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RESEARCH PAPER

Continuous Professional Development: Performance of Primary School Teachers

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
*Corresponding Author farrukh.ier@pu.edu.pk	The purpose of this study was to examine the performance of primary school teachers (PSTs) under the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework. The study was conducted in the district Faisalabad of the Punjab Province. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in combination as a mixed methods approach to solve the research problem. Secondary data of mentoring visit forms (MVF) filled by the District Teacher Educators (DTEs) were analyzed to assess the performance of the PSTs. To get the deep understanding of the problem qualitative data was also collected from the 17 DTEs and 32 PSTs through semi-structured interviews protocols. Both content analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The findings of the study reveal that there is no significant improvement in teachers' performance as a result of mentoring under CPD Framework. The study also revealed that the performance of the teachers remain at the fair state during the start of the academic session and gradually reaches to the good level during the late months of every academic session.

Introduction

In Pakistan poor quality of education in public primary schools has been a serious issue since many years. In the year 2004, it was decided to improve to improve structure and functions of the teachers' training institutes. Likewise in the Punjab Province, Directorate of staff development (DSD), Lahore was assigned the task of quality assurance and teachers professional development (DSD, 2015; 2007a). Considering quality education as the product of quality teachers, DSD launched a comprehensive program of teachers' professional development named CPD-Framework of DSD, Lahore in 2006 (Shehzad, 2014). DSD adopted mentoring as key

strategy to improve teachers' professional skills where District Teacher Educators (DTEs) were assigned the key responsibility of improving teachers quality through mentoring at the respective schools and Cluster Training and Support Centers (CTSCs) established close to the schools (DSD, 2009; 2007b). Major tasks of the DTEs include: teachers' training needs assessment, regular mentoring to improve weak areas of individual teachers, conduct capacity building sessions in collaboration with the DSD, Lahore and to motivate the teachers to actively participate in all CPD activities (DSD, 2007a; 2007b). They make regular assessment of teachers' performance through direct classroom observation and students' assessment tests. Based on the findings of assessment, DTEs guide and mentor the individual teachers with the specific objectives of improve weak areas assessed (Shehzad, 2014). The overall purposes of the mentors' practices are to ensure the presence of professionally sound and competent teachers in all schools and continuous improvement in students' learning outcomes (DSD, 2013; Shehzad, 2014). All mentors must know the weak areas of their mentees and carefully plan to address the said areas in a collaborative way. DTEs are required to plan CPD activities keeping in view the findings of the mentoring visits and students' assessment tests (DSD, 2010 & 2007a).The major areas of mentoring are comprised of "teacher's diary, taleemi-calendar, lesson development, activities based teaching and learning, use of AV aids, interaction with students, classroom management, student's assessment and homework" (Anwar, 2014, p.32; DSD, 2007a).

The success of every mentoring program is highly depends on sincerity, promise, dedication, and commitment of the mentors. The DSD team of experts remains in constant contact with all DTEs and provides need based guidance and support in addition to planned trainings of the mentors. The mentors' guide book' and 'coaching guide' provides information on all duty areas of the DTEs and stakeholders of CPD framework. The book contains six different reporting forms about the mentoring and evaluation to be completed by each mentor on monthly basis. Accordingly, all mentors are required to prepare activity plans and submit performance report to the DSD and the in-charge of respective District Training & Support Center (DTSC) on monthly basis (Anwar, 2014; DSD, 2013). DSD team of experts give feedback on reports of the DTEs for corrective measures where needed. DSD team of experts update these books when needs keeping into account the submissions and comments of the DTEs (DSD, 2015; 2007b).

The CPD framework of DSD, Lahore speciously looks a quite arduous framework where big human and financial assets are used in its execution. Instead of comprehensive infrastructure and engagement of big resources the outcome of the CPD program in terms of quality for education and teachers performance is still questionable and criticized at various forums by educational experts and media reports. The current study is focused to explore Performance of PSTs as a result of CPD framework of DSD, Lahore. Keeping in view the study focus, following research questions are explored:

Literature Review

Professional development is an essential element in almost every new scheme for educational enhancement (Anwar, 2014). Learning in schools is highly influenced by the quality of the teachers (Mathew, Mathew & Peechattu, 2017). To improve the quality of the teachers, every country is making many educational reforms for the professional development of the teachers (Anwar, 2014; Mahmood & Salfi, 2012; Shehzad, 2014). CPD is the most advanced form of teachers' professional development that has been acknowledged by a number of educational researchers (Saeed & Akhtar, 2017; Lawlor, 2014; Mourshed & Barber, 2007). CPD is a scheduled, continual and enduring process of improving the individual and professional abilities of the teachers (Saeed and Akhtar, 2017). Teacher CPD refers to a continuous process starting from pre-service education to completion of professional job of an employee. The primary characteristic of the current concept of CPD is that it is a sustainable process of professional growth as is indicated by the word 'continuous' in the term itself (Yoon, 2017). CPD plays a major role in supporting teachers to develop their pedagogical skills, content knowledge and teaching competencies (Desimone, 2009; Kelly, 2006). Teachers' participation in CPD activities changes their attitude towards classroom teaching that ultimately brings an affirmative change in behavior, attitude and academic achievements of the students (Da Costa, 1993). Investment in professional development of the teachers, highly improve student learning outcomes leading towards quality of education (Altun, 2011; Joyce, Calhoun, & Hopkins, 2008). The major objectives of any CPD program include improvement in teachers' professional skills, students' learning outcomes and institutional development (Mathew et al., 2017; Al-Ghatrifi, 2016; Anwar, 2014).

The concept of mentoring has been explained and meant differently by different educationists (Anwar, 2014; Mathew, 2003). There is no single universally agreed definition of mentoring (Jacobi, 1991; Shehzad, 2014), however, mentoring is broadly defined as 'a long term developmental relationship for one-on-one learning' and 'is an interaction between two individuals in a nurturing process that fosters growth and development to improve student learning by improving teacher quality' (Shareef, 2008, p.9). It is argued that mentoring with appropriate planning improves competence of the teachers and the quality of school education (Anwar, 2014; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Mentor is usually a senior teacher who helps to improve mentees' (students/novice teachers) learning and academic performance (Anwar, 2014; Shea, 2001). The formal mentoring involves an appropriately planned program where mentors and mentees are allotted by the respective school authorities to ensure successful induction of staff, growth, support and guidance and a high level of professional development of the new teachers (Bettman, Alpert, & Balke, 2003). A formal mentoring program is an important tool for the career development of the teaching staff if implemented at an early stage with clearly defined goals and objectives (Frei, Stamm, and Buddeberg-Fischer, 2010). Van der Nest (2012) argues that mentoring provides opportunities to learn, reflect, and experimentation in a supportive environment, which stimulates ideal learning and professional growth.

Mentoring practices improve mentees' understanding and awareness about advanced strategies of teaching that enables them to improve their education and skills through the opportunities of making friendly relationships with experienced mentors/ senior teachers (McIntyre & Hagger, 1996). So the school authorities should to consider such models of professional development which ensures collective learning and development of the teachers. The key benefits of mentoring related to career support and development of the mentees include: improved speed of learning; better skills of communication; quality of technical knowledge and expertise; ease to analyze problems and issues; more opportunities of sharing views and innovative ideas; enable to devise and improve strategies of teaching-learning; opportunity for expression on action; freedom to talk and positive feedback; positive support and facilitation; rights to use resources and horizontal transformation (Shareef, 2008, p.26).

Mentoring is a relatively new concept of TPD in Pakistan. Both formal and informal types of mentoring are being practiced in various educational institutes of the country. During pre-service professional education courses such as B.Ed., and M.Ed., etc., student teachers go to school for teaching practice where they learn teaching techniques under the supervision of senior teacher/mentor (Anwar, 2014; Shehzad, 2014). The CPD framework of DSD, Lahore is an exemplary program of TPD, in which mentoring methodology is used to provide all kinds of professional guidance and support at the workplace of the teachers. It is argued that mentoring methodology under CPD provides very successful, valuable and momentous podium of knowledge gain (Iqbal et al., 2016; Akhlaq et al., 2015; Anwar, 2014; Colley, 2002), and helps to improve quality of teaching and learning in the schools (Akhlaq et al., 2015; Arifeen, 2010). The main objectives of mentoring for teachers, under the CPD framework, are to ensure the presence of professionally sound, well prepared, and talented teachers in all schools to meet the target of high-quality education in schools (Anwar, 2014; DSD, 2007a; Shehzad, 2014).

Material and Methods

This study used a mixed methods approach to answer the research question that includes the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. All PSTs of public schools in district Faisalabad was taken as the population of study. To access the performance of the PSTs, secondary data of mentoring visit forms (MVF) for the academic year 2014-15 and 2015-16 was obtained from the regional office of the DSD, Lahore. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interview protocols from 17-DTEs and 32-PSTs of the respective schools by adopting convenient sampling method. The major areas of performance assessment per MVF are "Preparation of Teacher's Diary", "Use of Academic Calendar", "Lesson Planning", "Activity-Based Teaching", "Use of AV Aids", "Classroom Management", "Interaction with Students", "Assigning and checking of Student's Homework" and "Students' Assessment" (DSD, 2007a).

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data of PSTs' performance assessment per MVF forms of DTEs' monthly visits. The data of all MVF against different items of assessment was added in microsoft Excel sheets and then analyzed through SPSS version 20. For the purpose of interpretation, ranges of the mean values (MVs) of performance indicators were defined like: 2.5 ≤ MV< 3 (Good), 1.5 ≤ MV < 2.5 (Fair), 0.5 ≤ MV < 1.5 (Low), and 0.0 ≤ MV < 0.5 (No performance). For the qualitative data thematic analysis was done.

Interpretation of the Results

A. Quantitative Data

It was observed that although the performance of the teachers was improved upto some extent in different areas of teaching and learning as a result of mentoring under CPD framework but the desired level of improvement was not met at all. In most of the areas it was remained at fair level (1.5 ≤ MV < 2.5) except few areas of good level as presented in the table 1. The area wise interpretation of all aspects of mentoring assessment is given as under:

Teacher's Diary

It was observed that the performance of teachers regarding preparation and maintenance of "Teacher's Diary" was unsatisfactory and remained at fair level (overall MV was 2.19). It was noted that the performance of the PSTs was remained at fair level (range MV = 1.6 to 2.3) in the starting months (April to October) of each academic session 2014-15 to 2015-16. However, during the month of November to January 2015-16, it was improved to the 'good' level (MV=2.5). Although there was no tangible difference in the performance of the PSTs during the two academic sessions assessed, however the data explored that the performance of the PSTs was comparatively better during the academic session 2015-16. Similar observations were found about

Table 1
Assign and Check Homework of Homework

Performance indicator		Table 1: MVs of PSTs Performance: Preparation of Teacher's Diary												
		Academic year 2014-15						Academic year 2015-16						
	Month	Apr-14	May-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Apr-15	May-15	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16
Teacher Diary	MV	1.6	2.2	2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	1.7	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5
Assign and Check Homework	MV	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4	2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6

Following Academic Calendar	MV	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6
Activity Based Teaching	MV	1.8	2	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.4	2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.4
Use of Visual Aids	MV	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.4	2	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.6
Assess Students' Performance	MV	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7
Lesson Planning	MV	1.8	2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.6
Interaction with students	MV	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.7
Classroom Management	MV	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7

Follow Academic Calendar

Analysis of the MVF data regarding following of Academic Calendar by PSTs (Table 1) revealed that during the academic session 2014-15, the performance of PSTs to follow the Academic Calendar was at the fair level in April (MV=1.9), May (MV=2.1), September (MV=2.2) and October (MV=2.3). Teachers' performance was slightly increased and became good in November (MV=2.5) in academic session 2014-15. Data also showed that the performance of the teachers again decreased and became fair in December 2014-15. At the end of the academic session of 2014-15, the performance of teachers was reported to be good in January (MV=2.5). It can be extracted from the data that the performance of the teachers was fair at the start and good at the end of the academic session 2014-15.

Activity Based Teaching

Performance of PSTs regarding activity based teaching (Table1) in academic session 2014-15 was fair from April 2014 to October 2015 (MV=1.8 to 2.4). It remained good in November (MV=2.5) and December (MV=2.5) for academic 2015-16. The performance of PSTswas again decreased in January 2015-16 (MV 2.4) which shows the inconsistency of teachers' performance. It can be inferred from the data that there was no tangible difference between the performances of the teachers in both academic sessions.

Use of Visual Aids

Performance of PSTs about the use AV Aids (table 1) was remained at the fair level (MV=1.8 to 2.4) during the academic session 2014-15. It was remained fair during the months of April (MV=2.0), May (MV=2.1), September (MV=2.3) and October (MV=2.3) and improved to good level during the months of November (MV=2.5), December (MV=2.5) and January (MV=2.6) in 2015-16. In both academic sessions performance of the teachers at the end of the session was better as compared to the start of the sessions. It can be inferred from the data that there was

no tangible difference between the performances of the teachers in both academic sessions.

Assess Students' Performance

Assess Students' Performance (table 1) was remained at the fair level during the months of April (MV=2.1), May (MV=2.2), September (MV=2.3) and October (MV=2.3) in 2014-15. It was slightly increased and became good during the months of November (MV=2.5), December (MV=2.5) and January (MV=2.6) in 2015-16. The performance of the teachers was fair at the start and good at the end of the academic session 2014-15, and a similar trend was maintained during the academic session 2015-16.

Lesson Planning

Performance of PSTs about the Lesson Planning (table 1) was remained at the fair level (MV=1.8 to 2.4) in 2014-15. It was remained fair during April (MV=2.0), May (MV=2.1), September (MV=2.3) and October (MV=2.3) in 2015-16, but was improved to the level of good during the months of November (MV=2.5), December (MV=2.5) and January (MV=2.6). The data showed that in both academic sessions performance of the teachers at the end of the session was better as compared to the start of the session.

Interaction with Students

Performance of PSTs about the Lesson Planning (table 1)was remained at the fair level during the months of April (MV=2.1), May (MV=2.2), September (MV=2.3), and October (MV=2.3) in 2014-15. It was slightly increased and became good in November during 2014-15 (MV=2.5). The performance of the teachers again decreased and became fair in December 2014-15. At the end of the academic session 2014-15 performance of the teacher was reported to be good (MV=2.5). It can be extracted from the data that the performance of the teachers was fair at the start and good at the end of the academic session 2014-15.

Classroom Management

Performance of PSTs about the Lesson Planning (table 9, fig 9) was remained at the fair level during the months of April (MV=2.2), May (MV=2.3) and September (MV=2.3) for the academic session 2014-15. It was slightly increased and became good in October (MV=2.5), November (MV=2.6), December (MV=2.5) and January (MV=2.6) in academic session 2014-15 (MV=2.5), and a similar trend was noted in the academic session 2015-16. It can be extracted from the data that the performance of the teachers was fair at the start and good at the end of the academic session 2014-15. The Performance of the teachers was reported fair in April (MV=2.3) and May (MV=2.4) 2015-16. Data also showed that the performance of the teachers was good in September (MV=2.5), October (MV=2.5), November (MV=2.6), December

(MV=2.7) and January (MV=2.7) in academic session 2015-16. It can also be extracted from the data that the performance of the teachers at the end of both academic sessions was reported better as compared to the start of both academic sessions. It can be inferred from the data that there was no tangible difference between the performances of the teachers in both academic sessions.

Qualitative Data: Reasons of PSTs' Poor performance and Possibilities of Improvement

To have a deep understanding of the results of the quantitative data, the researchers collected views of PSTs and DTEs about the reasons of unsatisfactory output of CPD activities in terms of teachers' performance and possible ways of improvement of teachers' performance. 32 PSTs and 17 DTEs participated in the study selected conveniently and the data was collected through semi-structured interview protocol.

It was identified that the key reasons of poor performance of PSTs were Multi-grade teaching (29-views), Poor Parental Cooperation (25-views), Financial constraints (21-views), Difficult Books and Curriculum (27-views), Teachers' Poor qualification and lack Interest in teaching-learning activities (15-views), More monitoring and less mentoring by DTEs (12-views), Over Engagement of the Teachers in non-educational activities like polio campaigns and flood duties etc (8-views), Intimidating behavior of school administration and lack of facilities like office & furniture etc.

PSTs suggested that the performance of the PSTs can be improved by posting Qualified mentors (30-viws), more attention towards mentoring and less assessment (28-views), One Teacher for One Class (27-views), appropriate training need assessment (25-views), Sufficient funds should be provided to meet the educational needs of the schools (19-views), Community Engagement in the school activities (14-views), decentralization of financial and administrative powers (13-views), and Teachers must not be engaged in non-teaching activities (9-views).

Positive aspects of the mentoring were also explored as improved regularity, student enrolment, classroom discipline, teaching skills, healthy competition among teachers and use of teacher guides and AV- Aids. The negative aspects were explored as authoritative behavior of DTEs, more assessment and less mentoring, training without need assessment, traditional way of teaching, poor content knowledge, lack of trust, nontransferable jobs, lack of ownership and follow-up of mentoring and absence of rewards for good performing teachers.

Discussion

The findings of the data revealed that overall performance of the PSTs against all the nine dimensions of assessment was at the fair level. Shah, Khan and Ahmed (2015) concluded that the teachers' performance has improved up to some extent as a result of mentoring practices under the CPD framework. These findings

are in agreement with our results in the sense that some improvement has occurred in the overall teachers' performance. The findings of our study indicate that the level of improvement in the teachers' performance was not improved up to a significant level and remained at the fair or infrequent level. Akhlaq et al. (2015) conducted that the process of mentoring under CPD-framework was unhelpful in getting the desired targets of improved quality education and teachers' performance that is in agreement with the results of our study.

The major issues related to poor performance of the PSTs as perceived by DTEs were lack of teacher's interest, multi-grade teaching, overcrowded classrooms, plenty of traveling and conveyance problems, lack of ownership, poverty, lack of resources, improper assessment of the students, extra file work and cluster-based posting of DTEs. The findings of the study of Nadeem et al., (2011) are in agreement with the findings of our study. The study of Muthusamy (2015) concluded that poor administrative support, absence of teachers' training; inappropriate CPD activities and lack of resources were major limiting factors of teachers' performance in the schools of South Africa. These findings are also in agreement with the results of our study. The study of Okyere-Kwakye (2013) concluded that there were inadequate facilities of the furniture, toilets, computer labs, library and reading materials, staff rooms and residences for teachers in the public schools of Ghana, due to which performance of the teachers' was suffering. These findings are also in partial agreement with the findings of our study.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the data and subsequent discussions, it can be concluded that the Teachers' (mentees) performance is not improved tangibly as a result of mentoring under the CPD framework of the DSD, Lahore. The unsatisfactory outcomes of CPD framework in terms of Teachers' Performance are because of a number of challenges being faced by both DTEs (mentors) and PSTs (mentees). The study concluded that the overall status of performance of the PSTs in all the areas of assessment is unsatisfactory. The performance of the PSTs is not uniform throughout the academic session; rather it remains at a fair level during the starting months and improves up to the good level during the late months of the academic session. It is concluded that the major cause of the teachers' poor performance is inappropriate mentoring practices of the DTEs. Furthermore, PSTs are facing a number of issues that add to the poor performance of the PSTs. Key challenges faced by the PSTs include multi-grade teaching, lack of Parents' cooperation, deficiency of funds and resources, difficult curriculum & textbooks, least interest and low qualification of the teachers, additional assignments and unsuitable school environment. Furthermore, poor qualifications and teaching competence of the teachers are also key reasons for the poor performance of the PSTs. Teaching in the second language (English) is also a major issue for many teachers. Especially the teaching of Science, Mathematics, and English are more

difficult for many teachers' because of poor content knowledge of these subjects and the command over the English language.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of the study it is recommended that the concerned educational authorities must re-assess the qualifications and competence of teachers and DTEs. Issues faced by PSTs and DTEs in the execution of mentoring must be in addressed by involving PSTs in planning process of CPD activities. CPD activities must be based on a comprehensive needs assessment of the teachers and schools. A school-based mentoring program is recommended where a senior teacher (preferably school head) of the same school may be assigned to act as a mentor. Market-driven incentives may also be offered to the selected mentors so that they can perform their duties with full devotion, sincerity, and free of financial stress. The powers of recruitment of PSTs on an ad-hoc basis be given to the school heads to meet the urgent needs of the schools in case any teacher left the job during mid of the academic session.

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