



Continuous Professional Development Program and English Language Teachers Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Descriptive Study at Primary Level

Savaira^a, Dr Saqib Shahzad^b, Dr Muhammad Idris^c, Mr Azmat Ali Shah^d

^aMPhil Scholar, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. ^{b,c}Associate Professor, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. ^dLecturer, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

*Email: savira.kpk@gmail.com

Abstract: Programs for continuous professional development, or CPD, are made to tackle the unique needs of educators in an effort to raise standards across the board. Examining elementary school English teachers' opinions of the CPD program and evaluating the program's impact on the pedagogical content knowledge of these teachers were the focus of the current study. Analytical and descriptive research designs were used in the study. All female primary school teachers employed in Tehsil Takht Bhai, District Mardan comprised the study's population. Random selection was used to select a sample of 180 female teachers. A Likert scale questionnaire was designed for data collection, and SPSS was used to analyze the results using the mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages. The majority of the female instructors expressed positive sentiments about the CPD program and agreed that it had improved their understanding of English pedagogical content knowledge, according to the results. Given these results, it is advised that primary school teachers be continuously provided with CPD training to further support their professional development. Furthermore, to make the program more appealing and engaging, stakeholders and policy makers should give teachers the necessary training and assistance they need to use technological tools and resources efficiently.

Key words: Continuous Professional Development; Pedagogical Content Knowledge; Primary School Teachers, English Language Teachers

1. Introduction

Effective professional development is essential to the expansion and success of any firm, but it's especially important for those in the education sector. Teachers can improve their knowledge and abilities via continuous professional development (CPD), especially in the field of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which is necessary for efficient instruction. Pedagogical content knowledge is in-depth understanding of the subject and how best to provide it to students. Enhancing student learning outcomes requires CPD. Higher student success levels have been linked, per study, to ongoing professional development (Lavy & Angerist, 2001). Day (1999) said that professional development includes both unstructured learning opportunities and organized activities meant to help people, organizations, or higher education establishments in one way or another, eventually raising the caliber of teaching in the class.

One of the major projects under the Program for Education Sector Reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, is the implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD). School teachers are frequently held accountable for Pakistan's inadequate elementary school system. Similarly, the primary school system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also been described as challenging and ineffective. Therefore, at the elementary school level, where teachers have

to teach various subjects to their students, it is vital to increase Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Many teacher training programs are currently being conducted in Pakistan. The Continuous Professional Development program, created especially for primary school teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by the E&SE department, was the focus of this study. This program's objective is to improve the deplorable situation of KP elementary education by strengthening the pedagogical subject knowledge and abilities of teachers. Throughout an academic session, eight professional development days must be attended by all primary school teachers employed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public sector schools. Urdu, science, English, and math are the main subjects covered in the CPD.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

To examine how continuous professional development program in Tehsil Takht Bhai, District Mardan impacts the pedagogical content knowledge of English teachers in elementary schools.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The government acknowledges the vital role that English language instruction plays in the overall development of teachers and students. The primary objective of this study is to investigate how CPD programs impacts Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) in the context of English as a language and subject. Furthermore, this study can motivate elementary school English teachers to continuously enhance their PCK in English and offers insights for practices and policies associated with CPD programs while adding to the existing knowledge in the field.

1.3 Research Objectives

- a) To find out how primary school English instructors feel about the CPD program.
- b) To assess the impact of CPD program on the pedagogical subject knowledge of English instructors.

1.4 Research Questions

- a) What is the perception of the CPD program among English instructors?
- b) What effects does CPD have on elementary school English teachers' pedagogical content knowledge?

2. Literature Review

Back in 1986, Shulman put up the idea of pedagogical content knowledge. It combines subject-matter knowledge with pedagogical experience from teachers. The development and presentation of concepts, pedagogical practices, an awareness of the factors influencing how easy or difficult concepts are to learn, and the comprehension of prior knowledge among their students are all components of pedagogical content knowledge, according to Mishra and Koehler (2006). Teachers that possess a strong grasp of pedagogy, technology, and subject matter would be beneficial to their pupils, according to Ahmad and Sewani (2022). For teachers to be effective, they must possess experience in three distinct areas. Teachers must be knowledgeable about their subjects above anything else. To further improve their teaching methods, educators also need to be knowledgeable in a variety of pedagogical areas, including ideas and practices. Thirdly, in order to comprehend the best methods, resources, and techniques for teaching certain subjects, educators also need to possess pedagogical content knowledge.

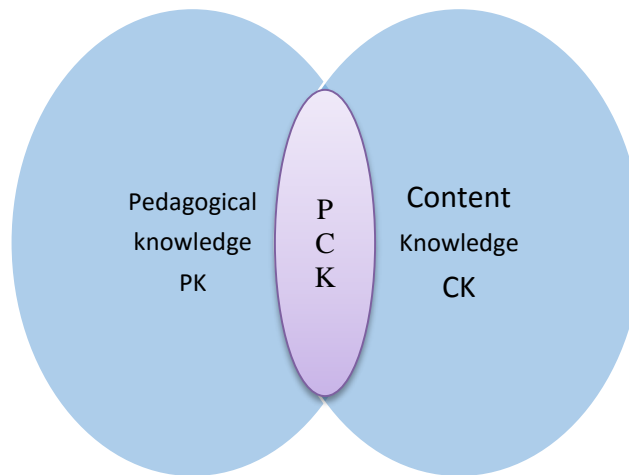
These three knowledge domains enable educators to provide the most efficient learning opportunities and give students an outstanding educational experience. (Shulman, 1986).

2.1 Pedagogical content Knowledge (PCK)

Following are the components of PCK:

- a) Expertise in the subject
- b) Knowledge of instructional strategies.
- c) Conceptual proficiency of the learners.
- d) Understanding of the elements that influence how easy or difficult a topic is for pupils to learn
- e) Knowledge of curriculum

(Shulman, 1986).



According to Doubek and Cooper (2007), teachers who possess a strong understanding of the curriculum, methodology, and subject matter are more likely to provide engaging classes that positively impact students' learning. Due to the challenges posed by globalization and internationalization, educational institutions in several countries are giving English a higher priority in their school curriculum as an effort to establish it as a universally recognized language (Shinde & Karekatti 2012). According to the findings of Ali (2019), academic achievement has not reached the expected level in the case of English teachers and students, even in spite of the government of Pakistan's increased emphasis, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on English language instruction and acquisition.

In Pakistan, raising the standard of teaching and learning process is the aim of continuous professional development. This is accomplished by emphasizing a number of factors, including the subject matter expertise, instructional skills, and classroom behavior of the teachers. Promoting professional abilities, guaranteeing educational quality, boosting enthusiasm, and promoting teacher accountability are the primary goals of continuous professional development (DSD, 2007a). The aim of CPD is to improve the quality of teaching methods while also constantly instructing and supervising all staff members of educational institutions in order to modify the behavior of teachers in the classroom (DSD, 2007b).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The scholars used a quantitative and descriptive research design.

3.2 Population

All those primary school female teachers in Tehsil Takht Bhai who had attended seven or more days training sessions with CPD. The number of such teachers was 890.

3.3 Sampling

The participants were chosen by simple random sampling. A sample of two hundred elementary school teachers working in Tehsil Takhtbai District Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, had been chosen.

3.4 Research Instrument

A five-point Likert scale was employed in a closed-ended Teachers' Perceptions Questionnaire to gather quantitative data. Mean, standard deviation frequencies, and percentages were used in the descriptive statistics analysis of the questionnaires.

4. Analysis of Data

Data was rigorously coded, organized, and entered into SPSS version 16 after collection. Many statistical metrics, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were then used to examine the data.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table: 1 Descriptive statistics of Teachers Perceptions about CPD Program

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		<u>Mean</u>		<u>Std. Deviation</u>
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
The CPD program meets my expectations and aligns perfectly with my needs.	51	25.5	88	44.0	6	3	47	23.5	8	4	2.37	1.208	
The CPD program is presented in a clear and engaging manner.	49	24.5	88	43.8	12	6	41	20.4	10	5.5	2.38	1.201	
The duration of the CPD program is sufficient for covering all the necessary topics.	63	31.0	99	49.5	6	3	27	13.5	5	2.5	2.06	1.054	
The goals and objectives of the CPD programs I enrolled in, are clear and directly applicable.	51	25.5	100	50.5	5	2.5	32	16.5	12	6	2.27	1.181	
The trainers or presenters of the CPD program are knowledgeable and experienced in English teaching.	30	15.0	106	53.0	14	7.0	30	15.0	20	10	2.52	1.207	
CPD training provides opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching skills and techniques, such as lesson planning, classroom management, and assessment.	69	34.50	88	44.00	6	3	27	13.5	10	5	2.11	1.167	

Majority of the instructors had favorable opinions of the CPD program. The majority of instructors said that the CPD program suited their requirements and fulfilled their expectations, with 69% strongly agreeing and 44% agreeing. 68.50% of respondents (24.50 percent strongly agreed, 44 percent agreed) thought the program was presented in an engaging and understandable manner. 81% of respondents—31.50% strongly agreed and 49.50% agreed—said there was enough time to cover all the important subjects. Sixty-six percent of instructors said that the aims and objectives of the CPD program closely related to the way they teach. The CPD program offers instructors improved opportunities to strengthen their pedagogical abilities, especially in areas like lesson preparation, classroom management, and evaluations, according to 78.50% (34.50% agreed and 44% strongly agreed) of respondents.

Table: 2 Descriptive statistics of Impact of CPD on Pedagogical contents knowledge of English teachers

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Participating in a CPD program assists me in recognizing	53	26.5	113	26.2	6	3	23	11.5	5	2.5	2.07	0.99

areas for improvement in my English teaching.													
I am confident in applying the new strategies in my classroom teaching after attending CPD programs.	47	23.5	113	26.2	8	4	26	13.0	6	3	2.16	1.023	
The CPD program(s) positively impacted my pedagogical content knowledge in English.	46	23.0	110	55.0	6	3	30	15.0	8	4	2.22	1.085	
The CPD program(s) had a positive impact on my students' learning outcomes.	39	19.5	119	59.5	8	4.5	26	13.0	8	4	2.22	1.034	
The CPD program raised my awareness of teaching and learning issues.	43	21.5	108	54.0	18	7.5	25	12.5	9	4.5	2.25	1.068	
The CPD program increased my confidence in integrating technology tools and resources in teaching English.	0	0	13	6.5	2	1	15 8	79	27	13. 5	4	0.638	

Eighty-three percent of respondents, or a considerable majority, said that the CPD program helps them in identifying areas in which their English teaching needs to be improved. Seventy-eight percent of participants said the program increased their knowledge of pedagogical content, and eighty percent of respondents said they felt confident applying the new tactics they had learned in the CPD program. Eighty percent of the responders said they enhanced their English teaching with the CPD's activities. 79% of respondents said that the CPD program improved their students' learning results. 75 percent of the respondents said that the CPD trainings increased their awareness of issues related to teaching and learning. However, only 6.50% of the participants indicated that the CPD program had increased their confidence in their ability to use technology-based resources and tools while instructing English to students.

4.2 Findings

The results indicate that the majority of educators held positive views toward the CPD initiative. The presentation was well-structured, amusing, and engaging in their opinion. They recognized the usefulness and content of the program. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) seminars were perceived as advantageous platforms for professional growth, augmenting comprehension of pedagogical subject matter and instructive skills, notably concerning topics such as lesson design, classroom administration, and evaluations. Ultimately, taking part in CPD programs improved teachers' ability to apply new teaching strategies, improve their knowledge of pedagogical content, develop specialized teaching skills, improve student learning outcomes, and raise their awareness of issues related to teaching and learning. The aforementioned results are in line with the conclusions of the research conducted by Al Asmari (2016) and Saleem, Gul, and Dogar (2021). Yet, one key area of attention that needs to be addressed is boosting educators' confidence in incorporating technology.

5. Conclusions

The program was regarded favorably, efficiently, and in accordance with each participant's demands. Instructors expressed gratitude for the program's clarity, applicability, and relevance as well as its impact on their professional development and advancement of their Pedagogical Content Knowledge. The findings of Harris and Sass (2011), which recognized the value of professional development in improving primary school teachers' teaching skills, are consistent with the study's findings. CPD has been shown to positively affect educational methods and outcomes in a number of earlier researches, including those by Lau (2006), Shang (2010), Jacobs & Farrell (2001), and Hayes (2000). According to the study conducted by Ravhuhali, Kutame, and Mutshaeni (2015), educators acknowledge the value of professional development in improving their subject-matter and pedagogical skills, as well as their methods and approaches to teaching. Insufficient effort was made toward this goal, nevertheless, since teachers failed to incorporate instructional tools into their lessons.

5.1 Recommendations

It is recommended that the CPD program should be continued and evaluated regularly as it positively impacts teachers' PCK and skills. In addition, all public schools should be provided with the resources they require, which should include free technology tools and visual aids. The training that educators need to properly use digital technologies and resources should come from stakeholders and policy makers. The application of authentic materials in English language lessons, such as articles, videos, and real-world examples, should be focused CPD sessions.

References

- Al Asmari, A. (2016). Continuous Professional Development of English Language Teachers: Perception and Practices. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7(3), 117-124.
- Ali, I. (2019). *Teachers Beliefs and Practices about Teaching of English at Secondary Level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Peshawar,
- Ali, Z., Ahmad, N., & Sewani, R. (2022). Examining Elementary School Teachers' Professional Proficiencies With Technology Integration and Their Impact on Students' Achievement. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(7), 2950- 2968.
- Angrist, J. D., & Lavy, V. (2001). Does teacher training affect pupil learning? Evidence from matched comparisons in Jerusalem public schools. *Journal of labor economics*, 19(2), 343-369.
- Day, C. (1999). *Developing Teachers: The Challenge of Lifelong Learning*, London and NY. Rutledge Falmer.
- Doubek, M. B., & Cooper, E. J. (2007). Closing the gap through professional development: Implications for reading research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 42(3), 411-415.
- DSD. (2007a). Guide for Cluster Training and Support Center. Lahore, DSD.
- DSD. (2007b). Continuous Professional Development Frame work for Primary Teacher. Lahore, DSD.
- Harris, D. N., & Sass, T. R. (2011). Teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement. *Journal of public economics*, 95(7-8), 798-812.
- Hayes, D. (2000). Cascade training and teachers' professional development. *ELT journal*, 54(2), 135-145.
- Jacobs, G., & Farrell, T.S.C. (2001). Paradigm shift: Understanding and implementing change in second language education. *TESL EJ*, 5(1).
- Koehler, M., Mishra, P., Kereluik, K., Shin, T. S., & Graham, C. R. (2014). The technologi pedagogical content knowledge framework. In *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology* (pp. 101-111), New York: Springer.
- Lau, K. L. (2006). Implementing strategy instruction in Chinese language classes: A school-based Chinese reading strategy instruction program. *Educational Research*, 48(2), 195- 209.
- Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers college record*, 108(6), 1017-1054.
- Ravhuhali, F., Kutame, A. P., & Mutshaeni, H. N. (2015). Teachers' perceptions of the impact of continuing professional development on promoting quality teaching and learning. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(1), 1-7.
- Saleem, A., Gul, R., & Dogar, A. A. (2021). Effectiveness of Continuous Professional Development Program As Perceived By Primary Level Teachers. *Ilkogretim Online*, 20(3).
- Shang, H. F. (2010). Reading strategy use, self-efficacy and EFL reading comprehension. *Asian EFL*

Journal, 12(2), 18-42.

Shinde, M. B., & Karekatti, T. K. (2012). Pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching English to primary school children. *International Journal of Instruction, 5(1).*

Shulman, L.S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational researcher, 15(2), 4-14.*

Stronge, J. H. (2018). *Qualities of effective teachers.* Ascd.