

Examining the Perceptions of Ghanaian Basic School (K-9) Teachers Towards Continuous Professional Development

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Abstract

This study examined the perceptions of Basic School (K-9) Teachers in Greater Accra towards continuous professional development programs. In carrying out this research, a descriptive survey design was applied. A survey was designed with Google Forms, and the link was posted to a WhatsApp group of 141 teachers from 63 basic schools in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana who were purposively sampled to participate in the study. All 141 teachers responded to the survey questions. The findings revealed mixed reactions from teachers towards continuous professional development programs/activities in Ghana. Some professional development programs, for instance, “Cluster/School Based INSET, ICT Integration in Teaching and Learning, Peer Class Observation, Classroom Management, and Subject Content and Methodology Professional Development” activities geared toward the needs of teachers therefore effective, whereas “Educational Leadership and School Management, Education of persons with Special Needs, Micro Teaching, and Social Dialogue” activities were not geared towards teachers needs therefore ineffective. The findings of this study provide valuable information to policymakers, Educational Administrators, and all stakeholders in Education. Considering the study's findings, conclusions and suggestions were provided.

Keywords: continuous professional development, teachers' perception, basic education (K-9)

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/14-30-05

Publication date: October 31st 2023

1. Introduction

The teaching profession is rapidly evolving in the 21st century around the world as it is now given much attention. Due to this transition and the day's standard, many conventional teaching approaches are being phased out in favor of new ones. Curricula are constantly changing to match teaching approaches, and teacher education programs are expanding to correlate with these changes. As a result, educators and language teachers should remain current on new advancements in their academic disciplines. They must continue to upgrade their knowledge on the job to keep up to date with the rapidly changing educational landscape.

Teacher Continuous Professional Development is a form of learning that strives to improve a teacher's professional competence and efficiency. Teacher professional development (TPD) is increasing interest as it is a crucial way to sharpen the knowledge and skills of teachers to assist students in gaining the needed competencies to succeed in this 21st century. In order to inculcate in students' essential skills such as critical thinking, intricate problem-solving abilities, proficient communication, profound comprehension of challenging subjects, collaborative teamwork, and independent self-guidance, it becomes imperative to employ holistic teaching methodologies that can foster the attainment of these vital proficiencies. Consequently, implementing effective professional development programs becomes essential to aid educators in acquiring and honing the instructional techniques necessary for imparting these competencies.

Numerous nations worldwide, including Ghana, have varied Teacher Continuous Professional Development policies with different professional development programs. The scarcity of individuals trained as professional teachers in Ghana, Africa, and elsewhere has become a worldwide issue. This is due to a nation's dependence on excellent education as a wheel for social, political, and economic progress. The caliber of educators who execute educational regulations and policies influences any nation's education. For that matter, teachers play a critical role in helping to shape the lives of the young generation, who are the future of any country. Education is dynamic, following worldwide trends in socioeconomic growth and technological progress (National Teaching Council [NTC], 2020).

(NTC, 2020) most Ghanaian instructors face significant challenges: Content knowledge understanding, action system knowledge, behavior modification, and class management abilities. Furthermore, the teaching profession has virtually ignored the “integration of inclusive pedagogies in teaching and learning strategies, reflective practice, the development of a teaching portfolio, and action research, all of which have harmed teachers' professional growth and resulted in low learner achievement of educational goals” (p.5).

Professional development, acknowledged worldwide as a vital component of teacher excellence, serves as a means for educators to sustain their up-to-date expertise in pedagogy and subject matter within their specialized fields. Furthermore, professional development holds significant potential to furnish classroom instructors with crucial knowledge and competencies, enabling them to evolve into adaptable professionals capable of advancing educational objectives aligned with government goals and priorities. As a result, Ghana developed a new professional development policy framework in 2020 to fulfill the standards embodied in the National Teachers Standards, which serve as recommendations for teachers to grow their skills and satisfy the learning requirements of their students (NTC, 2020).

Professional development policy is very dear to the heart of every country, and Ghana is no exception. The Education Ministry of Ghana has endorsed the Teacher Professional Development policy framework initiated by the National Teaching Council of Ghana and further directed its usage in all K12 educational institutions nationwide.

The policy documents have also been highly suggested to stakeholders involved in the training of teachers as a critical resource like the ‘Ghana Education Service (GES), the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Ghana publishers, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Teacher Unions, and other organizations whose mission is to help K12 teachers to build their competencies and skills.

In light of this, this research investigates Basic School (K-9) teachers' perceptions regarding Continuous Professional Development programs in Ghana. The goal is to give substantial proof of suggestions that will aid in formulating more extensive Continuous Professional Development policies and implementing successful practice and subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

2. Theoretical Framework and Related Literature; Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy)

Adult Learning Theory provides the theoretical basis for this research. The theory was propounded by Malcolm Shepherd Knowles, an American educator who was possibly one of the influential personalities regarding adult education in the United States during the latter part of the 20th century.

Alexander Kapp, a German schoolteacher, was the first proponent of the theory in 1833. Then, Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy established andragogy as an adult education theory. However, Malcolm Knowles subsequently made it highly popular in the United States. Andragogy is a Greek word that means "man-leading". Adult learning theory (andragogy) examines how adults learn in different ways than children. Adults, for example, are more self-directed, inwardly driven, and willing to learn.

Andragogy is the art and science of adult learning; thus, andragogy refers to any form of adult learning. (Knowles, 1984, p. 12 as cited in Smith, M. K. 2002). For Knowles, andragogy was premised on at least four crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about child learners on which traditional pedagogy is premised, and a fifth one was added later.

Knowles (1984) found the characteristics of Andragogy as follows:

‘Self-concept: As a person matures, his self-concept moves from being a dependent personality towards being a self-directed human being. As a result, adult learners must participate in planning and evaluating their progress as learners, thus explaining why something is important to learn.

‘Experience; As a person matures, he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning. As a result, learning activities are built on experience (including failures); hence themes/topics should be relevant to learners' prior knowledge to help promote learning’.

‘Readiness to learn; As a person matures, his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his societal roles. Conversely, adults are more interested in learning subjects directly related to and impacting their work, personal lives, or real-life requirements; people will not learn unless they are ready and motivated to learn.

‘Orientation to learning: As a person matures, his time perspective changes from postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly, his orientation toward learning shifts from subject-centeredness or segregation of content to problem-centeredness. This indicates that adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-driven to teach learners how to navigate information independently.

‘Motivation to learn’ As a person matures, the motivation to learn is internal. Adult learning requires helping learners overcome inhibitions, behaviors, and beliefs about learning’ (p.12).

2.1 Ghana's Current Policy on Teacher Professional Development and Management

According to the Education Regulatory Bodies Act 2020 (Act 1023, section 59), the National Teaching Council (NTC) is responsible for regulating the teaching profession in Ghana (p.36). The council is also responsible for designing and managing professional development policy for the K-12 education level, establishing a teacher's obligation and responsibility to become a highly qualified and effective educator in this current dispensation.

Stakeholders in Ghana education, such as teachers, teacher unions, the District and Municipal directorate of education, the Ghana Education Service (GES), and other Teacher Development Content Providers, take guidance from the policy document on offering great in-service teacher training activities. "Mandatory, Ranked-Based, and Recommended tasks" have been identified in the Framework. The latter is likewise separated into groups based on the assignment complexity and participation of the teacher. This guarantees that credit point computations are consistent and that credit point allocation is genuine.

Teachers at various ranks in Ghana have access to 'Compulsory' and 'ranked-based' professional development activities. Additionally, they must select one of the Approved tutoring classifications to meet a Professional Development point obligation at a particular grade or level in a 3-year Professional Development phase.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) is available at the school and circuit level for teachers to undergo professional learning activities through a supply-driven mode (NTC, 2020). Teachers can now access Accredited Service Providers on Demand through the teachers' webpage for Professional Development activities. Development Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who work in partnership with the Ghana Education Service (GES) are also certified to conduct supply-driven programs for teachers through District Education offices (NTC, 2020).

According to the National Teaching Council (2020), guidelines for awarding Continuing Education points at various grades are included in the framework. Teachers' logbooks keep track of Professional Development activities, which are subsequently uploaded to the teacher's online account. Professional Development organizers can pick from a list of certified activities on the site and offer points to instructors who may partake. Teachers must create their portfolio for assessment in addition to earning Professional Development credits, and the "two (PD score and Portfolio Assessment Score) are used to evaluate a teacher's professional status" (p.9).

NTC (2020) found that:

Suppose a teacher satisfies the Professional Learning point criteria but fails the Assessment Strategies or in any other way. In that case, he or she cannot renew his or her teaching license or work as a teacher in Ghana, according to the Teacher Regulatory Act. Teachers who acknowledge postings in disadvantaged areas as defined by the employer and the National Teaching Council are given extra opportunities to take part in two demand-driven professional development programs, which will be planned by the employer in collaboration with the National Teaching Council and will be free of charge to the staff except for transportation and feeding (p. 35).

NTC (2018) stated the objectives of the Ghanaian Teacher Professional Development Policy as follows: 'Provide a forum for harnessing ideas and experiences to improve professional competence and commitment.

'Offer intellectual, emotional, and social engagements to enrich teachers' experiences. To teach for better understanding, teachers must be intellectually engaged in their discipline and work regularly with others in their field.

'Maintain high competence that results from life-long learning.

'Demonstrate social responsiveness by encouraging members of the teaching profession to collaborate as a community of experts (Professional Learning 'Community – PLC), be current, skillful, and knowledgeable in their practice.

'Keep teachers in good standing and be abreast of time.

'Maintain professional excellence.

'Make available prospects to supplement the initial training of teachers and improve their knowledge, skills, attitude, and practices to meet diverse learners' learning needs.

'Assist teachers to adapt, contribute, think critically, and participate actively in addressing challenges associated with teaching and learning and implement recommendations.

'Augment teachers' commitment to their chosen profession" (pp.13-14).

The policy also emphasizes competency-based teacher professional development. It calls for frequent "In-Service Education and Training (INSET)" to help instructors build their skills and knowledge in current teaching and learning trends. According to the policy, teacher assessment is based on set standards and clear evidence of professional integrity when moving from one level to the next (e.g., from Principal Superintendent Rank to Assistant Director II Rank) according to the policy. Teachers in Ghana are responsible for choosing, undergoing,

and recording pertinent continuing education activities as part of rising through the career path and keeping their professional status intact.

Teacher licensing is another crucial element emphasized in Ghana's teaching regulatory body, the National Teaching Council's K-12 Professional Development and Management policy document, as a supervisory mechanism for ensuring that teachers are thoroughly updated on knowledge and instructional procedures. The policy provides that student teachers are licensed after graduating from the various colleges of education or Universities before they are recognized as professional teachers to be eligible for recruitment into the Ghana Education Service (GES). In order to meet professional standards, newly recruited teachers undergo induction in the form of "In-Service Training and Education (INSET) programs," during which they are assisted by mentors to be fully integrated into the service.

2.2 Activities for Teachers' Continuing Education

Teachers' individual needs, learning goals, and previous skills and experience impact their teaching and learning in their various classrooms. Continuing education of teachers is currently recognized worldwide as a critical part of the quest to improving effective teaching and learning in educational institutions to aid students' achievement levels. Given the increasing number and variety of Continuous Professional Development activities available, the most common and widely used are mentioned below.

2.2.1 Induction of Novice Teachers

Induction is an essential component in the lives of new teachers as it is a way to fully be baptized into the teaching profession and be familiar with the real work of life. All new teachers are assigned to the appropriate level after completing their basic pre-tertiary teacher education program. The primary teacher education package, on the other hand, is inadequate to qualify students as professional teachers, considering the duration of the program and the amount of practicum needed. As a result, teachers should engage in a systematic and ongoing professional development (CPD) program to improve their professional talents and performance (NTC, 2020).

Ministry of Education (MOE, 2004) found that novice teachers must take "an induction course" during their first year of work. To provide the right induction program for novice teachers, the National Teaching Council of Ghana has provided a generalized induction framework for all K12 educational institutions in Ghana.

2.2.2 Mentoring

All teachers can benefit from mentoring strategies as part of their professional growth. "Mentoring" has two degrees of meaning, according to Blandford (2000). In its most common definition, "mentoring" refers to providing professional assistance to newly trained teachers to provide a firm basis for lifelong learning in the early years of their careers. According to MOE (2003), "Mentoring is defined as collegial assistance and professional exchange among all instructors, which transforms the entire school into a dynamic learning community where continuous learning is the main business of every member of the community" (p.84).

2.2.3 Portfolio of Professional Development

Portfolios are a collection of recorded materials that demonstrate what a teacher has accomplished, fully understands, and can execute through his or her practical tasks. Moreover, it can be used to report learning expansion as a final method of evaluating teachers' skills, capabilities, and competencies, depicting teachers' professional upskill over time (MOE (2004).

A portfolio enables teachers to tailor their learning experiences in a way that allows them to focus on their professional development program. Participants in the CPD program may be required to keep a professional development library as one of their activities. This practice can potentially assist professionals by increasing teacher esteem and efficiency. Teachers are asked to prepare their observations and self-assessments after completing courses, activities, and professional discussions.

Organizations and teachers should be aware of several facets of teacher professional development, starting with understanding what professional development is and its importance for education reform and progress. Furthermore, schools, classroom teachers, or pre-service teacher trainers must appreciate the goals and objectives of each professional development program or activity to select the ones that best meet the requirements of teachers and students. Along with selecting effective programs, it is vital to diversify PD activities and give teachers various learning experiences appropriate for their teaching methodologies. Therefore, to enhance and develop language instruction, all parties, institutions, and teachers must be involved in the design, execution, and assessment of professional development activities.

The perceptions of teachers toward professional development activities are critical to the effectiveness of these activities since they are the key stakeholders in their own professional development. An essential element in the effectiveness of teacher professional development programs is their understanding of the need to enhance teaching techniques and introduce new ideas into the classroom. This may go a long way to help improve their pedagogical skills in the classroom and become more interested in professional development activities.

2.3 Purpose Statement

This study intends to explore Ghanaian Basic School teachers' perceptions towards Continuous Professional Development programs in Ghana. More importantly, this research aims to determine whether teachers are being provided with adequate opportunities for professional development as indicated in the policy document and their perceptions of these CPDs.

2.4 Research Question

What are the Perceptions of Ghanaian Basic School (K-9) Teachers towards Continuous Professional Development programs?

3. Research Method

The investigation was conducted using a descriptive survey approach. The study employed a survey because it allowed the researcher to evaluate the respondent's perceptions of Continuous professional development for Ghana teachers, making it easier to describe the situation and provide reasonable recommendations.

3.1 The Sample and Population

The population of the study included all Government of Ghana K9 Teachers in the Greater Accra Region. However, 141 K9 Teachers were selected from 63 public Schools to participate in this study. The researchers used the purposive sampling strategy to select the respondents for the investigation. The availability and willingness of the respondents to participate in the study led to the employment of this approach.

3.2 Research Instrument

The study employed self-designed survey questions to examine the research questions. The survey was divided into two sections. The first portion focused on the respondents' demographic profile, including their age, gender, highest educational degree, teaching experience, and level of teaching. The second segment concentrated on teachers' perceptions of continuing professional development programs.

In the survey, closed-ended questions were used. Closed-ended questions are precious since they create frequencies of replies that can be analyzed and treated statistically. In response to teachers' perceptions towards continuous professional development programs, the survey questions measured respondents' experiences, that is, whether or not respondents have taken part in specific continuous professional development programs found in the policy document (Yes/No) and then measured the perceptions of teachers by indicating how they agree to these continuous professional development programs that they took to be geared towards their needs as professional teachers. The research employed a four-point Likert scale offering respondents the following choices: "Strongly Disagree" (1), "Disagree" (2), "Agree" (3), and "Strongly Agree" (4).

3.3 Procedure

All teachers in the 63 public K9 schools whose head teachers consented to engage in the study received an open invitation to participate in the study outlining the goal. Teachers who wanted to participate were assembled in a WhatsApp group created by the researcher. Survey questions were designed with Google Forms, and the link to the form was posted to the teachers' WhatsApp group created by the researchers. Participants were required to submit the survey anonymously. Consent was implied in the completion of the survey. When all the participants had completed the survey, they were thanked for their time, and the WhatsApp group was closed.

3.4 Procedures for Data Analysis

The correctness and completeness of all survey questions were checked. For analysis, the survey responses were coded by assigning frequencies to the various categories of responses. The data was then analyzed and summarized using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. The results, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were tabulated, and the data was discussed.

4. Results and Findings

Table 1: Respondents Characteristics

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-30	40	28.4
31-40	70	49.6
41-50	25	17.7
51-60	6	4.3
Gender		
Male	96	68.1
Female	45	31.9
Highest educational qualification		
Diploma	59	41.8
Bachelor's degree	61	43.3
Master's degree	14	9.9
Other	7	5
Level of teaching		
KG	15	10.6
Primary	61	43.3
Junior High	65	46.5
Teaching Experience		
1-5	41	29.1
6-10	42	29.8
11-15	25	17.7
16-20	25	17.7
21 and above	8	5.7

N=141 (Source: Field data 2023).

4.1 Respondents Characteristics

Information was sought among teachers on the following personal characteristics: age, gender, highest educational qualification, level of teaching, and years of teaching (work experience).

Table 1 shows that most of the teachers in the study were middle-aged, with 95 participants (67.3%) ranging from 31 to 50 years. 40 participants (28.4%) were young teachers (20-30 years), and 6 participants (4.3%) were older (51-60 years). Males comprised 96 (68.1%) of the research participants, while females comprised 45 (31.9%).

According to the table, most of the teachers who participated in the study teach at the junior high school level; 61 (43.3%) teach at the primary school level, and just 15(10.6%) teach at the kindergarten level. A significant proportion of the teachers in the survey, 61 (43.3%), had a bachelor's degree. Only 14 (9.9%) of the teachers had a master's degree, the highest level of qualification. The most experienced teachers in the survey had been teaching for more than 21 years, 8 (5.7%). However, most participants (31.4%) had been teaching for 6-10 years 42 (29.8%).

Table 2: Teacher's participation experiences in Continuous professional development activities

Continuous Professional Development Programs	Yes	No
Cluster/School-Based INSET	94 (66.7%)	47 (33.3%)
ICT Integration in Teaching and Learning	48 (34%)	93 (66%)
Peer Class Observation	48 (43%)	93 (66%)
Further Studies (Study Leave/Distance/Sandwich)	55 (39%)	86 (61%)
Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Strategies	75 (53.2%)	66 (46.8%)
Classroom Management/Assessment	62 (44%)	79 (56%)
Subject Content and Methodology	55 (39%)	86 (61%)
Educational Leadership and School Management	40 (28.4%)	101 (71.6%)
Inclusive Education/Education of Persons with Special Needs/ /Gender Equity and Social Inclusion	32 (22.7%)	109 (77.3%)
Micro Teaching/Teaching Practicum/mentoring practices	20 (14.2%)	121 (85.8%)
Social Dialogue	15 (10.6%)	126 (89.4%)

N=141 (source: Field data 2023)

The results, as shown in Table 2.0, reveal that cluster/School-Based INSET 94(66.7%) and Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Strategies 75(53.2%) were the frequent form of continuous professional development

programs in which the teachers participated. Also, ‘ICT Integration in teaching and learning 48(34%), Subject Content and Methodology 55(39%), Classroom Management/Assessment 62(44%), educational leadership and school management 40(28.4%) are the moderately participated activities. Conversely, Social Dialogue Micro 15 (10.6) Teaching practices 20 (14.2%) were the least participated in continuous professional development programs.

Table 3:

Teachers’ perception of Continuing Professional Development events focuses on their needs.

Continuous Professional Development Programs	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total %	Mean	SD	Attitude
Cluster/School-Based INSET	6(4.3%)	9(6.4%)	24(17.0%)	102(72.3%)	100	3.57	.795	Agree
ICT Integration in Teaching and Learning	20(14.2%)	23(16.3%)	20(14.2%)	78(55.3%)	100	3.11	1.132	Agree
Peer Class Observation	11(7.8%)	30(21.3%)	36(25.5%)	64(45.4%)	100	3.09	.989	Agree
Further Studies (Study Leave/Distance/Sandwich)	63(44.7%)	49(34.8%)	4(2.8%)	25(17.7%)	100	1.94	1.090	Disagree
Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Strategies	34(24.1%)	48(34.0%)	14(9.9%)	45(31.9%)	100	2.50	1.175	agree
Classroom Management/Assessment	14(9.9%)	33(23.4%)	31(22.0%)	63(44.7%)	100	3.01	1.042	Agree
Subject Content and Methodology	18(12.8%)	42(29.8%)	29(20.6%)	52(36.9%)	100	2.82	1.073	Agree
Educational Leadership and School Management	48(34.0%)	46(32.6%)	19(13.5%)	28(19.9%)	100	2.19	1.114	Disagree
Inclusive Education/Education of Persons with Special Needs/ /Gender Equity and Social Inclusion	49(34.8%)	58(41.1%)	11(7.8%)	23(16.3%)	100	2.06	1.040	Disagree
Micro Teaching/Teaching Practicum/mentoring practices	57(40.4%)	43(30.5%)	25(17.7%)	16(11.3%)	100	2.00	1.021	Disagree
Social Dialogue	109(77.3%)	27(19.1%)	3(2.1%)	2(1.4%)	100	1.28	.577	Disagree

Source: (Field Data, 2023)

The results of teachers’ perception of Continuing Professional Development events focused on their needs are summarized in Table 3. With a Likert scale of five, which was re-grouped into four: “Strongly Disagree (1)”, “Disagree (2)”, “Agree (3)”, and “Strongly Agree (4)”. For discussion purposes, “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were grouped as “Disagree,” while “Strongly agree” and “agree” as “Agree.”

Table 3 shows that the majority of the teachers, 102(72.3%), strongly agree and 24(17.0%) agree that Cluster/School-Based INSET was focused on their needs; however, 9(6.4%) of the teachers disagree, and 6(4.3%) strongly disagree with Cluster/School-Based INSET focused on their needs. A shared mean of 3.57 indicates that the teachers agree that the Cluster/School-Based INSET activity focused on their needs.

Again, with regards to ICT Integration in teaching and learning and Peer Class Observation, the majority of the teachers, 78(55.3%) and 64(45.4%) respectively, strongly agree, and 20(14.2%), 36(25.5%) respectively agree that these programs were focused on their needs. On the other side of the coin, 20(14.2%), 11(7.8%) respectively strongly disagree and 23(16.3%), 30(21.3%) respectively disagree. With a shared mean of 3.11 and 3.09, teachers agree that the programs they participated in focused on their needs.

Furthermore, 45(31.9%) of the teachers strongly agree, and 14(9.9%) agree that the pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Strategies activity they have taken part in was geared towards their needs. However, 48(34%) disagree while 34(24.1%) strongly disagree. With a shared mean of 2.50, it means that teachers agree.

In another development, Classroom Management/Assessment and Subject Content and Methodology Continuous Professional development activities saw the majority of teachers, 63(44.7%) and 52(36.9%) respectively, strongly agree that these activities were focused on their needs, 31(22%) and 29(20.6%) of teachers respectively agree. However, 33(23.4%) and 42(29.8%) of the teachers respectively disagree while 14(9.9%) and 18(12.8%) strongly disagree. With a shared mean of 3.01 and 2.82, respectively, teachers agree.

From Table 3, 48(34%), 49(34.8%), 57(40.4%), and 109(77.3%) of the teachers strongly disagree that Educational Leadership and School Management, ‘Education of Persons with Special Needs/Inclusive Education /Gender Equity and Social Inclusion’, ‘Micro Teaching/Teaching Practicum/mentoring practices, and Social Dialogue’ activities respectively were geared towards their needs. In the same way, 46(32.6%), 58(41.1%),

43(30.5%), and 27(19.1%) of the teachers disagree. On the other hand, 28(19.9%), 23(16.3%), 16(11.3%), and 2(1.4%) of the teachers respectively strongly agree while 19(13.5%), 11(7.8%), 29(20.6%) and 3(2.1%) of the teachers respectively agree. The shared mean of 2.19, 2.06, 2.0, and 1.28 indicates that the teachers disagree.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

Based on the educational qualification revealed in the findings, 59(41.8%) of the respondents hold Teacher's Diploma certificates, 61(43.3%) hold Bachelor's degrees, 14(9.9%) hold Master's degrees, and the remaining 7(5%) hold other forms of certification including non-teaching professional certification. This illustrates that a significant 95% of the respondents are professionally qualified teachers. This supports the claim that even within the realm of education, it is generally acknowledged that the quality of teachers is the most crucial variable because teachers have a critical impact on students' learning outcomes (Ladd & Sorenson, 2014; Rivkin et al., 2005). The finding further contradicts the assertion by Ndirangu (2004), who underscores the pivotal role of teachers in shaping curriculum advancement, shedding light on their significance within the education framework. A teacher's qualifications and experience significantly affect students' academic achievement (Owoeye, 2000; Ibrahim, 2000).

From the findings, it can be seen that 102(72.3%), 78(55.3%), 63(44.7%), and 52(36.9%) of the respondents strongly agree, and 24(17%), 20(14.2%), 36(25.5%), 31(22%) and 29(20.6%) of the respondents respectively agree that cluster/school based INSET, 'ICT integration in teaching and learning, peer class observation', classroom management and subject content and methodology professional development activities meet their needs therefore effective. However, 6(4.3%), 20(14.2%), 11(7.8%), 14(9.9%) and 18(12.8%) strongly disagree and 9(6.4%), 23(16.3%), 30(21.3%), 33(23.4%) and 42(29.8%) of the respondents also disagree to that. This indicates that majority ($M=3.57$, $SD=.795$), ($M=3.11$, $SD=1.132$), ($M=3.09$, $SD=.989$), ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.042$), and ($M=282$, $SD=1.073$) of the teachers support this assertion. This finding is consistent with Smith, M.K (2002), who stated that learning activities are built on experiences; hence, themes or topics should be relevant to the learner's prior knowledge to help promote learning.

He added that adults are more interested in learning subjects directly related to and impacting their work, personal lives, or real-life situations and that individuals will only learn when they are ready and motivated to learn. He again added that adult learners must participate in designing and assessing what they have to learn, pointing to the learners' necessity of acquiring the knowledge they are expected to grasp.

It is important to note that the content of Cluster/School-Based INSET is derived from the challenges that teachers face in their classroom and teaching. Also, School-Based INSET is organized once every week in every Basic school (K9) in Ghana; cluster-based INSET draws teachers from different schools within a particular locality or geographical area, which is organized twice every term. Teachers design and implement School-Based INSET and Cluster-Based INSET activities and further evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of those activities. This finding is further supported by the objective of the National Teaching Council of Ghana's professional development framework, which states that providing a forum for harnessing ideas and experiences to improve professional competence and commitment"; "demonstrates social responsiveness by encouraging members of the teaching profession to collaborate as a community of experts (Professional Learning Community-PLC"; "be current, skillful and knowledgeable in their practice" (p.13).

The professional development policy underscores the importance of competency-based teacher professional development that mandates teachers to enhance their competencies and skills through active participation in INSET in modern teaching and learning trends. The finding is further consistent with Abaka (2020) in a study conducted in the central region of Ghana, who reiterates the point that well-organized Continuous Professional Development activities influenced basic school teachers' learning, for instance, In-Service Education and training (INSET), workshops; and Continuing Education which functioned as cultural artifacts to promote learning. She additionally asserts that as a means of learning, professional development activities aim to re-educate teachers to achieve a certain degree of competence. Professional development provides teachers valuable chances to shape their expertise through group assignments and various learning activities. Teachers also benefit from facilitators who influence and stimulate their professional growth. Abaka (2020) stems her argument from the fact that 85.15 of the respondents suggested that In-service training was one of the predominant forms of CPD activities. Also, 52.1% of the respondents rated high in the areas of ICT skills for teachers as self-reported learning needs.

However, 63(44.7%), 48(38%), 49(34.8%), 57(40.4%) and 109(77.3%) strongly disagree. In comparison, 49(34.8%), 46(32.6%), 58(41.4%), 43(30.5%) and 27(19.9%) of the respondents respectively disagree that further studies (study leave/Distance/Sandwich), educational leadership and school management, 'education of persons with special needs/inclusive education/gender equity and social inclusion,' 'micro-teaching/teaching practicum/mentoring practices and social dialogue' professional development activities meet their needs. This implies that the majority ($M=1.94$, $SD=1.09$), ($M=2.19$, $SD=1.114$), ($M=2.06$, $SD=1.040$), ($M=2.00$, $SD=1.02$) and ($M=1.28$, $SD=.578$) of the respondents respectively disagree that these activities that they took part in meet their need. It is evident from Table 2, which seeks teachers' CPD participation experiences that most teachers did

not attend these CPD activities. For instance, 126(89.4%), 121(85.8%), 109(77.3%), 101(71.6%) and 86(61%) of the respondents indicated “No” to the participation of social dialogue, ‘micro-teaching/teaching practicum/mentoring practices, education of persons with special need/inclusion education/gender equity and social inclusion,’ educational leadership and school management and further studies (study leave/distance, sandwich).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This has investigated the perceptions of Ghanaian basic school teachers in the Greater Accra Region towards Continuous Professional Development programs. The realization is that there were mixed reactions from teachers towards continuous professional development programs in Ghana. Some professional development programs like Cluster/School-Based INSET, ICT Integration in Teaching and Learning, Peer Class Observation, Classroom Management, and Subject Content and Methodology Professional Development Activities meet teachers' needs and are adequate. In contrast, Educational Leadership and School Management, ‘Education of Persons with Special Needs/Inclusive Education /Gender Equity and Social Inclusion, ‘Micro Teaching/Teaching Practicum/mentoring practices, and Social Dialogue activities were not geared towards their needs and therefore ineffective.

Based on the findings, there is a need to revise the content of affected continuous development programs, which teachers perceived as not meeting their needs to directly impact their job as professional teachers. Also, attention should be given to all CPD activities to holistically prepare teachers for 21st-century teaching. The need to receive rigorous training continuously on all CPD activities found in the policy document, and as much as possible, in the planning and evaluation of continuous professional development activities, basic school teachers should be given the opportunity to be part of the team.

5.1 Limitation

The study was exclusively focused on Basic School (K9) Teachers in the Greater Accra Region, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other regions or levels of education in Ghana. Additionally, using a WhatsApp group for survey distribution may introduce selection bias, as only teachers within the group were included, potentially excluding those with differing perspectives on continuous professional development. Therefore, the results should be interpreted within the context of this specific sample and distribution method.

5.2 Validity and reliability of the instrument:

A valid research finding is one in which there is a similarity between the reality that exists on the ground and the description of that reality. There was a pre-testing of the research questionnaire to confirm the instrument's validity. The pre-testing led to the modification of the questionnaire.

Before the pre-testing, the questionnaire was shown to colleagues and experienced researchers for their professional input. This was to take care of the face and construct validity of the instrument. Statistically, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.732 was used to justify the degree of reliability of the research instruments. In the same way, semi-structured interviews and focus group guides were also shown to experienced researchers for their input. In addition, the interview, as it was carried out between the researcher and the interviewees, they were made to confirm the date and time favorable to them.

Conflicting Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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