

INSIGHTS OF SECONDARY TEACHERS TOWARDS THE DIMENSIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

FATIMA KUBRA¹, DR. TEHSIN EHSAN² AND MR. MUHAMMAD ADNAN RIAZ³

¹Mphil (Education) Student, ² Lecturer, ³ Lecturer, Department of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

This research delves into an examination of teachers' perspectives regarding the various dimensions of professional development within Tehsil Skardu. The study categorizes these perceptions into four key dimensions: teachers' self-efficacy, collaborative efforts among teachers, professional competency, and teachers' leadership qualities. The primary objectives of this investigation encompass uncovering the viewpoints held by secondary school teachers concerning their professional development, exploring their self-efficacy beliefs, understanding their attitudes towards teacher collaboration, and gaining insights into their perceptions of teachers' leadership and professional competence. The research population is comprised of all teachers in government secondary schools within Tehsil Skardu. A sample size of eight senior teachers from these institutions was selected for the study. Data was collected from four distinct government secondary schools, resulting in a total of eight participants. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the gathered data. The outcomes of this study hold the potential to offer valuable insights that could inform the design and implementation of impactful professional development initiatives, meticulously tailored to align with the specific needs and aspirations of educators. By better understanding teachers' perspectives, this research contributes to the optimization of professional growth strategies, thus enhancing the overall quality of education within the region.

Keywords, Professional Development, Teachers' self-efficacy, Teachers' collaboration, Teachers' leadership, professional competency of teachers.

INTRODUCTION:

Background of the Study

The attainment of academic achievement is significantly associated with the level of expertise and dedication shown by educators. Professional development is a crucial component in cultivating effective educators capable of adapting to the dynamic educational landscape. Gaining insight into the perceptions of secondary teachers on the features of professional growth is of utmost importance, since the efficacy of teaching directly impacts the academic achievements of students. The efficacy of professional development programmes is contingent upon their congruence with the perspectives and requirements of educators, spanning from individual classroom settings to broader school-wide initiatives (Bragg et al., 2021).

Professional training and development covered a variety of topics, including subject-matter expertise and the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, and data from assessments of students' knowledge, which included information on their progress through a particular syllabus, their culture, their linguistic and cultural resources, their theoretical framework, and their conceptual understanding. The research teachers needed abilities such as self-analysis, the ability to identify new possibilities in regard to standards that applied to this practice, and, furthermore, the ability to establish techniques for analyzing the practice with the goal of coming up with ways to enhance it. (Postholm, 2012).

Rational of the Study

The rational of this study was to explore the insights of secondary school teachers towards the dimensions of professional development of teachers in Tehsil Skardu Baltistan.

Significance of the Study

Education authorities, school administrators, and providers of professional development might get practical benefits from gaining insight into the opinions of secondary teachers about many areas of professional development. The findings of this research may be used to design and implement tailored professional development initiatives that address the specific requirements of teachers and enhance their effectiveness within the educational setting. The implications of these results extend to the allocation of resources and support systems for teachers, ultimately impacting students' learning outcomes.

Problem Statement

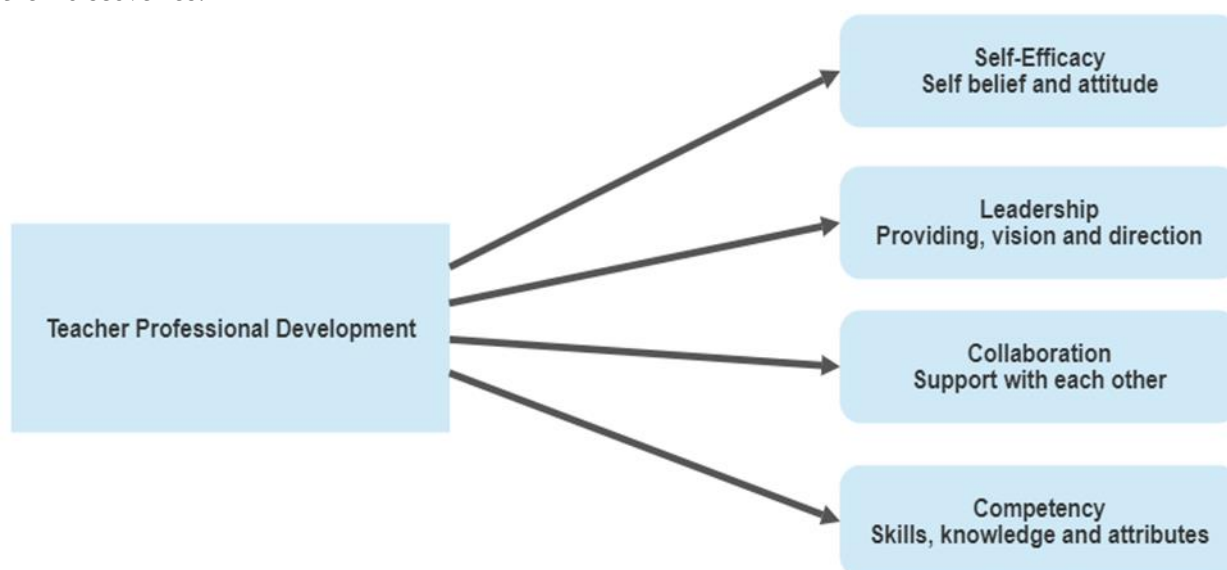
The significance of professional development is well acknowledged, yet there are gaps in our understanding of the perceptions of secondary teachers towards its many components. The efficacy of professional development courses is greatly impacted by educators' perspectives on optimal programmer design. There has been little research conducted on the diverse perspectives of secondary teachers about several areas of professional development, including teacher effectiveness, collaboration, leadership, and technology integration. In order to facilitate informed decision-making and enhance the efficacy of professional development programmers, it is imperative to address this existing gap (Sancar et al., 2021).

Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to examine the viewpoints of secondary school educators about several facets of professional development. The objective of this study is to examine the perspectives of teachers about significant subjects such as the collaborative practices, leadership, teacher efficacy and professional competence. The objective of this research is to enhance our understanding of the needs, challenges, and objectives that teachers have in relation to their ongoing professional development.

Conceptual Framework

The study is grounded on the conceptual framework that posits the advantages of multidimensional professional development that aligns with the experiences and expectations of teachers. This research examines several elements, including teacher effectiveness, collaboration, leadership and professional competence. These many elements intersect and impact the professional growth of teachers, affecting their ability to meet the evolving demands of the education field. The framework underscores the need of seeing teachers as active participants in their professional development endeavors and highlights the significance of designing tailored courses that align with their discoveries.



LITERATURE REVIEW:

The topic of professional development for educators is characterized by its dynamic and evolving nature, playing a critical role in enhancing student learning outcomes and the effectiveness of instructional practices. This section provides a comprehensive examination of the scholarly



literature pertaining to professional development, teacher effectiveness, collaboration, leadership, and the prevailing themes identified in contemporary research.

Professional Development

The concept of "professional development" (PD) encompasses a wide range of programmes and strategies aimed at enhancing educators' knowledge in their respective fields and improving their instructional techniques. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2009), professional development that is effective in the field of education is characterized by its job-embedded nature, continuing nature, collaborative approach, and customization to meet the specific requirements of teachers. Various methods may be used to undertake professional development (PD) programmes, including workshops, seminars, conferences, peer collaborations, online courses, and reflective practices (Guskey, 2002). Additionally, Borko (2004) underscores the significance of professional development that prioritizes the enhancement of both subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical skills, therefore supporting educators in effectively incorporating theoretical concepts into practical classroom strategies.

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy, which is defined as teachers' belief in their ability to positively impact student learning, is considered a crucial component of effective teaching (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). According to Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), it has an impact on decisions related to instructional methods, level of exertion, and persistence when confronted with challenges. According to Henson (2001), instructors with high levels of self-efficacy are more inclined to use innovative teaching methods, set high standards for their students, and adapt their instructional approaches to accommodate diverse student needs. Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011) suggest that the improvement of teacher effectiveness via targeted professional development has the potential to provide enhanced instructional methodologies and improved student outcomes.

Collaboration

The act of instructors collaborating with one another is a powerful instrument for enhancing teaching practices and cultivating professional growth (Little, 1990). Educators have the opportunity to engage in collaborative endeavors, share insights, and collaborate in addressing challenges via the use of a platform facilitated by professional learning communities (Vescio et al., 2008). According to Louis and Kruse (1995), the collaborative environment fosters the exchange of ideas, critical analysis of educational methods, and implementation of effective strategies. Collective learning fosters an environment that promotes ongoing development and a shared commitment to the success of all students, aligning with the research focus on cooperation and the exchange of information.

Leadership

Harris and Muijs (2004) assert that the significance of teacher leadership is increasing in its role of influencing professional development and educational progress. In addition to their instructional responsibilities, teacher leaders engage in peer mentoring and exert influence on institutional policy (Harris & Chapman, 2002). According to Goddard et al. (2007), these leaders actively foster cooperation, facilitate the sharing of best practices, and cultivate an environment conducive to innovation. The findings of the research align with the theoretical framework of leadership, which underscores the significance of educators in effectively guiding professional development and academic progress.

Professional competency

Professional Competency refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions that teachers need to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities in the classroom and beyond. It encompasses a broad range of dimensions that contribute to effective teaching and student learning. Some key components of professional competency include subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, instructional strategies, classroom management skills, assessment and feedback practices, cultural competence, communication skills, reflective practice, and professional ethics. These components work together to support teachers in creating positive and

engaging learning environments and facilitating student growth and achievement (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

Research Methodology:

Research Design

The primary objective of this qualitative research is to get a comprehensive understanding of how secondary school educators perceive and conceptualize different facets of professional development. Qualitative research offers a comprehensive and intricate comprehension of the subject under investigation via its emphasis on the viewpoints and lived experiences of the individuals involved.

Participants and Sampling

The research study included the participation of eight educators at the secondary school level, who came from various cultural origins, had different teaching specializations, and worked in different institutional settings. The researchers used a deliberate sampling technique in order to assure the inclusion of a diverse range of subject matter knowledge, grade levels, and regional representation among the teaching staff. The objective of this method was to include a wide range of perspectives on the subject of career development (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2020).

Sample

The sample of this study was approximately 8 senior teachers from secondary level school.

Gender	Selected Teachers for Interview
Female	5
Male	3
Total Teachers	8

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data of the study. Patton point out that, Purposive sampling aims to choose data cases whose study will shed light on the research questions.

Data Collection Methods (Semi-structured Interviews)

The predominant approach used for data gathering was the utilization of semi-structured interviews. The use of face-to-face interviews facilitated comprehensive talks and enabled a thorough investigation of respondents' perspectives on their professional growth. In order to maintain the precision of the participants' replies, the interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed verbatim.


Data Analysis (Thematic Analysis)

A thematic analysis was conducted on the data obtained from the interviews. The final report was composed after many rounds of the aforementioned process, including activities such as familiarizing oneself with the data, generating the first set of codes, searching for themes, evaluating the themes, ascertaining the themes, and delineating the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data underwent analysis in order to identify similarities and themes, with the aim of gaining a more profound comprehension of the participants' viewpoints towards different aspects of professional growth.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the study procedure, utmost emphasis was placed on ethical issues. Prior to the commencement of any questioning, each interviewee provided their informed permission. The anonymity of the participants was ensured, with their identities being safeguarded via the use of code names and numerical identifiers. The research was carried out in compliance with relevant ethical guidelines to safeguard the welfare and security of all individuals involved.

Stage of Research	Ethical Considerations
Informed Consent	Participants provided informed consent, understanding the study's purpose, their



	rights, and the voluntary nature of participation.
Confidentiality	Participants' identities were kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and unique identifiers.
Privacy	Interviews were conducted in private settings to ensure participants' privacy and comfort.
Data Security	Audio recordings and transcriptions were securely stored and accessible only to the research team.
Respect for Diversity	The study respected participants' diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.

The research methodology adopted in this study ensures rigor, depth, and ethical integrity in exploring secondary teachers' insights regarding the dimensions of professional development.

Results

The thematic analysis of the interview data yielded profound insights into the dimensions of professional development as perceived by secondary teachers. Emerged themes are:

Acquiring New Content Knowledge:

As educators, it's imperative to have a deep and current understanding of the subjects we teach. Continuously updating our content knowledge enables us to provide accurate and relevant information to our students. It also allows us to bring real-world applications and examples into the classroom, making the learning experience more engaging and relatable. Staying informed about the latest research and advancements in our field ensures that we deliver high-quality **Cultivating Self-Efficacy**

Building confidence: Teachers work on developing a strong belief in their own ability to impact student learning positively. This involves setting achievable goals, celebrating successes, and learning from challenges. Cation that prepares students for the challenges of the future.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Shared learning environment: Teachers find value in collaborating within PLCs, which are groups of educators focused on a common goal. These communities provide a platform for discussing challenges, sharing insights, and collectively seeking solutions.

Mentorship and Experience Sharing

Wisdom transfer: Leaders in teacher development often possess extensive experience in education. They leverage this experience to mentor and share practical insights, helping less experienced educators navigate challenges and make informed decisions.

Findings and discussion

The concept of professional development emphasizes the continuous learning and advancement of educators. This involves active engagement in various activities like workshops, conferences, and training sessions to enhance knowledge, refine skills, and improve teaching methods. It reflects a commitment to staying up-to-date with the latest research, pedagogy, and technological innovations in education. Professional development comprises interconnected dimensions crucial to educators' growth. These dimensions encompass acquiring new content knowledge, refining teaching skills, building self-efficacy and leadership qualities, fostering reflective practice, and promoting collaboration among colleagues. These dimensions work together to enhance teachers' effectiveness and positively impact student learning outcomes. Collaboration is a significant aspect of professional development. It involves participating in joint efforts with fellow educators, sharing experiences, and collectively addressing challenges. Collaboration facilitates diverse perspectives, new insights, and innovative ideas, contributing to professional growth. This collaborative spirit nurtures a sense of community and mutual support among teachers, ultimately benefiting students. In the realm of professional teacher development, leadership is not limited to specific roles. It can be demonstrated by mentors, peers, or any teacher excelling in a certain area. These leaders inspire and guide educators on their growth journey. Their role is pivotal in creating an environment conducive to continuous improvement and collective progress.



Conclusion

Professional development serves as the pivot that drives teachers to a higher level of competence and effectiveness in the complex fabric of education. The continuous process of growth that educators engage in is woven through a variety of activities and aspects. As they expand their knowledge, develop their teaching abilities, take on leadership responsibilities, and cultivate reflective practices, they create a web of expertise that benefits them personally and improves the educational environment as a whole.

The dimensions of professional development for teachers encompass a diverse and interconnected set of elements that collectively contribute to their growth and effectiveness. These dimensions, ranging from the acquisition of new content knowledge and the development of pedagogical skills to fostering collaboration, self-efficacy, leadership, and reflective practice, operate in harmony to enhance educators' capabilities. Through continuous engagement in formal and informal activities, teachers are equipped with the tools to adapt to evolving educational landscapes, refine their instructional strategies, and ultimately create positive impacts on student learning outcomes. As these dimensions intertwine, they weave a comprehensive tapestry that supports teachers in their journey towards professional excellence and the creation of enriched educational experiences for their students.

Future Research Avenues:

This study opens avenues for further exploration. Longitudinal studies can delve into the long-term impact of these themes on teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. Comparative studies across diverse educational contexts can enrich the understanding of contextual influences on professional development. Moreover, investigating the influence of leadership and policy on shaping these themes can offer valuable insights into systemic improvement.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Bragg, L. A., Walsh, C., & Heyeres, M. (2021). Successful design and delivery of online professional development for teachers: A systematic review of the literature. *Computers & Education*, 166, 104158. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104158>
- [2] Danim, S. (2018). Exploring teacher competency: A comparative study between novice and experienced EFL teachers. *International Journal of Language Education and Culture Review*, 4(1), 1-14.
- [3] Day, C. (2002). School reform and transitions in teacher professionalism and identity. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 37(8), 677-692.
- [4] Fernández-Batanero, J. M., Montenegro-Rueda, M., Fernández-Cerero, J., & García-Martínez, I. (2020). Digital competences for teacher professional development. Systematic review. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1827389>
- [5] Ibrahim, M., Adnan, M., & Shah, M. S. (2020). Impact of professional development programs on teaching efficacy: A case study of Pakistani universities. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, 7(2), 104-113.
- [6] Kafyulilo, A. (2013). The role of teacher's collaboration in teacher development. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(4), 95-104.
- [7] Kiranli, S. (2013). Relationship between the leadership behaviors of school principals and the organizational citizenship behaviors of teachers in primary schools. *European Journal of Research on Education*, 1(1), 35-42.
- [8] McSweeney, K. (2020). Teacher development in the context of education policy reform: Insights from Ireland. In K. McSweeney (Ed.), *Teacher Development: Reflections from the Field* (pp. 15-34). Springer.
- [9] Postareff, L., Lindblom-Ylänne, S., & Nevgi, A. (2007). Variation in teachers' descriptions of teaching: Broadening the understanding of teaching in higher education. *Learning and Instruction*, 17(6), 612-624.



- [10] Postholm, M. B. (2012). *The professional development of teachers: Practice and theory*. Sense Publishers.
- [11] Sancar, R., Atal, D., & Deryakulu, D. (2021). A new framework for teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 101, 103305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103305>
- [12] Shakenova, A. (2017). School leadership and its impact on teachers' professional development. *Cogent Education*, 4(1), 1328702.
- [13] Tschannen-Moran, M., & McMaster, P. (2009). Sources of self-efficacy: Four professional development formats and their relationship to self-efficacy and implementation of a new teaching strategy. *The Elementary School Journal*, 110(2), 228-245.
- [14] Yohong Jiang. (2017). A review of recent research on teacher education and professional development. *US-China Education Review*, 7(2), 93-100.