

The Continuous Professional Development of School Principals: Current Practices in Pakistan

Abida Nasreen* and George Odhiambo**

Abstract

Schools in Pakistan are going through a period of transformation and reform. In line with these reforms, the National Education Policy has advocated the importance of establishing ongoing professional development for principals. The main focus of this study was to explore the current practices of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the obstacles that they have to face in the pursuit of CPD. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilized. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with 30 randomly selected secondary school principals from Lahore (Punjab, Pakistan). The findings identify the areas for improvement in terms of design related to content and process. The data revealed that the principals were not satisfied with the current CPD opportunities and the content of the training programmes. In addition, the principals reported a number of constraints that they encountered in their pursuit of CPD, relating to time, finance and workload. This research provides distinctive findings that can inform the development of CPD programmes for school principals in order to improve the quality of their leadership keeping in mind both the old problems and the new realities faced by the school leaders. This research work can also equip the school leadership with the most recent data, thus enabling them to understand and consider the current situation when making decisions for the future. In recent years, the position of school principal has become a multi-layered responsibility and this study may provide an insight into the dynamics of school principals' continuous professional development in a period of educational transformation and reform.

Keywords: Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Principals, Secondary Schools, leaders.

* Assistant Professor, IER, University of the Punjab, Lahore. E-mail: nasreen.ier@pu.edu.pk

** Programme Director, Educational Leadership & Management, Faculty of Education and Social Work. The University of Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Introduction

A decade ago, the issue of school leadership was noticeably absent from most major agendas for school reform; but today, school leadership improvement was the main area of concern on the list of priorities for school reform (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Research findings indicates that principals have strong impact on school improvement and effectiveness, and particularly on student outcomes; as such, the demands of the position have become more complicated, multi-dimensional and sometimes conflicting, as school principals face more contradictory expectations than ever before. Principal leadership is declared to be among the most pressing matters on a list of issues in public school education in The Wallace Foundation survey of school and district administrators, policymakers, and others (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Crowther et al. (2002) argued that principals must play a huge role in order for school reform to succeed; for this reason, supporting, encouraging and improving the continuing professional development of school principals has become an indispensable factor to achieve school reform.

There are several terms associated with professional development that are used in the current literature; they include in-service education, career development, staff development, professional learning, and continuing education. (Mizell, 2010). The objective of all the processes related to these terms is ultimately to facilitate and improve learning for teachers, principals, and students. Many types of educational experiences related to a practitioner's work life includes in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). In education, the term professional development may be used in reference to a variety of specialised formal training and education, or advanced professional learning to improve the professional knowledge, capability, skill, and effectiveness of school administrators, teachers, and other educators (Glossary of educational Reform, 2017). Mayer and Lloyd (2011) cited Knapp's (2003) definition of professional development as 'the full range of activities, formal and informal, that engage teachers or administrators in new learning about their professional practice' (p.112). The definition of CPD given in the business directory (2017) draws on elements that are relevant to current issues:

Process of improving and increasing staff competencies through access to specialized training and educational opportunities in the workplace, provided by outside organization, or by observing others perform the job. Professional development helps build and keep the staff morale up, and is thought to attract higher quality personnel to an organization. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com>).

A principal must be dynamic and energetic to keep himself/herself abreast of the latest developments in knowledge and skills relating to his/her field. Waniganayakeet.al. (2008) perceives 'professional development' as continuous professional learning enables professionals to not only affirm existing understandings but also to attain new knowledge and skills, thereby remaining up-to-date with latest developments in the field. Professional development is also associated with personal growth (Practice Potentials 2008, p119). The principals' commitment to learn from their experiences in formal and informal professional development opportunities helps them to maintain high standards in the school organization that ultimately affect all the stakeholders. According to Mizell (2010), effective professional development affects students in public schools. Flecknoe (2000) reported immediate effects from professional development on all levels of school organization. Mizell (2010) further explained that teachers, school and district leaders should continually expand their knowledge and skills to implement the best educational practices to achieve success. Effective professional development is continuous (Schleicher, 2016) and includes training, practice, feedback, adequate time, and follow-up support.

Along with the knowledge and skills gained through professional development programmes, the principals' individual experiences at work contribute to their successful or unsuccessful tenure in schools. Every school has unique characteristics, and must be managed and organized accordingly. No professional development course can provide a formula for becoming a successful principal. As Deborah (2016) explained, it is not just professional learning but also epiphanic life experiences that shape professional selves and practices. Deborah further argues that learning is a highly individualized process, and there is no one-size-fits-all formula.

Learning is a social experience, influenced by interactive practices in generating new ideas, values, and attitudes. Therefore, the development of inner expertise cannot be divorced from the nature of the outer context (Dadds, 1997, p.8). Schleicher (2016) further highlighted the increasing interest in building cumulative knowledge across the profession; for example, by connecting research with practice, and to develop schools as learning organizations. Barber et al (2010), reporting on a consensus on school importance and leadership improvement after reviewing across different systems, recognized that high-performing principals emphasize instructional leadership and the development of teachers; and they learn best in context and from a diverse range of sources (including peers, superiors, online resources, and formal training).

To be effective, school principals must prioritize their own professional development as a highly important element in providing them with the insights necessary to perform their complex roles. Goss (2015) emphasized the need to develop the principals' capacity to lead changes and improve teaching practices in schools, as only skillful and effective leadership can ensure the accomplishment of school goals. Principals must have

the skills to manage organizational change, and the ability to have a clear vision to introduce change (Zbar, 2013, p. 13). Educators, both teachers and principals, who participate in professional development must then put their new knowledge and skills to work. Once viewed primarily as managers, school principals now are required to have expertise in instruction, academic content, data analysis and public relations (Darling-Hammond 2007; Huber, 2008; Levine, 2005; Perez, 2011; Peterson, 2002).

According to Mizell (2010), good leaders foster good leadership at other levels; and leadership at other levels produces a steady stream of future leaders for the system as a whole (Fullan, 2001: 10). Leithwood et al. (2006) described the three sets of simple practices performed by successful leaders as setting directions, developing people, and developing the organization. Successful schools require continual learning, which requires leaders to remain focused on both instructional and managerial tasks (Miller et al. 2007). Notman and Henry (2011) described seven leadership capacities for being a successful principal: management, communication, consultation, knowing when to lead, decision making, critical reflection and interpersonal connectedness with members of the school community.

Salfi (2011) found that successful school leaders develop colleagues for distributing leadership responsibilities and sharing the school vision. They further develop mechanisms for teachers' professional development and engage various stakeholders in making decisions for school improvement. In general, effective principals are good instructional leaders who are always present to provide constructive and timely feedback to new and veteran teachers alike to improve their instruction (Hull, 2012), which is only possible when the principals themselves continuously engage in formal and informal learning activities and programmes. Swaffield and MacBeath (2013) cited the Oduro finding (2009) in Africa, where three-quarters of the principals had little or no training and their leadership strategies were mostly based on trial and error. Moreover, principals considered themselves to be the custodians of school properties and the implementers of government policies, rather than the school leaders; thus requiring careful design and organization of formal professional development programmes. Gamage, (2004) declares that the existing in-service training programmes should be organized in a more consistent, better designed and more comprehensive manner, with greater emphasis on advanced knowledge and practice, and more opportunities for sharing knowledge and learning of best practices. Similar views are expressed by Peterson (2002) in a review of professional development programmes for principals in the US, arguing that many such programmes were not carefully designed for coordinated, long-term learning.

What constitutes professional development?

Professional development is generally described as undertaking formal practices such as training programmes, conferences, seminars/workshops, collaborative learning in networks/teams or training courses at a college or university; however, it is important to note that people also learn informally through debates and discussions among colleagues, independent reading, research, or peer learning (Mizell, 2010). Day and Sachs (2004) argued that "... all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school..." also form part of professional development. According to a synthesis of international research conducted by Dempster, Lovett and Flückiger (2014), high quality leadership learning programmes should be philosophically and theoretically attuned to individual and system needs in leadership and professional learning; goal-oriented; informed by the weight of research evidence; time-rich; practice-centred; purpose-designed for specific career stages; peer-supported within or beyond the school; context-sensitive; partnership-powered; and committed to evaluating the effects on leaders as well as on school practices to which their learning applies (p.2). Evidence collected by Mentz et al. (2010) reveals that principals identified five valuable aspects of training programmes: experiencing relationships with students, parents, colleagues and administrators; mentor–mentee meetings; conflict resolution skills; connection with parents and the community; value-laden leadership and formal training programmes. Lingam and Lingam (2014) research on school leaders' perceptions of the leadership and management programme in Fiji recommends four areas to highlight in future management training programs: financial management, context-specific training, various strategies for programme delivery and field-based training.

Davies (2006) identified the significance of formal organizational networks and personal professional networks as good sources of professional learning for principals, and notes that such support networks also help in developing strategic capacity for school leadership. Professionally developed school principals will be ideally suited to equip their teachers in times of change. Present day leaders live in a time where even the most scrupulous ones would lean toward creating more leaders. As Barber, Whelan, & Clark (2010) articulate, good educational systems find leaders for today, whereas the best systems grow them for tomorrow; they foresee the future needs of school organization and consequently develop not only themselves, but also other school teachers to accomplish school goals. Therefore, school principals can function as an innovative and puissant force for effective functioning of secondary schools. To equip school principals with the skills and competences required to perform multiple roles, it is necessary to provide high quality initial training at the start of their job and then consistent plan for their continuous professional development to keep them up to date.

The Context of Principal Preparation in Pakistan

The National Education Policy 1998-2010 and National Education Policy 2009 advocated the importance of professional development for school personnel in Pakistan. The National Education Policy 1998-2010 recommended an increase in the effectiveness of the professional development system by institutionalizing in-service training for teachers, teacher trainers and educational administrators through school clustering and other techniques (Khan, 2013). On the other hand, the National Education Policy (2009) emphasized the need for reform in all areas, for example, in pre-service training and standardization of qualifications; professional development; teacher remuneration, career progression and status; and governance and management of the teaching workforce.

Principal selection and preparation programmes in Pakistan are two of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education. Most public schooling in Pakistan is segregated according to gender (Mango, 2013). There are separate schools for male and female students at the secondary level; correspondingly, male and female principals are appointed based on the school type.

School principal recruitment and selection is generally made through the Public Service Commission (PSC), which normally posts advertisements for school principal positions in print and electronic media. The general requirements for these positions include the following:

- Ph.D. with M.Ed. or M.A. in Education or B.Ed. (second division) from a university recognized by the Higher Education Commission, with seven years of teaching or administration experience or a combination of both after Ph.D. or,
- M.Phil., with M.Ed. or M.A. in Education (second division) from a university recognized by the Higher Education Commission, with nine years of teaching or administration experience or a combination of both after M.Phil. or,
- M.A. or M.Sc. with M.Ed. or M.A. in Education (second division) from a university recognized by Higher Education Commission, with twelve years of teaching or administration experience or combination of both after M.A. or M.Sc.

In addition to the above academic qualifications and experience, candidates for principalship are also required to sit for and pass a written test. If the test results are favourable, they are then invited for an interview. Successful candidates are then appointed at the basic pay scale-19 (Punjab Public Service Commission, 2017), initially including two to three months of professional orientation and training programme. The Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) is the main provincial level in-service training department responsible for conducting this type of professional training programmes for teachers and school principals. Other organizations involved in in-service training include the Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE), the District Training and Support Centres (DTSCs), the Punjab Education Commission (PEC), etc.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

1. What continuous professional development (CPD) activities are currently undertaken by secondary school principals, and how do they relate to their personal needs, the needs of schools, and the needs of society?
2. What are the problems faced by secondary school principals in their pursuit of CPD?
3. How is CPD contributing to the knowledge and the skills of principals to improve their management of school operations?
4. What are the roles of the school principals, and the functions they are required to perform?

Assumption of the Study

The present study was undertaken with the assumption that in order to answer questions related to the effective development of school principals, one must first understand the nature of their current professional development. Hence, the present study was undertaken primarily in anticipation of the value of its results for guiding future study.

Research Methodology

The nature of the study is descriptive, with both qualitative and quantitative methods used to collect and analyze the data. The participants were 30 principals of both boys and girls secondary schools in Lahore city, situated in the Punjab province of Pakistan. The schools and their principals were selected from a list of secondary schools situated in Lahore city. The researcher requested an appointment with the participants to conduct a short, semi-structured interview at a convenient time during school hours. School principal opinions and information were collected from these interviews, which also included a questionnaire personally administered by the researcher. Most of the principals completed and returned the questionnaires at the time of their interviews.

After collecting the data, the researcher conducted both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for quantitative data analysis, which calculated the Frequencies, Percentages and Mean scores. The information gathered from the interviews was submitted to a qualitative analysis. An interpretive methodological approach was employed, emphasizing the naturalistic methods of inquiry. The essence of an interpretive approach is to capture the points of view of the participants (Radnor, 2001); therefore, the principals' point of view was obtained in order to arrive at a clear picture of current practices relating to professional development.

Finally, the Researcher brought together the qualitative and quantitative data and synthesized all of the information to acquire a better understanding of the phenomena under study.

Background information of research participants

Thirteen female and seventeen male school principals were randomly selected for this research. Table 1 below shows the response rate.

Table 1
Response rate

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	13	43.3	43.3
Male	17	56.7	100.0

The respondents had been in their current positions for a varied number of years prior to the research, as illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Experience of Principals

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
More than 20 Years	1	3.3	3.3
16-20 Years	4	13.3	16.7
11-15 Years	3	10.0	26.7
6-10 Years	3	10.0	36.7
2-5 Years	16	53.3	90.0
Less than 1 Year	3	10.0	100.0

The table demonstrates that more than 50% (N= 16) of the respondents had 2-5 years of experience as principals, while eight (26%) of the responders had more than 11 years of experience.

Table 3
Age of the School Principals

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
51-60 Years	1	3.3	3.3
41-50 Years	9	30.0	33.3
31-40 Years	18	60.0	93.3
20-30 Years	2	6.7	100.0

As indicated in the above table, 60 % of the respondents fell into the 31-40 age range, whereas 33% were older than 41 years of age.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The instruments used to collect data were semi-structured interviews and a short questionnaire. The interviews were transcribed and the information was synthesised. The questionnaire data was analyzed in the form of Frequencies and Percentage and Mean scores.

Type of professional development activities

Principals stated that they attended different types of CPD programmes conducted by the department. They also reported that they were involved in self-directed learning activities. The most common types of professional development activities that the principals participated in included the following:

1. conferences
2. workshops
3. short and long training courses
4. professional networks
5. self-directed study
6. collaborative learning
7. research work
8. membership in professional organizations
9. enhanced qualification, etc.

The school principals' response mean values are shown in the table below:

Table 4

Type of Professional development activities

Statements	M	SD
Single day workshop / Short courses	3.71	0.78
Workshop series / Long courses	2.37	0.71
Conferences / Lectures	2.77	0.89
College / University	1.77	1.00
Peer coaching / Observation	3.37	0.76
Mentoring	3.70	0.53
Study groups / Group activities	3.10	0.75
Work-shadowing	3.33	0.75
Collaborative learning	3.53	0.50
Networks	2.93	0.78
Teleconference / Video	2.00	0.83
Action research	2.40	0.93
Self-directed visits to professionals	2.87	1.00
Membership in professional organizational	1.93	0.74
Self-directed study	3.73	0.69

The above given information clearly indicates that most principals somewhat agreed that they were learning professionally through single day workshops/short courses, mentoring, collaborative work, and self-directed learning. In contrast, their opinion on learning through other forms of professional activities differs greatly, disagreeing with regard to Workshop series / Long courses, Conferences / Lectures, Peer coaching / Observation, College / University, Study groups / Group activities, Work-shadowing, Networks, Teleconference / Video, Action research, Self-directed visits to professionals, and Membership in professional organizations.

Organizational provision of professional development trainings

The school principals stated that the following organizations have provided professional development opportunities in the previously mentioned types of training activities:

1. Directorate of Staff Development (DSD)
2. Private Organizations/Agencies
3. College/ University
4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) / United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
5. Punjab Education Commission (PEC)
6. Punjab Textbook Board (PTB)
7. Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE)
8. District Training and Support Centres (DTSCs)
9. Own Institution
10. Other Schools

For the most part, the principals opined that along with the formal out of school trainings described above, there is a need for arranging training at the school campus that can take place either during or after school hours. Specifically on this subject, one principal declared:

"I have very busy routine and mostly there are so many things to do at school. I mostly find it difficult to go out of school for some days or even for some hours to attend any meetings or training courses. There are day-to-day issues and problems that need my attention. There are senior teachers but they cannot take decisions without consulting with me..... I think there should be some online trainings within school timings or after school, one or two hours for such activities. Senior teachers should also attend such trainings as they can be prospective school principals." (Participant No: 25, urban school)

This point of view is reinforced by Mizell's (2010) suggestion that professional development may occur:

1. During the regular school day;
2. At school, either before classes begin or after they end;
3. After school;
4. During days designated by a school system solely for professional development;
5. During the summer and other school breaks.

Content included in formal trainings

The principals were asked about the content taught in the training programmes. Their responses and patterns are presented Table 5 below:

Table 5

Content included in formal trainings

Statements	M	SD
Content knowledge of a specific subject area	4.13	0.97
Teaching strategies, techniques or methods	3.17	0.79
Curriculum planning and development	2.93	0.94
Use of Technology in class	2.63	1.09
Classroom management and discipline	3.23	0.77
Assessment techniques	2.70	0.83
Research work	2.73	0.86
Communication skills	3.23	1.50
School discipline	3.70	0.83

The above given training content areas presents a very interesting situation in which school leaders were of the view that their training programmes were mostly focused on content knowledge of a specific subject area along with teaching strategies and school discipline. According to the mean values shown above, curriculum planning, technology, classroom management and discipline, assessment techniques, research work and communication skills were all neglected, even though proficiency in all these areas is crucial for school principals to function effectively as school leaders.

Improvement in skills through CPD

The principals were asked whether they felt they were more capable of performing their jobs efficiently after engaging in the CPD activities. Their opinions are presented hereunder in Table 6:

Table 6*Principals' opinions of their skill development through CPD*

Statements	M	SD
constructive changes in my attitudes / views	3.53	0.70
constructive changes in my teaching practice	3.50	0.50
Knowledge / skills improvement	3.53	0.50
Overall school improvement and development	2.40	0.56
Improvement in communication skills	3.53	0.62
Increased collaboration with peers	3.57	0.60
Increased management skills	2.50	0.50
Learned techniques to modify undesired teacher behaviour	2.43	0.56
Techniques for school management	2.47	0.50

It is clear from the information in table 6 that the principals' responses were mostly negative with regard to their skill development through CPD activities. One of the school principals described the situation clearly:

We generally try to learn by our own efforts. Training programmes are never designed according to our needs. I, myself, learn through experience. The training usually provides knowledge on the teaching strategies and students' achievement. Management related component is also included but not according to our needs. The content related to legal and financial issues management is mostly neglected or less discussed in formal workshops or meetings. They [Directorate of staff development] should design programmes keeping in view the varying levels of experience, motivation, interest, knowledge, and skill of principals. Financial management should be a big part of training in which school budget related information should be discussed. All schools are subjected to an audit process each year which is very difficult to manage mostly. (Participant No: 01, urban school)

Another Principal expressed his view that:

They should formally organize programmes on school management and finance. They should also formally educate us about school funds, annual school audits, educational laws, rules and regulations along with other managerial duties and responsibilities before appointing as a principal. They should train principals in the areas of planning, budgeting, reviewing and reporting, internal control and dealing with other financial management issues. (Participant No: 30, rural school)

The principals were then queried on the effectiveness of the formal professional training in a number of areas, i.e., leading school learning, developing organizational vision, serving as instructional leader, managing school operations and engaging parents and community. Table 7 below illustrates their responses:

Table 7*Effectiveness of formal professional training in the nominated areas*

How effectively did your formal training prepare you to do the following: 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5= Strongly Agree	M	SD
<i>Leading school learning</i>		
Creating collaborating learning environment	4.01	0.82
Making collaborative decisions on school matters	3.87	0.82
Engaging in planning for school improvement	4.07	0.80
Engaging in self-development and continuous learning	3.55	0.90
<i>Developing Organizational vision</i>		
Using effective communication skills	2.98	0.76
Developing ethical guidelines for decision making	3.07	0.67
Developing broad agreement on school mission among staff members	2.55	0.76
<i>Serving as Instructional Leader</i>		
Understanding the individual learning differences and teaching them effectively	4.22	0.67
Designing professional development programmes for teachers to increase their capacity of teaching and learning	3.32	0.58
Assessing teachers and provide instructional feedback	3.88	0.73
<i>Managing School</i>		
Handling school discipline	4.33	0.76
Allocating resources to pursue important school goals	4.27	0.70
Managing and maintaining purposeful teaching learning environment	4.61	0.73
Managing and maintaining school facilities and resources	4.12	0.83
<i>Community Collaboration</i>		
Acquiring parent participation to support student learning	3.54	0.74
Collaborating with outside community for assistance	3.21	0.79

It is clear from the information in Table 7 above that the school principals perceived the formal training programmes as mostly preparing them to lead school learning, serve as instructional leaders, and manage school operations. Their views are moderately favourable with regard to the potential of the training programmes to improve their ability to develop organizational vision and engage parents and community in overall school development.

Problems encountered by the principals in their pursuit of CPD

The principals raised a number of concerns regarding their pursuit of CPD, as illustrated in Table 8 below:

Table 8

Mean Comparison of Problems faced by Principals

Problems	M	SD
Most of their time spent on maintaining school schedule	4.67	0.99
Few chances to get professional knowledge	2.93	0.82
Time/workload issues of staff	2.73	0.82
Time/workload issues of your own	3.03	0.80
Financial issues	2.73	0.90
Meetings inside and outside the school	2.87	0.81

The above table reflects the principals' time as mostly spent on maintaining the school schedule, thus preventing them from engaging in formal professional activities. Regarding this schedule problem, one school principal observed:

The job of a principal is so hectic. We are so much busy in day to day affairs that we hardly get any time to read journals or explore information on the net. We remain here on duty from morning till afternoon and after that we have to go to our homes and we have our family to look after. We have a very busy routine. There are so many problems of teachers, their subjects, work load, maintaining school records, students' affairs and so many other things along with the meetings with our authorities.... definitely I learn from these things too but still it's difficult to get engaged myself in self-directed readings about current researches in the field. I have no time to conduct researches by myself but we are generally supportive in giving information to other researchers. (Participant No: 25, urban school)

Multiple roles performed by the school principals

CPD is also important for principals because they are required to perform multiple roles and to develop their personality from different angles to accomplish school effectiveness. The findings in this research coincide with those of the study by Ng and Szeto (2015) in which they identified the numerous roles and responsibilities of a principal as including those of a model, a mentor, a facilitator, a manager, a planner, a curriculum leader, a visionary leader, a resources investigator, etc. According to the different principals, they regularly perform multiple roles to regulate school functioning efficiently. These multiple roles, as described by the principals, are listed below:

Table 9*Multiple roles performed by the school principals*

Administrative role	Academic role	Problem solver	community leader
Visionary manager	Curriculum leader	Facilitator	Social architect
Distinguished leader	Educator	Counsellor	Catalyst of positive
Group coordinator	Teacher	Guide	Relationships
Change agent	Mentor	Negotiator	Public relations
Resource provider	Imparter of meaning		representative
Democratic leader	Spiritual leader		
Organizational architect	Moral agent		
Controller	Instructional leader		
Planner			
Organizer			
Supervisor			

According to one of the school principals:

In general, we are engaged in many types of activities in a routine school life. We as principals manage people, data and processes to foster school improvement. We need to be supportive for new ideas and practices and should also be responsive to the current needs of the school organization.

(Participant No: 21, urban school)

Key functions performed by the principals

The school principals identified the following as their key functions:

1. Monitoring organizational information
2. Coordinating school activities
3. Managing financial resources
4. Developing budgets and mathematical skills
5. Representing the school to the community, public relations skills, and public communication skills
6. Maintaining files
7. Taking school rounds and checking classes
8. Checking attendance register
9. Listening to complaints from and problems of school staff
10. Dealing with parents and other community members
11. Checking school cleanliness

12. Meeting with staff on current affairs and on other special needs and concerns
13. Checking school discipline
14. Teaching classes
15. Maintaining the school building
16. Building sound relationships with the directorate personnel, liaison and negotiate with higher authorities
17. Working with groups and committees on various matters
18. Establishing an atmosphere conducive to learning

One of the responders explained the effectiveness of schools and principals:

Efficient secondary school principals deliberately plan their actions to create effective school culture and environment, so that those actions build strong linkages within and outside the school. This is a critical skill that should be enhanced by the proper organization and conduction of training courses by the Government. I would like to suggest management related trainings should be arranged in National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA).

(Participant No: 06, urban school)

Discussion and Conclusion

Although studies and literature on educational management and secondary school leadership exist with regard to Europe and America (Coleman, 2003), this is not the case with regard to developing countries (Oplatka, 2006), such as Pakistan. The National Education Policy 1998-2010 and National Education Policy 2009 advocated the importance and effectiveness of professional development not only for school principals but also for teachers and trainers of teachers in Pakistan. The Ministry of Education also emphasized the need to reform professional development at all levels. But it is an unfortunate fact that most of the goals set in the policies and plans are either very poorly achieved or not achieved at all, as reported by the words of Bengali (1999) in his work entitled "*History of Educational policy making and planning in Pakistan*", as follows: "A review of the history of educational planning in Pakistan shows that setting targets, bemoaning the failure to achieve the same, and setting new targets with unqualified optimism has been a continuing game policy makers have played ad nauseam and at great public expense over the last 50 years" (p, 28). Conforming with this view, the professional development of school principals is one of the underachieved targets of our plans and policies. Therefore, by design, the findings of this research study serve to augment the body of existing literature on the continuous professional development of school principals.

The purpose of this study was to examine the current practices of in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of secondary school principals, focusing on the type of CPD that they are formally offered or informally engaged in. The content and conduct of the training programmes, the learning and utilisation of knowledge and skills gained through these programmes, and the problems faced by the principals in pursuing such programmes were other main points of this study.

The perceptions and opinions of principals indicate that they are in favour of CPD, although they also express reservations and complaints about the content and implementation of the training programmes. This finding accords with the view of Mizell (2010) that poorly conceived and ineffectively implemented professional development leads to complaints. The principals assert that professional development programmes should be organized in keeping with the fact that different principals have varying levels of motivation, interest, knowledge, and skill, and that their workloads and time schedules are so tight that they leave very little time to spend on their professional development.

The secondary school principals stated that a major part of their training should provide knowledge and skills in leadership and in areas related to management, in the same way that civil servants are trained to enhance their management skills. School leaders described their training programmes as mostly focused on content knowledge in a specific subject area and on teaching strategies and school discipline, while generally neglecting curriculum planning, technology, classroom management and discipline, assessment techniques, research work and communication skills, all of which are crucial for principals to function as effective school leaders. The responders also identified school finance, budgets, laws, rules and regulations as elements that should be discussed in great detail, among other topics, since most principals have difficulties dealing with annual audits. Their view accords with the work of Beyers and Mohloana (2015) on principals' capacity to manage financial resources effectively. Their study reveals that school principals have inadequate knowledge about financial management, and recommends that all school principals should be given sufficient, rather than merely introductory training in financial management. The research also concludes that most of the principals' time is spent on maintaining the school schedule, thereby hindering their engagement in formal professional activities.

The principals reported their attendance at different types of CPD programmes conducted by the department, as well as their engagement in self-directed learning activities. Workshops, short and long training courses, self-directed study, and collaborative learning were the most frequently attended types of professional development activities, and the principals were somewhat in agreement about their

professional learning through single day workshops/ short courses, mentoring, collaborative work, and self-directed learning. With regard to their opinion on learning through other forms of professional activities, however, they disagreed about workshop series / long courses, conferences / lectures, peer coaching / observation, college / university, study groups / group activities, work-shadowing, networks, teleconference / video, action research, self-directed visits to professionals, and membership in professional organizations. In contrast, Mizell (2010) and Russell (N.D) identified almost all these modes of professional learning as the most typical modes of learning.

Recommendations

On the basis of research findings it is recommended that Directorate of education should arrange trainings on regular basis for principals to enhance their skills related to school improvement. CPD should be formally facilitated to take place during or after school hours and Directorate of education should collect feedback on regular basis from school principals with regard to their needs for professional development.

References

- Barber, M. Whelan, F., & Clark, M. (2010). *Capturing the leadership premium*, McKinsey & Company, Retrieved from <http://mckinseysociety.com/capturing-the-leadership-premium/>
- Beyers, L. J. E., & Mohloana, T. (2015). Financial management capacity of principals and school governing bodies in Lebowakgomo, Limpopo Province, *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9, 3, 343-350, available at: [http://krepublishers.com/02-Journals/IJES/IJES-09-0-000-15-Web/IJES-09-3-000-15-Abst-PDF/IJES-9-3-351-15-531-Kalobo-L/IJES-9-3-351-15-531-Kalobo-L-Ab\[10\].pmd.pdf](http://krepublishers.com/02-Journals/IJES/IJES-09-0-000-15-Web/IJES-09-3-000-15-Abst-PDF/IJES-9-3-351-15-531-Kalobo-L/IJES-9-3-351-15-531-Kalobo-L-Ab[10].pmd.pdf).
- Business dictionary*. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/professional-development.html>
- Coleman, M. (2003). Gender and the orthodoxies of leadership. *School Leadership & Management*, 23, 325–339.
- Crowther, F. (2002). *Developing teacher leaders: How teacher leadership enhances school success*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin.
- Dadds, M. (1997). Continuing professional development: nurturing the expert within. *Journal of in-service education*, 23(1), 31-38. Retrieved from <http://www.fm-kp.si/zalozba/ISBN/978-961-6573-65-8/219-240.pdf>.

- Darling-Hammond, L., Lapointe, M., Meyerson, D., Orr, M., & Cohen, C. (2007). *Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from exemplary leadership development programs*, Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, Stanford, CA.
- Davies, B. (2006). *Leading the strategically focused school: Success and sustainability*, Paul Chapman Publishing, London
- Day, C., & Sachs, J. (2004), *International handbook on the continuing professional development of teachers*, Open University Press, Maidenhead.
- Deborah, M. N. (2016). Rethinking professional learning for teachers and school leaders, *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 1(4), 270-285.
- Dempster, N., Lovett, S., & Flückiger, B. (2011). *Content and strategies to develop school leadership: A select literature review*, The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Melbourne.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of Change*, JosseyBass, San Francisco CA.
- Flecknoe, M. (2000). Can continuing professional development for teachers be shown to raise pupil's achievements. *Journal of in-service education*, 26(3), 437-457. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjie19>.
- Flückiger, B., Lovett, S., & Dempster, N. (2014). Judging the quality of school leadership learning programs: An international search, *Professional Development in Education*, 40(4) 561-575.
- Gamage, D. T., & Ueyama, T. (2004). Professional development perspectives of principals in Australia and Japan, *The Education Forum*, 69, 1, 65-78.
- Glossary of educational Reform* (2017). Retrieved from <http://edglossary.org/professional-development/>
- Goss, P., Hunter, J., Romanes, D., & Parsonage, H., (2015). *Targeted teaching: How better use of data can improve student learning*, Grattan Institute. Retrieved from <https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/827-Targeted-Teaching.pdf>.
- Huber, S. (2008), School development and school leadership development: New learning opportunities for school leaders and their schools, in Lumby, J. Crow, G. and Pashiardis, P. (Eds.), *International handbook on the preparation and development of school leaders*, Taylor and Francis, New York.

- Hull, J. (2012). *The principal perspective: Full report*, Center for Public Education, Alexandria, Retrieved from <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/principal-perspective>
- Khan, M. (2013). *National education policy (1998-2010)*, Retrieved from, http://education_problems.wordpress.com/2013/04/02/national-education-policy-1998-2010/.
- Leithwood, K., Aitken, R., & Jantzi, D. (2006). *Making schools smarter: Leading with evidence*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Levine, A. (2005). Educating School Leaders. *The Education Schools Project*. available at, <http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Final313.pdf>
- Lingam, G. I., & Lingam, N. (2014). Leadership and management training for school heads: A milestone Achievement for Fiji. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 42(2), 63–79.
- Mango, C. S. (2013). *Comparative Perspectives on international school leadership: Policy, preparation, and practice*, Taylor & Francis, New York.
- Mayer, D., & Lloyd, M. (2011). *Professional learning: An introduction to the research literature*, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), Melbourne.
- Mentz, K., Webber, C. F. & vander, Walt. J. L. (2010). Novice principals from Canada and South Africa share their experiences", *Education as Change*, 14(2), 155–167.
- Miller, T. N., Devin, M., & Shoop, R. J. (2007). *Closing the leadership gap: How district and university partnerships shape effective school leaders*, Corwin Press, Inc. California.
- Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan. (2008). *National Education Policy 2009*. Retrieved from: <http://unesco.org.pk/education/teachereducation/files/National%20Education%20Policy.pdf>.
- Mizell, H. (2010). *Why professional development matters. United States of America: Learning Forward*, Retrieved from: www.learningforward.org/advancing/whypdmatters.cfm

- Ng, S. W., & Szeto, E. (2015). Preparing school leaders: The professional development needs of newly appointed principals", *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 1741143214564766, pp.1-18, retrieved from available <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1741143214564766>.
- Notman, R., & Henry D. A. (2011). Building and sustaining successful school leadership in New Zealand, *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 10(4) 375–394.
- Oduro, G. (2009). The missing ingredient: Head teacher leadership development in Sub Saharan Africa, Paper presented at the Conference for Commonwealth Educational Cooperation: Looking Ahead at 50, March 31st , Oxford, UK.
- Oplatka, I. (2006). Women in educational administration within developing countries towards a new international research agenda, *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44, 604-624.
- Perez, L., Uline, C., Johnson, J., James-Ward, C., & Basom, M. (2011). Foregrounding fieldwork in leadership preparation: The transformative capacity of authentic inquiry, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47 (1), 217-257.
- Peterson, K. (2002). The professional development of principals: Innovations and opportunities", in *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38, 2, 213 – 232.
- Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC)*. (2017). Retrieved from [http://www.ppsc.gov.pk/\(S\(d1d0lorkhy0r2gcfb3n1e5m0\)\)/Default.aspx](http://www.ppsc.gov.pk/(S(d1d0lorkhy0r2gcfb3n1e5m0))/Default.aspx)
- Radnor H (2001). *Researching your professional practice: Doing interpretive research*, Oxford University Press, Buckingham.
- Russell, A. (N.D), *Child care staff: Learning and growing through professional development*. Professional support coordinator alliance (PSCA). Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations, available at: [http://www.cscentral.org.au/Resources/PSCAPD_Resource .pdf](http://www.cscentral.org.au/Resources/PSCAPD_Resource.pdf).
- Salfi N. A. (2011). Successful leadership practices of head teachers for school improvement: Some evidence from Pakistan. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(4), 414–432.

- Schleicher, A. (2016), *Teaching excellence through professional learning and policy reform: Lessons from around the world*, International Summit on the Teaching Profession, OECD Publishing, Paris, Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264252059-en>
- Swaffield, S., & MacBeath, J. (2013). Deliberating on school leadership in post-conflict contexts: A Ghanaian Snapshot. Paper presented at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement -ICSEI. Santiago, Chile. 2nd -6th January, 2013, Retrieved from http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/archive/cce/publications/Swaffield_ICSEI2013.pdf
- The Wallace Foundation. (2013). *The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning*. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/effective-principal-leadership/Pages/The-School-Principal-as-Leader-Guiding-Schools-to-Better-Teaching-and-Learning.aspx>.
- Waniganayake, M., Harrison, L., Cheeseman, S., De Gioia, K., Burgess, C., & Press, F. (2008). *Practice Potentials: Impact of participation in professional development and support on quality outcomes for children in childcare centres*, Professional Support Coordinators Alliance, Access Macquarie and Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra.
- Zbar, V. (2013). *Generating whole-school improvement: The stages of sustained success*, Vic. Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne.