In-Service EFL Teachers' Needs Assessment for Professional Development (PD) at Public Sector Universities in Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract:

This study aims to reveal English language teachers perception towards professional development and to identify their needs regarding professional development. Present study used quantitative method to describe needs of the English teachers. The study included 100 EFL teachers who are working at Universities of Sindh. In order to achieve aim of the study, researcher used questionnaire for data collection. Research questionnaire consisted of three sections each of it included statements. Findings of the study clarified that professional development is essential with the emergence of new trend in ELT, it also helps in improving students, success and achievement, and it improves teachers' learning and teaching quality. Furthermore, teachers needed professional development training programs on teaching language skills, classroom management, teaching methods and techniques and assessment and evaluation.

Key words: Needs Analysis, Professional Development, and Teachers' Needs.

1.   Introduction:

English has become a language which is spoken and learnt worldwide. Fareh (2010) stated that it has become a fundamental part of educational curriculum; books are developed to facilitate and various institutes are providing English language learning courses. Therefore in the English classes diversity is observed in terms of different socio-cultural and psychological background, leaning styles and learning experiences. It greatly affect on students' learning and teachers' teaching. Teachers need to adopt different and innovative instructional strategies in order to meet the goals. It is acknowledged that quality education is the product of teaching quality. It is emphasized that success of educational system lies on the teaching quality literature has also greatly emphasized on the teaching quality education is linked to the teachers' professional development. Thus, teachers need to be up-to-date with the new trend in education.

In 2003 Higher education commission introduced learning innovative division program for continuous professional development for the teachers at the university level in order to maintain academic excellence of the institutes around the Pakistan. English language teaching reform is one of its departments which provide two programs of professional development. It includes short term programs; workshops and seminars and long term are the fellowships. Saleem, Masrur & Afzal, (2014) stated that there are more than 17000 teachers of the university from which 161 are given fellowships whereas 1343 teachers are trained through short term programs.

Wallace (1991) had presented three models which are practiced in the teacher professional development programs that are; Craft model, applied science model and reflective model. Craft model of teacher education is a traditional model which is consisted expert and trainee. Where, the task of trainee is to learn teaching techniques from the expert by observing instructional practices. Trainee is supposed to imitate teaching practices of expert which is more fashioned in the practicum. In Applied science model teaching is considered as a science. Teaching expert presents the insights of the teaching theories and trainees has to draw conclusion from the presented knowledge. Reflective model is the combination of these two models where trainers teaching experiences and received knowledge is combined to make trainees to reflect on it. Recently this model is more fashioned to train trainees to develop professional competency. Burns (2017) criticized training models where teacher is considered as the receiver of the knowledge. Further Kiely & Davis (2010: 280) added that if these models sustained then teachers would fail to achieve the expected targets.

1.1.   Problem statement:

Nelson Graff (2011) stated that studies has shown that various teachers are struggling to figure out what and how to teach in order to be up-to-date and meet the needs of the student. Thus, with the emergence of new trends in the English language teaching, there is a great need to change language teaching and it greatly affect in the

achievements of students. The models which are more fashioned in training programs do not help teachers effectively in developing their professional competency. Professional competency is developed when trainings programs help teachers to fulfill their needs for professional development. Issue is highlighted in the literature is the lack of proper in-service teacher training (Coşkun-Demirpolat 2015).

Haq, Tirmazi & Zulfqar (2018) cited Schleicher (2011) and stated that literature is evident there is a greater need of teachers' professional learning on subject disciplines and teachers teaching and learning. Teachers are expected to meet the needs of the students and bring improvement in the educational process. This can be achieve by taking teachers' voice into the consideration then the adequate and effective teachers training programs should be launched for the professional development of the EFL teachers.

1.2.   Aim of the study:
Aim of the present study was to identify EFL teachers' perception towards professional development and analyze their needs for professional development.

2.   Literature review:

2.1.   In-service training and teacher education:
Teacher education is the preparations of teachers for professional development which do not merely depend on training teacher but it also help teachers to enhance teaching skills along with the other abilities. Burns (2010) and Wallace, (1991) stated that in-service training and education of teacher can greatly effect on the educational process. It helps teachers professionally fulfill their responsibilities and duties. Teacher education and training plays vital role in the development of teacher. It helps teachers to understand their strength and weaknesses and find ways to improve. Gopang (2016) stated that teacher training programs should be organized in such a way that they meet the needs of the teachers. Therefore before implementing any teacher training program it is necessary to explore needs of the teachers.

2.2.   Professional development:
Professional development is includes all the activities under which a teacher goes to enhance skills and knowledge for professional development and career advancement. Guskey (2000) defined it as a systematic process which is designed to enhance individuals' professional knowledge, skills and attitudes. Professional development has tendency to have profound effect on the teachers.

2.3.   Theoretical framework:
Presents study used Situated Cognition Theory of Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989). It helped in defining learning at the workplace. In the literature there are various theories that are developed to explain learning is collaborative, and socially embodied which results in constructing, and negotiating knowledge (Brown et al., 1989; Webster-Wright, 2009). According to the theory, learning is constructed socially, embodied with job, and occurs with the social interaction. This theory has explained how learning takes place at the workplace. Brown et al. (1989) helped to enlighten learning needs and learning process of teachers.

3.   Methodology:
Quantitative research is a process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data numerically (Creswell, 2012). He further added that it begins with problem statement, formulation of hypothesis, and reviewed literature to analyze and interpret numerically. It is a approach which helps researcher to collect data from a larger population through research questionnaire and surveys and present generalized results. Therefore, quantitative research methodology is used in present study.

3.1.   Population and sample of the study:
Sample population of the present study is the EFL teachers which were selected through convenient sampling. There were 100 EFL teachers teaching at the universities of the Sindh.

3.2.   Instrumentation and data collection:
Present study was quantitative therefore researcher used questionnaire s a tool to collect data from the participants of the study. The questionnaire was consisted of three sections. Section one included demographic data, section two had five statements to investigate EFL teachers' perception towards professional development and the third section included statements related to need analysis of the EFL teachers.

3.3.   Data analysis:

Present study was descriptive study; researcher analyzed collected data through descriptive statistics. Researcher used percentage, mean and standard deviation for descriptive analysis. Researcher used SPSS for descriptive analysis.

4.   Results and discussion:

4.1.   Section 1: Demographic data:

This part of the research questionnaire helped researcher to know about the selected participants of the study. It included question related to the level of education of the participants, their teaching experience, and number of the professional development programs attended by the research participants in past three years.

Level of education:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undergraduate	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Master's	83	83.0	83.0	92.0
	PhD.	8	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Results presented in the Table reveal that 83% of the participants had done their masters. 9% of the participants had done undergraduate and 8% of the population was PhD.

Teaching Experiences:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-3	35	35.0	35.0	35.0
	4-6	26	26.0	26.0	61.0
	7-9	16	16.0	16.0	77.0
	10-15	14	14.0	14.0	91.0
	More than 15	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Above mentioned table presents that 35% of the EFL teachers had 1-3 years teaching experience, 26% of the teachers had 4-6 years, 16% of the participants had 7-9 years, 14% had 10-15 years and only 9% of the participants had more than 15 years teaching experience.

Participation in Professional development training

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	70	70.0	70.0	70.0
	No	30	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Above tables reveals that 70% of the participants had attended professional development sessions.

Number of sessions attended in past three years:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 10	82	82.0	82.0	82.0
	10-30	14	14.0	14.0	96.0
	30-60	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Results mention in the above tables revels that 82% of the research participants had attended less than 10 professional development sessions, 14% of the participants had attended 10-30 sessions, and 4% of the participants had attended 30-60 sessions in past three years.

4.2.   Section 2: Research Question1: Perception of the EFL teachers' towards professional development.
This section helps researcher to identify perceptions of the EFL teachers towards professional development.

EFL Teachers' perceptions toward professional development:

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Teachers' Professional development is essential with the emergency of new trends in ELT.	1.96	1.230
Need assessment is necessary before launching teachers' professional development.	2.12	1.217
Teachers' professional development increases teachers learning and achievement.	2.00	1.295
Professional development improves teaching quality.	2.03	1.329
Professional development results in improving student success.	2.08	1.253

Above table reveals that higher mean value (M=2.12) represents that teachers' perceive that need assessment is necessary before launching professional development program and (M=2.08) mean value represent that professional development programs results in improving students success.

4.3.   Section three: Research Question 2:- Needs of EFL teachers' for professional development:
To answer this research, researcher had four variables; teaching language skills, teaching methods and techniques, classroom management, and evaluation and assessment.

Teaching Language skills:

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pronunciation	2.06	1.205
Speaking	2.10	1.283
Listening	2.18	1.250
Reading	2.11	1.262
Writing	2.00	1.247

In the above table Higher mean value (M= 2.18 and M=2.11) represents that teachers more preferred trainings on teaching listening and reading skills.

Teaching Methods and techniques:

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Training on new emerging trends in ELT.	2.06	1.205
Training on developing lesson plans	2.09	1.223
Training on communicative language teaching CLT	2.12	1.225
Training on Developing learner autonomy	2.06	1.213
Training on Developing learners' critical thinking skills	1.97	1.251

Higher mean value in the Table (M=2.12) reveals that they needed training on communicative language teaching CLT and (M=2.09) developing lesson plans.

Classroom management:

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Dealing with disruptive student behavior	2.22	1.292
Dealing with learner indifference	2.16	1.178
Managing time effectively in class	2.07	1.233
Monitoring group and pair work activities	2.10	1.185

Results in the table reveals that in classroom management higher mean value is (M=2.22) training on dealing with disruptive behavior of students and (M=2.16) on dealing with learner indifferences in class.

Evaluation and assessment:

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Training on variety of assessment technique	2.14	1.181
Training on Applying different means of assessment	2.03	1.167
Training on variety of Feedback techniques	2.02	1.180
Designing tasks to measure learners' achievement of learning objectives	2.11	1.197

In above mentioned table higher mean value represents that teachers' preferred training on variety of assessment techniques (M=2.14) and designing tasks to measure students' achievement of learning objectives (M=2.11).

5.   Findings:

Findings of the research study had enlightened that EFL teachers' perceive needs assessment is a necessary process before launching professional development programs and professional development programs are necessary with the emergence of new trends in ELT. Furthermore, professional development programs helps in improving teachers teaching quality and students achievements.

Moreover findings of the study suggested EFL teachers' needs of the study that they wanted to improve in; teaching language skills, teaching method and techniques, classroom management, and assessment and evaluation.   In teaching language skills, EFL teachers feel more confident in teaching pronunciation, writing and speaking skills. They more emphasized on improving teaching receptive skills that are; listening skills and reading skills. When they were asked about the teaching methods and techniques they preferred trainings on the communicative language teaching CLT and developing lesson plans. In the classroom management, EFL teachers preferred trainings on dealing with disruptive behavior of the student and dealing with indifferences of the students in the class. In the assessment and evaluation, they preferred trainings on variety of assessment techniques and designing such task that can help teachers to measure students' achievement of learning objectives.

6.   Conclusion:

One of the major aims of the study was to highlight the needs of EFL teachers working at the different universities of Sindh. To achieve this aim research questionnaire was used to analyse needs. It provided detailed understanding of their needs. Results revealed that perceived needs of the EFL teachers were more likely related to the improving teaching language skills, classroom management, teaching methods and techniques, and assessment and evaluation.

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