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RESEARCH PAPER

An Analysis of Professional Development Skills at Higher Education Level

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ABSTRACT

Professional development skills are defined as the activities that develop a teacher's knowledge, practices, and attributes. Study was on "An analysis of professional development skills at higher education level". The objectives of the study were to study professional knowledge of university teachers, to examine the professional attributes and to analyze the professional practices of university teachers. The study was quantitative, a descriptive survey was conducted to collect data. The number sample was twenty-one teachers and three hundred and seventy students selected using a proportionate sampling technique. The data were analyzed with the help of a statistical package for the social sciences and was tabulated. The result of study was that the teachers had deep and better subject matter knowledge, content knowledge, and curriculum knowledge but they have not general pedagogical knowledge. Teachers must try to improve their professional weaknesses regarding to general pedagogy in the light of student feedback.

| **KEYWORDS** | Professional Development, Professional Growth, Higher Education, Teaching Excellence |

Introduction

Professional development in higher education emphasizes collaboration as a key component. Academics collaborate with their colleagues through curriculum development, peer review, formal and informal networking, research, and so on. Collaboration may occur within a department, across different faculties and disciplines, between different institutions, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Collaboration and communication should also be the key to the relationship between educational developers and academic staff.

Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. Professional development encompasses all types of learning opportunities, ranging from university degrees to formal coursework, conferences, and informal learning opportunities. There are a variety of approaches to professional development, including consultation, coaching, groups of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision and technical assistance, etc.

Teacher professional development is defined as teachers' learning: how they learn and how they apply their knowledge in practice to support students learning (Postholm, 2012). In this moving world, knowledge isn't existence considered as a still. As the circumstance transforms it requests new knowledge and the skills of the people to make due to the general public. So also the teachers of the here and now may not stay effective, on the off chance that they have not adopted new skills and information.

Review of Literature

Skills

Skill is characterized as the built capacity to utilize information. It is additionally represented regarding requirements and self-sufficiency (Quendler et al., 2013).). Diverse see can be connected to what is recognized as the educational skill, which to positive levels reflects all over the teacher battles inside an established. The European Commission's dictionary Cedefop (2008) describes the skill capacity to do tasks and illuminate issues, the capacity to apply knowledge results sufficiently in a characterized setting (work, education, individual or professional development.

Professionalism

The professionalism of the teaching method is more concerned with what kind of skills teachers have and what they require relative to their tasks as a teacher. Professionalism in teaching means that teachers are skilled and talented in resolving their responsibilities in the right way. Professional independence discusses the chance to control the design of one's individual effort (Lilja, 2009). Professionalism is defined as " an ideal to which individuals and occupational groups aspire, to distinguish themselves from other workers " (Pratte & Rury, 1991).

Professional Development

Providing teachers with data-driven feedback, aligned professional development, and opportunities for advancement may help limit attrition, contribute to more effective teaching and improve student learning. However, research shows that much of the professional development teachers currently receive does not improve either teacher or student performance (Aragon, 2018). The professional development of teachers goes exterior a just instructive arrangement. It demonstrates adjustment to alter with a see to changing instruction and learning exercise adjusting teacher attitudes and moving forward the instructive comes about the students. The professional development of teachers is disturbed with single, proficient, and authoritative needs (Heideman, 2010).

Taylor (2007) says that a teacher's role looks like more of a specialist rather than a professional's as the teachers are told what to teach. Moreover, the obligation of the central curriculum, collective with a chain of national test marks and assessment criteria is recognized as a performance display to evaluate teaching proficiency and a student learning effect (Wong, 2006).

Professional Development in Pakistan

Planning and policy wings, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education (2009) had expressed some PD standards for a teacher in Pakistan to improve his teaching, skills, and knowledge in four key areas. These areas are focusing on a teacher's competence in the achievement of updated content knowledge of the subject they were teaching at every level. They stress that the teacher needs to be trained to use an effective strategy and a skill by using comprehensive knowledge of an instructional tool. Further was motivated by the wing the teachers have essential ethical knowledge and skills to assess student achievement. Furthermore, they describe that the teacher will be accountable for developed ethical behavior in students. The quality of education will be judged on the basics of the following standards specifically:

- Subject matter knowledge
- Human development and growth
- Knowledge about social life skills/Islamic moral values

- Instructional strategies and planning
- Assessments
- Learning atmosphere
- Active communication and skillful use of ICT
- Teamwork and partnership
- Continuous professional developments and a code of manner
- Instruction of English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL).

As every standard has 3 parts specifically the teacher's understanding and knowledge about the contents, secondly values and behavior, attitude to accomplish their teaching, and finally their performance which is connected with the abilities of teachers to convey their knowledge. All these parts interlinked with one another to cover all parts of teaching tasks. As per national standards of teacher's professional development 2009, the way toward training must begin with a reasonable identification of needs. Individual work well knowing the principle of learning. In Pakistan teacher's professional development opportunities, through different in-service training programs. HEC of Pakistan and the university provide such opportunities for PD for teachers (Janjua, 2019).

Theoretical Framework of Professional Development

Australian research council linkage and United Kingdom professional standard frameworks focused on the development of a standard for teacher's professional skills in different discipline areas. The frameworks insert the disciplines; however, they are supported by non-exclusive spaces that described fulfilled education. Without a doubt, this thinks about diagrams a professional development framework for teachers in higher education, created on the UK Professional standards frameworks have noteworthy ranges of cooperative energy around three domains: professional knowledge, professional attributes, and professional practice (Bower, 2014).

Professional Knowledge

Professional knowledge of how to have a deep knowledge of their content areas, curriculum, and university students. Professional understanding is important to imparting students applicable getting to know experience at the correct intensity of know-how. When teachers have a deep expertise of the concern being taught, they are much more likely to ask better order questions, inspire students to explore further reasons in getting to know topics, have interaction with colleague's student at a deeper level, and features a student-centered classroom. Professional knowledge that can guarantee a teacher's expertise, is determined by existing conditions and contexts, as well as the personal experiences, beliefs, and needs of each teacher, a fact that renders a prior definition of this knowledge extremely difficult. Nevertheless, there are knowledge fields that constitute a necessary prerequisite for every teacher, or at least for a large part of them, (Meijer et al., 1999; Meijer et al., 2001), and which structure the fundamental piece of "professional knowledge". These include: subject method knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge and context knowledge.

Professional Practices

As a professional, the teachers have acquired and sharpen the skills in achieving great incredible results for students. Having fewer pedagogic skills makes it teachers are hard to continue student consideration in learning. Chapuis (2003) to cook diverse student learning styles, to connect with into cognitive testing and applicable curriculum (Kalantzis & Cope, 2003). The satisfactory practices in dealing with a classroom with multiple activities assist teachers to create conducive studying atmospheres that encourage the involvement of different students in getting to know each other dynamically. The teachers want to show a converting in their practice in which they expertise within the remark findings.

Teacher's code of professional practices (2006) proves a great standard in learning and teaching by:

- Engaging learners for learning
- Maintaining minutes to monitor, assess, manage and improve the student learning
- Working on achieving a high result for students
- Developing their teaching skills and professional knowledge
- Using students research and student achievement data to update professional practices
- Backup the professional and personal development of others
- Assisting in mentoring and development of establishing teachers
- Providing productive feedback toward mates that is measured useful
- Working collaboratively with others to accomplish a goal
- Accepting accountability for professional and learning development
- Telling people for their supremacies and rights where suitable

Professional Attributes

Positive private attributes together with fairness, humor, and kindness, I trust, must be measured as essential attributes for a trainer. Now, much of the conversation around 'first-class' teaching' trainer access and teacher schooling is ready a collection of excessive-stage abilities and values.

In everyday life, teachers are imitated and recreated. It is sensible why teachers must show and advance positive attitudes, values, and behavior that they anticipate from students. Some commendable attitudes and behavior, for example, adaptability to students, patience, humorism, enthusiasm, fairness, care, and interest add sustainability in teaching. (Liakopoulou, 2011; Malikow, 2005). We can say, the teacher act in the classroom as a role model. Teachers carry on as the best teachers at universities and contribute to promoting attributes in various subjects of the curriculum. Teachers are required to show great characters since they are compelling entertainers in the lives of internees (Silver et al., 2005). These attributes includes the following

- Teachers are committed, as their primary responsibility, to improving student learning.
- Teachers understand and are committed to the responsibilities and obligations belonging to the teaching profession.
- Teacher exercise consistently high levels of professional conduct and principles of fundamental justice in their dealings with students, colleagues, and the school community.
- Teacher have, and can clearly articulate, a philosophy of education as it relates to the aims of education and approaches to teaching.
- Teacher understand their professional obligation to contribute to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the Vanuatu community.
- Teacher ground their teaching in the belief that all students have then to learn and should be treated compassionately, justly and equitably.
- Teacher take into account in their professional activities the disparate values held by individual students, groups of students, families, and the school's community.
- Teacher understand the influences that have shaped their own values and beliefs and how these values and beliefs may influence their interaction with others.
- Teacher exercise discretion in dealing with matters of confidentiality, trust and sensitivity in relation to students, parents and professional colleagues.
- Teacher actively engage in debate about current educational and social that affect teachers, work.

Material and Methods

The quantitative and a descriptive survey research design was used. Manuel & Medal (2009) define descriptive research thus: Involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the present nature, composition, or processes of phenomena. The focus is on prevailing conditions, or how a person, group, or thing behaves or functions in the present. It often involves some type of comparison or contrast.

The population of the study consisted of twenty-five (25) teachers and eleven hundred ninety-three (1193) students from the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, and seventeen (17) teachers and six hundred fifty-seven (657) students from the University of Ponch, Rawlakot.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A multistage sampling technique was used. In the first stage, a purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the universities, and the researcher selected two universities (ssi) The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (ii) The University of Ponch Rawlakot. The study was delimited to the three departments.

In the second stage, the numbers of teachers 21 (50%) were selected from the three departments of the universities, therefore proportionate sampling was determined (Gay, 1996).

In the third stage, the numbers of students 370 (20%) were selected from the three departments of the universities, therefore proportionate sampling was determined (Cohen, 2007).

Table 1
Sample

Name of the University/Departments	Teachers	Students	
University Of Azad Jammu & Kashmir	12	239	
1. Departments of English	04	101	
2. Departments of Sociology	04	71	
3. Departments of Psychology	04	67	
University of Ponch, Rawlakot	09	131	
Departments of English	03	62	
Departments of Sociology	03	37	
Departments of Psychology	03	32	
Total		21	370

Data Collection and Procedure

The researcher personally visited for data collection. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the selected respondents. Hence, data were collected through direct responses by administering the developed questionnaires. Two self-structured questionnaires were used as a research instrument, one for the teachers and one for the students. The questionnaires consisted of having five-point Likert-Scale. The study was quantitative, hence the data were analyzed with the help of SPSS, and the statistical tool frequency and percentage were drawn and tabulated through SPSS software (version 24).

Findings

The findings of the teacher's questionnaire were:

- The finding of the study revealed that majority of the teachers 95.1% agreed, while 4.7% of the teachers undecided about the statement that the teachers provide information to the students that allow them to gain a deeper and better understanding of the subject matter

- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 76.1% agreed, while 23.8% of the teacher's undecided about the statement that the teachers present the content of subject matter that is tailored to the student's knowledge.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 90.4% agreed, while 9.5% of the teacher's undecided about the statement that the teachers relate to learning with prior knowledge and the everyday life of students through examples.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 85.7% agreed, while 14.3% of the teachers undecided about the statement that the teachers introduce knowledge to the students to enable them to problem-solving.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 90.4% agreed, while 9.5% of the teachers undecided about the statement that the teachers promote teamwork between the students.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 61.9% were agreed, 23.8% of the teachers undecided that the teachers use different lesson plans according to subjects to enhance the students learning. While 14.3% of respondents disagreed.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 95.2% agreed, while 4.8% of the teacher's undecided about the statement that the teachers use a variety of strategies to enhance the students learning.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 71.4% agreed, while 28.6% of the teacher's undecided about the statement that the teachers use appropriate teaching aids to teach better.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 66.7% agreed, 19.0% of teacher's undecided, while 14.3% of the teachers disagreed about the statement that the teachers use ICT in teaching (Information and Communication Technologies).
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 80.9% agreed, 9.5% of teachers undecided, while 9.5% of teachers disagreed about the statement that the teachers' educational planning is according to the knowledge and information of the students.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 66.7% agreed, while 33.3% of the teachers undecided about the statement that the teachers use different assessment approaches to improve student learning.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 90.5% agreed, while 9.5% of the teachers undecided about the statement that the teachers provide initial or final overviews of a period in the class.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 100% agreed about the statement that the majority of respondents agreed that teachers come into class with proper preparation of lessons.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 100% agreed, while 42.9% agreed about the statement that teaches listen to the student with proper attention.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 85.7% agreed, while 14.3% of the teachers undecided about the statement that teachers promote creativity in the classroom for students to enjoy learning.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 100% agreed about the statement that teachers provide a positive atmosphere in the classroom.
- The finding of the study revealed the majority of the teachers 100% agreed about the statement that teachers can manage the class and positively address the conflict.

Conclusions

- The study concluded that the university teachers had deep and better subject matter knowledge, content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, and knowledge of self. The university teachers have not general pedagogical knowledge.
- The study concluded that the university teachers know how to engage students in learning and to promote individual, and teamwork among the students, to use different assessment approaches, and ICT to enhance students learning. The university teachers do not plan the lessons according to the subject matter and do not use varieties of strategy, and appropriate teaching aids to enhance the students' learning.
- The study concluded that the university teachers maintain a respectable position among the students, and listen to the student with proper attention. Teachers provide a positive atmosphere in the classroom. They are aware of the students' differences in learning. They come into the class with proper preparation. Teachers positively address the conflict and consult the issues with colleagues related to the university. The university teachers do not motivate the students towards learning. Teachers do not promote enjoyable learning and do not try to remove their professional weaknesses.

Recommendations

Following recommendations recommend from the findings and conclusion:

- It was concluded that the majority of students disagreed with the statement that the teachers present the content of the subjects with a clear and logical framework. So it is recommended that the teachers may present the content of the subjects with a clear and logical framework.
- It was concluded that the majority of students disagreed with the statement that the teachers present the content of the subjects according to the mental level of the students. So it is recommended that the teachers may present the content of the subjects according to the mental level of the students
- It was concluded that the majority of students disagreed with the statement that the teachers s design the lesson plans according to the subject. So it is recommended that the teachers may design the lesson plans according to the subject.
- It was concluded that the majority of students disagreed with the statement that the teachers use a variety of strategies and appropriate teaching aids to enhance the students learning. So it is recommended that the teachers may use a variety of strategies and appropriate teaching aids to enhance the students learning
- It was concluded that the majority of students disagreed with the statement that the teachers motivate the students towards learning. So it is recommended that the teachers may motivate the students towards learning
- It was concluded that the majority of students disagreed with the statement that the teachers must be responsible to ensure that they promote creativity in the classroom for students to enjoy learning. So it is recommended that the teachers may promote creativity in the classroom for enjoyable learning.
- It was concluded that the majority of students disagreed with the statement that the teachers try to improve their professional weaknesses in the light of student feedback. So it is recommended that the teachers may try to improve their professional weaknesses in the light of student feedback.
- Study proves that the professional development skills play a substantial role in a teaching profession. In direction to make a teaching-learning process more effective, teachers may be provided training to develop their professional knowledge,

professional practices and familiarize themselves with the professional attributes of a teaching profession.

- The university departments of education and teacher training institutions need to set up well-organized seminars and conferences to involve university teachers in continuous professional development.

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