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Attitude of Teachers towards Professional Development Trainings

Misbah Muzaffar, M.S. Research Scholar Samina Yasmin Malik, Ph.D.

Abstract

The research was conducted to explore the attitude of teachers toward professional development trainings. The objectives of the study were: to examine the attitude of teachers toward professional development trainings, to explore the reasons for not taking interest in the professional development trainings and to explore the impact of teachers trainings on the professional development of the teachers. Quantitative approach was used in the study. Questionnaire was developed by the researchers. Study is delimited to the six public sector universities (NUML University, Islamic International University, Urdu university, Arid University, Fatima Jinnah University and Air University Islamabad). All the teachers from these universities were the population of the study. Purposive sampling technique was

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used for selecting the study sample. Results showed many factors due to which teachers do

not take interest in the professional development trainings. It is recommended that proper

planning should be done for professional development trainings. Teachers may be

motivated and encouraged to participate in the professional development trainings.

Key Words: Professional training, Teachers attitude, teacher's professional development

Introduction

Attitudes and attitude change discussed from the beginning of the century. Attitude has

very distinct place in psychology and psychologist take great interest in this area.

Same as other disciplines the educators also show great interest towards the attitude due to

its great impact on learning. The concept of the attitude is difficult to define in

satisfactorily ways but it has been define by different psychologist, philosophers, and

educationist. The earliest definition was proposed by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918). They

stated that it is state of readiness (mental and neural) which is organized with the help of

experience which in turn have a strong effect on one's reaction to the situations and objects

one's deal (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1918).

Attitude Formation

Behavior and formation of attitudes are directly influenced by the situational stimuli or

events in the environment. Strict behaviorists argued that internal events are very important

in attitude formation. Reinforces have direct influence on attitude change. This assumption

is supported by social learning theorist. According to them, behaviors are not only learned

through reinforcement as it is supported by traditional psychologist. Most of the learning

occurs by observation and verbal instruction which have strong influence on attitude and

attitude formation (Zimbardo and Leippe, 1991).

Theories of Attitude Change

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Literature showed many types of attitude change (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; O'Keefe,

1990). There are four categories of attitude theories:

• Consistency theories

• Learning theories

• Social judgment theories

• Functional theories

Consistency Theories

These theories are based on the assumption that there is the need of consistency for

individuals. It says that there must be consistency among attitudes and behaviors. It is

assumed that lack of the consistency between attitude and behavior is one of the reason of

discomfort for the individual, one try to ease his/her tension through maintenance of the

balance between attitude and behavior. In begging, consistency theory was termed as

balance theory (Himmelfarb and Eagly, 1974; Kiesler, Collins and Miller, 1969; O'Keefe,

1990). Balance theory mainly focuses on relationships. Another theory "Affective

Cognitive consistency theory", presented by Rosenberg (1956), investigates and

examines the relationship between attitude and beliefs.

Learning Theories

Learning theories can be called the behavioral theories of attitude change, developed

during 1950 and 1960. Bem (1967), quoted in Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974), used

Skinnerian approach to the study of attitude change. He assumed those attitudes occur

due to prior environmental. He also assumed that attitude change occurs when a person

has not direct knowledge of internal stimuli available to learner.

Social Judgment Theory

Social judgment theory involves the application of judgmental principles to the study of

attitude change.

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Functional Theories

Functional theories of attitude emerged in 1950s. The main theme of these theories is that

change in attitude needs to have the motivational bases as well as the functions for

individuals. Having information regarding function as well as attitude performers helps a

lot person for persuasive information whishing attitude change. (Himmelfarb and Eagly,

1974).

Teachers Training and Attitude Change

Basic concern of teachers training is to bring changing in the attitude of the teachers.

Lortie (1975), as quoted by Hogben & Petty (1979), stated that in the area of attitude

change or to modify the attitude, the basic concern of the teachers' training programs is

to have the desirable changes in the teachers attitude towards their students as well to

their profession (teaching). Teachers training contribute towards not only to shape and

modify teacher's attitude but also develop certain teaching skills which are necessary for

teaching profession. Several studies are conducted on teachers training and their

professional development and these studies reported that teacher's trainings shows

positive change in attitude of the teachers and prove fruitful for the professional

development of the teachers. One study was conducted on the same topic which shows

the significant positive changes, as reported with regard to expansion, and reorganization

of curriculum, formal discipline, recognition of individual differences and personality

development. Teachers those who do not avail teachers training programs, they cannot

show their performance up to the mark.

Researches showed that teachers who have great deal of training are much concerned

about their pupil's social relation, their growth and development in respect to social,

mental, physical, emotional, and these trained teachers are less concerned with control

and restraint. As the number of training programs increased, these teachers become more

logical, rational, and their attitude of warmth increased. Hogben and Petty (1979) also

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remarked in his study which was conducted on teachers training. His study showed that

professional development courses have positive impact on teacher's attitudes.

Professional Development of Teachers

Professional development and professional attitude is vey essential for every employee.

Professional development is very important for every professional member to develop in

their profession. They must struggle to improve their performance quality. A professional

development program gives chances for the growth of individual's career through

workshop, seminar, research, travel and through working with other person and

colleagues those who are more experienced. Different professional development courses

are offered for the teachers all over the world. If training programs enhance the quality of

teaching, then they can serve more enthusiastically the growing population. In Pakistani

teacher's training institutes, activities like seminars, conferences, training practices and

surveys etc., are used and teachers' performance is evaluated through reflective journals,

portfolio, group work, class room observation, discussion and presentation.

Many societies try to change their educational system. Teacher's professional

development is the essential aspect of these reforms. Societies agreed that only through

teacher's professional development, they can have positive change in their societies. It is

only possible through if we generate trained and fully equipped teacher who prop the

existing education system and bring positive change for the improvement of this

educational system.

In Pakistan, there are many teachers training institutes, but unfortunately these institutes

are not functioning effectively. Reimers (2003) found some reasons due to which

educational standards are not fully met. He reported factors for low quality performance

which include unmotivated faculty and students, lack of supervision and inactive Deans.

In Pakistani institution, there is dire need to pay full attention to acquire knowledge

through textbooks, lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences and also to acquire

expertise in the relevant field. Professional development gives great care towards the

skills, knowledge, and attitude.

Professional development has great deal of importance for the teachers as it is directly

connected with students' learning. Professional development not only updates the

knowledge and skills of the teachers but also increase the productivity and potential of

the teachers as well as students' achievements. Ostern and Kenp (1933) recommended

that teachers need professional development opportunities and team work which

improves professional growth and development.

Professional development is offered to bring changes on different areas like teacher's

practices, attitudes and beliefs. Teacher development programs have very distinct role in

teacher's careers but, if teachers are not taking interest in these programs or the programs

are ineffective, fruitful results will not be obtained. Majority of the programs did not

achieve their aims and objectives as teachers do not take much interest in these programs

to enhance their professional skills. They just attend these programs for the sake of

certificates (Makrani, 2010).

Impact of professional development trainings on teachers

It is obvious from many researches that when teachers spend plenty of the time on their

professional work or in attending the professional programs professional competencies

are developed which bring positive change in their professional attitude and skills.

Desimon et, al. (2002) concluded that professional development programs have positive

impact on teachers for enhancing their working capabilities and teaching practices. Broko

and Putnam (1955) provide evidence to support the fact that professional development

programs plays an essential role in teacher's career and it changes teacher's

methodologies. Gibbs and Coffey (2004), reported that professional development training

courses and programs bring positive changes for increasing the knowledge and skills of

university teachers.

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Nature of Professional Development Trainings

Leithwood (1992) remarked in his study that Professional development trainings are very

crucial in teacher's career as Professional development courses and programs develop the

survival skills of teachers. It also aids to develop competency in basic skills of teaching,

expanding instructional flexibility and in increasing instructional expertise. It contributes

towards professional growth and increase participation in decision making. Nature of

professional development trainings determines the effectiveness of these trainings.

Factors that determines the effectiveness of these programs include content of training

program, duration of training, time span daily spent, collective participation,

collaboration, active learning, teachers interest, motivation elements, use of modern

technologies and practical implications.

Desimon et, al. (2002) and Baker and Smith (1999) identified some characteristics of

professional development as being the most effective in sustaining change in teachers.

These are given as under:

A great emphasis on providing concrete, realistic and challenging goals

> Include those activities that take support from both technical and conceptual

aspects of instructions

> Get support and guide from colleagues and other fellows

Lack of Motivation and Enthusiasm

According to Remez and Sasson (2011), motivation and enthusiasm are important factors

which push anyone to take actions. Lack of motivation and enthusiasm can be important

factors of failure. Usually people with low motivation are passive and blame everything

around them. Conversely, people with high level of motivation are more energetic and

positive. They argued that reasons for lack of motivation and enthusiasm in professional

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development training can be lacking confidence on abilities, fear of failure, low self

esteem, lack of enough interest, laziness, no awareness of the importance of goal, stressed

or nervous, absence of enough stimuli or incentives, teachers conservativeness, conflict

with work schedule, family responsibilities and not having pre requisites. According to

Teaching and Learning International Survey (2010), the reasons faced by German

teachers for lacking interest in professional development trainings were no suitable

professional development and conflict with work schedule.

Methodology

This research is descriptive by nature as it is measuring the current beliefs attitudes of the

teachers regarding their professional development training. The researchers used

quantitative approach to achieve the objective of the present study.

The basic purpose or the aim of the study was to explore the teacher's attitude towards

professional development trainings.

The objectives of the study were:

To examine teachers attitude towards professional development trainings

> To explore the reasons for not taking interest in the professional development

trainings

To investigate the impact of teachers training on professional development of

teachers

Study was delimited to the six public sector universities (National University of Modern

Languages, Islamic International University, Urdu University, Arid University, Fatima

Jinnah University and Air University). All the teachers from these universities were the

population of the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for

the study. 10 teachers from each university were selected to explore their attitude towards

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professional development training. Questionnaire was used to explore teacher's attitude towards professional development trainings. Both close and open ended questions were included in the tool to explore teacher's attitude towards professional development trainings. Validity of the tool was determined through expert opinion.

Result analysis

Questionnaire was used for data collection purpose. There were both open and closed ended item in the tool. Percentages were calculated for the close ended items. Open ended items were analyzed qualitatively. The whole data was tabulated and analyzed the percentages of each statement. Description and discussion of each statement given as under:

Table: 1. *Professional development trainings are essential for teachers.*

Responses	SA	\boldsymbol{A}	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	42	18	0	0	0
%	70	30	0	0	0

It is obvious that professional development trainings are essential for successful survival in any profession. In this question, majority said that professional development trainings are necessary for teachers.

Table: 2. *Professional development trainings boost the individual career.*

Responses	SA	\boldsymbol{A}	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	30	28	2	0	0

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%	50	46	4	0	0

Majority of the teachers were strongly agreed with this statement. They considered professional development important for boosting their carrier.

Table: 3. *Professional training is the process of enhancing teacher's status through imparting awareness and knowledge.*

Responses	SA	A	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	20	35	5	0	0
%	33	58	9	0	0

When teachers were asked that professional training is the process of enhancing their status through imparting awareness and knowledge, majority of the teachers showed willingness on this statement.

Table: 4. Professional development trainings are efforts to bring changes in the teaching methodologies, attitudes and in teaching beliefs.

Responses	SA	\boldsymbol{A}	UD	DA	SD
No of	24	30	4	2	
responses					
%	40	50	6	4	0

Teacher's trainings influence teacher's philosophies of teaching, their attitudes and their teaching practices. When they were investigated about this aspect, majority was agreeing.

Table: 5. Teachers are motivated to participate in professional development trainings.

Responses	SA	\boldsymbol{A}	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	25	19	7	9	0
%	41	31	13	15	0

Researches indicated a lot of factors for not taking interest in the professional development trainings. When teacher were inquired about it, 41% said that teachers are motivated to participate in professional development trainings. While, 9% teachers were disagree with this statement.

Table: 6. In Pakistan, professional development is concerned with knowledge but professional development means acquiring expertise in the relevant filed.

Responses	SA	\boldsymbol{A}	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	18	24	9	9	0
%	30	40	15	15	0

Basically, trainings are not the theoretical aspects but they enable trainees to learn such tips and techniques which are essential for their career. Professional development involves acquiring expertise. Majority of the teachers agreed that in Pakistan, trainings

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are concerned with knowledge. 15% were neutral while 15% disagreed with the statement.

Table: 7. Reason of low quality education in Pakistan is lack of teacher's professional development.

Responses	SA	A	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	18	24	4	14	0
%	30	40	7	23	0

Researches indicate that one reason for low quality of education in Pakistan is lack of teacher's professional development. As indicated above, it is one reason for low quality of education in Pakistan.

Table: 8. Research indicates that majority of professional development programs fails because teachers are not too much interested in professional development trainings.

Responses	SA	\boldsymbol{A}	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	14	23	15	5	3
%	23	38	25	9	5

One reason for the failure of professional development trainings can be lack of teacher's enthusiasm and interest in the trainings. 23% teachers were strongly agreed, 38% were agreed, 25% were undecided, and 8% were disagreed while 5% were strongly disagreeing.

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Table: 9. Teachers may take part in the professional development trainings just for getting certificates.

Responses	SA	A	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	18	22	9	11	0
%	30	36	15	19	0

Majority of the teachers were agreed that mostly teachers participate in the professional development trainings just for the sake of getting certificates.

Table: 10. Teachers lack interest in professional development trainings due to fear of failure.

Responses	SA	A	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	8	7	14	23	8
%	13	11	23	38	15

In response to this statement, 13% were strongly agreed, 11% agreed, 23% undecided, 38% disagreed and 13% were strongly disagreed.

Table: 11. Teachers lack enthusiasm in Professional development trainings because they are not aware of importance and usefulness of the professional development training.

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Responses	SA	A	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	15	19	7	14	5
%	25	31	13	23	8

Teacher's lack of awareness regarding importance of professional development trainings can also be a reason for teacher's lack of enthusiasm in professional development trainings. Majority of the teachers agreed with this statement.

Table: 12. One reason for the lack of interest in professional development trainings can be much emphasis on the theoretical aspects than practical.

Responses	SA	\boldsymbol{A}	UD	DA	SD
No of responses	23	21	6	5	5
%	38	35	10	9	8

Mostly it is said that professional development trainings have big theoretical portion than practice. It is obvious form teacher's responses that this is also one aspect of teacher's lack of interest in the professional development trainings. While 16% showed disagreement with this statement.

Table: 13. Teachers lack motivation and enthusiasm due to absence of enough stimuli and incentive.

Responses	SA	\boldsymbol{A}	UD	DA	SD

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No of	16	30	6	5	3
responses					
%	26	50	10	8	6
	20		10	O	

Researches indicate that there is absence of incentive or stimuli in the professional development trainings, there is lack of teacher's motivation and enthusiasm in the teachers. Majority was agreeing with this statement. While some teachers showed disagreement on this statement.

14: Barriers for not taking interest in professional development trainings.

Teachers were asked regarding barriers for not taking interest in the professional development trainings. They gave different responses. Several reasons and factors were identified by teachers which hinder their active participation and interest in professional development trainings. Identified elements were extra workload, insufficient time, absence of incentives in professional development trainings, much emphasis on theoretical aspects than practice, family responsibilities, teacher's conservativeness, lack of awareness regarding usefulness of training and conflict with teachers working schedule. These were some barriers or reasons which were identified by teachers.

15: Suggest some ways through which they can be motivated for taking interest in professional development trainings.

Different ways were suggested by the teachers through which teachers can be motivated to take interest in the professional development trainings. They suggested that first of all teacher should be aware that how important professional development training is, for their successful carrier. Much emphasis should be given on practical aspects than theoretical aspects. Teachers should be rewarded for good jobs. Incentives or stimuli should be offered during professional development trainings. There should be proper

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monitoring of teachers teaching practices after trainings. Traveling and accommodation funds should be given to the teachers if trainings centers are far away from their accommodations. Teachers should be encouraged and motivated during trainings. These were some suggestions which can be used for motivating teachers to take interest in the professional development trainings.

Results & Discussion

Data was collected through questionnaire. Data indicated that there are many reasons due to which teachers do not take interest in the professional development trainings. Reasons or barriers were absence of incentive of enough stimuli, teachers' workload, and work stress, much theoretical aspect then practical aspect, family responsibilities, lack of opportunities and not having awareness regarding usefulness of professional development training. Data indicated that majority of the teachers attend professional development trainings just for the sake of getting certificates. Some ways were suggested by the teachers through which they can be motivated to take interest in the professional development trainings. By using these ways teacher's positive attitude towards professional development trainings can be developed. As awareness regarding usefulness of professional development trainings can be given to the teachers. Presence of incentive, reward for good jobs, monitoring of the teachers work after trainings, provision of traveling funds and encouragement of teachers during training are some ways through which teachers positive attitude towards professional development trainings can be developed.

Reimers (2003) reported that successful professional development experiences have a powerful impact on teacher's work both in and out of classroom, especially considering that a number of teachers throughout the world are underprepared for their profession. In Pakistani context, teachers have negative attitude towards professional development trainings due to many reasons which were mentioned above. Teachers are mostly reluctant to participate in the professional development trainings. Data has indicated barriers due to which teachers are reluctant to participate in professional development trainings. Efforts can be made by concerned authorities to remove these barriers so that positive outcome of the

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professional development trainings can be obtained and positive attitude of teachers can be developed regarding professional development trainings.

Recommendations

Professional development is very essential for teachers as it inculcates curiosity, motivation, and new ways of thinking. It becomes most influential when it is adopted on continuous bases with well planned trainings. It is recommended that proper planning may be done for professional development trainings. Teachers may be motivated and encouraged to participate in the professional development trainings. Incentives and rewards can be offered during trainings for good jobs. Proper framework may also be designed for monitoring of teachers performance after training.

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