution of teachers, manageable classes, and workload.
4. It is necessary to offer adequate financial and institutional resources (funding, honoraria, staff support) and present incentives (recognition awards, monetary, and career advancement opportunities associated with CPD attendance).
5. To maintain professional development, enhance the quality of teaching as well as the learning outcomes of students, a teacher-led, well-resourced and global CPD system must be developed.

7.1 *Limitation and Future Researches*

This research was targeted at secondary school teachers in Rawalpindi and the sample of the study was very small, only 45 teachers were chosen using snowball method and this might not be representative of all the teacher experiences. The use of self-reported data also creates the risk of personal bias. Future studies need to have longitudinal designs and experimental designs to assess the sustainability of

professional development (PD) and implement new models, including blended, technology-enhanced, and mentorship-based ones. Regional, inter-subject, and inter-type comparison would contribute to the detection of contextual variations. Additional focus should also be put on ICT integration, online platforms, AI tools, and the correlation between teacher motivation, well-being, and PD outcomes.

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Conflict of Interest

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