Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Professional Development Needs of Primary and Lower Secondary Teachers

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Professional development of teachers is an important factor for educational reforms.　Only by relying on continuous professional development of teachers can we increase the chances of achieving higher quality and, consequently, sustainable learning. Teachers play a crucial role the education and training of the young generations, and the professional education and continuous professional development of teachers are therefore essential. Teachers at all levels of pre-university education initially complete a basic level of qualification, without which they cannot practice the teaching profession. However, the development of teachers should not stop with the completion of their studies. In addition to their work, they should also engage in training, workshops, conferences, and other activities that are beneficial for their professional development. The aim of this study is to identify the professional development needs of teachers in elementary and lower secondary education. A mixed research approach was followed for this study, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, and two instruments were applied: a questionnaire and interviews with teachers. The study population consists of all teachers in elementary and lower secondary education in Kosovo, with 356 teachers included in the quantitative study and 10 teachers from these levels included in the qualitative study.　The participation of teachers was random. Based on the empirical results, it was found that approximately 92.4% of teachers expressed a need for training, while about 7.6% of participants stated that they did not need the training presented in the questionnaire. As for the most suitable periods for attending training, teachers prefer the spring, summer and winter vacation periods, as well as weekends, as these periods do not disrupt the teaching process. Empirical results showed a statistically significant difference among teachers based on their experience, where less experienced teachers have a greater need for training, while teachers with over 35 years of experience in the area of education have less need for training.

INTRODUCTION

Professional development of teachers encompasses activities for professional growth in accordance with the requirements of the licensing system and other documents regulating this component. The goal is to develop teachers' competencies that enable the improvement and advancement of teaching

and learning practices in the classroom, ensuring all students receive quality services in accordance with society's demands (MASHT, 2017). According to Intakhab Khan and Naseeb Khan (2014), the term "professional development" usually refers to a formal process, such as a conference, seminar, collaborative learning among members of a workforce, or a course at a college or university (Khan, Intakhab Alam and A. Naseeb Khan, 2014). Even when resources are formally provided for the ongoing development of teachers, the opportunities for effective learning vary in terms of quality (Bransford, D. J. et al. (Eds.), 1999).

Teachers are facing a world that can be simultaneously creative, complex and challenging. Many studies have shown that the quality of teaching is crucial in raising students' achievement levels and their progress. Indeed, a school is only as good as its teachers (MASHT, 2017).

Teachers are the key to improving learning in schools. To teach in accordance with the new theories of learning, teachers require extensive learning opportunities. (Bransford, D. J. et al. (Eds.), 1999). Preparing teachers for adopting a new 21st century-oriented teaching style is by no means an easy task. It has been proposed that most of the goals of 21st century skills can be learned within the context of scientific research or through project-based learning (Windschitl, 2009). Teachers play an important role in supporting and motivating students. They should always strive to improve themselves to be visionary and competent in their respective areas. Discipline in their work is essential (Ninlawana, 2015). For teachers to keep up with scientific and other technical and technological developments, it is required that they continuously raise and develop themselves professionally.

In Kosovo, various training sessions, workshops, and other activities have been organized for teachers at different levels over the years. In many cases, no research has been conducted to determine the specific areas in which teachers need to be engaged or how the knowledge gained from their participation is being applied. To achieve satisfactory results, institutions need to identify the professional development needs of teachers and then organize training accordingly.

The quality of education cannot be uniquely defined, but theorists, practitioners and learners agree that the fundamental and most important goal of education at all levels is the quality of the teaching and learning process and the achievements (knowledge) of the students (Brejc, M., et al., 2008). In order for teachers to develop properly and qualitatively, it is first necessary to know what each one's needs are for professional development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional development of teachers

Teaching is a profession that requires continuous development. Professional development of teachers, as a means to train qualified educators, is recognized as a crucial variable in shaping school policies, regulating learning environments, and fostering student learning (Borko, 2004).

From a professional development perspective, traditional professional development activities no longer suffice in helping teachers learn how to teach effectively. Similar to the cognitive psychological perspective, it is emphasized that teaching and learning are not primarily about fact-based knowledge, but rather, teachers must acquire new concepts related to content and pedagogy and take on new roles (McLaughlin, 1997).

Effective professional development is often seen as essential for school success and teacher satisfaction, although it has been criticized for its cost, vague objectives, and a lack of data on teacher and school improvement in many efforts (Oyedele, V.&Chikwature, W., 2016). Studies on the effectiveness of professional development programs have shown that training programs organized at the beginning and end of each academic year are inadequate and ineffective, failing to meet the needs of teachers. (Yenen, E. T. and M. K. Yöntem, 2020).

A change in teaching practice always affects pre-existing knowledge and beliefs about how knowledge and new beliefs about teaching, learning, students and the subject matter should be acquired.(Kwakman, 2003). Consequently, teachers must be supported in acquiring these new knowledge and beliefs, with particular attention given to supporting the change in their existing knowledge and beliefs in various areas. From this perspective, teacher learning is not just about transmitting knowledge, as teaching must be facilitated by creating favourable learning environments in which teachers take responsibility for their own learning (Bransford, D. J. et al. (Eds.), 1999).

Professional development is considered a professional duty for teachers in many European countries and regions (European Commission, 2009). However, teachers are not explicitly required to engage in professional development activities in all countries. For example, while continuous professional development is a professional duty in France, Iceland, the Netherlands and Sweden, participation in it is practically optional (European Commission, 2009).

Identifying the needs of teachers for professional development

The need for professional development of employees, in all profiles, regardless of which profile they belong to, is significant. (Aliu-Gashi, 2019).

According to Bell (1993), as cited in Harris, teachers are conceptualized as professionals who critically think about themselves as practitioners and the contexts within which they work. The relationships between teacher development, education and the broader society are highlighted. An important aspect of the critical perspective on teacher development is the notion of empowerment. However, within the empowerment paradigm, change is conceived as an ongoing activity created within schools by teachers, parents, and students as part of a continuous process of professional development (Harris, 2000).

Teachers must model knowledge in the development of sustainable improvement to address educational issues that need continuous updates while dealing with students in the classroom. (Yenen, E. T. and M. K. Yöntem, 2020).

The determination of needs and priority areas based on the school is led by the teachers themselves, according to the needs arising during various assessments of what teachers perceive as their needs and what we see in the students' outcomes in teaching, and where they need more assistance. The most standard form of needs assessment is consulting with the teachers themselves (MASHT, 2017).

According to Elçi and Yaratan (2012), the needs for professional development in teaching for high-level skills, the use of instructional technology and motivating students have been highly estimated. The needs appear to have not changed significantly since the late 1990s. (Elçi, A.&Yaratan, H. , 2012).

To identify the needs for the professional development of teachers, several key stakeholders need to be involved. Among the main factors for identifying the needs for professional development are the teachers themselves, as they can provide valuable information about which areas they need to advance their knowledge in. School administrators are also crucial, as they are in contact with the teachers and can assess the individual needs of each teacher. Administrators have access to documentation regarding each teacher's education and professional development.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Research methods

During this research, we followed a mixed research approach, applying both qualitative and quantitative methods. Through the quantitative approach, we utilized descriptive statistics and inferential analysis. Through the qualitative approach, we collected valuable information about the

professional development needs of teachers. These two approaches complemented each other, providing data from participants through open-ended and closed-ended questions.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to identify the professional development needs of teachers in elementary and lower secondary education.

Research hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There are differences among teachers with different levels of experience regarding their professional development needs.

Hypothesis 2: There are differences among teachers with different levels of education regarding their professional development needs.

Participants

A total of 356 teachers from various regions of the Republic of Kosovo participated in the quantitative research. Among them, 56.2% were primary school teachers, 43.8% were lower secondary school teachers, 78.7% were female, and 21.3% were male.

Research Instruments

Two research instruments were applied for this study: a questionnaire and interviews with teachers.

The questionnaire included variables related to identifying the professional development needs of teachers. The interviews were structured, and questions related to the needs of primary and lower secondary school teachers for professional development were presented.

Research instrument reliability

Based on the results, the Chronbach's Alpha model showed a predicted instrument reliability value of 0.839, while the actual reliability value was 0.836. These two values are close to each other, indicating high instrument reliability.

Based on these results, we can conclude that the reliability of the used instrument is very high, and the research instrument meets the criteria for use.

Table no. 1. Instrument reliability

Reliability statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
.836	.839

Methods of statistical data analysis

For the analysis of qualitative data, no specific package was used, but the extracted data were aggregated and presented on the paper. The data from the quantitative research were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To test the internal consistency of the instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha was used, taking a value above 0.7 as evidence of whether the questionnaire has internal consistency or not. For the evaluation of the results of all statistical tests, a significance level of 0.05 was set.

To compare the results among participant groups, parametric tests were used: One Way ANOVA test.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Descriptive results

Training needs

Based on the results presented in Figure No. 1, we note that 92.4% of teachers have expressed the need to attend training, while 7.6% of them have stated that they do not need training.

Do you need to attend training (as one of the main forms of professional development) to better perform your educational work?
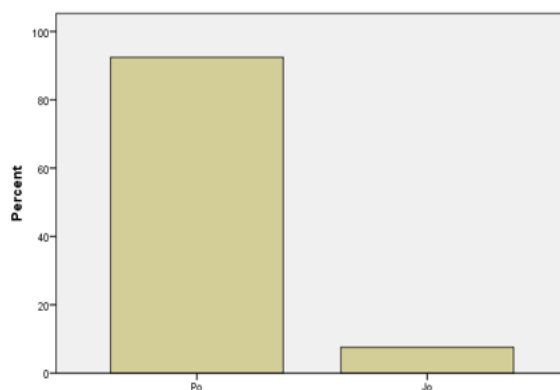

Figure no. 1. Training needs of teachers

Types of training

Regarding the need for teachers to attend training on the Core Curriculum for the preparatory class and elementary education, 69.4% of them have stated that they do not need this training, 16% have expressed a slight need, 0.6% are unsure if they need it or not, 3.7% have stated that this training is very necessary for them, while 10.4% have stated that this training is essential, M=1.7, SD=1.301. Approximately 45.8% of teachers have stated that they do not need to attend training on Work Planning, 29.8% have stated that they have a slight need, 3.9% are unsure, 8.7% believe this training is very necessary, while 16.9% have stated that this training is necessary for them, M=2.26, SD=1.517.

Around 21.6% of teachers have stated that they do not need to attend training on Teaching with Information Technology, 29.8% have stated they have a slight need, 7% are unsure about attending this training, 10.7% believe this training is very necessary for them, and 30.9% of teachers believe this training is essential for them, M=2.99, SD=1.585.

Approximately 49.4% of teachers have stated that they do not need to attend training on Classroom Discipline Management, 19.9% believe they have a slight need, 4.8% are unsure, 9.6% believe this training is very necessary, while 16.3% have stated that this training is essential for them, M=2.23, SD=1.531.

Around 50.3% of teachers have stated that they do not need to attend training on Communication Skills, Reading and Interpretation in Albanian Language and Literature, 19.1% of them have stated that they have a slight need, 6.7% are unsure, 14.3% have stated that this training is very necessary for them, while 9.6% have stated that it is necessary for them to participate, M=2.14, SD=1.42.

About 45.8% of participants have stated that they do not need to attend training on Individual Education Plan Drafting, 17.1% have stated that they have a slight need, 7.9% are unsure, 15.7% have stated that this training is important for them, while 13.5% have stated that this training is essential for them, M=2.34, SD=1.507.

About 20.8% of participants have stated that they do not need to attend training on Access and Differentiated Teaching for Children with Special Needs, 26.7% have stated that they have a slight need, 11% are unsure, 24.7% have stated that this training is very important for them, while 16.9% have stated that this training is essential, M=2.9, SD=1.42.

Approximately 37.1% of participants have expressed that they do not need to attend training on Mathematics and Teaching Mathematics for Grades I-V, 20.2% have stated that they have a slight need, 6.2% are unsure if they need this training, 20.5% have stated that this training is very important, while 16% have stated that this training is essential, M=2.58, SD=1.537.

Around 32.6% of participants have expressed that they do not need to attend training on the Identification and Support of Students with Exceptional Intelligence, 23.6% have stated that they have a slight need for this training, 8.4% are unsure, 19.4% have stated that this training is very important, while 16% have stated that this training is essential, M=2.63, SD=1.497.

Around 25% of participants have expressed that they do not need to attend training on the Application of Computer Programs in Teaching, 25.3% of them have stated that they have a slight need, 12.1% are unsure, 20.8% have stated that this training is very important, while 16.9% have stated that this training is essential, M=2.79, SD=1.448.

Approximately 26.4% of participants have expressed that they do not need to attend training on the Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Coding, 25% have stated that they have a slight need, 9.6% are unsure, 21.6% have stated that they have a significant need for this training, while 17.4% have stated that this training is essential, M=2.79, SD=1.476.Around 30.6% of participants have expressed that they do not need to attend training on the Professional Bodies - Their Role and Function in Kosovo's Schools, 23.9% of them have stated that they have a slight need for this training, 12.6% are unsure, 18.3% of participants have stated that this training is very important, while 14.6% have stated that this training is essential, M=2.62, SD=1.447.

Approximately 23.6% of participants have expressed that they do not need to attend training on the Comprehensive Assessment and Test Development for Grades 1-5, 21.1% of them have stated that they have a slight need, 9.6% are unsure, 16.3% of participants have expressed that this training is very important, while 20.5% of teachers have stated that this training is essential, M=2.71, SD=1.556.

Approximately 26.7% of participants have stated that they do not need to attend training on Project-Based Learning, 24.2% of them have stated that they have a slight need, 12.9% are unsure, 20.8% have stated that this training is very important, while 15.4% have stated that this training is essential. If we look at the results for each variable, we can see that a significant number of participants have stated that they do not need training or have only a slight need for it. Therefore, the average in each variable is low, and due to the wide range of responses, the standard deviation is generally quite high.

In the overall results about the need for training, it was found that about 36.7% of participants have stated that they do not need training at all, 22.6% have stated that they have a slight need, 8.1% are unsure if they need it or not, 16.1% have stated that training is important, while 16.5% of participants have stated that the training presented in the research is essential to complete. The average result is low, standing at 2.53.

In the open-ended question where participants were asked to suggest training they need, a small number of teachers provided the following suggestions: Critical Thinking during Reading and Writing, Motivation, Lesson and Program Planning, Laboratory Work, Individual Education Plan (IEP), Teaching Strategies, Assessment.

Table no. 2. Types of training

I need to attend training on:	I do not need	I have a slight need	I am not sure	It is very important	It is essential	M	DS
The Core Curriculum for preparatory grade and primary education	69.4 %	16%	0.6%	3.7%	10.4%	1.70	1.301
Work Planning	45.8%	24.7%	3.9%	8.7%	16.9%	2.26	1.517
Teaching with Information Technology	21.6%	29.8%	7%	10.7%	30.9%	2.99	1.585
Classroom Discipline Management	49.4%	19.9%	4.8%	9.6%	16.3%	2.23	1.531
Communication Skills, Reading and Interpretation in Albanian Language and Literature	50.3%	19.1%	6.7%	14.3%	9.6%	2.14	1.410
Individual Education Plan Drafting	45.8%	17.1%	7.9%	15.7%	13.5%	2.34	1.507
Access and Differentiated Teaching for Children with Special Needs	20.8%	26.7%	11%	24.7%	16.9%	2.90	1.420
Mathematics and Teaching Mathematics for Grades I-V	37.1%	20.2%	6.2%	20.5%	16%	2.58	1.537
Identification and Support of Students with Exceptional Intelligence	32.6%	23.6%	8.4%	19.4%	16%	2.63	1.497
Application of Computer Programs in Teaching	25%	25.3%	12.1%	20.8%	16.9%	2.79	1.448
Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Coding	26.4%	25%	9.6%	21.6%	17.4%	2.79	1.476
Professional Bodies - Their Role and Function in Kosovo's Schools	30.6%	23.9%	12.6%	18.3%	14.6%	2.62	1.447
Comprehensive Assessment and Test Development for Grades 1-5	32.6%	21.1%	9.6%	16.3%	20.5%	2.71	1.556
Project-Based Learning	26.7%	24.2%	12.9%	20.8%	15.4%	2.74	1.440
General results	36.7%	22.6%	8.1%	16.1%	16.5%	2.53	////
Add to the list other training needs if you need to:							
1	Critical Thinking during Reading and Writing, Motivation, Lesson and Program Planning, Laboratory Work, Individual Education Plan (IEP), Teaching Strategies, Assessment						

Training requests

Regarding training requests, only the overall results are presented. Based on the overall results regarding the expression of interest in professional development, it was found that about 67% of the participants stated that they have never submitted a request to institutions and organizations to attend training. 17.9% stated that they have occasionally submitted requests, 8.8% have submitted requests from time to time, only 4% of the participants stated that they have frequently submitted requests, while 2.3% have submitted requests very often to institutions and organizations to attend training. The average result is low, standing at 1.57.

Table no. 3. Requests for training/professional development

I have expressed an interest in professional development.	Never	Someti mes	From time to time	Ofte n	Very often	M
General results	67%	17.9%	8.8%	4%	2.3	1.57

Monitoring for needs identification and implementation of training

Based on the overall results of professional development monitoring, it was found that approximately 73% of participants have not been monitored before or after completing training by institutions and organizations, 22.1% have stated that they have been monitored from sometimes, 16% have been monitored from time to time, 6.7% of participants have stated that they have been monitored often, while only 2% of participants have indicated that they have been monitored very often before or after completing training by institutions and organizations. The average of the results is low, standing at 1.82.

Table no. 4. Monitoring

I have been monitored for professional development.	Never	Sometime s	From time to time	Often	Very often	M
General results	53.2%	22.1%	16%	6.7%	2%	1.8 2

Reasons for attending the training

Approximately 28.4% strongly disagree with the statement that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) obliges them to attend training, about 21.1% disagree with this statement, 25.6% somewhat agree, 17.4% agree, and 7.6% completely agree that MEST obliges them to attend training. M 2.55, DS=1.274

Approximately 28.7% of participants strongly disagree that the Directorate of Education obliges them to attend training, 23.9% of them disagree, 24.7% somewhat agree, 16% agree, and 6.7% completely agree that the Directorate of Education obliges them to attend training. M=2.48, SD=1.246

Approximately 29.5% of participants strongly disagree that school management obliges them to participate in training, 24.2% of participants disagree, 23.6% somewhat agree, 16.6% agree, and 6.2% of participants completely agree that school management obliges them to participate in training where required. M=2.46, DS=1.243

Approximately 3.4% of participants strongly disagree that they themselves seek professional development through training, 3.4% of them disagree with this statement, 17.1% somewhat agree, 30.3% agree, and 45.8% of participants completely agree that they seek professional development through training on their own initiative. M=4.12, DS=1.028.

Approximately 1.7% of participants strongly disagree that they seek training on their own to adapt to changes, 4.5% disagree, 17.4% somewhat agree, 27.8% agree, and 48.6% of participants completely agree that they seek training on their own to adapt to changes. M=4.17, DS=0.982

Approximately 1.4% of participants strongly disagree that they seek training on their own because it helps them perform their educational and teaching work better, 4.5% disagree, 16.9% somewhat

agree, 25.6% agree, and 51.7% of participants completely agree that they seek training on their own because it helps them perform their educational and teaching work better. M=4.22, DS=0.973.

Table no. 5. Reasons for attending the trainings

I attend training because:	I do not agree at all	I do not agree	Some what agree	I agree	I compl etely agree	M	DS
MESTI obliges me	28.4%	21.1%	25.6%	17.4%	7.6%	2.55	1.274
MED obliges me	28.7%	23.9%	24.7%	16%	6.7%	2.48	1.246
The school management where I work obliges me	29.5%	24.2%	23.6%	16.6%	6.2%	2.46	1.243
I seek professional development through training,	3.4%	3.4%	17.1%	30.3%	45.8%	4.12	1.028
I seek seek training on my own to adapt to changes	1.7%	4.5%	17.4%	27.8%	48.6%	4.17	.982
I seek training on my own because it helps me perform my educational and teaching work better	1.4%	4.5%	16.9%	25.6%	51.7%	4.22	.973

Training format

Based on the results presented in the Table, it can be observed that 48.9% of the participants prefer short-duration training (less than 5 days) both inside and outside the school, 3.1% of the participants prefer long-duration training (more than 5 days) both inside and outside the school, while 48% of the participants do not have a preference and are open to training regardless of its duration.

Table no. 6. Training format

What is the type of training your want to attend?	Frequency	Percent
Short-term training (less than 5 days) inside and outside the school	174	48.9 %
Long-term training (less than 5 days) inside and outside the school	11	3.1%
All training types	171	48.0%
Total	356	100.0%

Most suitable time for training

Approximately 21.6% of participants prefer to have training during the summer vacation, 19.9% during the winter vacation, while 58.4% prefer to attend training during weekends.

Table no. 7. Most suitable time for training

What is the most suitable time for holding training?		
	Frequency	Percent
During the summer break	77	21.6%
During the winter break	71	19.9%
During the weekends	208	58.4%
Total	356	100.0%

CONCLUSIVE RESULTS

Results related to the hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

Alternative Hypothesis (AH): There are differences among teachers with different levels of experience regarding their professional development needs.

Zero Hypothesis (OH): There are no differences among teachers with different levels of experience regarding their professional development needs.

To test this hypothesis, the means of the results, Levene test for the homogeneity of variables, and the one-way parametric ANOVA test were used.

Based on the means, we observe that teachers with up to 5 years of experience have the highest average, M=43.1013, followed by teachers with 6-15 years of experience, M=36.6393, teachers with 16-25 years of experience, M=32.4245, then teachers with 26-35 years of experience, M=27.2821, and finally, teachers with over 35 years of experience have the lowest mean, M=23.6. From these results, it can be understood that teachers with less experience in education have a greater need for training and professional development, while teachers with more experience have a lower need.

Based on Levene test, it is evident that the variances are not homogeneous because p=0.003<0.05.

The results of the ANOVA test suggest the value of F=14.315 and p=0.000<0.05, and based on all these results, it was found that the variances are not homogeneous, and the differences are statistically significant. Teachers with up to 5 years of experience have a greater need for training.

Table no. 8. Differences based on experience for the professional development need

Descriptives						
Professional development needs						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Up to 5 years	79	43.1013	14.43251	1.62378	39.8686	46.3340
6-15 years	122	36.6393	13.76909	1.24659	34.1714	39.1073
16-25 years	106	32.4245	12.57583	1.22147	30.0026	34.8465
26-35 years	39	27.2821	9.62986	1.54201	24.1604	30.4037
Over 35 years	10	23.6000	8.11309	2.56558	17.7962	29.4038
Total	356	35.4270	14.01037	.74255	33.9666	36.8873

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Professional development needs			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
4.046	4	351	.003

ANOVA
Professional development needs

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9773.586	4	2443.397	14,315	.000
Within Groups	59909.515	351	170.682		
Total	69683.101	355			

Hypothesis 2:

Alternative Hypothesis (AH): There are differences among teachers with different levels of education regarding their professional development needs.

Zero Hypothesis (OH): There are no differences among teachers with different levels of education background regarding their professional development needs.

Based on the average results, we find that students have the highest average, M=49, followed by teachers with a 3-year Bachelor degree, M=39.9444, then those with a Master degree, M=39.333, followed by teachers with a 4-year Bachelor degree, M=33.8988, and finally, teachers with a PhD or PhD candidates have the lowest average, M=33.25.

The results of the Levene test indicate that the results are homogeneous, as p=0.104>0.05.

The results of the one-way ANOVA test show that F=3.264, and p=0.012<0.05.

From these results, we can conclude that students have a higher need for professional development, while teachers with a PhD or those in the process of obtaining this degree have shown less need for professional development, and these differences are statistically significant.

Table no. 9. Differences based on education background for the professional development need

Descriptives						
Professional development needs						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
3-year Bachelor	18	39.9444	15.22951	3.58963	32.3710	47.5179
4-year Bachelor	257	33.8988	13.32517	.83120	32.2620	35.5357
Master	75	39.3333	14.99670	1.73167	35.8829	42.7838
PHD/PHD candidate	4	33.2500	10.68878	5.34439	16.2418	50.2582
Student	2	49.0000	28.28427	20.00000	-205.1241	303.1241
Total	356	35.4270	14.01037	.74255	33.9666	36.8873

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Development needs			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.939	4	351	.104

ANOVA					
Professional development needs					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2499.370	4	624.843	3,264	.012
Within Groups	67183.731	351	191,407		
Total	69683.101	355			

Quality results

In this section, qualitative results obtained through structured interviews with teachers from elementary and lower secondary schools are presented.

Within this section, 11 topics/issues related to the professional development needs of teachers have been addressed.

Topic 1: The need for attending training for the better implementation of educational work

Regarding the need for teachers to attend training, all participating teachers state that they need to continuously engage in various training programs. Despite participating in numerous training sessions, they believe that for a teacher to stay up-to-date and perform his/her duties at a higher level, he/she must constantly stay informed of innovations and attend different training programs. Training is seen as an important tool for the professional development of teachers, helping them to better accomplish their educational and instructional tasks.

Topic 2: What forms of professional development teachers have pursued?

Regarding the forms of professional development of teachers, they include attending different training programs, both in-person and online, participating in various scientific conferences, workshops, seminars, professional activities, utilizing various scientific resources, pursuing Master level education, attending various courses, collaborating closely with colleagues, and so on.

Topic 3: Steps/initiatives taken by teachers for their professional development

Attending training organized by MESTI, MED and other non-governmental, local, and international organizations. Personal initiatives to participate in various scientific forums, training sessions and workshops, continuous interest in participating in various training programs, applying for opportunities offered by institutions and organizations for training or other forms of professional development, exploring scientific literature.

Topic 4: The necessary support to accomplish planned work and achieve results with students

In order to carry out planned work and achieve results with students, teachers seek support through concrete resources such as smart boards, projectors, computer labs, reducing the number of students per class, in some cases making functional the school library, and in others updating the library with new titles. They also require higher-quality textbooks, functional professional bodies, psychological support for managing the challenges and work-related stress.

Topic 5: Monitoring or assessment to identify the needs for professional development

Teachers are rarely monitored to identify their needs for professional development. The school management primarily carries out monitoring. They seek regular monitoring. Since the need for professional development is ongoing, they should therefore be monitored regularly.

Topic 6: The way training is attended (based on teachers' requests and needs or proposed by others)

In most training sessions, teachers are assigned by the school management without being consulted about their needs. However, in some training programs, teachers have had the opportunity to participate by expressing their interest. Teachers have also participated in training by presenting themselves and nominating others, primarily through the school management where they work.

Topic 7: Payment by teachers for attending training

In most of the training sessions that teachers have attended, they have done so without any cost, with specific cases where teachers have paid to attend such training programs. Very few training sessions have involved teachers paying for their participation, with the majority being organized free of charge for them.

Topic 8: The most beneficial and effective training for teachers' work

Among the training programs that teachers have attended and consider highly beneficial and effective for their work are: Critical Thinking in Reading and Writing, Assessment Training for Quality Coordinators (Internal Assessment), Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Coding, Educational Leadership, Digital Teaching, Educational Management, Student-Centered Teaching, Learning Assessment, Career Education, Development of Reading and Writing Skills, Test Drafting and Assessment.

Topic 9: Desired format for attending training (during weekends, summer, winter holidays) and the most suitable time for conducting them (shorter than 5 days, longer than 5 days)

Primarily, teachers prefer to attend training during spring, summer and winter holidays, as well as on weekends, as these periods do not disrupt the teaching process. Regarding the duration of training, teachers prefer that training sessions do not last longer than 5 days.

Topic 10: Participation and quality of training conducted by various organizations

In general, teachers have a moderate assessment of the quality of training programs. Some of them rate them higher, but there are also those who consider them to be at a lower professional level. "Some training sessions are provided by trainers who are not very professional and are too general, which did not help improve my performance. They have mostly served to obtain the necessary certification for licensing."

Some also attribute this to the organizer and rate training programs organized by different organizations more highly.

"As for the quality of training offered by various organizations, I consider them to be at a high level."

CONCLUSION

Based on empirical results, it was found that approximately 92.4% of teachers have expressed the need for training, while 7.6% of them have stated that they do not need training. Therefore, teachers have shown interest in attending training, indicating a desire for professional development. However, when asked about the need for specific training, it appears that around 36.7% of participants do not need any training at all, and only 16.5% of participants have expressed that the training presented in the research is essential for them to undertake. As a result, there is a mismatch between the interest in training and the expression of the need to undertake specific training proposed by the researcher. If participants had suggested various types of training, this discrepancy would have implied that participants had completed these training programs. However, when participants were asked to suggest any training, they recommended the following: Critical Thinking

during Reading and Writing, Motivation, Lesson and Program Planning, Laboratory Work, IEP, Teaching Strategies, Assessment.

If we look at the overall results regarding participants' engagement in professional development, it was found that around 67% of participants have indicated that they have never submitted a request to institutions and organizations to attend training, while only 2.3% have submitted requests very often to institutions and organizations to attend training. These results indicate that teachers are not actively engaged and present their needs to institutions and competent personnel for professional development. They usually participate in training because they are assigned by the management. On the other hand, institutions also have a responsibility because, before assigning training, needs should be identified, and there should be monitoring of the implementation process after training completion. Empirical results have shown that institutions and organizations that organize training sessions rarely monitor before and after the training. Approximately 73% of participants have stated that they have never been monitored before or after the completion of training by institutions and organizations, while only 2% of participants have stated that they are very often monitored before or after the completion of training by institutions and organizations.

Regarding the concluding results, statistically significant differences were found among teachers with different levels of experience in presenting their professional development needs. Based on the tests conducted regarding this hypothesis, it was found that the variances are not homogeneous, and the differences are statistically significant. Teachers with up to 5 years of experience have a greater need for training, while those with over 35 years of experience have less need for training. From these results, we can conclude that the alternative hypothesis is supported: There are differences among teachers with different levels of experience regarding their professional development needs.

In the empirical research related to differences among teachers with different educational qualifications, statistically significant differences were found. Teachers who have presented a need for professional development are those with students working as teachers, while teachers who are in the process of or have obtained a PhD degree have shown less need for professional development.

Based on the qualitative results obtained with elementary and high school teachers, we observe a significant interest among teachers in professional development. They implement various forms of professional development, including various training programs, participation in different scientific conferences, workshops, seminars, professional bodies etc. Teachers have attended various training sessions by applying for participation or participating in different events organized by the MESTI and various local and international organizations. To achieve their planned work and achieve results with students, teachers seek support in concrete resources and strategies, such as reducing the number of students per class etc.. Identifying the professional development needs of teachers is seldom a priority for relevant institutions. In most cases, teachers are assigned to attend training by the school management, and personal interest in training is relatively rare. Teachers' participation in various training sessions is primarily free of charge, although in very rare cases, teachers may pay for specific training programs. Regarding the usefulness of the training, teachers have emphasized the importance of several training sessions for the performance of their duties. Teachers generally prefer training to be conducted during holidays (spring, summer, winter) or weekends, with a maximum duration of 5 days. Training organized by various organizations is highly estimated by teachers. Teachers have certain expectations for the organization of training. Firstly, they expect training to be organized based on teachers' needs and that the implementation of the knowledge gained is monitored etc.

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