

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is essential for enhancing teachers' skills and improving educational quality, but its implementation in private institutions often faces challenges. This study examines the obstacles teachers face in accessing effective CPD and develops a structured model to address these issues. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research gathered quantitative data from 428 teachers and 134 head teachers, and qualitative insights from focus group discussions with educational experts. Findings reveal that CPD programs are inconsistently applied, with barriers such as time constraints, insufficient funding, lack of institutional support, and low teacher motivation. Teachers often rely on self-directed learning due to limited access to formal training. The study highlights the importance of leadership involvement, need-based training, financial incentives, and structured policies for successful CPD. The proposed CPD model emphasizes institutional support, systematic needs assessments, and leadership-driven initiatives to ensure sustainable professional development and improve educational outcomes in private institutions.

Keywords: Continuous Professional Development, Teacher Training, Private Educational Institutions, Professional Learning, Educational Policy, Pakistan

Background and Context

Teachers play a foundational role in shaping students' educational experiences, cognitive development, and personal growth. Their impact extends beyond content delivery to include mentoring, modeling behavior, and cultivating lifelong learning habits. In the Pakistani education system, teachers serve as the linchpin for academic reforms, and the quality of their professional competencies directly influences student achievement and institutional effectiveness (Dahri, 2006). As facilitators of knowledge and catalysts of change, teachers require robust and ongoing professional training to meet the evolving demands of modern classrooms and national education goals. In Pakistan, the disparity between public and private educational institutions is significant. While public sector teachers benefit from structured professional development initiatives, their counterparts in the private sector—particularly those in low-fee institutions—face considerable challenges in accessing quality Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs. This imbalance undermines educational equity and weakens the overall effectiveness of the national education system (Awan, 2011). Although private schools enroll a substantial portion of the student population and employ a greater number of teachers than public schools (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2020–21), there exists no standardized framework for the professional development of private-sector educators, especially in low-cost institutions (PEIRA Act, 2013).

Despite efforts by regulatory bodies such as the Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), professional development has not been prioritized. Regulatory focus has remained on administrative matters such as registration and renewal, with limited attention to academic standards and teacher capacity building.

Consequently, many private institutions lack institutional policies, funding mechanisms, or leadership commitment for teacher training (Iqbal, 2002). The resulting gap leaves educators reliant on informal and self-directed learning, without a cohesive strategy for sustained professional growth. Recognizing the critical role of CPD, Pakistan's National Education Policy (2009) and Vision 2030 emphasize the need for structured, ongoing teacher development programs. They advocate for the integration of training into a three-year professional cycle, with career progression tied to CPD participation. Nevertheless, implementation remains fragmented, particularly in the private sector, which is often excluded from public funding and policy support. The absence of CPD policies contributes to outdated teaching methods, low job satisfaction, and reduced student outcomes (NEP, 2009; Vision 2030).

Problem Statement

The lack of a coherent, accessible, and sustainable CPD system in private educational institutions, especially low-fee schools, represents a significant barrier to educational progress in Pakistan. Despite the presence of over 957,000 private school teachers nationwide, there is minimal regulatory oversight or institutional support for their professional development (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2020–21). This neglect results in professional stagnation, low instructional quality, and widening inequities in student learning experiences. Moreover, the decentralized education system post-18th constitutional amendment has led to inconsistent policies across provinces, leaving private institutions without a unified direction for teacher development.

Research Objectives

This study seeks to:

1. Identify current CPD practices in private educational institutions.
2. Analyze challenges faced by teachers concerning pedagogical knowledge and professional growth.
3. Develop a structured and context-sensitive CPD model tailored to private sector needs.

Research Questions

1. What are the current practices of CPD for teachers in private educational institutions?
2. What challenges do these teachers face in acquiring and applying pedagogical knowledge?
3. What are the identified needs for effective CPD implementation in the private sector?
- 4.

Significance of the Study

This research contributes to both academic literature and practical educational policy by designing a comprehensive CPD model that aligns with national education reforms and institutional realities. By incorporating stakeholders' insights—including teachers, head teachers, and educational experts—it offers a participatory framework that enhances relevance, sustainability, and ownership. Implementing such a model in private educational institutions can improve teacher motivation, instructional quality, and student learning outcomes, thereby promoting systemic change and educational equity.

Literature Review

The Role of Teacher Education in Professional Development

Teacher education is a foundational element in educational reform, serving not only to equip instructors with content knowledge and pedagogical skills but also to shape their attitudes, values, and reflective practices (Shahid, 2007). It encompasses both pre-service and in-service stages, which are critical to building a competent teaching workforce capable of responding to dynamic classroom and

societal needs. Pre-service programs focus on foundational theory and instructional design, while in-service training ensures the continuous upgrading of teaching skills through exposure to evolving educational trends and challenges (Iqbal, 2002; Khan & Ali, 2019).

In Pakistan, teacher education has historically suffered from inadequate infrastructure, sporadic training opportunities, and a lack of institutionalized systems for professional growth—especially in private institutions (National Education Policy, 1998–2010). Despite national recognition of teachers as central actors in educational transformation, systematic efforts to sustain their professional development remain weak.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD): Definition and Scope

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) refers to a lifelong, systematic process through which teachers acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enhance their effectiveness and career progression (Gujjar, Naoreen, Saifi, & Bajwa, 2010). CPD activities encompass a wide range of formal and informal learning experiences, such as workshops, peer collaboration, online courses, mentoring, and reflective practice (Sze, Tan, & Amiel, 2019). The goal is to empower teachers to meet diverse student needs, adapt to curricular changes, and embrace innovations in pedagogy and technology.

High-quality CPD initiatives are often linked to increased teacher motivation, improved instructional practices, and better student outcomes (Day & Gu, 2014; Mokhele & Jita, 2012). However, the effectiveness of CPD depends significantly on its contextual relevance, alignment with school goals, and availability of institutional support.

Barriers to Effective CPD in Private Educational Institutions

Private educational institutions, especially low-fee ones, face distinct challenges in implementing effective CPD programs. Key barriers include limited financial resources, lack of time, weak policy frameworks, and insufficient leadership commitment (Ngala & Odebero, 2010; Umar & Fayyaz, 2017). Many private schools operate with minimal oversight, and their educators often rely on self-directed or ad hoc training. Teachers also report a lack of incentives and recognition for participating in professional development, which affects motivation and retention.

Moreover, regulatory authorities like PEIRA have not adequately prioritized academic development, focusing instead on administrative functions (PEIRA Act, 2013). The absence of standardized frameworks has resulted in fragmented and inconsistent CPD practices across institutions, undermining efforts to improve educational quality.

Theoretical Underpinnings of CPD

CPD is grounded in adult learning theories, which emphasize self-directed learning, experiential knowledge, and reflective practice. Knowles' theory of andragogy, for example, posits that adult learners are autonomous and bring prior experiences into learning contexts, which makes CPD most effective when it is relevant, problem-centered, and participatory (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015). Social constructivist approaches also advocate for collaborative and peer-based learning models that enhance critical reflection and knowledge co-construction.

Models of CPD range from formal competency-based training to informal collaborative initiatives, including blended approaches that combine in-person and online modalities (Guskey, 2000; Sywelem & Witte, 2013). Effective models incorporate needs assessment, goal setting,

structured delivery, feedback mechanisms, and ongoing evaluation.

CPD and Educational Reform in Pakistan

Pakistan's National Education Policy (2009) recognizes CPD as a critical component of educational reform. The policy proposes mandatory professional development cycles tied to career advancement, with a focus on subject-specific and skill-based training. However, the implementation of these reforms has been inconsistent, particularly in the private sector where regulatory engagement is limited.

According to Vision 2030, teachers are the "center of gravity" in the education system, and their capacity building is essential for achieving national development goals. Yet, despite acknowledging the importance of CPD, the government's actions have not translated into widespread institutional support for private educators (Planning Commission, 2007). The literature highlights a global consensus on the value of CPD in improving educational outcomes.

However, in the context of Pakistani private education, the absence of standardized CPD frameworks, weak regulatory support, and limited institutional commitment have led to significant implementation gaps. Addressing these challenges requires context-sensitive models that integrate institutional policy, leadership involvement, teacher needs assessment, and monitoring mechanisms.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a **sequential explanatory mixed-methods design** to comprehensively examine the existing practices of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in private educational institutions and to develop a structured CPD model. This approach enabled the integration of quantitative data for generalizability with qualitative data for deeper contextual insights (Creswell &

Clark, 2011). The design unfolded in two distinct phases: a quantitative phase involving surveys administered to teachers and head teachers, followed by a qualitative phase consisting of focus group discussions with educational experts and school owners.

Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of teachers and head teachers working in private educational institutions (PEIs) located within Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Pakistan. These institutions included low-fee schools charging up to PKR 5000 per month. A multi-stage stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness across various school types and geographic areas.

- **Quantitative sample:** 428 teachers and 134 head teachers participated in the structured surveys.
- **Qualitative sample:** 20 participants (educational experts and school owners) were selected purposively for focus group discussions. This sampling strategy facilitated the inclusion of diverse perspectives from various stakeholders in the private education sector.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using both standardized questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides:

1. **Questionnaires** for teachers and head teachers measured key dimensions of CPD practices, including institutional support, access to training, challenges, and perceptions of CPD effectiveness. These instruments were validated through expert review and pilot testing, with strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha > 0.70).
2. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** explored deeper insights into systemic issues, leadership perspectives, and recommendations for CPD improvement.

The development and validation of instruments were guided by previous literature on CPD and contextual realities in Pakistani private education.

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative data were collected first through the administration of paper-based surveys to teachers and head teachers across selected PEIs. Upon analysis of this data, qualitative focus groups were conducted to enrich the findings and inform model development. Ethical approval was secured, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Data Analysis

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation were used to analyze the survey data using SPSS software. These analyses helped to assess trends, relationships, and group differences related to CPD practices and perceptions.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Data from FGDs were analyzed thematically using NVivo software. Thematic coding allowed the identification of key patterns and insights related to CPD challenges, leadership roles, and policy gaps. The findings from the qualitative phase were used to triangulate survey results and enrich the interpretation of data.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical research standards, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw. Participants were informed of the study's objectives and their rights before data collection. All data were anonymized and used solely for academic purposes.

Results

This section presents the key findings derived from the quantitative surveys of teachers and head teachers, followed by qualitative insights from focus

group discussions with educational experts and school owners. The data reveal patterns in CPD practices, institutional support, challenges faced by educators, and stakeholder recommendations for effective professional development in private educational institutions (PEIs).

Quantitative Findings

Demographic Characteristics

The teacher sample (N = 428) included both male and female educators across various subject areas and school levels (grades I-VIII). The head teacher group (N = 134) represented administrative leadership from low-fee private schools in Islamabad Capital Territory. Most participants had 3-15 years of teaching experience.

Teachers' Perceptions of CPD

Survey data indicated that a majority of teachers (78%) acknowledged the importance of CPD in enhancing teaching efficacy and classroom performance. However, only 42% reported having access to structured CPD programs. Teachers largely depended on self-directed learning or sporadic school-led workshops.

Institutional Support for CPD

The findings highlighted a significant gap in institutional support:

- Only 38% of teachers agreed that their schools actively facilitated CPD.
- Less than 30% indicated that their schools had a formal CPD policy.
- Financial support for training programs was available to just 18% of respondents.

Barriers to CPD Participation

Key barriers reported by teachers included:

- **Time constraints** due to teaching workload (reported by 67%).
- **Lack of funding** for external training (reported by 59%).

- **Limited motivation** due to the absence of career-linked incentives (reported by 51%).

Statistical Associations

- **Gender Differences:** Female teachers reported higher motivation for CPD but less institutional support compared to male teachers ($p < .05$).
- **Teaching Experience:** Teachers with less than five years of experience perceived greater value in CPD but had fewer opportunities to access formal training.
- **Correlations:** Strong positive correlations were found between institutional support and teacher participation in CPD ($r = .64, p < .01$), and between CPD engagement and self-reported teaching effectiveness ($r = .57, p < .01$).

Head Teachers' Perspectives

Head teachers generally supported CPD initiatives but cited logistical and budgetary constraints as key impediments. While 72% expressed interest in structured CPD for staff, only 26% had implemented such programs. Leadership involvement in planning or evaluating training was minimal in most institutions.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of focus group discussions with educational experts and school owners revealed the following key themes:

1. Leadership and Policy Gaps

Participants highlighted the absence of institutional policies and clear leadership roles in promoting CPD. School leaders often lacked awareness or expertise in managing professional learning systems.

2. Inadequate Incentive Structures

Teachers received little to no career advancement for engaging in CPD. Participants emphasized that linking CPD to promotions or salary increments could improve participation.

3. Need for Contextualized Training

Stakeholders stressed the need for training programs that reflect the real challenges faced by

teachers in low-fee private schools, such as multigrade teaching and limited resources.

4. Recommendations for Model Development

Participants advocated for a CPD model that includes:

- A school-based needs assessment framework
- Modular training formats for flexibility
- Leadership-led monitoring and evaluation
- Integration of online platforms for accessibility

Discussion

This study investigated the current practices, challenges, and needs related to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) among teachers in private educational institutions (PEIs) within Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan. The mixed-methods approach provided a holistic view of CPD implementation and its institutional limitations. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative phases reveal a gap between the recognized importance of CPD and its practical execution in private settings.

Teachers' Perceptions and Institutional Constraints

The majority of teachers (78%) affirmed the significance of CPD in enhancing instructional quality, a finding consistent with prior research (Day & Gu, 2014; Mokhele&Jita, 2012). However, access to structured CPD programs remains limited, with only 42% of teachers reporting participation in organized training. The predominant reliance on self-directed learning signals a systemic lack of institutional responsibility for professional growth—a concern echoed by Gujjar et al. (2010), who emphasized the need for institutionalized CPD policies. The findings also underscore critical barriers such as limited funding, time constraints, and absence of career incentives. These results parallel the literature identifying time, resources, and motivation as persistent CPD challenges (Ngala

& Odebero, 2010; Umar & Fayyaz, 2017). Gender-based analysis indicated that female teachers, despite high motivation, face greater institutional neglect—raising equity concerns that require targeted intervention.

Leadership and Policy Gaps in CPD Implementation

The study's qualitative phase shed light on leadership deficits and policy voids in CPD planning. While head teachers recognized the value of professional development, few had mechanisms in place to support it. Similar conclusions were drawn by Englund, Olofsson, and Price (2018), who noted that sustainable CPD requires systemic backing through policy, planning, and leadership involvement. Focus group participants highlighted the absence of structured needs assessments and leadership-driven strategies in private schools. These insights align with Guskey's (2000) CPD model, which emphasizes the need for institutional leadership, relevance to practice, and systematic evaluation to drive teacher learning effectively.

The Need for Contextualized CPD Models

Participants in both phases advocated for a CPD model that is responsive to the practical realities of low-fee private schools, including constraints such as multigrade classrooms and limited digital infrastructure. This echoes prior findings that highlight the importance of context-sensitive and flexible CPD models, especially in under-resourced educational settings (Knowles et al., 2015; Sywelem& Witte, 2013). The proposed CPD model emerging from this study addresses these contextual demands by integrating modular training, leadership support, blended learning options, and performance-linked incentives. It offers a framework aligned with both national education policies (NEP, 2009) and international standards for sustainable teacher development.

Contributions to Educational Policy and Practice

This study contributes to a growing body of evidence on the structural challenges facing teacher development in private education in Pakistan. By providing empirical data and a model grounded in both theory and practice, the research informs policymakers, educational planners, and school administrators about the mechanisms necessary for effective CPD. Moreover, by linking CPD engagement with self-reported teaching effectiveness and institutional support, the study strengthens the case for integrating CPD into school improvement plans and educational reform agendas. It also supports the notion that CPD should not be an isolated activity but a continuous, institutionally embedded process that aligns with school goals and student outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations emerge that can guide stakeholders in enhancing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers in private educational institutions. It is essential that policymakers develop and enforce a standardized CPD policy framework that extends to all private institutions, ensuring consistency in training quality and participation. Such policies should mandate periodic professional development as a requirement for teacher certification and progression, thereby embedding CPD into the broader educational quality assurance system.

School administrators must proactively integrate CPD into institutional development plans, aligning professional learning with school goals and student needs. Regular needs assessments should be conducted to identify specific skill gaps among teaching staff, which can then inform the design of targeted and relevant training programs. Furthermore, offering incentives such as promotions, salary increments, and formal

recognition can significantly enhance teacher motivation to engage in ongoing development.

Teachers, as lifelong learners, should maintain personal CPD portfolios to document and reflect on their growth over time. Participation in peer-led training, professional networks, and digital learning platforms can help overcome limitations related to time, resources, and access. Teachers also play a pivotal role in advocating for improved CPD infrastructure within their institutions, and their voices should be incorporated into the planning and evaluation of development initiatives.

Academic researchers and practitioners are encouraged to build on this study by testing and refining the proposed CPD model across diverse educational contexts. Further inquiry should focus on the long-term effects of structured CPD on teaching quality, student learning outcomes, and institutional performance. Moreover, research into technology-enabled and hybrid CPD formats is critical for expanding access and ensuring inclusivity, especially for teachers in under-resourced schools. Collectively, these recommendations highlight the need for a multi-level, collaborative approach to institutionalize effective CPD. When strategically implemented, such efforts can elevate the quality of teaching in private educational institutions and contribute to broader educational reform in Pakistan.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite its comprehensive scope, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the research was geographically limited to private educational institutions in the Islamabad Capital Territory, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions of Pakistan with differing socio-economic, cultural, and regulatory contexts. Educational landscapes in provinces such as Punjab, Sindh, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan may exhibit different patterns of CPD needs and implementation barriers due to local governance structures and resource availability. Secondly, the study focused primarily on low-fee private schools, which, although significant in number, may not reflect the practices and experiences of mid- and high-tier private institutions that may have more robust CPD systems in place. The exclusion of public sector schools also limits the comparative analysis of CPD frameworks across educational sectors. Thirdly, while the mixed-methods design provided valuable insights, the quantitative component relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias or inaccuracies in perception. Additionally, the qualitative findings, though rich and insightful, are limited by the sample size and context-specific perspectives of the participants involved in the focus group discussions. Given these limitations, future research should aim to expand the geographical and institutional scope of inquiry by including diverse educational contexts across multiple provinces and both public and private sectors. Comparative studies exploring CPD implementation in different types of schools can offer a more nuanced understanding of systemic strengths and weaknesses. Longitudinal studies that assess the long-term impact of CPD programs on teaching practices and student outcomes would also contribute significantly to the field. Furthermore, future investigations could examine the role of technology-enhanced CPD models, including online and blended learning approaches, especially in light of increasing digitalization in education. Exploring the perspectives of students and parents on the perceived benefits of teacher development could also enrich the discourse and inform more holistic educational policy reforms.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the current practices, challenges, and institutional gaps associated with

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) among teachers in private educational institutions (PEIs) in Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan. Using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, it revealed a significant disjuncture between the recognized importance of CPD and its practical implementation within the private sector. While educators and school leaders generally acknowledged the value of CPD in enhancing instructional quality and educational outcomes, the lack of structured programs, policy direction, and institutional support has rendered professional development efforts inconsistent and often ineffective. The results indicated that teachers largely depend on informal learning or self-initiated development, with minimal incentives or strategic alignment with career progression. These challenges are further compounded by the absence of regulatory mandates or coordinated frameworks guiding teacher development in private schools. The study proposes a contextually tailored CPD model that incorporates modular training, institutional needs assessments, leadership engagement, and built-in evaluation mechanisms. This model responds to the unique challenges faced by low-fee private schools and provides a roadmap for policymakers and administrators to institutionalize sustainable professional learning systems.

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