

University Principals' and Directors' Perceptions of Faculty Professional Development Needs: A Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract

Effective leadership and management are indispensable for creating high-quality environments in educational institutions. They support and motivate faculty, ensure efficient teaching and learning, and foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. This way, effective management enhances the institution's overall academic performance and reputation. This qualitative study aimed to investigate the perception of university directors and principals regarding the need for professional development for faculty members. A total of seven directors and principals from different divisions and campuses of the University of Education, Lahore, were selected as a sample for the study using a purposive sampling technique. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain in-depth information from the directors and principals. The interviews were meticulously transcribed verbatim and subsequently translated into English. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data after transcription. Researchers explored that principals and directors perceived professional development needs for the faculty in three significant domains including research-related professional development needs, teaching-related professional development needs, and collaboration-related professional development needs. The fulfillment of these needs can play an essential role in improving the ranking of the university as well as addressing the challenges of the 21st century. The university administration can address these needs by offering relevant PD opportunities and support to the faculty so they can engage themselves in research-related activities and seek collaboration to promote a research-oriented culture within the university.

Keywords: Professional Development Needs, Faculty Members, Principals/Directors Perception, Qualitative Analysis.

Introduction

Internationally, universities are challenged by the fast-changing needs of society, technological advancement, and globalization (Anane & Kuranchie, 2022; Efu, 2020; Jaramillo-Baquerizo et al., 2019). The high participation rate of students at the university level has increased class size and a more considerable diversity of learners in terms of gender, experience, socioeconomic status, and culture, increasing the pressures on the university administration to prioritise the continuous professional development of teachers to address these challenges. In addition, university teachers are supposed to focus on constant learning, which is one of the most effective means of determining an individual's ability to meet the present and future demands of the workplace. PD is considered essential for teachers because it strengthens teachers, modernises their profession, and refreshes their knowledge so they can confront

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the various problems and complexities of a changing world (Bayram & Canaran, 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Macfarlane, 2020). Thus, this ongoing learning can facilitate teachers to generate innovative ideas to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Jaramillo-Baquerizo et al., 2019; MacPhail & O'Sullivan, 2019; Popova et al., 2022).

Professional development is offered to teachers in different ways within the basic framework of their educational responsibilities (Macfarlane, 2020; Gyamfi et al., 2023; Tonga et al., 2019). Consequently, professional development may alter teachers' beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and sentiments that guide their plans and actions. The professional development programmes aim to improve instructors' teaching methods, maximise the teaching and learning process, and enhance the research skills of teachers (Al-Shammakhi, 2020; Gumanová & Šukolová, 2022; Maaranen et al., 2020; Tran, 2016). Moreover, it can also help teachers deal with 21st-century learners who are more diverse than ever. Professional development may alter teachers' conventional curriculum, instruction, and evaluation viewpoints. They can evaluate their work and adjust their methodology to accommodate students from diverse backgrounds (Bayram & Canaran, 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Doeur, 2022; Kennedy, 2014; Macfarlane, 2020). Thus, effective professional development programmes assist faculty in acquiring and maintaining essential knowledge and skills (Eliahoo, 2017).

According to the literature, institutions that place a high priority on the professional development of educators at all levels are consistently correlated with their institutions' high rankings (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Doeur, 2022; Gumanová & Šukolová, 2022). Considering the critical role of professional development, several studies have identified teachers' professional development as a primary predictor of positive student results. (Glackin, 2016; McEvoy et al., 2019). According to Tonga et al. (2019), countries that regularly carry out successful professional development programmes have higher educational attainment and higher standards for professional development. Bayram and Canaran (2020), and Macfarlane (2020) contend that teachers' experiences regarding the relevance of professional development activities must be taken into account while designing new programmes. According to Al-Shammakhi (2020), professional development must be thoughtfully designed to meet the contextual needs of the participating teachers and incorporate integrated monitoring and sustainability aspects to have a meaningful impact.

The way the institute views and uses professional development programmes and activities determines its performance. It is, therefore, inextricably linked to institutional reality (Hadar & Brody, 2018; Tregubova, 2021; Popova et al., 2022). Consequently, it is vital to comprehend teachers' professional development needs in the professional development planning process (Al-Shammakhi, 2020; Gumanová & Šukolová, 2022; Polskaya, 2022). Keeping in view the significance of professional development, institutions of higher education, particularly universities, encourage their faculty to participate in professional development activities to increase their job performance (Fohlin et al., 2021; Gyamfi et al., 2023; MacPhail & O'Sullivan, 2019).

The public sector universities in Pakistan play a vital role in the professional development of teachers. These universities are governed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) (Dilshad et al., 2019; Ilyas & Zamir, 2020; Subhani et al., 2017). HEC and the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) have taken several initiatives to uplift university teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The HEC directs the university authorities to implement the planned/ tailored programmes for uplifting the teachers' skills through the Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC) established at the universities. Therefore, the administration of the institution plans events for the professional development of teachers, such as study trips, doctoral scholarships, participation at conferences, symposiums, workshops, webinars, and teacher exchange programmes.

The university faculty avails opportunities for professional development from time to time, which are

organised by the university, HEC, or Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC). HEC deals with national and international programmes for the development of university teachers. In Pakistan, little research has been conducted on teachers' professional development, and limited studies are available at all levels (i.e., Elementary, Secondary, Higher Secondary, and Higher Education) (Dilshad et al., 2019; Khan & Afridi, 2017).

Even though professional development has been regarded as a crucial part of faculty members' career progression, an adequate identification of the distinctive professional development needs of faculty members is an important task. It can facilitate to improvement of the capacities of faculty for teaching and research. Moreover, faculty members at various career phases and with a range of qualifications and disciplines may need different kinds of professional development opportunities. Inadequate analysis of tailored opportunities may undermine the effectiveness of professional development activities (Anane & Kuranchie, 2022; Kálmán et al., 2020; Polskaya, 2022).

Hence, the present study was designed to analyse the professional development needs of faculty from the perspective of principals and directors working at the University of Education, Lahore. The University of Education Lahore was established as a public-sector University in 2002; as a newly established university, teachers' professional development was considered essential to address the quality teaching, learning, and research standards. It was also realised that there was a need for a formal setup in the university that could deal with professional development activities regularly to improve the quality of teachers, teaching, and research.

University principals and directors are more focused on identifying and offering appropriate professional development opportunities for faculty, taking into account a careful need analysis and the limitations of financial and personnel resources. Therefore, this study aims to understand managers' views on faculty members' current professional development needs. The study's results might help to explore the perspective of principals and directors of the university about the professional development needs of the faculty. They can provide an insight into the mechanism and process they follow to determine these needs. The study's results might be beneficial for the administration to identify and implement targeted strategies and policies that promote a welcoming and practical environment for faculty members' development and progression in various disciplines.

Review of Related Literature

Faculty professional development is crucial for upholding exemplary quality in teaching and research within higher education institutions. It encompasses various activities to improve faculty members' knowledge, abilities, and skills (Bayram & Canaran, 2020; Gyamfi et al., 2023). The activities encompass workshops, seminars, conferences, advanced degree programmes, and induction training (Doeur, 2022; Popova et al., 2022). The main goal of professional development is to ensure that faculty members stay abreast of the most current teaching approaches, technological developments, and research advancements. This, in turn, enhances student achievement and institutional performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Doeur, 2022; Richter & Richter, 2024).

The theoretical underpinnings of professional development emphasise the intricate and diverse nature of educational settings and the different needs of teachers. Guskey (2002) highlighted a model that focuses on the influence of professional development on teachers' beliefs and attitudes. This model suggests that good PD significantly modifies teaching methods and student outcomes. Desimone (2009) presented an essential conceptual framework for professional development, which encompasses critical elements such as emphasising specific subject matter, engaging in active learning, maintaining consistency, ensuring an adequate duration, and promoting collaborative engagement. It has been shown that these components significantly increase the effectiveness of professional development programmes (Darling-Hammond et

al., 2017; Doeur, 2022).

Extensive research has been conducted on the organisation and implementation of professional development programmes in developed nations, leading to a substantial body of data supporting the most effective approaches. Professional development is considered integral to the United States, the UK, and Australia's educational systems (Fohlin et al., 2021; Macfarlane, 2020). The research conducted by Garet et al. (2016) highlighted that professional development programmes that concentrate on specific subject areas, offer opportunities for engaged learning, and encourage collective engagement are the most effective at enhancing teaching practices. A longitudinal study conducted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) reveals that consistent and rigorous professional development is essential to improve teacher-teaching methods and student performance substantially. Moreover, Sánchez-Tarazaga et al. (2024) found that the absence of formal induction programmes and mentorship for new faculty members was a notable deficiency that inhibited the overall effectiveness of professional development programmes for faculty members. It implies that the absence of an inadequate professional development structure can affect the quality of the teaching and learning process.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan has played a crucial role in encouraging professional development for faculty members. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has implemented several programmes, such as providing financial support for advanced degrees, offering doctoral research grants, and establishing teaching excellence centers. Nevertheless, executing these projects frequently encounters difficulties such as constrained economic resources, insufficient infrastructure, and inconsistent implementation (Dilshad et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2021). A study finding by Nawab (2020) and Subhani et al. (2017) emphasised the necessity for well-organised and enduring professional development programmes in Pakistan.

The perspectives of principals and directors on the need for faculty professional development are crucial for the development and execution of effective programmes. Educational managers have a vital role in influencing the professional development environment by identifying the unique needs of faculty members and pushing for the allocation of resources and support. According to Fullan's (2016) research, successful leadership entails fostering a culture of ongoing learning and offering the required assistance for faculty members to participate in professional development activities. Leithwood et al. (2021) revealed in their study that leadership approaches that fostered collaboration, offered constructive feedback, and stimulated creativity were linked to increased faculty engagement in professional development activities and enhanced teaching results. This emphasises the significance of leadership in creating an ideal environment for professional development.

Several practical approaches for professional development have been established through research, which can effectively meet the demands of faculty members. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) highlight the significance of professional development programmes that prioritise content, integrate active learning, and are consistently maintained. These programmes can lead to substantial modifications in instructional methodologies and enhancements in student performance. Collaboration is a crucial component of effective professional development. Vangrieken et al. (2017) explored that deeper learning and long-lasting changes in instructional practices were the outcomes of collaborative professional development, which involved faculty members working together to address problems and share efficient strategies. A similar finding was shown by Desimone and Garet (2015), who observed that collective engagement in professional development strengthened its effectiveness by cultivating a feeling of community and shared purpose among faculty members.

Furthermore, the utilisation of technology in professional development has become increasingly prominent in recent years. Online platforms and digital tools offer convenient and easily accessible opportunities for faculty development. Macfarlane (2020) revealed in his study that technology usage

improved faculty members' professional skills. Additionally, it enhanced the efficacy of professional development activities, encouraged collaboration among teachers, and offered personalised learning opportunities.

Research Questions

The following was the research of this study:

1. What are the perspectives of the Principals and Directors of the University of Education about the professional development needs of the faculty members?

Methods and Material

The study utilised a qualitative research design that employed a phenomenological approach to investigate the perspectives and experiences of directors and principals regarding the professional development needs of faculty members working at the University of Education, Lahore. Phenomenological research design is precious for studying intricate occurrences and experiences to gain an extensive understanding of the subjective experiences that participants share (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Researchers obtained the data from seven directors and principals serving at different campuses and divisions of the University of Education, Lahore. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants. This technique entails selecting participants who have directly encountered phenomena, such as the particular needs of faculty members in the context of professional development (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). In addition, all the participants in the study had extensive expertise in offering professional development opportunities at the university and understanding the needs of faculty members.

Researchers reached out to the participants and got their consent to take part in the study. They conducted interviews with the participants at their preferred places and scheduled times, using a semi-structured interview guide to collect data. The guide was developed using specific themes and subjects that were identified throughout the literature review. The interview questions were intended to elicit candid discussions from participants, allowing them to share their experiences and provide comprehensive answers. The data were captured with an audio recording device and a cell phone, with the explicit permission of the directors and principals.

The interview data were transcribed precisely as spoken and were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. This approach facilitated the recognition and investigation of themes and patterns within the data. The analysis entailed a seamless progression of data immersion, coding, and theme development. The study followed an iterative procedure, with the refinement and development of themes occurring during the interviews (Dibley et al., 2020). The researchers identified significant themes and patterns in the data that pertained to the directors' and principals' perspectives on the professional development needs of faculty members. Three major themes emerged, including research-related professional development needs, teaching-related professional development needs, and collaboration-related professional development needs.

Findings

The findings from the data are presented below under these three themes.

1. Research-Related Professional Development Needs

Research-related professional development needs emerged as the first central theme. The directors and principals identified research activity as one of the teacher's most influential professional learning needs. All the principals/directors considered article writing and publication, writing research projects or proposal and their execution, developing research tools, learning data analysis techniques and related

software, addressing ethical concerns in research, and pursuing a Ph.D. for research purposes as primary research-related needs of the faculty.

Most of the directors and principals (P1, P3, P5, and P6) identified research-related needs as one of the most essential professional learning needs for faculty members. They stated that research culture is indispensable for shifting the university's leading position. Therefore, teachers must publish and disseminate relevant research. Teachers must understand how to produce original publications; for this purpose, they need training in writing and publishing relevant research. These research studies can assist teachers, students, and institutions.

One director mentioned that:

Faculty members must engage in research activities as part of their professional learning requirements. Research papers play a major role in the academic promotion of teachers, particularly when it comes to university rankings that assess institutions on a national and international level (P3).

Some principals and directors of the divisions and campuses of the university (P2, P3, P4, and P7) acknowledged research activity as one of the maximum imperative professional learning needs for faculty members because their research abilities are essential in determining their career advancement and, consequently, their elevated professional titles. While recognising research paper writing as an important need, they also mentioned additional demands related to research, such as participation in research-related professional development activities including research projects, developing research tools, and usage of data analysis software. Furthermore, pursuing the Ph.D. programmes for research purposes was considered essential professional development of university faculty members.

One principal highlighted the need for participation in research-related professional development activities for faculty members in the following manner:

Publishing in research journals and completing research projects can provide teachers with a feeling of achievement by enhancing their professional confidence and competence (P7).

One director specified research-related needs in the following way:

Faculty members are required to engage in research-related activities, such as authoring articles, publishing papers, delivering presentations at conferences, and conducting data analysis. The publication is unquestionably the most valuable outcome (P7).

One of the Principals voiced his opinion.

Ph.D. faculty members need peer-reviewed publications to share information. Furthermore, Ph.D. faculty members who join the teaching profession with a doctorate must conduct research activities on campus. In contrast, faculty members who joined the teaching profession without a doctoral degree need opportunities to pursue a Ph.D (P5).

One of the Principals expressed his thoughts on the importance of collaboration in the following words:

Working together on a research project within one's department is typically more convenient. Faculty members must participate in collaborative research efforts within and outside the department (P3).

2. Teaching Related Professional Development Needs

Teaching-related professional development needs emerged as the second major theme. Sub-themes emerged as content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, assessment techniques, curriculum knowledge, mentoring, peer coaching, networking, technology-related training, communication skills, induction, refresher courses, training, workshops, seminars, webinars and conferences for up-gradation of knowledge. The directors and principals of divisions and campuses showed an agreement regarding the

engagement of faculty members in professional development activities related to teaching.

3. Content Knowledge

Most principals and directors (P1, P3, P6, and P7) believe that getting a doctorate or advanced education is essential for faculty members' professional development since it enables them to keep their content knowledge up-to-date. According to them, some faculty members need much more competencies during the job. Their professional development must be continuous: they must continue enhancing their subject-matter expertise by engaging in professional development activities.

One of the directors expressed his views:

Professional development updates teachers' content knowledge while teaching current trends in a field. I believe that professional development is essential, particularly for upgrading their teaching (P1).

Professional development was considered an important tool for teachers' awareness of the most recent advancements and up-to-date content knowledge in their field. This thing can help them bridge the knowledge gaps that arise intentionally or unintentionally. One of the principals expressed his views:

It is pertinent because educators must develop their content knowledge abilities. It's critical to stay current with advancements in subject matter and apply them to teaching in the classroom (P2).

(i) Pedagogy/Pedagogical Knowledge

The majority of directors and principals (P1, P3, P4, and P6) expressed that teachers needed to learn effective methods that they could use to transmit their knowledge to the learners in an effective manner.

This view was expressed by a principal as:

Teachers need to obtain knowledge of the various outstanding pedagogical approaches that can be implemented at the university level to maximise the student's performance (P4).

One principal stated that:

I think the majority of teachers encounter challenges in determining whether or not their pupils are meeting their learning objectives. They also have difficulties in using effective strategies to motivate students to study. Consequently, teachers look for pedagogical techniques that would assist them in meeting the needs of students (P6).

In contrast to the above opinion, one director expressed that:

Teachers need no more pedagogical content knowledge because they already learned those pedagogical skills in their higher degrees. I felt that faculty from the Education discipline are more equipped with pedagogical content knowledge than other faculty members from different disciplines (P1).

(ii) Communication Skills

Some principals and directors (P2, P3, P4, and P7) expressed that English is an international language through which a large volume of knowledge is transmitted. The English language is used as a medium of instruction in higher education institutions in Pakistan. Most of the courses at the university level are offered in English language. Therefore, teachers must have a good grasp of the second language due to its worldwide importance. Teachers must try to impart knowledge using this language rather than relying only on their native tongue. Therefore, teachers' English language communication skills should be improved through proper training where needed. Faculty members should be provided sufficient training to master the art of communication in the English language effectively on national and international levels.

One of the directors expressed;

It is evident that student-teacher interaction is essential and can play a pivotal role in better teaching-learning process. Our university has declared English as the medium of instruction for students. Therefore, there is a need for teachers to communicate in the English language in a better way(P2).

(iii) Assessment Techniques

The majority of principals and directors (P1, P3, P5, and P7) highlighted the domain of assessment as an important professional learning need of faculty members. They explained their view by mentioning that university teachers are responsible for designing classroom tests. They are expected to develop effective, consistent, and fair tests. They need to improve the structure of tests in their relevant fields while adhering to the rules and principles of assessment. They further expressed that teachers' knowledge and understanding of the selection of each test item is very important to get the desired results. Therefore, teachers should improve their test development skills to evaluate students' learning objectively. Additionally, they need to make sure that their pedagogical approaches are aligned with learning objectives and consider the higher- and lower-order thinking components outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy. This need was specified as follows:

One principal stated,

Teachers must participate in professional development programmes that teach them how to design quality test questions and items, evaluate student work, and assign grades (P5).

One principal showed his concern by stating:

Teachers need professional development related to educational assessment to be more knowledgeable and objective when they grade students (P6).

Some principals and directors (P1, P4, P5, and P7) held the opinion that faculty members needed to be trained in a variety of assessment techniques. Their exam items need to match the learning objectives. It is probably the most significant prerequisite for our educators.

(iv) Course Development

University directors and principals (P1, P3, P5, and P6), indicated course development as an important professional need of faculty. They perceived that an understanding of course development can help teachers highlight the most crucial concepts, modify the activities, and exclude material that is not pertinent to the learning objectives of the students. Teachers must therefore improve their knowledge of course development through professional development. They added that instructors should create and plan their courses utilising a variety of resources, such as the internet platform, or modify their current course outlines by adding or removing content to better meet the needs of their students.

One of the principals stated the viewpoint as

The faculty needs training on designing and modifying course outlines and instructional plans and using alternate sources to augment the content (P5).

Moreover, principals and directors stated that teachers need content and materials adaptability training to overcome situational factors, such as overcrowded classrooms and individual differences.

(v) Use of Technology in Teaching and Learning

Most directors and principals (P1, P3, P5, and P7) desired teachers to become more familiar with new technology. They considered ICT training courses and workshops for faculty as the most important need. They mentioned that the importance of instructional technologies has grown as a result of COVID-19. The directors and principals reported that when teachers switched off from physical teaching-learning to

blended learning, this was an area where they believed training must be given. Online learning has increased in all educational institutions globally, so there is a need to provide digital training regarding different instructional tools and software like Google Meet, zoom, and other effective teaching-learning tools. One of the principals stated:

Advanced knowledge and skills related to ICT were deemed essential for teachers' professional development at the age of COVID-19. Due to COVID-19, everything has changed. There is a shift in the teaching-learning process. There is a great need for teachers to learn about technology. ICT-related training is also required for teachers to perform better now these days. (P1)

They further added that the knowledge of different software in IT is also essential. Teachers' and students' needs are changing with time, so it is deemed important for teachers to know how to develop and design different software. The directors of science, information technology, and administrative sciences (P7) desired teachers to use software for research. If purchased, these are quite expensive. They cannot conduct research without sophisticated software. Therefore, training is required to design software independently.

(vi) Induction

Most directors and principals (P1, P3, P4, and P6) expressed the need for faculty members regarding induction. Induction, also known as orientation, is typically provided to teachers when hired for the first time or transferred from another setting. The directors and principals reported that induction is critical to faculty members' professional development because it facilitates new colleagues to feel comfortable and not thrown into the deep end immediately. They further stated that an orientation programme for new and experienced faculty members (promoted to new managerial positions, including coordinators and heads of departments) would be typically held to familiarise them with the various aspects of the new environment, including regulations, curriculum, assessment, the learning process, and pedagogical strategies. However, principals highlighted the current situation by mentioning that induction is not provided to new teachers now. He stated:

I am concerned that not all new hires have been provided induction training. I felt that all new faculty members need to receive training or at least an orientation on university regulations and strategies to solve class-related issues (P5).

(vii) Mentoring

Most directors and principals (P1, P2, P3, and P6) stressed that mentoring is important to teachers' professional development needs. It may be conducted carefully, emphasising the potential benefits for all concerned. One of the principals opined that:

The mentorship program needs to be upgraded; it might be considered constructive feedback for teachers' performances (P3).

(viii) Need for Frequent Professional Development Opportunities

Most directors and principals (P2, P3, P5, and P7) emphasised the need to provide teachers with regular access to professional development opportunities through refresher courses, training, seminars, workshops, webinars, and conferences. They emphasised that these opportunities must be designed to help teachers improve their knowledge.

4. Opportunities for Collaboration

Most directors and principals (P1, P3, P5, and P7) stressed collaboration as professional development needs for faculty members. They believed that collaboration is an important component of the teacher's

professional development. They mentioned that teachers could benefit from sharing ideas and discussing research designs and methodologies with their colleagues within the university or outside the university. Weekly and daily meetings focusing on research and teaching ideas benefit faculty members. They further expressed that collaboration assists university teachers in having a better understanding of their professional learning experiences within and outside the university, allowing them to share their experiences, learn and adapt teaching and research techniques from one another, and encourage the implementation of novel conceptions regarding their profession.

One of them stated:

Collaboration is a good and necessary element of effective professional development activities for teachers, as it enhances their professional development and practice. So, faculty needs frequent collaboration opportunities within and outside campus (P3).

Discussion

The findings of the study explored the perspective of principals and directors on the professional development needs of faculty members working at different campuses and divisions of the University of Education, Lahore. Professional development needs identified by the directors and principals were related to research, teaching, and collaboration. They mentioned that research-related needs include article writing and publication and writing research projects. All directors and principals considered that teachers who possess academic writing skills seem more independent and confident in their profession. The results of the present study established that most directors and principals recognised the importance of research papers and research projects in determining faculty career development. Therefore, the faculty members must continue to publish articles in different international and national journals. The study findings indicated that most faculty members are expected to plan, explore, write, win, and present research projects to advance their professional development. This study's results are congruent with those of MacPhail and O'Sullivan (2019), Ulla (2018), and Grima-Farell (2017). MacPhail and O'Sullivan (2019) and Meeus et al. (2018) studies which found similar professional development needs of faculty members, such as involvement in research projects and professional development activities and scientific research methodologies. The results of the current study revealed that most directors and principals emphasised that faculty members should focus on fostering a research-oriented culture. They must realise that any nation can only exist by benefiting from the studies of advanced and developed nations and carrying out research to solve its educational challenges. This finding corroborated Kelchtermans et al. (2018) research studies, which found that teachers viewed the cultivation of research culture as an important contribution to the field of study.

The study's findings showed that opportunities for collaboration in research-based professional development have been pointed out as the most critical need for faculty members. Most directors and principals underlined the need for collaboration opportunities for research purposes. This study's finding is aligned with the study results of Lunenburg et al. (2014), Maaranen et al. (2020), McEvoy et al. (2018), and Paltridge and Starfield (2016), in which researchers found that teachers needed to engage in collaborative research projects to come up with creative ideas. Moreover, directors and principals indicated that the pursuit of Ph.D. degrees for non-PhD faculty members is an important need for their advancement in the field. This study's findings are consistent with those of Gong et al. (2021), who indicated that university-level teachers consider doctoral study to be their critical need.

The update of content knowledge was also considered an essential need of the faculty members. According to Barnes and Lock (2010) and Bayram and Canaran (2020), a good teacher must have a strong understanding of the subject matter to make the learning both relevant and meaningful and to facilitate the learners' academic performance. Similar views were expressed by Alzahrani and Mohamad

Nor (2021), who considered the teacher's subject-matter knowledge a crucial factor. The current study's findings showed that most directors and principals believe that faculty members need to improve their pedagogical knowledge and skills. These findings are aligned with Ezati et al. (2014) and Lavonen's (2018) study, which indicated similar knowledge needs of teachers. Most directors and principals emphasised that faculty members need to improve their communication skills. These findings are consistent with Noom-Ura's (2013) study and Oeamoum and Sriwichai's (2020) studies, which explored the communication skills of teachers as needed.

Assessment techniques were also considered an essential component of the teaching of any discipline. Therefore, the training of faculty members in the assessment domain was considered of utmost importance. The current study findings are consistent with Mak's (2019) findings regarding the gap between the extent and variety of methods wherein teachers interpret and evaluate students' achievements. The present study exhibited that the directors and principals perceived that faculty members needed induction training and mentoring to overcome the challenges at the beginning of their careers.

Conclusion

The study highlighted the various professional development needs of faculty members from the perspectives of directors and principals. It implies that principals and directors recognise the importance of the professional development needs of faculty members, keeping in view the requirements of the 21st century. However, the fulfillment of these needs can be determined by a proper need analysis and requirements of faculty members. Principals and directors can plan and restructure the existing structure of professional development. They can provide suggestions to the administration where improvement is required, such as the arrangement of induction training, fostering collaboration opportunities, and mentoring novice teachers. Since the faculty members are the backbone of the university, the administration might provide them with the necessary resources, training, and support to contribute to the university's advancement. Tailored approaches are required to address the diverse PD needs of faculty members.

Recommendations

1. Induction training might be mandatory for all new faculty members. There is a need to improve the mechanism of induction training on campuses and divisions. Some novice teachers need to learn about their deficiencies in teaching and research, university administration might introduce peer observation and coaching/mentoring practices in classes.
2. The university administration might provide faculty members platforms for collaborating with relevant disciplines in other universities in Pakistan and internationally. So, the faculty members can benefit from the collaborative experiences of experts in research and teaching.
3. Faculty members may be connected to other national and worldwide institutions and industries through arrangements made by the university administration. Industrial linkage might play a significant role in the promotion of research by educators.

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