

Teacher Development: Keys to Educator Success

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Abstract:- This study evaluated the participation of 174 teachers from 6 departments of Baguio Central University in various professional development programs. Utilizing a survey, the study explored how informal and formal professional development avenues influence the faculty members. The investigation revealed that teachers typically assume an active role in professional development, with informal and formal activities being deemed extremely beneficial. Additionally, the study pointed out that the level of involvement in particular professional development initiatives is commonly affected by their personal characteristics. Furthermore, the results highlighted that engaging in official discussions with colleagues can be highly beneficial for teacher's professional growth. Overall, the research findings suggest that all of the participants tend to have analogous professional development requirements. In terms of significance, this research is advantageous in providing an understanding of professional development activities in the higher educational setting.

Keywords:- CPD, professional development, teacher activities, informal, formal

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of ongoing professional development among educators is a fundamental element in various school reform plans. To be successful, individuals need to have acquired specialized training and educational expertise, as well as have the trust and admiration of their professional colleagues which provides opportunities for growth in independence and self-determination (Darling-Hammond & Godwin, 1993; Sullivan, 1995 as cited by Zepeda, 2008). This type of Professional Advancement is seen as a combination of collective and personal endeavours that enhance personal development and foster career progression (Recentes, 2001). With such pursuits, staff members can improve their skillset and job performance, as well as increase their job satisfaction. For this reason, professional growth should be part of any teacher's responsibilities.

Moreover, Bayacsan (2011) states that Teacher Professional Development (TPD) serves as a means of providing teachers with the tools to increase student learning, with methods ranging from videos to conferences. This involves teachers updating their knowledge to adapt to the new expectations of students, teachers, and other educational agents. To keep up with international educational standards, educational reforms that include Professional Development are increasingly being implemented. According to the work of Villegas-Reimers (2003), this form of professional development has a direct

and positive influence on both the teachers' performance and the results of their students, as suggested by the evidence of Borko and Putnam (1995) and other researchers. Furthermore, the authors Ozer and Beycioglu (2010) note that offering Professional Development activities is an effective way of enhancing the quality of instruction.

Finally, Lokino (2007) noted that Filipino teachers hold the opinion that their initial teaching preparation is sufficient. However, the teaching profession has experienced significant changes because of increased advancements in technology, new education initiatives, and progress in the sciences; educators must remain informed in order to properly perform their jobs. Should the results of this study prove beneficial, they can be used to illustrate the current professional growth of teachers and help the institutions improve their supporter pools. Administrators would also gain the insight to choose those who are in need of professional development, allowing the system to advance. Overall, it is essential to create a professional development system that can make the education system competitive and cutting-edge on both a national and international scale.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Professional Development

Professional development outlined in this study encompasses a variety of learning experiences available to teachers and other education professionals. To ensure school success and teacher satisfaction, it is essential that these individuals are able to continuously increase their instructional knowledge (The Education Week, 2004). Focusing on the attainment of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for successful teaching, educators are urged to part take in professional development programs throughout their careers (Sparks and Richardson, n.d), with it also being beneficial for a person in terms of building on their personal roles (Bayacsan, 2011). It is imperative for teachers to progress their own learning, offering students a chance to reach academic goals (Arroway, 2009, as cited in Labasan, 2014). Keeping abreast of the latest changes in the profession and showing constant enthusiasm for their subject matter are important attributes teachers should have (Stein, 2010).

B. Formal and Informal Professional Development

Each professional development, according to Ganser (2000), includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring, etc.) and informal experiences (reading professional publications, watching television, documentaries related to academic discipline, etc.). It is also the growth that occurs as the teacher moves through the professional career cycle, (Glathorn, 1995). Professional development is categorized into: a.) formal school arrangements such as

courses/workshops on subject matter and/or other education-related topics, education conferences or seminars at which teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss education problems, qualification programmes like degree programmes, observation visits to other schools, participation in a network of teachers, individual or collaborative research on a topic of professional interests, mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching and b.) informal arrangements such as reading professional literature like journals, evidence-based papers, and thesis papers and engaging in informal dialogue with peers on how to improve teaching.

C. Usefulness of Professional Development Activities

It is believed that professional development has a positive effect on the teaching-learning process. Research has identified that in-service professional development activities have the potential to improve teachers' quality by equipping them with pedagogical and content knowledge, as well as providing other skills that help them to increase their instructional effectiveness (Borko 2004; Desimone et al., 2002; Fishman et al., 2003; Gruskey, 2002., Bayacsan, 2011). The impact of professional development on the enhancements of the teachers may be affected by several factors such as the duration or intensity of the professional development activities, manner of participation either individual or collective, and the content of the professional development.

The duration of professional development appears to be associated with stronger impact on teachers an student learning-in part perhaps because such sustained efforts typically include applications to practice, often supported by study groups and/or coaching (Darling-Hammond, et. al. 2009). The duration of professional development that is sustained over time, according to Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001), is expected to be important in two ways: a.) provides an opportunity for in-depth discussion of content, student conceptions and misconceptions, and pedagogical strategies and b.) allows teachers to try out new practices in the classroom and obtain feedback on their teaching. It is clearly indicated that the duration of professional development activities affects the impact of the activities on teacher's performance. Such statement is seen in the study of Ingvarson, et al. (2005), which shows that the time span and contact hours both have substantial, though indirect, effects on program outcomes. Other researches also show that longer-duration programs show positive and significant effects on the student achievement (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009)

Aside from the duration or intensity of professional development, the manner of participation –either collective or individual also tells how much teachers are affected by the professional development activities they participate in. many researchers have found out that collective participation is very much helpful in the growth and development of teachers. There is some evidence, for instance, that networks of teachers involved in change can help sustain motivation (Lieberman and McLaughlin, 1992). According to Bandura (1995) and Schunk (1981) as cited by Harwell (2003), when teachers take time to interact, study

together, discuss teaching, and help one another put into practice new skills and strategies, they grow and their students' behaviors improve accordingly. This is because social persuasion is a powerful means of changing beliefs, as has been suggested by a number of researchers. Collective participation has several advantages: a.) provides teachers the opportunity to discuss concepts, skills, and problems that arise during their professional development experience; b.) makes teachers from the same department or school share common curriculum materials, course offerings, and assessment requirements; c.) enables teachers who share the same students to discuss students' needs across classes and grade levels; d.) helps sustain changes in practice over time by focusing on a group of teachers from the same school (Garet, et al., 2001).

The content of professional development should also be taken into consideration because it does affect the development of teachers. To be that professional development that was content-focused and coherent and had active learning was more successful in improving teacher effective, professional development should be based on curricular and instructional strategies that have a high probability of affecting student learning—and, just as important, students' ability to learn (Joyce and Showers, 2002) cited in Harwell (2003). "Other research also suggest that professional development is most effective when it addresses the concrete, everyday challenges involved in teaching and learning specific academic subject matter, rather than focusing on abstract educational principles or teaching methods taken out of context' (darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). The effectiveness of the content of every professional activity is a great factor in the success of the activity. The activity should be based on the immediate needs of the teachers so that it can get full attention of participants and promote professional development.

D. Social learning theory

According to the Social Learning Theory (SLT), individuals gain their knowledge through observation (Bandura, 1977). The observation of others' behaviors is known to be a key factor in the development of teachers (Lortie, 2002) and the creation of a mental model of how lessons should shape up (Rowlands, Thwaites, & Jared, 2011). SLT's self-regulatory concept of self-efficacy is based on how successful a person believes they can be in a given situation or context (Bandura, 1997). Low levels of self-efficacy lead to pessimistic attitudes towards student motivation and incentive (Woolfolk et al., 1990). Moreover, teachers often learn and adapt the practices of other teachers and transform them into their own (Lortie, 2002). Furthermore, SLT suggests that, over time, these practices become routine (Bandura, 1997; Cuban, 2009; Wake, 2011).

As teachers, we observe the largely traditional teaching of more experienced colleagues, we reconstruct this, knowing that it represents a safe and stable practice. Thus, we enter into a well-established didactic contract (Brousseau, 1997) based on traditional and conservative teaching approaches. Wake (2011) argues that the introduction of student-centered problem-solving approaches requires a change or renegotiation of this

contract. According to SLT then, the facilitation of this renegotiation is reliant upon teachers having the appropriate pedagogical knowledge – in the form of mental models of possible and alternate practices, pedagogies and behaviors (Bandura, 1997) – combined with a level of self-efficacy in order to be able to implement such approaches (Guskey, 1988).

III. METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods research was used in the participation to the different Professional Development activities of the teacher of Baguio Central University. This combines and integrates qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single research study. It involves collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to understand a phenomenon better and answer the research questions. The participants of the study were the 174 teachers of Baguio Central University, Baguio City, Philippines for Academic Year 2022- 2023. Total enumeration sampling method was used.

IV. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. *Level of Participation in the Different Professional Development Activities*

Seminars are an effective way to stay up to date in the field of teaching and can be a convenient way for professionals to get the latest information about their field. Some teachers recognize the importance of seminars for staying abreast of new teaching strategies and pedagogies. Since its beginnings with Socrates, seminars have proven to be a valuable teaching method (Bates, 2016). Yildirim (2010) further demonstrated the usefulness of seminars through a research study investigating how seminars can increase the effectiveness of strategic planning. This research found that the Philippines teachers in general participated in formal activities such as seminars often, as indicated by a mean value of 2.55.

The results of this study suggest that seminars, workshops, and other professional development opportunities are highly beneficial for optimizing school performance and educational programs. School principals gained confidence in formulating their strategic plans by attending a seminar and analyzing their schools' SWOT (Yildirim, 2010). This study found that teachers often take part in workshops, although they acknowledge that the time commitment involved (Okon & Anderson, 1982). Further, according to Essien, Akpan, & Obot (2016), In-service courses, seminars and workshops are beneficial for teachers and improve their capacity for knowledge acquisition and experience. Also, Anderson and Wilson (1996) highlighted the importance of involving teachers, administrators, and affected organizations for successful education change, seen in the context of a two-week summer workshop.

Another astonishing finding is that teachers tend to participate in conferences that relate to their field of specialization. The discussion article of Finnegan et al. (2019) suggests conferences offer a swifter route to knowledge dissemination, facilitated by the ability to choose

the content and mode of delivery. The notion of autonomy of practice is an attribute of professionalism, as demonstrated by this research, which also indicates conferences provide educators the freedom of choice in professional development uptake.

Interestingly, educators across the globe demonstrate an interest in conferences as a primary resource to stay current on industry trends and advancements. Teachers prefer conferences as opposed to journals, because the topics are closely related to their field of specialization, as well as autonomy of practice. This research supports the notion that conference participation is seen as a more effective way of bridging the gap between theory and practice (Finnegan et al., 2019; Evans, 2011).

Furthermore, teachers reported that they are usually not given monetary rewards for attending learning sessions or hosting clubs, and were not encouraged to take charge of committees or get involved due to the lack of meaningful rewards. As such, collaborative research on curriculum development and other activities have been defined as one of the least participated by teachers. However, collaborative research engages teachers to convene in a quality time to produce a methodological approach to educational challenges, and is likely to be beneficial in improving quality of education (Carcamo, 2019; Buena, 2019; Blasé, 2019). Finally, teachers have reported that there are few to no monetary rewards for taking part in additional learning initiatives, in particular collaborative research which can be seen as the least participated activity. Despite this, collaborative research has its benefits and schools should provide a comprehensive framework, particularly with regards to quality of education (Carcamo, 2019; Buena, 2019; Blasé, 2019).

Hence, the Benchmarking framework seeks to provide a comprehensive view of teaching contributions and emphasize the importance of forward-thinking attribute which contribute to innovative teaching practices. However, the research highlighted a reluctance among teachers to partake in school mobility activities, citing a lack of invitations from other universities and a reluctance to risk contracting the COVID-19 virus as the primary reasons. The research concluded that the teachers had a weighted mean of 2.08 for their participation in this activity, suggesting it was a seldom activity. Moreover, there are teachers highlighted their need to focus on their current school's culture rather than learning the practices of other schools and noted the lack of proper dissemination of information regarding assessment and benchmarking practices. This was further enforced by the IATF Resolution No. 169-A s. 2022 which limited travel to only those of necessity during the pandemic.

On the other hand, with the plethora of literatures on formal activities, more or less, it offers several benefits that the respondents were able to recognize like collective participation of teachers and sustainability of collegiality among colleagues. Formal activities include conferences, seminars, workshops, qualification programs, observation visits to other schools, collaborative research, mentoring,

peer observation and coaching. These formal activities can bring teachers together and promote collaboration to continue through formal and informal learning. In addition, many professional development activities utilize face to face instruction delivered at specific times and inherently possess temporal and geographical related activities (Tyler et. al 2009).

Research revealed that informal learning activities, such as internet and peer-based knowledge sharing are most popular amongst teachers. This could be attributed to a hassle-free access to teaching materials and resources, or even more likely due to time consuming formal learning activities (Bennett and Lemoine, 1999; Ball, 2018; Scribner et al, 1999). The findings are especially meaningful in light of the current pandemic, which has seen digitalized instruction increasing in popularity (Allen, 2021). Furthermore, Marsick and Watkins (1990) supports the study's results with their findings that teachers generally favor informal over formal learning activities.

B. The Level of Usefulness of the Professional Development Activities as Perceived by the Respondents

The results of this study suggest that formal activities, such as seminars, are particularly useful for teachers in that they offer opportunities for learning new pedagogies and reclaim forgotten information (Aubrey & Riely, 2016). Additionally, these seminars aid in developing critical reading and writing skills (Padgett, Keup, & Pascarella, 2013; Plymouth, 2011). This result was further reinforced by several other studies in varying fields such as education, business and medicine (Weber, Gabbert, Kropp, & Pynes, 2007; Yildirim (2010). Furthermore, seminars are convenient for professionals who need to stay up-to-date in their field and might not have the time to do all the research on their own.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that formal activities such as seminars are particularly useful for teachers, providing opportunities to develop critical thinking and writing skills and learn new information. Additionally, they are more convenient for busy professionals who need to stay up-to-date in their field.

The research highlighted that Collaborative research on curriculum development had a weighted mean of 3.32 which is interpreted as very much useful. Examples of stakeholder collaborations discussed during the interview included McLoughlin and Lee (2008) on the concept of participatory collaboration, Konings, Seidel and van Merriënboer (2013) on how integrating the expertise of multiple stakeholders can improve the design process, and Wood & Kompare (2017) on the challenges of participatory collaboration. Furthermore, Observation visits to other schools had the lowest mean of 2.80 which is interpreted as much useful. The teachers' expressed their views that these visits to other schools were useful as it allowed them to explore teaching strategies seen online or found through rare invitations from other schools.

Indeed, visiting other schools or benchmarking is an activity that is being done in the education sector nowadays. This activity is very important because it serves as windows for others school leaders, teachers and other educators to see for themselves the practices of model schools. This is permitted among schools because it benefits others especially for programs like school-based management, and others (Saldi, 2020).

Moreover, the respondents perceived informal professional activities as highly useful, with Reading professional literature being of the highest mean of 3.45. This allowed teachers to quickly be able to apply the information they have obtained. Educators have come to depend more on the Internet for resources for their profession than district or state sessions. Professional development activities such as school observations, bonding, and collaborations primarily provide quality educational practices to help teachers understand the demands of the job. Rajaram & Pereira-Pasaran (2010) explored collaborations as beneficial for managing errors, creating a more personalized learning environment, and ultimately, achieving success. Wenglinsky (1998) studied the beneficial effects of technology and the fostering of higher order thinking skills. Smyth and Shacklock (1998) indicated that with access to the Internet and plentiful resources, the way teachers approach their work has drastically changed and improved. Further research in this field could provide useful insight into which forms of educational resources benefit educators the most.

This study by Harbison (2018) found that teachers primarily rely on informal professional development activities due to their accessibility and convenience. Most teachers believe that informal activities are highly beneficial for their professional growth, in contrast to formal activities, which scored an overall mean of 3.37 for informal activities compared to 3.18 for formal activities (Harbison, 2018). Through this research, Harbison (2018) implies that any teacher can develop their skills, whether through formal or informal activities, and both should be seriously considered to help enhance their teaching abilities. Educators need to acquire the necessary skills for professional development, which can be attained through both formal and informal activities. Harbison's (2018) study highlighted informal activities as being a convenient option for teachers to gain the skills needed. The findings of the study suggest that teachers should consider using both formal and informal activities to be adequately prepared for teaching in the 21st century.

C. The Extent of Support Provided by the Different Stakeholders

Teachers have perceived that collegial support is greater than administrative support, a finding confirmed by PACOCOA's assessment of school activities for Level 2 certification. This was reflected by the overall mean of 3.01 and 2.43 respectively. One inhibitor to teachers' informal learning is a lack of decision-making power experienced by the teachers. The highest weighted mean of 2.69 was found for Conducting frequent evaluation and observation while Involving teachers in decisions and actions related to the

curriculum earned the lowest weighted mean of 2.42. Most respondents contextualized that it is important to involve teachers in the decision-making and planning process as it is with the teachers who will implement it. One way for administrators to improve the support given to teachers is to provide more opportunities for the teacher teams to speak on things like school lunches and teacher duties. Moreover, teachers should have designated leaders to facilitate communication between the school and the teachers.

School administration was found to have poor support for the implementation of the curriculum, with a mean of 2.08 (Sebullen, 2021). According to Friedman (2020), increasing administrative support could lead to higher job satisfaction and performance levels for teachers. Additionally, teachers need to be more involved in decisions and actions related to the curriculum (Francescucci & Rohani, 2018). Additionally, evaluation of activities conducted in school is necessary to understand the impact of the curriculum, and provide teachers support from the leaderships (Saxena & Saxena, 2020).

The results of the research have shown that the provision of learning materials and/or resources and facilities for teaching and learning is relatively low, with a weighted mean of 2.55. This means that the school should prioritize the development of physical facilities, not just for the professional development of teachers, but also to ensure students can reach their potential. Despite the lack of support from administrators, teachers have gone above and beyond to develop their own skills, in order to accommodate the needs of the school and ensure programmes could still continue during the current pandemic and its restrictions. Results show that collegial support is seen as moderately provided with the weighted mean of 3.01 while conducting demonstration teaching and re-echoing of the seminars/trainings attended to have the highest mean of 3.20 and 3.02. However, the least indicator was found to be conducting collaboration with and among faculties.

Collegial support has been shown to have a high mean rating of 3.20 in building professional learning communities (Pascua, 2020; Magsambol, 2020). Such support is paramount in developing learning programs which maximize teaching-learning experiences and evaluate best practices (Pascua, 2020). When provided with professional learning communities, teachers are exposed to wider learning contents and pedagogies (Russell, 2001). Through this, teachers are able to control and understand the subject in a more comprehensive manner, better meeting 21st century teaching demands (Russell, 2001). Consequently, increased access to collegial support can be seen as a crucial way for teachers to upgrade their competencies while enhancing their skills (Magsambol, 2020).

The study of Rotas and Cahapay (2020) and Idris, Hussain, and Ahmad (2020) reveals that collaboration among and between faculties is not highly encouraged, which implies that the collegial support in teaching to learners remains insufficient. Consequently, teachers have shifted their focus to developing and implementing learning in collaboration with outside agencies due to the growing

need to address contemporary challenges affecting students' lives. The scarcity of resources in schools and increasing demands from teachers and learners make outside support all the more necessary in providing a holistic teaching-learning experience.

V. FINDINGS

- Professional development opportunities such as seminars and workshops are beneficial for enhanced school performance and educating personnel.
- Formal and informal activities are both desired by teachers for professional development.
- Formal activities such as seminars provide opportunities to learn new pedagogies and develop critical skills.
- Informal activities such as self-directed and social learning are convenient and available.
- Schools should facilitate dialogue between teachers and administrators to increase teacher's resources for professional development.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The teachers in the school always participated in the professional development activities.
- Informal and formal professional development are seen to be very much useful to teachers teaching in the higher education.
- Teachers' level of participation in the different professional development activities is usually affected by internal factors specifically their personal characteristics.
- Engaging formal dialogues with peers is very much useful in the professional development of the teachers.
- The respondents are alike in their professional development.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

From these conclusions, the following recommendations are therefore forwarded:

- All teachers should actively participate in professional development activities in order to maximize their effectiveness.
- A clear professional development plan should be created to ensure the successful implementation of the continuous learning process.
- Teacher's professional development should be prioritized as it can significantly impact the success of educational reforms and student learning.
- Professional development activities should be supported and encouraged to allow for a variety of informal and formal learning settings.
- Creating collaborative networks between academics and other institutions should be encouraged to allow for open dialogue and support between all stakeholders of education.

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