

Exploring the Perceptions of Teachers on the Impact of Professional Development Programs in Enhancing Teaching Quality

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Abstract

This qualitative research study examines the multifaceted impact of training programs on educational performance within educational institutions, focusing on the Layyah district. The study sample consists of ten secondary school teachers selected from different schools in the Layyah district. Through thematic analysis of key themes, including improved instructional strategies, improved classroom management, technology integration, increased collaboration among educators, implementation challenges, and success factors, essential insights are uncovered to optimize the effectiveness of training initiatives. The findings highlight the importance of a culture of continuous learning among teachers, supported by clear communication, strong leadership, and comprehensive support. Furthermore, for successful implementation, embracing technology integration and addressing challenges such as resistance to change and resource limitations is essential. Recommendations include allocating adequate resources, promoting collaboration, embracing technology integration, and providing ongoing support mechanisms. Emphasis is also placed on continuous monitoring and evaluation of training programs to ensure alignment with changing needs and maximize impact on teaching performance and student outcomes. This study provides practical guidance to educational institutions seeking to improve teaching effectiveness through targeted training initiatives, ultimately benefiting teachers and students.

Keywords: Professional Development, Teacher's Commitment, Career Progression

Introduction

In the dynamic educational landscape, pursuing excellence in teaching has become a primary objective for institutions worldwide. Recognizing the central role of educators in shaping the future, there is increasing emphasis on the continued development and refinement of teaching skills. Training programs have become a key instrument in this quest, allowing educators to improve their teaching practices, adapt to changing learning environments, and ultimately improve their teaching performance. This study proposal seeks to delve deeper into the area

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of educator training programs to conduct a detailed examination of their impact on educational performance (Dolev & Leshem, 2017). As the educational landscape evolves with technological advancements, diversity of learning needs, and an ever-changing sociocultural context, it becomes imperative to understand the effectiveness of training programs. This review aims to examine the existing literature, analyze the various methodologies used in these programs, and evaluate their discernible effects on teachers' teaching skills (Barrett et al., 2015).

Educational institutions invest significantly in training programs, and stakeholders continually seek evidence-based information based on the results of these initiatives. This study addresses this need, aiming to provide nuanced perspectives that inform educators, administrators, and policymakers about the most effective strategies to foster the professional growth of teaching professionals (Early et al., 2017). While pedagogical competencies are indisputably crucial to teaching communication competencies, experts identify two complementary factors that can help clinical educators identify and capitalize on relevant teaching opportunities in clinical practice: the ability to discern this, which is essential to teaching and the ability to recognize competencies, poor performance, or omission. Understand all communication competencies that are appropriate or inappropriate in various contexts and be able to identify these competencies in student-patient interactions as essential elements of effective clinical teaching. This is why teacher development programs focus on communication skills training and often encourage teachers to participate in such training. This participation will help them identify and improve their communication skills in various clinical settings. Additionally, the ability of supervisors to provide constructive and interactive feedback to students on using effective and ineffective communication skills is another essential component (Cebrián & Junyent, 2015).

Significance

In the ever-evolving scenery of education, the proposed study on the impact of training programs on teaching performance assumes paramount significance. With educators at the forefront of shaping the intellectual and emotional development of the next generation, understanding and optimizing the efficacy of training initiatives becomes imperative. This research promises to unlock insights that can revolutionize teaching practices, not only for individual educators but also for entire educational institutions. By identifying the most effective training methodologies, the study aims to empower educators to navigate the complexities of modern classrooms with enhanced pedagogical skills. Policymakers and administrators will benefit from evidence-based recommendations, facilitating informed decisions in designing and implementing training programs. Furthermore, the study's potential to guide resource allocation and foster a culture of continuous improvement underscores its practical relevance. As educational systems strive for global competitiveness, the findings of this research can contribute to positioning institutions as hubs of excellence, attracting talent, and fostering inclusivity.

Objectives

- To explore standard training methodologies employed in education.
- To highlight effective strategies for integrating training into educational institutions.

Research Questions

- What types of training programs are prevalent in education?
- How do these training programs impact teaching performance?
- Are there specific methodologies or approaches that prove more effective?
- What challenges are associated with implementing training in educational institutions?

Review of Literature

Teachers, who are recognized as central educational reform figures, must continue adapting to changes. Therefore, it is imperative to establish a comprehensive teacher professional development system as an ongoing process. This system should cover various areas, including theoretical studies, practical applications, internship experiences, and the implementation of systems for monitoring and evaluating student work. However, this article focuses specifically on these last two aspects. According to the authors, professional development aims to improve existing practices rather than achieve higher qualifications. In contrast, professional development aimed at enhancing qualifications and careers often takes an institutional form, such as participation in postgraduate studies (Bellibas & Gumus, 2016). Teaching self-efficacy plays an important role in teachers' behavior in the classroom. Researchers define *self-efficacy* as an individual's perceived ability to take actions that effectively lead to achieving a specific goal. Teachers who demonstrate high teaching efficacy often set ambitious goals, show less fear of failure and demonstrate innovation by adopting new strategies when faced with challenges. This self-efficacy encompasses two main components: self-efficacy in science teaching, which refers to the belief in one's ability to perform teaching tasks, and outcome expectancy, which involves the belief that executing these tasks will produce results. Favorable (Gore et al., 2017). Self-efficacy is generally considered domain- and context-specific, implying that individuals may exhibit different self-efficacy beliefs based on other domains or situations. For example, teachers may demonstrate varying confidence levels in their self-efficacy across subjects. Therefore, a teacher who demonstrates high self-efficacy in teaching mathematics will not necessarily indicate equivalent self-efficacy in teaching science (Herro & Quigley, 2017).

In teacher education, a crucial question is how to prepare future teachers for science teaching effectively. What are the most effective approaches to improving preservice teachers' self-efficacy in teacher education programs? Research in science education indicates that many factors related to science courses promote self-efficacy in science teaching. This includes experiences in scientific methods courses as well as scientific content courses. The distinction between scientific methods and content courses lies in their respective orientations. Scientific methods courses aim to equip future teachers with essential skills for teaching science. This includes teaching strategies relevant to science education, methods for assessing students' scientific knowledge, and techniques for implementing effective classroom management. On the other hand, courses with scientific content aim to train future teachers in the contents of science itself, delving into various concepts, theories, and scientific principles (Makopoulou et al., 2021).

Avidov-Ungar (2016) defines *professional development* as any educational experience relevant to a professional's work. Professionals from various fields participate in professional development to acquire and apply new skills and knowledge to improve their performance. In education, research highlights the substantial impact of school leadership and quality of teaching on student achievement. School leaders continually strive to introduce and implement the most effective educational practices, and professional development serves as a primary strategy for raising teacher performance levels within school systems. In the literature, teacher professional development encompasses formal and informal learning activities designed by teachers to improve knowledge, skills, competencies, motivation, self-efficacy, and professional skills. Fischer et al. (2018) characterized formal teacher professional development as structured learning environments facilitated by experts to help teachers hone their skills, including training courses, workshops, and conferences.

On the other hand, informal professional development of teachers consists of activities without a specific program or mandatory environment. These informal activities involve individual efforts by teachers, such as reading colleagues' stories and classroom observations,

and participating in collaborative efforts, such as teacher networks, blogs, and discussion groups. Empirical studies suggest that beginning teachers often rely on observations and informal discussions with peers to refine their teaching practices. In contrast, experienced teachers usually participate in formal meetings and structured professional development activities to further improve their skills and knowledge.

Mullet et al. (2011) pointed out that early career teachers often face challenges related to classroom management and practical teaching approaches. These problems can be resolved through mentoring, peer observation, and other informal, practical knowledge-sharing methods. In contrast, as teachers move into the middle phase of their careers, they seek more formal learning opportunities. Mid-career teachers typically focus on acquiring professional knowledge in subject content, pedagogy, teaching methods, and performance standards through conferences, workshops, and training courses. Teachers generally show different preferences regarding learning opportunities throughout their professional careers.

Oke and Fernandes (2020) mentioned that early career teachers often face challenges related to classroom running and active teaching tactics. In contrast, as teachers enter their careers' middle phase, they seek more formal learning opportunities. Mid-career teachers often prioritize acquiring professional knowledge in various areas, such as subject content, pedagogy, teaching methods, and performance standards. They usually participate in activities such as conferences, workshops, and training courses to develop their knowledge further. Teachers generally show different preferences for learning opportunities throughout their professional careers, with mid-career teachers emphasizing improving their skills and expertise in key subject areas for teaching practice. Bressman et al. (2011) supported that distinguished tailoring professional development grounded on their level of knowledge and information can have significant benefits. Allowing teachers to choose the type of training they need can improve their self-efficacy and teaching methods. Research in this area suggests that providing differentiated and personalized support to meet the training needs of teachers can strengthen their professional commitment. By providing customized training options, educators are more likely to feel empowered and motivated to engage in professional development activities that align with their specific needs and goals. This approach fosters a sense of ownership over your learning process and can ultimately lead to better teaching practices and student outcomes.

Career progression is defined by Suherman and Wathoni (2022) as the training systems that often characterize career progression in education. It involves changes in job functions that can lead to increased status, responsibilities, and sometimes a pay increase. However, the teaching profession generally offers a relatively flat career path. This lack of clear career paths and advancement opportunities can hinder the recruitment and retention of highly qualified and motivated teachers. Without opportunities for continuous teaching, they may seek career advancement outside the classroom, moving into educational management positions to realize their career aspirations and maintain their motivation in their teaching practice (Bragg et al., 2021).

King and Boyatt's (2015) study further supports the relationship between teacher professional development and career advancement, as respondents associated teacher professional development with promotion. Teachers actively participating in teacher professional development programs often see positive effects on their career progression, promotion opportunities, retention rates, and overall commitment to their profession. This framework suggests that teacher professional development interventions can impact various outcomes related to career progression, including increased professional knowledge and content, increased job satisfaction, and improved classroom practices (Coldwell, 2017).

According to Desimone and Pak's (2017) study, participating in professional development can positively impact teachers' commitment to their profession and their intention to remain

in the field. They emphasized that teaching is emotionally demanding and requires ongoing support and access to learning opportunities to maintain teacher engagement over time. Dogan et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of both the quality of teachers' professional development and the issue of professional stagnation in teachers' commitment to their profession. Their research affirmed that access to knowledge and skill development opportunities is crucial to teachers' professional engagement. They concluded that teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities are essential to their professional commitment.

Margot and Kettler (2019) highlighted that teacher professional development is a self-regulated process encompassing emotions and cognition. Its goal is to improve teachers' knowledge, practices, self-efficacy, and commitment to their profession. In a study by Jennings et al. (2017), veteran teachers, defined as those with significant experience, found that their commitment, resilience, and effectiveness in the profession were closely related to receiving sufficient academic support and benefiting from teacher retention efforts.

Methodology

The research used a qualitative approach to investigate teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of professional development programs in improving the quality of teaching. Using purposive sampling, the study involved five secondary school teachers selected from various schools in the Layyah district. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, while thematic analysis was used to identify trends and themes in the collected data.

Population and Sample

The study included a sample of ten secondary school teachers chosen for their experience and knowledge in leading school improvement initiatives at the secondary level. Through purposive sampling, participants were selected based on their ability to provide detailed information about the research topic. The sample was composed of teachers from different schools in the same district, which ensured that diverse perspectives were represented.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected participants. These interviews were meticulously designed to delve into participants' experiences, perspectives, and strategies regarding high school improvement. The open-ended questions allowed participants to express their ideas and points of view freely. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded, and transcribed verbatim to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the data.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews were subjected to thematic analysis, which focused on identifying important themes and patterns. This process involved coding and categorizing data to reveal critical insights. By examining the data, commonalities, and divergences in participants' experiences and perspectives regarding high school improvement were identified and analyzed.

Results/Interpretation

Thematic analysis of interviews with ten secondary school teachers in Layyah district yielded exciting results on the impact of training programs on teacher performance. Participants unanimously reported positive results resulting from their participation in various training initiatives.

(MQ) What types of training programs are prevalent in the field of education?

How would you describe the prevailing trends in education-related training programs?

The prevailing trends in education-related training programs reflect a shift towards personalized and flexible learning experiences, incorporating online and blended learning approaches. There is a growing emphasis on social and emotional learning (SEL) and professional development topics like diversity, equity, and inclusion. Overall, the focus is on creating dynamic and inclusive training experiences to meet students' diverse needs effectively (Participant 4).

(MQ) How do these training programs impact teaching performance?

In your experience, how do prevalent training programs in education directly influence teaching performance?

Education training programs significantly impact teaching performance by offering educators opportunities to enhance pedagogical skills, integrate innovative methods, and stay updated on best practices. Participation leads to improved instructional techniques, classroom management, and student outcomes, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration (Participant 10).

How do training programs affect teaching performance?

Training programs positively influence teaching performance by equipping educators with improved pedagogical skills, innovative teaching methods, and updated best practices. Participation leads to enhanced instructional techniques, classroom management, and student outcomes. Moreover, these programs foster a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration among educators, supporting ongoing professional growth (Participant 5).

(MQ) Are there specific methodologies or approaches that prove more effective?

How have training programs shaped and improved your teaching performance?

Training programs have significantly shaped and improved my teaching performance by providing valuable insights, pedagogical strategies, and resources that I have applied directly in my classroom. These experiences have enhanced my instruction, classroom management, and understanding of student needs, leading to more engaging and effective teaching practices. Participating in training programs has been instrumental in continuously improving my teaching and benefiting student learning outcomes (Participant 2).

In your experience, what specific positive changes have you observed in your teaching due to participating in training programs?

Participating in training programs has resulted in several positive changes in my teaching practice. These include enhanced pedagogical strategies, improved classroom management, integration of technology, increased collaboration among educators, and a greater focus on student engagement. These changes have contributed to my growth as an educator, leading to more effective teaching methods and improved student outcomes (Participant 3).

(MQ) What are the challenges associated with implementing training in educational institutions?

Can you share a specific instance or project where you faced challenges introducing training initiatives in an educational setting?

I faced challenges introducing a professional development program focused on technology integration for teachers. Resistance stemmed from educators' concerns about their familiarity with technology and logistical issues such as scheduling conflicts. To address this, I organized tailored workshops, encouraged peer collaboration, and provided ongoing support. Over time, resistance lessened as teachers saw the positive impact of technology on student learning. Through proactive efforts and support, we successfully implemented the training initiative and improved technology integration in our school (Participant 7).

From your perspective, what are the primary challenges often encountered when implementing training programs in educational institutions?

The primary challenges encountered when implementing training programs in educational institutions include resistance to change, time constraints, limited resources, lack of buy-in, inadequate support systems, and diverse learning needs. Overcoming these challenges requires clear communication, adequate resources, ongoing support, and a commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement within the institution (Participant 5).

Table 1: Themes and their description

Sr. No.	Themes	Description
1	Training Programs	Enhanced Pedagogical Strategies Improved Classroom Management Integration of Technology Increased Collaboration Among Educators
2	Implementing Training	Resistance to Change Time Constraints Limited Resources Lack of Buy-In from Educators or Leadership
3	Resulting from Training	Personalized Learning Experiences Diversified Instructional Approaches Improved Classroom Environments Enhanced Student Outcomes
4	Success Factors in Implementing Training	Clear Communication Strong Leadership Support Adequate Allocation of Resources Ongoing Support Mechanisms Commitment to Continuous Improvement

There are some full descriptions of the above show table sub themes, which drive from the different questions of interviews. Researchers simplify the description of all the themes according to their questions.

Training Programs

Enhanced Pedagogical Strategies

Innovative teaching methods focused on improving student learning outcomes through personalized and engaging instruction.

Improved Classroom Management

Practical strategies to create a positive learning environment by establishing clear expectations and routines and fostering positive student behavior.

Integration of Technology

Purposeful use of digital tools and resources to enhance instruction, facilitate communication, and provide interactive learning experiences.

Increased Collaboration Among Teachers

Cultivating teamwork and professional learning communities to share best practices, collaborate on lesson planning, and support each other's professional growth.

Implementing Training

Resistance to Change

Reluctance or opposition to adopting new practices often stems from fear, doubt, or attachment to existing methods.

Time Constraints

There is limited time for educators to engage in Training or implement new initiatives due to busy schedules and competing responsibilities.

Limited Resources

Constraints on financial, material, or human resources within an institution hinder the implementation of training programs or access to necessary resources.

Lack of Buy-In from Educators or Leadership

The absence of support or endorsement from educators or leadership impacts motivation, resource allocation, and successful implementation of initiatives.

Resulting from Training

Personalized Learning Experiences

I tailor instruction to meet individual student needs, interests, and learning styles, fostering autonomy and self-directed learning.

Diversified Instructional Approaches

Utilizing various teaching methods and strategies to engage students, accommodate diverse learning styles, and provide multiple pathways to learning.

Improved Classroom Environments

Creating a positive, supportive, and inclusive learning environment promotes student engagement, motivation, and academic success through clear expectations and a sense of belonging.

Enhanced Student Outcomes

Positive academic, social, and emotional growth and achievement among students resulted from effective teaching and learning experiences, leading to improved mastery of content and increased motivation.

Success Factors in Implementing Training**Clear Communication**

Effective and transparent communication ensures all stakeholders understand goals, expectations, and processes, fostering clarity and alignment.

Strong Leadership Support

Leadership that champions initiatives provides guidance and allocates resources, demonstrating a commitment to success, empowering staff, and fostering a supportive environment.

Adequate Allocation of Resources

Sufficient provision of financial, material, and human resources enables the effective implementation and sustainability of initiatives, supporting quality education.

Ongoing Support Mechanisms

Establishing structures and processes for continuous support, mentoring, and professional development sustains momentum and fosters growth and improvement.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

A culture that values reflection, feedback, and adaptation promotes ongoing learning and growth, driving innovation and excellence in education.

Conclusion

Based on the thematic analysis and conclusions drawn from the data, recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of training programs within educational institutions. First and foremost, fostering a culture of continuous learning is essential. This involves encouraging educators to engage actively in ongoing professional development opportunities and cultivating an environment that values learning and growth. Additionally, providing comprehensive support is crucial. Educational institutions should ensure that educators have access to adequate resources, including time, funding, and Training programs, to successfully implement new strategies and initiatives. Clear communication channels are imperative to provide educators with transparent guidance, expectations, and feedback throughout implementation.

Moreover, leadership support plays a pivotal role. School leaders should advocate for professional development, allocate resources effectively, and provide encouragement and recognition for educators' efforts. Promoting collaboration and sharing of best practices among educators is also essential. Establishing professional learning communities, mentorship programs, and platforms for knowledge exchange can facilitate collaboration and enhance teaching effectiveness. Addressing challenges and barriers such as resistance to change, time constraints, and limited resources is critical. Educational institutions should provide targeted support and resources to overcome these barriers and ensure successful implementation. Embracing technology integration is another key recommendation. Investing in technology infrastructure and providing Training and support for educators to integrate technology into their teaching practices effectively can enhance instruction and personalize student learning experiences. Finally, monitoring and evaluating the impact of training

programs is essential for continuous improvement. Collecting feedback from educators and students, analyzing data, and adjusting strategies as needed can help ensure the effectiveness of training initiatives in enhancing teaching performance and student success.

Recommendations

A holistic strategy is indispensable to harnessing the potential of the training program. This approach establishes a culture that champions ongoing learning and professional development among educators. This entails fostering an environment where educators are encouraged to seek out and engage in diverse learning opportunities tailored to their needs and interests. Clear and transparent communication channels, facilitated by leadership, are vital in providing educators with the guidance, expectations, and feedback necessary for their growth. Additionally, comprehensive support mechanisms must be in place to ensure educators have access to the material and temporal resources required for the successful implementation of training initiatives. This includes dedicated time for training sessions, funding for professional development activities, and access to relevant instructional materials and technologies.

Furthermore, fostering collaboration among educators is critical to leveraging collective knowledge and expertise. Establishing platforms for sharing best practices, facilitating mentorship programs, and fostering communities of practice can promote collaboration and mutual support. Embracing technology integration is another critical aspect, enabling educators to leverage digital tools and resources to enhance instruction and personalize student learning experiences. Addressing challenges and barriers, such as resistance to change and limited resources, requires proactive measures and targeted support strategies. Finally, continuous monitoring and evaluation of the impact of training programs are essential for gauging effectiveness and informing future improvements. By adopting this comprehensive approach, educational institutions can empower educators, enhance teaching performance, and improve student outcomes.

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