THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract

 Research has identified a number of factors that determine the success of the educational process, these include national policies, the nature of the educational system in the country, social and cultural norms and the quality of teachers. Many researchers believe that the quality of teachers is the most important factor amongst these factors. Teachers' continuous professional development is a proven means to develop and maintain the quality of teachers in order to secure the success of the educational process.

This study examines the teachers' professional development process in the context of Saudi Araba (KSA). This study reviews how teachers' continuous professional development can improve their sense of self-efficacy and has a positive impact on their professional practices. After reviewing the impact of teacher's professional development on the delivery of content, use of teaching resources, classroom and time management and students' learning outcomes, the study investigates the issues that hinder teachers' participation in these programmes. It highlights different types of teachers' professional development and the current situation in the KSA in relation to teachers' professional development. The study investigates the views of teachers and teacher educators through a questionnaire and interview on how these programmes can be improved and how Saudi teachers can be motivated to participate in these programmes. Recommendations for related authorities and future researchers are identified, such as for authorities provision of adequate professional development programmes and facilities and perks to motivate the teachers to participate in these programmes and for researchers area specific research, research on effectivity of different types of professional development programmes including online or distance education

CHAPTER 1 - Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

Education is considered the base for growth and development of any nation. It helps the people to develop the talent and skills that are required for a better quality of life. Education is vital for human development and enhancement of economic growth of any country. Education not only enables the people to demonstrate a better social behaviour such as honest dealing with others and better sense of professional responsibility but lets them to play a progressive role in all the walks of life. Research indicates that the prospects of a nation can be enhanced through the quality of education it provides to its youth. There are various factors that determine the quality of education and quality of teachers is an important factor among them (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2007).

In the recent times, there is strong agreement amongst academics and professionals that teachers' continuous professional development (CPD) is vital for providing quality education (Boyle et al., 2004; Karimi, 2011; Ross and Bruce, 2007; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2007). Teachers' professional development programmes are taken as the key to success for any educational development. These programmes not only ensure the improvement in teachers' performance but help in the application of academic research in classroom settings. Research indicates that effective teachers' professional development programmes have a significant impact on the entire educational process (Karimi, 2011). Furthermore, a positive relationship between teachers' continuous professional development and students' learning outcomes is also noted by researchers, this is the ultimate goal of any educational process (Karimi, 2011; Ross and Bruce, 2007). These programmes also facilitate the incorporation of rapid changes that are taking place in different domains of life into teaching practices such as the use of technology that offers an ever-increasing volume of information but at the same time poses a challenge to teachers for updating their knowledge and skills according to new trends (Mizell, 2010).

It is observed that teachers' continuous professional development enables them to deal with the ever-growing challenges related to the field of education. It is also observed that teachers need different types of professional development programmes in different phases of their career. Research indicates that the teachers that obtain pre-service training before starting their career are equipped with skills and techniques that are required to start a profession with confidence but it cannot prepare them to deal with all the challenges they are expected to face in different phases of their career (Adnyani, 2015; Boyle et al., 2004).

Teachers' training is vital part of their professional life. It is an on-going process that aims to provide the skills and knowledge that teachers need for successful delivery of knowledge and for preparing the students to face the challenges of life. Provision of adequate facilities for teachers' continuous professional development can ensure a high standard of educational process (Bachtiar, 2016; Adnyani, 2015; Tanang and Abu, 2014; Fullan and Mascall, 2000).

1.2 Definitions of Teachers' Continuous Professional Development

Teachers' professional development is defined in a number of ways by different scholars. It is explained as a process that aims to improve teachers' professional knowledge and skills and provides them with the most suitable approaches in relation to their specific context (Tanang et al., 2014; Guskey, 2000). Another definition of teachers' professional development explains it as a strategic, focused, constant and logical process (Bolam, 2002; Gabriel et al, 2011) that can be formal or informal in nature and can be in form of education or training. Furthermore, it either can be long-term or short-term (Bolam, 2002). OECD (2005) defines teachers' effective professional development as an on-going process that includes training, practice and feedback. It also provides adequate time and follow-up support for teachers so they can implement the newly learnt knowledge and skills in classroom settings. Successful professional development programmes offer the learning activities that are applicable in classroom settings and enable the teachers to develop the learning communities that can facilitate their long-term learning and sharing the experiences related to implementation of newly learnt techniques.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of Teachers' Continuous Professional Development

Teachers' professional development programmes should be designed in a manner that they can achieve some specific aims and objectives (OECD, 1998):

- These programmes should aim to increase the teachers' knowledge about subject matter ,according to research and advancement in that specific field.

- Teachers' continuous professional development programmes should improve their skills, attitudes and approaches towards the educational process and should inform and equip them with new teaching techniques that are emerging as the result of educational research.

- These programmes should provide the teachers with the skills for the implementation of changes proposed to the curriculum.

- These programmes must be supportive for improvement in existing curriculum and its application in educational settings.

- They should provide teachers with new teaching techniques that can improve the delivery of content.

- These programmes should enhance the teachers' capability to share and exchange their skills and knowledge with their counterparts.

- These programmes should enable the novice or weaker teachers to improve their knowledge and skills for an effective performance in their professional role.

1.4 Characteristics of successful professional development programmes

Research indicates that there are some particular features that make a professional development programmes successful (Bachtiar, 2016). These features are essential for success of such programmes in all the parts of world. He argues that for being effective, teachers' professional development programmes must be designed on the bases of teachers' needs analysis for professional development. They should be structured and well-planned and able to cover all the

aspects of the educational process. He suggests that all the teachers' professional development programmes, be pre-service, in-service or self-study must have the following characteristics in order to be effective and impactful (Bachtiar, 2016):

• They must include the content and activities that can increase teachers' knowledge and teaching skills in order to improves their overall performance

• They should encourage collaboration and teamwork amongst teachers and promote the sense of sharing the teaching and training experiences and newly learnt techniques with their colleagues.

• These programmes must consider teachers' professional needs and fulfill them, and should be able to increase their job satisfaction by by reducing stress levels .

1.5 Impact of teachers' professional development on different aspects of teaching

The term 'impact', can be explained in relation to teachers' professional development programmes, as an improvement in teachers' professional knowledge and skill and application of this improved knowledge in classroom settings (Powell et al., 2003). It is a general observation that teachers' professional development programmes have a positive impact on their performance during the educational process and their participation in such programmes improves the prospects of their growth and excellence as teachers (Adnyani, 2015; Tanang and Abu, 2014; Poskitt, 2005; Tanang et al., 2014; Ariff et al., 2016; Bachtiar, 2016; Coburn, 2016; Gabriel et al., 2011). Peter (2012) suggests that teachers' training improves their performance and has a positive impact on delivery of content, use of teaching aids in classroom and students learning outcomes which is the ultimate goal of the entire educational process.

Furthermore, CPD programmes are recognised for having a positive impact on teachers' self-efficacy , this can be explained as people's confidence about their capabilities. Sense of self-efficacy regulates one's feelings and inspires _actions. Self-efficacy is defined as people's ability to control the quality of their performance (Bandura, 2001). It includes one's ability to organise and execute the actions that are needed for achievement of a desired level of success. It is observed that people can perform better when they trust their own capabilities and a higher level of self-efficacy supports an effective and efficient performance of duties and responsibilities (Bandura, 2001).

1.6 Different models of teachers' continuous professional development

There is a variety of continuous professional development models. Mostly used of them can be enlisted as: Training Model, Award-bearing Model, Deficit Model, Cascade Model, Standards-based Model, Coaching/mentoring Model, Community of practice Model, Inquiry/Action research Model and Transformative Model (Kennedy, 2005)..

All these models have their own strengths and limitations and can be useful in different circumstances. Below is a brief description of three of these models that are the most frequently used in different parts of world (Kennedy, 2005)

1.6.1The Training Model

The training model of teachers' continuous professional development is a globally acknowledged and applied model (Little, 1994; Kelly and McDiarmid, 2002; Kennedy, 2005). In the recent times, it is widely used for teachers' professional development in almost all the parts of the world. This model involves a skills-based, technocratic concept of teaching. This model provides an opportunity for teachers to update their skills and depict their competence. The basic concept of this model involves the delivery of training for teachers by an expert. This training is based on a curriculum or an agenda that is determined either by government, related institute or by the expert him/herself and usually the teachers receiving the training play a passive role in this process. This type of training can take place in a specific institution or at the teachers' workplace, be a school or college. Generally, this model involves an off-site delivery of training that is criticised for lacking a connection with the actual classroom and the context of participants' work conditions. It is also explained as one of the major reasons for failure of such training models (Day, 1999). He argues that such trainings fail to relate with the basic moral purposes of teaching and teachers' professionalism. The training model of teachers' continuous professional development can be explained as a standards-based concept of teacher development that enables the teachers to strive for demonstration of some specific skills that are desired by an agreed upon national or organisational standard (Kennedy, 2005).

Kirk et al (2003) states that this training model involves a higher level of central control that is usually referred as quality assurance that ensures consistency and uniformity of performance of all the teachers who have attended this training. He argues that the training model of teachers' continuous professional development suggests a narrow concept of teaching and education and that the standardisation of training programmes results in overlooking the need for teachers to be independent and able to identify and fulfill their individual needs for professional development. Kirk et al (2003) also suggests that the concept of standardised training programmes should be aimed at enabling the participant to improve their teaching practices, learning new concepts and technology and increase the level of students' achievements. They further suggest that training programmes for teachers' professional development should be designed for supporting the teachers to learn new skills and to improve the existing teaching practices and relating and practicing them in their actual working environment.

The basic weakness of this model is its inability to impact directly on actual classroom practices as teacher may fail to implement the newly learnt knowledge and skills in classroom settings whereas Kennedy (2005) argues that the training model of teachers' professional development enables the dominant stakeholders of the educational process such as governments or organisations to control and restrict the teachers to a specific agenda and allocates them a passive role through reception of an explicit knowledge (Kennedy, 2005). The Training model of CPD requires special arrangements for delivery of training, thus it is more expensive in comparison to some, other models such as the observation model or cascade model. Hoban (2002) suggests that despite a number of limitations of this model of teachers' professional development, it is an effective source of knowledge and skills for teachers,

especially for novice teachers. It equips them with the techniques that enables them to start their professional career in a confident manner.

1.6.2 The Observation Model

This model of teachers' professional development involves provision of an experienced teacher in a school that might be a specialist or an experienced colleague who can observe the teachers' classrooms practices, assess them and provide them with structured, constructive feedback. This model can be applied to measure the effectiveness of a training session or workshop or for evaluation of teachers' effectiveness on periodic bases (for example, after every six months or one year). Furthermore, it can help in the identification of teachers' needs for professional development and for designing an effective teachers' professional development programmes (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). The observer can use a spreadsheet graph or even simply his/her handwritten notes for providing an immediate feedback to the teacher or management about the teacher's performance. It can help the teachers to improve their performance in some particular areas of teaching practice (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989).

This model of teachers' professional development is based on observation of teachers' performance in classroom settings and is considered evaluative in nature. Recently this model is increasingly used as a form of teachers' professional development for improvement in teaching practices and student learning outcomes. A number of benefits of this model are explained as being easy to administer, being cost effective and provision of opportunities for learning for different stakeholders of the educational process including teachers, school headers and administration (Kennedy, 2005).

Kennedy (2005) argues that most of the teachers do not like to be observed in the classroom as it can be a nerve wracking experience. But research indicates that teacher observations that are aimed to serve as tool for continuous professional development rather than evaluating their performance , have a positive impact on the educational process. It can work as a source of mutual growth for teachers and can enable them to share the instructional techniques and ideologies with their colleagues and relevant authorities.

There are two types of this model. Firstly, this model can be implemented on the basis of teacher-to-teacher observation that can work as a tool for an in-house professional development. It is assumed that both the observers and the observed learn from the process. This process not only improves the teachers' performance but students' learning outcome as well, within a specific organisation (Kennedy, 2005).

The second type of this model is based on observation by a teachers' trainer and the feedback provided by him/her. This type of observation model is based on the assumption that reflection on the trainer/expert's direct observation of the teachers' classroom practices will result in professional development of the teacher and will ultimately improve the students' learning outcomes. (Karimi, 2011; Kennedy, 2005).

This method of teacher professional development is easy to administer and can be implemented in a cost-effective manner. A senior, experienced teacher can observe colleagues for the sake of guidance or teachers can observe each other during classroom practices in order to identify the

needs for development and to guide each other to overcome the existing issues. This model requires teachers' cooperation with each other as a means of mutual professional growth of the entire group of teachers involved in this process.

On the other hand, there are some limitations of this model that are basically psychological in nature. First of all, people's general disliking for being observed is the most important limitation of this method. Furthermore, teachers might not like to share the issues they are facing in classroom settings with their counterparts or management as it can highlight their weaknesses (Kennedy, 2005).

1.6.3 Inquiry Model

The Inquiry model of teachers' professional development is also called the action-research model. A teacher can conduct this action research on his/her own or a group of teachers can decide to conducts a less formal study to solve an issue related to teaching practices. Research indicates that teachers can develop new ideas and strategies in teaching if they are given an opportunity for asking questions and answering these questions through collection of data from their workplace (Amin, 2005; Rauf et al., 2017).

Action research is defined as the study of a social situation that alows the participants themselves to work as researchers. It enables them to improve the quality of action that is under discussion or research (Somekh, 1994; Day, 1999). A number of researchers, such as Weiner (2002) and Burbank and Kauchack (2003) suggest that this model of teachers' professional development can have a strong impact on quality of teaching practice if it is shared in wider communities of practice. It can improve the knowledge and skills of a wider community of practice working in similar contexts without their practical contribution in this inquiry or action research. Weiner (2002) argues that action research can enable the teachers to solve the issues that training model based models are unable to address for being off-site. She maintains that action research or inquiry model can address the specific issues faced by an individual teacher or a specific institution that might not be much relevant to other organisations. She suggests that the basic purpose of the inquiry model is professional development of participating teachers and their transformation into well-aware and better skilled teachers.

Kennedy, (2005) argues that the inquiry model involves decentralisation of teachers' professional development and allocates this responibility to teachers, school administration and local authorities who can identify the teachers' needs for professional developmet and can address these needs through action research. He argues that at the same time, this strategy can be seen as a tool to decrease the role of universities as sole producers of research.

Some researchers argue that a collaborative form of action research enables the teachers to turn the passive role imposed on them into an active one and makes them responsible for their own professional development Burbank and Kauchack (2003). They suggest that the inquiry model of teachers' professional development involves the teachers deeply in the educational process as they work on the bases on their findings instead of merely following the product of someone else's research. It also limits the teachers' dependency on research produced by others and

empowers them to identify the issues, look for the solutions and implement their own or somebody's relevant research into their classroom settings.

Action research has been recognised as a successful model of teachers' continuous professional development that allows teachers to ask critical questions related to their teaching practices and educational environment. But it is an important point to note that the teachers' ability to ask critical questions may vary in different situations and different societies (Sachs, 2003). Still there is a strong agreement amongst researchers that this model of teachers' continuous professional development has the significant capacity to transform teaching practice and professional sovereignty of teachers (Kennedy, 2005).

Just like the other models of teachers' continuous professional development, the inquiry model also has its strengths and limitations. First of all, this model is progressive in nature and involves teachers' personal interest in order to find a solution for an existing issue. It makes them more involved in their profession and they work in a proactive manner. This model is cost effective. On the other hand, this model requires that the teachers participating in this inquiry/action research are able to conduct an action research on their own. If they are working in the form of a group or team, they should be cooperative so they can conduct this research in an effective manner. Furthermore, they must be able to collect, evaluate and analyse the relevant data in order to find out a factual solution for the issue under discussion (Kennedy, 2005).

1.7 Historical perspective of teachers' continuous development programmes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Just like the other parts of world, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) aims develop a comprehensive educational system for its citizens. As teachers are an integral part of the education system and it is the believed that quality of education is determined by the quality of teachers that impart knowledge and enable a country's young generation to obtain the skills that are necessary not only for their own well-being but also for the growth and prosperity of a nation. In order to produce high quality teachers, the government of the KSA is determined to equip them with the knowledge and skills that are necessary for good performance in classroom settings (Alghamdi, 2011).

Historically, beginning of teachers' continuous development programmes in KSA can be traced back to the year 1954 when the Ministry of Education (MOE) arranged CPD programmes for 1,025 teachers who were offered different courses covering a range of subjects. The Ministry of Education offered these programmes during the summer vacation so the teachers can avail them in a convenient manner and schools' educational schedule is not affected (General Directorate of Training and Scholarship, 2002).

The Ministry of Education was directly responsible for designing and implementing the CPD programmes in the KSA from 1955 to 1973 but these programmes were offered in some limited regions of the state. The CPD programmes offered during this time period were long-term in nature ranging from six months to three years. The reason for offering long-term programmes was the realisation that most of the teachers in the KSA were not fully qualified for teaching and needed a comprehensive training for being effective in their role as teachers. These programmes

were designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills in the areas of subject matter and teaching methods (General Directorate of Training and Scholarship, 2002).

The General Directorate of Training and Scholarship (GDTS) was established in the year 1974 and aimed to facilitate the process of continuous professional development in the field of education. this organisation was responsible for teacher' continuous professional development thus it worked to develop the training me for teachers according to contemporary global trends (General Directorate of Training and Scholarship, 2011).

A 'Guide to Educational Training and Scholarship was approved by the Ministry of Civil Service in the year 1977. This document was developed by the Ministry of Education and highlights the need for teachers' continuous professional development programmes and emphasises on provision of these programmes across the KSA (General Directorate of Training and Scholarship, 2002). The execution of policies mentioned in this guide started in the year 1980 and CPD programmes were made available in most of the regions in the KSA. But these programmes were not able to support all the teachers and there was a dire need to expand teachers training programmes in terms of number and access thus 45 centres for educational training and scholarship were established in the year 1997. These centres were located in different regions and were able to provide training facilities for a great number of teacher through a variety of programmes offered to them (Ministry of Education, 2010). GDTS was responsible for the management of teacher' professional development programmes whereas Educational Training Centers (ETCs) were responsible for the design and delivery of these programmes (Alghamdi, 2011).

King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz's project for developing public education was launched in the year 2006 and it aimed to develop and advance different features of educational processes in the KSA (Aleasa, 2009; Alkatheery & Alnassar, 2010; Tatweer, 2010). This project includes different training programmes for teachers and their development is a major concern for this project. It also identifies that quality of teachers has a direct relationship with the quality of education thus teachers' professional development is vital for the development of an effective education system but the programmes aimed at teachers' continuous professional "are still under development" (Tatweer, 2011, p. 45).

1.8 *Context for continuous professional development in the KSA*

1.8.1 Designing of teachers' continuous professional programmes

Educational Training Centres (ETCs) are directly responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of teachers' continuous professional development programmes since 1997 in the KSA. They work under the guidelines set by the General Directorate of Training and Scholarship (GDTS) that require them to ensure the development of programmes according to the needs of local teachers (Alghamdi, 2011).

Educational Training Centres (ETCs) are required to identify and analyse the teachers' needs for development; formulate the desired aims and objectives; design and develop effective programmes; select suitable content and activities for these programmes; determine the methods

for effective delivery of these programmes and decide the methods and tools to evaluate and assess them effectivity and success of these program and their impact on teachers' knowledge, skills, performance and approaches in classroom settings. Furthermore, Educational Training Centres (ETCs) are required to clearly identify and mention the trainers who are available for delivery of these programmes, the target groups, and the duration of these programmes while considering the challenges of human and financial resources available for this purpose (Alghamdi, 2011).

A number of studies have been conducted regarding the evaluation of these CPD programmes with a focus on their design (Aldkheel, 1992; Buteal, 2009; Hamrun, 2007; Meemar, 2007; Mosa, 1995). These studies revealed that these programmes do not include the contents and activities that can facilitate the needs of local teachers. These programmes lack the knowledge of subject matter, teaching strategies, methods, and skills that local teachers need for being effective in the performance of their duties. Research indicates that usually these CPD programmes offer some new information for teachers in a short period of time that is theory based. It is also observed that these programmes do not focus on the practical aspects of teaching. Furthermore, the trainers who deliver these programmes are not always suitably qualified and trained. These trainers are basically teachers who are nominated by ETCs for delivery of these training, usually without having had any training in this specific domain (Aldkheel, 1992; Buteal, 2009; Hamrun, 2007; Meemar, 2007; Mosa, 1995).

1.8.2 Implementation of teachers' continuous professional development programmes

Research indicates that though The General Directorate of Training and Scholarship has provided a detailed guideline for delivery of teachers' professional development programmes and suggests the use of different methods for delivery of content including (a) lecture, (b) discussion (c) field visits, (d) workshops, (e) programmed learning, (f) brainstorming, (g) role playing, and (h) case studies but generally the trainers use the lecture method that is the least interactive method of these all (Abdualjuad, 1996; Alhindi, 2009; Mosa, 1995). A study conducted by Alhajeri (2004) aimed to that was focused to investigate the problems faced by 300 teachers who were enrolled in in-service training programmes in the KSA and identified three types of issues, classified as: (a) administrative, (b) training, and (c) individual. This study revealed that teachers' training programmes lacked the practical activities that are vital for improvement of teachers' skills. Furthermore, the trainee teachers were not provided with the training manuals in advance or at the beginning of these programmes. Furthermore, arrangements for the smooth delivery of these training sessions were poor and trainees were not provided with any refreshments during the sessions (Alghamdi, 2011).

Another study, conducted by Roas (2001) that investigated the opinion of 357 teacher trainers and trainee teachers about effectiveness of teachers' continuous professional development programmes, this research revealed a number of issue that are hindering the teachers' participation and effective delivery of these programmes including unsuitable scheduling of these programmes and use of just two delivery methods, lectures and discussion, for delivery of

these programmes. Whereas about 15 methods are used for delivery of such programmes in different parts of the world. This study also observed that that Educational Training Centres were inept regarding locations, buildings and different facilities such as library, equipment, teaching aids, training rooms, resting rooms, and canteens (Alghamdi, 2011).

1.9 Evaluation of teachers' continuous professional development programmes

General Directorate of Training and Scholarship (2002, pp. 84-85) provides a detailed guideline for the evaluation of teacher continuous professional development programmes. It suggests the use of four types of assessment including: (a) "formative assessment" for identification of teachers needs for professional development; (b) "construction assessment" that is aimed at the formulation of objectives for these programmes besides planning of content, activities, and methods for effective delivery of teachers' continuous professional development programmes; (c) "summative assessment" that is to be conducted at the end of a programmes to determine its success or failure and to decide whether the programme should be continued, cancelled or improved, and (d) "follow-up assessment" in order to identify the impact of programmes on teachers' knowledge, performance, and attitudes in the post-programme phase (Alghamdi, 2011).

These guidelines suggests that evaluation and assessment of these programmes must be comprehensive and should cover different aspects such as aims and objectives, content and activities included in the training sessions. It also suggests that the trainers should observe and evaluate the impact of these programmes on the performance of trainee teachers during and after the programmes through the use of different evaluation tools, such as questionnaires, interviews and tests. Follow up of this assessment is also suggested and should be undertaken through trainees' self-evaluations reports and reports from school leaders as this process can provide valuable feedback that can help to make these programmes more effective by taking corrective actions in order to resolves the issues mentioned in the feedback. Furthermore, these guidelines suggests the use of some forms of data collection data in order to evaluate the performance of trainers and trainee, besides the effectiveness of these programmes regarding achievement of their aims and objectives in terms of delivery of content and activities (Alghamdi, 2011).

Unfortunately, most of the studies conducted in the domain of teachers' continuous professional development in the context of the KSA are focused to evaluate these programmes in terms of their design and implementation but are lacking the assessment and evaluation of their effectiveness in the post-programme phase. However, as these studies indicate that aims and objectives, content, and activities of these teachers' continuous professional development programmes are not aligned with the needs of local teachers, it can be inferred that "formative evaluation" and "construction evaluation" are not properly executed. Furthermore, these studies also revealed that "summative evaluation" and "follow-up evaluation", for assessment of the impact of these programmes on teachers' knowledge, performance, and attitudes at the end of these programmes and in the post-program phase are not applied (Alabdualateef, 2007; Alhajeri, 2004; Roas, 2001).

1.10 Teachers professional development in Saudi Arabia

In the recent times, education is considered the most effective means of human development and is the source of growth and prosperity of any nation. Teachers are an integral part of the education system and the quality of education is directly related to the quality of teachers. Teacher professional development programmes equip the teachers with the knowledge and skills that enable them to perform their professional responsibilities in an effective manner (Alghamdi, 2011).

It is observed that teachers' current level of competency and continuous professional development programmes in the KSA are not in ideal and need a lot of improvement. It is also observed that the current situation in the terms of educational practices and teachers' continuous professional development in the KSA is not due to the lack of human and financial resources but for lacking adequate planning and attention by the authorities responsible for designing , implementing and evaluating these programmes. There is a clear need to put in serious effort in order to find a solution to these problems and to devise a strategy to manage the obstacles relating to effective designing, implementation, and evaluation of these programmes (Alghamdi, 2011).

1.11 Summary

This chapter presents an overview of academic literature related to teachers' continuous professional development. It covers the topics like perspective of teachers' professional development, definitions of teachers' continuous professional development, aims and objectives of teachers' continuous professional development, characteristics and features of successful professional development programmes, different models of teachers' continuous professional development (with focus on three most commonly used models, Training model, Observation model and Inquiry model). This chapter also discusses the historical perspective of teachers' continuous development programmes in the KSA, current state of affairs in the field of teachers' continuous professional development in the KSA (designing of teachers' continuous professional programmes, implementation of teachers' continuous professional development programmes and evaluation of teachers' continuous professional development programmes). The chapter ends at a brief discussion on need for teachers' professional development in Saudi Arabia.

CHAPTER 2 - Research Methodology

Research methodology is vital part of any research project that enables the researchers to carry out their research process in an organized and hassle free manner (Biggam, 2011). Bryman (2012) explains research methodology as use of explicit procedures or techniques for identification, selection, processing and analysing data collected about a pre-set topic. Description of research methodology enables the researcher to critically evaluate the validity and reliability of a study. The methodology section of any research project aims to answer the questions, such as how the data was collected and how it was analysed.

2.1 Research Design

Research design is a strategic plan that guides the researcher throughout the research process. It includes the steps that the researcher should undertake for answering the research questions. Selection of a suitable research design is vital for the success of any research project. It not only provides a guideline for undertaking a dissertation in a step by step and logical manner but at the same time ensures that the data collected for that particular study is relevant to the research topic and questions (Bryman, 2012).

Anderson (2013) suggests that after defining the aims and determining the research questions, the researcher should select a suitable research design according to the nature of that specific topic. A number of research designs are available including exploratory research design, experimental research design, longitudinal research designs and case study .The researcher can choose any one of them that is appropriate for achievement of the aims and objectives of that particular study in the time and resources available (Anderson, 2013).

Exploratory research design is suitable for the topics that need detailed probing and investigation and is frequently used in the domain of social research thus I have opted for this design this research . This research design enables the researchers to gain an understanding about the phenomena that are competitively new or less researched. Schutt, (2006) suggests that an exploratory research design provides considerable insight about specific questions or situations though usually the research outcomes of this type of investigation are not considered useful for decision-making.

2.2 Methodological Approach

After selection of an appropriate research design, researchers need to decide on a specific methodological approach for their project. They have to select either a qualitative or a quantitative research approach, where the qualitative research approach is suitable for exploratory research studies and is considered useful for developing a thorough understanding about the phenomenon under investigation through unstructured probing. The quantitative approach is taken appropriate for quantifying the data and conducting statistical analysis on it, in order to draw conclusions that can be applicable for a large population (Creswell, 2008; Bryman, 2012). The decision between quantitative and qualitative research approach is based on the depth and breadth of the research where a qualitative approach focuses on the depth of the topic and quantitative research focuses on the breadth of the dissertation (Bryman, 2012; Matthews and Ross, 2010). Many researchers believe that some studies need a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to achieve their particular aims and objectives that is called a mixed methods research methodology (Goddard and Melville, 2001).

I have adopted a qualitative research approach for this project as this study is based on an exploratory research design. As the dissertation was aimed to develop a subjective understanding of the topic under discussion, I believed that the qualitative approach will enable me to meet the aims and objectives and answer the pre-determined research question. I have used a questionnaire and interview as the data collection tools that are considered effective for in-depth probing about any topic (Cohen et al, 2011).

2.3 Research Aims

The aims of this research study are:

- To investigate the extent of professional development programmes for primary school teachers in the KSA.
- To explore the impact of various professional development programmes on the performance and teaching practices of primary school teachers in the KSA.
- To study the challenges experienced by primary school teachers in relation to different professional development programmes in the KSA.

2.4 Research Question

The study investigated the views of classroom teachers and university staff on the current state of professional development programmes available for primary schools teachers in the KSA and the challenges they face in trying implement them in classroom settings.

2.5 Research Context

This study is conducted in the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) which is country in the Middle East region. It is also known as one of the richest countries in the world due to its natural resources, especially oil and gas. The KSA holds a distinct position in the Muslim world as it is the religious hub for the Muslim community around the world (Oyaid, 2009; Samin, 2008; Alsharkh, 2012).

Research indicates that despite the abundance of financial resources, the prevailing conditions in the field of education in the KSA are not in an ideal state (Alghamdi, 2011). It is also observed that a lack of competence in teachers is one of the most prominent reasons for this situation and there is a need to provide teachers with opportunities for professional development so they can play their role in growth of their society in an effective manner (Alghamdi, 2011). This study is an effort to probe the impact of teachers' professional development programmes on their performance and the challenges they face regarding their access to these programmes. It also aims make some recommendations for academics and professionals for improvement in the current state of affairs.

2.6 Data Collection

The selection of data collection methods for a dissertation is an important decision that is highly dependent on the type of research, time and resources available for that project (Anderson, 2013). In the case of the topic under discussion, insufficient data was available in the context of the KSA thus the researcher decided to explore the topic through secondary and primary both the types of research for accumulation of required information.

2.6.1 Secondary Research

Secondary research is defined as consulting the existing academic and non-academic literature about the area of research (Jankowicz, 1995). Secondary research enables the researcher to find

out what is already explored about the topic under research and what is still to be investigated thus saving the duplication of effort. I have conducted a comprehensive literature review about the research topic as secondary research. This process has helped me to develop a detailed background knowledge about the topic and to carry out further research in a logical manner. I used a number of resources for conducting secondary research including books, on-line journals and internet and utilised both digital and print media for exploring the academic material and literature.

2.6.2 Primary Research

Bhattacherjee (2012) defines primary research as the collection of first-hand information about the research topic from a target population. Primary research is vital for most of the research projects as it offers original and reliable information about a phenomenon. Usually, the researchers conduct primary research after viewing some secondary data in order to obtain background knowledge about the research topic.

Primary research is popular amongst researcher due to a number of advantages it offers that include (Bryman, 2012):

- Primary research enables the researchers to collect current, fresh and to the point data that is most relevant to the research topic.
- Primary research can be used in qualitative and quantitative both the types of research projects.
- Primary research offers the researchers a high degree of control on selection of data collection methods and techniques.
- In primary research, the researcher can collect the data according to the requirements of a specific research project that include sample size, timeframe, resources and aims and objectives.
- Primary research allows the researchers to go beyond the existing body of knowledge and develop new ideas and concepts on the basis of first-hand information.

Researchers can use a variety of tools including questionnaires and interviews for conducting primary research (Bryman, 2012). For this research project, I have used an open-ended questionnaire for gathering data from 20 primary school teachers and an interview to collect information from 4 university lectures about the current practices relating to teachers' professional development and the challenges faced by them in this regard in the KSA.

2.7 Research Tools

2.7.1 Questionnaire as a data collection tool

Questionnaires are widely used as data collection tools in social research and are considered an effective data collection tool for both qualitative and quantitative both the types of research. Questionnaires can collect data from a large number of research participants in a timely and cost effective manner (Cohen et al, 2011; Munn and Drever, 1996). They can help to obtain a broad overview of a particular situation or provide more detailed feedback on something specific.

A number of problems are identified by researchers in relation to the use of questionnaires for data collection, these include selection of an incorrect sample, low rate of response and the context in which a questionnaire is administered. It is observed that the context of situation or time when a questionnaire is completed can have a special impact on the data collected through it. Research also indicates that a questionnaire requires simple and clear language and requires a short period of time for its completion in order to obtain a better response from research participants (Cohen et al, 2011).

Questionnaires can be administered in different ways, such as in a traditional pen and paper style. In the recent times, questionnaires are more popular as they are easy to develop and administer and can collect data from a large number of research participants in short period of time. This technique also diminishes the possibility of researcher's influence on research participant's responses and research outcomes. Due to the ability to reach a large target population and a high response rate, questionnaires can help the researchers to generalize the research outcome. Like all other research tools, questionnaires also have some advantages and disadvantages. Its advantages can be enlisted as the follows (Cohen et al., 2011):

• Questionnaires offer the research participant an opportunity to respond in detail in an anonymous manner (without the fear of being recognised) in comparison to other research tools such as interviews or discussions.

• Questionnaires enable the researchers to collect data from a large target population in a short period of time.

• Data collected through questionnaires (especially through close-ended questionnaires) can be easily analysed in comparison to transcription of an interview or a conversation.

On the other hand, following are the disadvantages of questionnaires as data collection tool:

• The researcher may miss out some information as the research participants may not fill the questionnaire completely.

• Sometimes questionnaires provide very brief information, especially in the case of close-ended questionnaires, thus help to answer 'what' but not about 'why' or 'how' (just descriptions and not explanations).

• Different research participants may interpret the questionnaires differently so their responses need to be considered and analysed carefully.

I have used a questionnaire for collecting data from a group of research participants comprising 20 primary school teachers. I have selected this research tool as it helps to gather data from a large target population in a timely and effective manner.

2.7.2 Interviews as data collection tool

Interviews are recognised as an effective data collection tool in the field of social science as they provide an opportunity for in-depth probing about the topic under discussion. Interviews are especially useful in the case of qualitative research. Interviews are taken as a representational and less structured data collection tool (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Kvale (1996) and Kvale and

Brinkmann (2009) argues that researchers can use interviews to accumulate information about the events that cannot be directly observed. The use of interviews for data collection broadens the scope and helps to develop a thorough understanding about the phenomena under investigation.

Kvale (1996) explains interviews as a conversation that is aimed at gathering information about the interviewee's views, opinions or experiences in relation to the meanings of the pre-defined phenomena. Similarly, Schostak, (2006) explains an interview as a purposeful conversation between partners that is designed to gather in-depth information about a particular topic. He maintains that interviews enable the researchers to interpret the phenomenon under investigation in relation to the interviewee's opinion or point of view.

There are various forms of interviews including one-to-one interviews (that are the most commonly used) and focus group interviews. Research indicates that four types of interviews are frequently used in social sciences research that can be enlisted as (Marshall & Rossman, 2006):

1.Structured interview, that include a set of pre-set direct questions aimed at getting immediate responses and mostly in the form of 'yes' or 'no' type answers. This type of interview offers very little freedom to interviewees. This type of interview is considered comparable to the 'self-administered' quantitative questionnaire in relation to the form and basic purpose (Berg, 2007).

2.Unstructured or open-ended interviews, that offer an open situation resulting in a better level of flexibility and autonomy for interviewer and interviewees. Unlike the structured interview, this kind of interviews is flexible in terms of planning, implementation and organisation of content and interview questions (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002), thus can accumulate in-depth information due to letting the interviewee to elaborate on the phenomenon under discussion (Dörnyei, 2007).

3.Semi-structured interviews that are taken as a flexible form of the structured interviews. This type of interviews allows in depth probing through allowing the interviewer to further inquire and expand the interviewee's responses to preset questions (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). This type of interviews involves the use of a basic checklist that can be helpful to cover all relevant areas. Use of this checklist not only allows the researchers to undertake an in-depth probing but helps keeps them on the track and helps to remain focused on the aims and objectives of the study (Berg, 2007).

4.Focus group interviews that are explained as the interviews with purposefully selected research participants (usually on the bases of the information they hold). But it is not necessary that these research participants are a representative sample of a specific population and they might be a group especially focused on a given topic (Barbour and Schostak, 2005).

For this dissertation , I have opted to use semi structured interviews for the collection of data from a group of 4 university lectures as it allows to cover various issues concerning the proposed study to be covered . It also enables the researchers to collect in-depth information and opinion and points of view of research participants that is vital for any qualitative research.

2.8 Pilot Study

Polit, et al. (2001), Baker (1994) and Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) explain the pilot study as a small version of a complete study that the researchers undertakes in order to observe whether the tools and techniques applied can provide the desired results or not. It is also defined as a trial run of a study that is conducted as groundwork for a comprehensive research project. A pilot study can be aimed to test a specific research instruments such as a questionnaires or interview (Polit, et al., 2001, Baker, 1994; Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001) explain a pilot study as "reassessment without tears" that ensures that selected research techniques and methods will work during the actual research process. It allows the researcher to adapt or modify the techniques and methods according to the outcomes of pilot study (if necessary).

Welman and Kruger (1999) argue that usually novice researchers feel that academic guidelines for research are only applicable in an ideal environment and cannot be applied to practical research conditions. This is the point where a pilot study can help to clarify how the academic standards can be applied to practical situations.

Welman and Kruger (1999) have enlisted the following benefits of conducting a pilot study before an actual research process:

- A pilot study helps to detect the probable imperfections in data collection instruments (inability to collect the required information).
- A pilot study helps in the identification of vague or ambiguous items in a questionnaire or interview.
- A pilot study can indicate the lackings of a research plan and can depict the areas where the actual research project can fail.
- It can enable the researcher to understand the situations where the research plan cannot be executed (for example, if a reasonably segregated environment in not available to interview the female research participants in the context of the KSA).
- The pilot study can also identify practical problems of the research procedure.
- A pilot study can indicates whether the research participants can easily comprehend the proposed data collection instruments or not (level of difficulty).

I decided to conduct a pilot study before collecting primary data from the entire target population. It was a trial of the questionnaire and interview designed for this study. I selected five primary school teachers for conducting the pilot questionnaire and one university lecturer for a pilot interview. During this process, I observed whether these tools could collect sufficient data to answer the research question or not. I also observed how much time was required to complete one interview. Analysis of the data collected through this pilot study indicated that I needed to add more questions in the questionnaire in order to make it more comprehensive. Furthermore, though the interview designed for this study was able to gather sufficient information about the area of research, it required much more time than my initial estimation. I managed to overcome these limitations that enabled me to conduct the actual study in an effective manner.

2.9 Target Population

The target population of this research study was 20 primary school teachers from a specific school in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and 4 University lecturers working in the field of teachers training and professional development. This target population was selected on the bases of probability sampling that offers the entire population an equal opportunity of being selected to participate in a disertation (Lance and Hattori, 2016). This equal opportunity is considered the core of probability sampling technique. I contacted the entire school staff and offered a voluntary participation in this research study and the first 20 people who agreed to participate were selected. The same technique was applied for the selection of 4 university lecturers.

2.10 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is a commonly used technique for analysing textual data gathered for social research. This technique helps the researchers to identify, scrutinise and record the themes and patterns that frequently occur within the primary data collected for a specific study. Thematic analysis is basically used by researchers in order to capture the details of association within a set o2f data (Guest, 2012). I have used thematic analysis for this study as it is not limited to counting the phrases or words used in a text but categorise both implicit and explicit themes in the data *(*Boyatzis, 1998). It also enables the researchers to interpret, compare and contrast the frequently occurring themes and understand and exhibit the associations amongst various them. (Guest, 2012; Boyatzis, 1998).

2.11 Ethical considerations

Oliver (2010) suggests that the reliability of any research study is highly dependent on the fact how ethical standards are maintained while conducting a research project. He suggests that the researchers should be mindful about a number of ethical concerns that may arise during the research process in order to ensure a specific standard of ethics while dealing with them. He further suggests that the researcher should ensure that there will be no negative impact on research participants (personally, socially or professionally) due to their participation in the study. Besides this all, there exists the potential of bias on my own part as I am a staff member of the school from where the research participants of this study are selected. For this reason, I should ensure them that their participation in this dissertation will remain confidential and any information about them will not be shared with anybody, for any purpose. I can allocate the participants a number or sign to use in place of their name so they cannot be identified by the related authorities about whom they are providing information (Goddard and Melville, 2001). In a similar vein, Matthews and Ross (2010) recommend that the researchers should ensure the transparency of research work through obtaining a clear written consent from research participants before starting the collection of primary data from them. They suggest that the research participants should be informed about the aims and objectives of the study and the probable outcomes of the proposed research. They should also be informed about how the data will be collected as well as their right not to answer any question if they are not comfortable with it or to leave the study anytime without any prior warning about it or giving any reason for

doing so, and that there will be no legal or professional obligation on them in this regard (Matthews and Ross, 2010). I have followed all these guidelines during the research process for ensuring the reliability of this dissertation.

2.12 Considerations

Research indicates that social and cultural factors play an important role in determining the reliability of any research project (Bryman, 2012; Blaikie, 2000). I have paid a special attention to the cultural aspects of the KSA. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia follows the religious boundaries in all walks of life including the education sector and there are separate schools for male and female students and teaching staff are also from the same gender. It means that researchers cannot contact female research participants in privacy. I considered these limitations carefully in order to avoid any violation of these religious, cultural and social norms. As I have administered open-ended questionnaire so there was no need for face to face interaction with the research participants and for interview, all four research participants were male thus there was no need to arrange a special space for conducting an interview. This all eased the process of primary data collection for me in a culturally suitable manner.

Another concern was about the language barrier as most of Saudi people cannot understand English very well. So I managed to translate the questionnaire and interviews in Arabic language so that there was no ambiguity about the questions asked of the research participants. I then translated their responses in English in order to analyse them.

2.13 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study aims to highlight the prevailing conditions in the field of education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, these are not in ideal state despite an abundance of resources. Though there has been a teachers' professional development programme in practice in the state for decades, it is not effective in supporting the teachers who need pre-service and in-service professional development in different phases of their careers. This study is exploratory in nature and can provide insight about the changes required in this specific domain. As there is a little research work is done in this domain in the context of the KSA, this study can be taken as the bases for further research on this topic.

The most prominent limitations of this study are limited time and resources available for this project. I have used a questionnaire for gathering data from 20 primary school teachers due to scarcity of time and financial resources and interviews are conducted from only 4 university lecturers. These two sets of target population were selected from one organisation which limits the generalisability of the outcomes of this study on the entire population of the country.

2.14 Summary

This chapter has presented an outline of the research methodology selected for this dissertation and justifies its selection in the context of this specific topic. This chapter includes a brief account of the research design and the methodological approach chosen for this research study. After explaining the data collection methods (qualitative research) and tools (questionnaire and

interview) that were used for gathering secondary and primary data, the chapter highlights the sampling technique, data analysis methods and the ethical and cultural considerations that I have undertaken during the research process. The scope and limitations related to this research project, tare also highlighted.

CHAPTER 3 – RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of this dissertation, the data has been obtained through primary data that I had collected from a questionnaire distributed to teachers in a primary school and from interviewing four university lecturers.
This dissertation is conducted in the context of the KSA and the aims are:

- To investigate the extent of professional development programmes for primary school teachers in the KSA.
- To explore the impact of various professional development programmes on the performance and teaching practices of primary school teachers in the KSA.
- To study the challenges experienced by primary school teachers in relation to different professional development programmes in the KSA.

This chapter also includes discussion that clarifies the research findings and relates them to the existing literature that I had reviewed, in order to develop a foundation for providing recommendations for improving current practice

3.1 Questionnaire findings

3.1.1: Personal Data

The questionnaire, administered to collect primary data for this dissertation, comprises two parts. The first part is information about the demographic background of research participants and includes five questions relating to their names, gender, age, teaching experience and designation. I had organised the information about these questions in the form of text that is supported by data representation.

The first question is about research participant's names but it was only for my personal record, their names in this dissertation have been anonymised which is a promise I made to research participants in my initial consent letter. The second question is about the gender of research participants. Amongst 20 research participants, 20 (100%) were female and 0 (0%) were male the questionnaire was in a girls' school and this situation reflects the situation regrading single ، sex schools in Saudi Arabia is separate.

Pie graph to show the gender of research participants
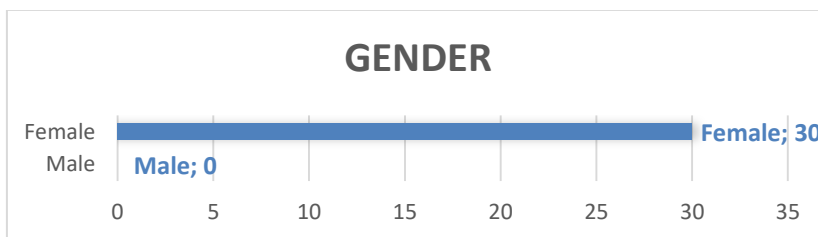
GENDER

Female; 30
Male; 0

Figure 1:Bar graph to show the gender of research participants.

The third question of part one is about the age of research participants. Among the 20 research participants selected for this study, 4 (20%) were between 21-30 years old, 3 (15%) were 31-40 years old, 4 (20%) were 41-50 years old and 9 (45%) were above the age of 51 years. This data shows that that majority of research participants are above 41 years of age.

Pie graph to show age of research participants Figure 2: Pie graph to show age of research

AGE

21 - 30 Years 20%
31 - 40 Years 15%
41 - 50 Years 20%
51 Years & Above 45%
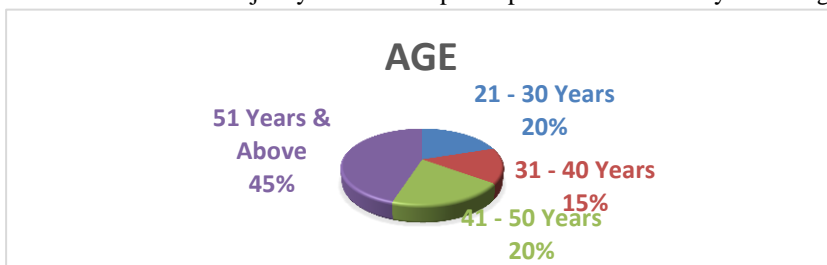
participants.

The fourth question of section one is about research participants' teaching experience. It was revealed that 4 research participants (20%) had teaching experience of between 1-5 years, 3 research participants (15%) had teaching experience of between 6-10 years, 4 research participants (20%) had teaching experience of between 11-20 years and 9 research participants (45%) had teaching experience of more than 20 years. This data shows that the majority of research participants are working in the field of education and are experienced.

Teaching experience of research participants

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

21 Years & Above; 45
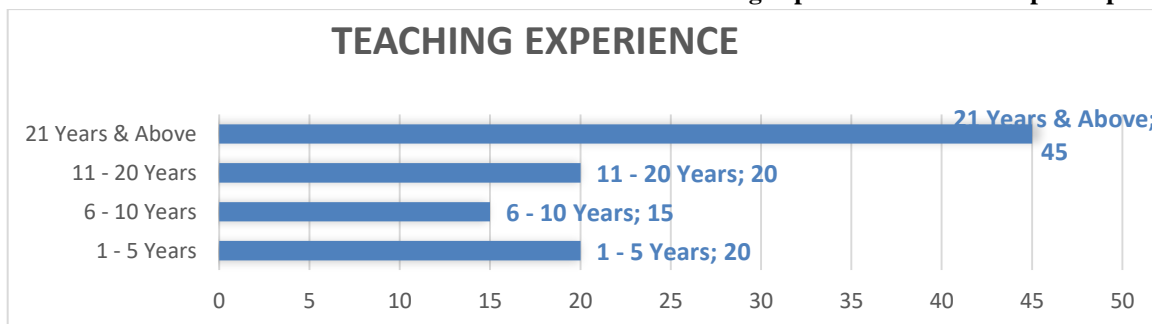11 - 20 Years; 20
6 - 10 Years; 15
1 - 5 Years; 20

Figure 3: Line graph to show the teaching experience of research participants

Question number five of this section is related to the research participants' designation. The information provided by 20 research participants showed that 100% of the research population are working as class teachers.

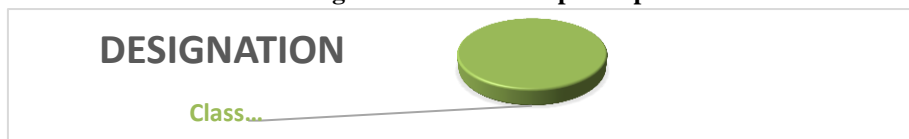**The designation of research participants**

Figure 4: Pie graph to show the designation of research participants

3.1.2 : Significance of Teachers' Professional Development in Saudi Context

The second part of the questionnaire is related to the information about the research participants' views, beliefs and opinions about the significance of teachers' professional development in the context of the KSA. This part also investigates the existing conditions regarding professional development and how they can be improved in order to obtain better educational outcomes, as well as probing the impact of teachers' professional development programmes on their performance in the classroom There are 21 questions in this section that enabled detailed probing of research participants' views and opinions on the research question.
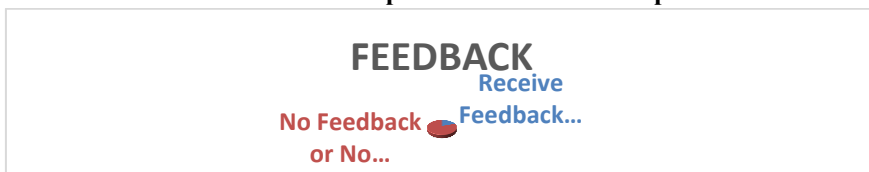
Questions 1-2 of section two are about the significance of teachers' professional development programmes for securing educational goals and the importance of communication between different levels of the education system. All research participants agreed that teachers' professional development is vital for the success of the educational process and achievement of educational goals. They also agreed with the idea that effective communication between different levels of education system ensures provision and success of such programmes.

Question number 3 of section two is about the availability of teachers' professional development programmes and availability of support from the Ministry of Education regarding implementation of new ideas in educational settings. The majority of research participants mentioned that adequate support with the implementation of new ideas and training programmes for provision of new knowledge and skills is not provided by the Ministry of Education, this is proving a great hindrance in bringing innovation in educational practices.

Questions 4-5 of section two are about monitoring of teachers, classroom routine and teaching practices by the school principal and Ministry of Education. The information provided by research participants revealed that monitoring of teachers' performance is not regular and effective. The majority of research participants replied that school principal sometimes monitor teachers' performance in the classroom whereas the Ministry of Education seldom performs monitoring sessions. This infers that the Saudi educational system is lacking regular and effective monitoring of teachers performance.

Questions 6-7 of section two are about provision of feedback by relevant authorities (Principal, Ministry of Education) after observation of teachers' performance. In response to these questions, most of the research participant replied that they do not receive any feedback from

relevant authorities after monitoring of their performance. Only 20% of the research participants agreed that they receive feedback after monitoring sessions.

Feedback in relation to improvement in teachers' performance

Figure 5: Pie graph to show getting feedback in relation to improvement in teachersperformance .

Questions 8-9 of section two are about the significance of monitoring and getting feedback in relation to improvement in teachers' performance. All the research participants agreed that regular monitoring is likely to improve teachers' performance and provision of feedback plays an important role in this regard. Only 5% of the research participants were of the opinion that monitoring cannot have a positive impact on teachers' performance.

Regular monitoring improves teachers' performance.
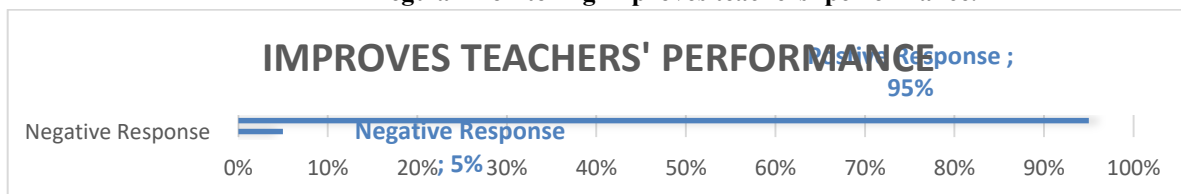
Figure 6: Bar graph to show regular monitoring improves teachers' performance.

Questions 10-11 of part two are about the significance of pre-service teachers' training for novice teachers and availability of in-service programmes for primary school teachers. While responding to these questions, all research participants agreed that pre-service training programmes are very important for novice teachers and these programmes prepare them for their professional endeavours and enable them to start their careers with confidence. They also mentioned that pre-service teachers training programmes make novice teachers more effective. But regarding the availability of in-service programmes, a majority of research participants replied that they do not have access to in-service teachers' professional development programmes. Only 20% of the research participants agreed that they have access to in-service professional development programmes, this is a situation that needs to be improved.

Questions 12-13 of part two investigate whether the teachers are motivated to participate in these programmes and whether the teachers have access to workshops and seminars for enhancement of their professional knowledge and skills. In response to these questions, research participants replied that usually teachers are not motivated to participate in in-service professional development programmes. The most prominent reasons for this behaviour were mentioned as absence of any reward for participation and lack of support from school management, who are usually unwilling to release the teachers for such training programmes as it requires changes in timetable and increases the workload of other staff members. Absence of any career benefits related to teachers' participation in in-service training programmes is also mentioned as a major

reason for teacher disinterest in such programmes. Regarding access to workshops and seminars they replied that they have access to workshops and seminars as these are brief and school management can arrange them easily or can manage to send some teachers to the workshops/seminars for a brief period of time.

Questions 14-15 of part two are about the frequency of workshops and seminars offered by schools for teachers professional development and teachers preference for professional development programmes. While responding to this question, the majority of research participants replied that school does not offer such programmes frequently and usually such activities take place during school holidays and teacher are not willing to participate in them as they have to sacrifice their leisure time for this purpose. For their preference about professional development programmes most of them mentioned that they consider in-service programmes better than workshops and seminars as they provide adequate knowledge and skills and are able to make a difference to teachers' performance.

Questions 16-17 of part two are related to provision of paid leave and other incentives for teachers who participate in in-service professional development programmes. In response to these questions, research participants replied that in the past teachers were offered paid leave to participate in in-service professional development programmes but now this policy is no longer in place and teachers are not provided with any paid leave or other incentives for their participation in such programmes. Research participants mentioned this as the most important reason for teacher disinterest in professional development programmes.

Questions 18 and 19 of part two investigate teachers' beliefs about the impact of teachers' participation in professional development programmes and its relationship with students' learning outcomes. In response to these questions, the majority of research participants replied that teachers' participation in professional development programmes has a positive impact on their performance in classroom settings and there is a strong relationship between teacher classroom performance and securing student learning outcomes. They emphasised that all the types of professional development programmes, be pre-service, in-service or workshops and seminars are helpful in the enhancement of teachers' performance and result in improved learning outcomes which is the ultimate goal of the entire educational process.

Questions 20 and 21 of section two are related to challenges faced by schools while managing teachers' professional development activities and strategies that can be applied to overcome these challenges. While responding to these questions, research participants mentioned teachers' disinterest in their own professional development as the most important challenge. They also mentioned that absence of paid leave, availability of these programmes during holidays and minimal career benefits as the factors restricting teachers' participation in such programmes - these are the major hurdles that schools face in this regard. Besides this all, schools have to modify their timetable to accommodate the absence of teachers who are going to participate in professional development programmes, this increases the workload on the rest of the staff which is a huge challenge for school management. Some research participants also mentioned that experienced teachers, who are approaching the end of their careers are least interested in their career development as either they see no benefit of putting extra effort into these activities or

find them too challenging. Research participants suggested that the government should devise a policy of providing paid leave and career growth plans on the basis of teachers' participation in professional development programmes so teachers become more motivated and schools face less challenges in this regard.

Questions 22 and 23 of part two are about teachers' beliefs and experiences relating to the impact of these programmes on their classroom performance and the need to participate in such programmes. Almost all the research participants stated that professional development programmes have a positive impact on their classroom performance and they recommend that their colleagues and friends participate in these activities. They also agreed with the notion that teachers' professional development programmes should provide information on subject matter and preparation of lessons. Furthermore, these programmes should support teachers to master the five attitudes (Gourneau, 2015) of effective teachers: Caring and Kindness, Sharing Responsibility; Sensitively Accepting Diversity, Fostering Individualised Instruction and Encouraging Creativity. They also emphasised that teachers need time to reflect and share their knowledge with their colleagues after attending professional development programmes.

3.2 Interview findings

I collected data from interviewing four university lecturers who are working in the field of teacher training. I opted for an interview as the research tool in order to obtain information about the existing conditions, practices and these lecturers' opinion on them as interviews provide in-depth information and allow the researcher to probe in detail. Interviews also allow the researcher to observe the body language and facial expressions of research participants and enables him/her to interpret the authenticity of the data provided by them.

The first question of this interview is "Please clarify your current role in the university". In response to this question, these lecturers stated that they are working in multiple capacities. One of these research participants stated that:

"I am working as a faculty member of curriculum and teaching methods department. I am working on multiple tasks such as academic teaching, scientific research, training, coordinating programmes and community services."

While another research participant informed me :

"I am working as a lecture at curriculum and teaching methods department. I am involved in many tasks such as academic teaching, teachers training, administrative work inside the university and some other activities inside the department."

This shows that these lecturers are performing a range of duties and are well-aware of the different areas of teacher training and professional development programmes.

The second question of this interview is "How are primary school teachers trained in the KSA?" In response to this question, one research participant stated that:

"Recently, the Ministry of Education provides many training programmes on different topics for teachers. These training programmes are provided to teachers during their service as teachers to develop and improve their teaching skills and experiences. I believe that these programmes are very effective as we expected".

Yet another research participant informed me that:

"There is a practical training for teachers during the undergraduate study, in addition they are offered in-service training and workshops from time to time that are effective. This all suggests that in the KSA, different types of teachers' professional development programmes are available for teachers that are aimed at enhancement of their knowledge and skills."

While responding to question number 3 "Do you believe that this training is effective in preparing teachers for delivering the new curriculum?" one lecturer replied that:

"There is a practical training for teachers during the undergraduate study. In addition they are offered in-service training programmes and workshops from time to time that would be effective."

Whereas another interviewee stated that:

"Teachers are offered in-service training programmes that can improve their performance but I do believe that teachers of primary schools need more training programmes before and while teaching the students as at this age students need specially skilled and trained teachers for effective learning".

In response to question number 4, "Have you identified any current trends in KSA primary teacher Education?" one university lecture replied as:

"Yes, Ministry of education has recently announced the professional standards for teachers. In addition, there is also a test of the abilities of teachers in general and by pre-post specialisation before and after serving as teacher. It helps in development of skills and abilities through courses."

Another university lecturer replied to this question in detail :

"Yes, there are recently identified standards from the Ministry of Education

- *Knowledge of the student and how they learn*
- *knowledge of specialization and methods of teaching*
- *knowledge of language of communication skills and quantitative*
- *knowledge of general teaching methods*
- *building a safe environment and providing feedback on tis construction*
- *establishing high expectations and a supportive leering culture*
- *Familiarity with the professional requirements of the teacher*
- *Continuous development of professional knowledge and practices*
- *Creation and strengthening of students' learning opportunities"*

In response to question number 5 "What professional qualities should primary school teachers in the KSA should have?" one interviewee stated:

"Teachers are required to have a deep understanding of primary school student's needs, personal requirements and teaching methods as the management of education processes of primary school students is different than other levels of education. In addition, they need to master different teaching strategies that are an essential part of teaching process. Teachers also need to develop a balance in their personality and behaviors and should learn to be patient while dealing their students."

The next question (question number 6) is "What are the main challenges that primary school teachers face in the course of their professional development?" and one university lecturer responded to it as:

"Lack of motivation and personal interest is the most significant challenge for these teachers. Most female primary school teachers are old women who do not want to develop themselves or use computers or modern strategies in education."

While another one stated that:

"These teachers do not have access to effective teachers training programmes. Despite the importance of primary school teachers' training, local universities don't provide special academic programmes for primary school teachers. Moreover, primary school teachers are responsible for many tasks which hamper their ability to attend such training and academic programmes. Lack of essential resources is also a prominent challenge faced by these teachers".

While responding to question number 7 "What are the professional development opportunities available for primary school teachers in the KSA?" one university lecturer stated that:

"Saudi Ministry of Education offers a variety of programmes for teachers' professional development that include pre-service training programmes, in-service training programmes and workshops and seminars that can enhance their performance as teachers. Most of these training opportunities are about developing their technical skills."

Yet another university lecturer informed me that:

"The Ministry of Education provides a number of things, the first of which is a one-year scholarship program (expertise program). The Ministry of education also signed an agreement with an Australian company named Melbourne to develop the competencies of the teachers for all stages of study, as well as dispatching the platform and internal dispatch for those who wanted to complete the master's or doctorate studies".

In response to question number 8 "Have the strategies introduced by the Ministry of Education in the KSA to enhance the professional development of teachers been successful? If not, please explain why" one research participant stated that:

"There are several strategies proposed by ministry of education. However, it is still early to judge whether these strategies are successful or not."

While another university lecturer responded as:

"I see that these strategies did not give the desired result because of the poor application of some teachers because of lack of experience or lack of relevance to the content of education as well as because of the opposition faced by other teachers."

Question number 9 asked research participants: "Have you attended any training events in connection with your role as a university lecturer involved in the training of primary school teachers? Have these training events effectively supported your work? Research participants replied that they are offered a number of online and in-class programmes but there should be more programmes for their professional development. They all agreed that such programmes support their work.

While responding to question number 10 "What type of professional development opportunities have been made available to you?" one university lecturer replied that:

"There are several training courses, programmes and workshops. Some of these are available online and/or in class. I have personally attended some online courses and I found them very useful".

In response to question number 11 that is "Which types of professional development activities do you believe are the most effective in teacher training?" one university lecturer stated:

"Personally, I believe that all development programmes that improve teachers' performance are effective."

And another university lecturer stated that:

"Extensive training programmes, typical lessons, peer assessment and procedural research, all can improve teachers performance thus are effective".

While responding to the last question "What are the factors that impact on the professional development of teachers? Please identify three positive factors and three negative factors and list them in rank order" ,one university lecturer replied as:

"Negative factors are lack of time, lack of incentives and no suitable environment for development while the positive factors can be enlisted as teachers' willingness to develop themselves, for becoming better and competing for the Excellence Teaching Award. The teacher can also move to another job after getting the appropriate development. The teacher can also join the programmes offered by the Ministry of Education. The teacher is sufficiently responsible and trusted by his superiors."

3.3 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of this study that were obtained through organising and analysing the primary data collected through a questionnaire and interview from two groups of research participants (teachers and teacher trainers). These research findings reflect the existing conditions related to teachers' professional programmes in the KSA and highlight the need for improvement in them that can increase the teachers' performance, confidence and sense of self-efficacy and can result in better learning outcomes of students that is the ultimate goal of the entire educational process.

CHAPTER 4 - Discussion, Analysis, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Aims of the chapter

This chapter aims to present a discussion and analysis of the research outcomes of this study. Besides this discussion, this chapter also identifies the limitations of this study and provides detailed recommendations for relevant authorities that have the potential to improve the existing conditions in the KSA, in relation to teachers' professional development. After providing some recommendations for future research in this area, the chapter ends with a brief summary of this research project.

4.2 Reflection of Research process

This dissertation is an effort to investigate the existing conditions regarding teachers' continuous professional development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The population of this study comprises 20 school primary teachers and 4 university lecturers who are working in the field of teachers' professional education and training. I conducted a thorough literature review that enabled me to examine current practices in the area of professional development.

- **Professional development Mode in Practice: General Training Model**

This dissertation highlights that a general training model (that is based on provision of different types of professional development programmes, such as pre-service training programmes, in-service training programmes, workshops and seminars) of teachers' professional development is followed in the KSA and other models such as an observation model and inquiry model are not currently in practice.

- **Significance of Teachers' Professional Development**

As teachers are a vital part of the educational process and the quality of education is highly dependent on the quality of teachers, thus it is imperative to provide them with adequate opportunities for professional development in different phases of their career. Qualified and trained teachers can effectively perform their professional responsibilities and different types of professional development programmes can help them in this regard. Research indicates that teachers' awareness about the significance of their professional development plays a key role in their motivation to attend these courses and improve their teaching skills.

- **Importance of Teachers Pre-service Training Programmes**

A number of studies have revealed the effectiveness of pre-service teachers' training programmes. These studies observed that there is a marked difference in performance between the teachers who started their careers with and without pre-service training. It was also revealed that novice teachers who obtain pre-service training start their professional careers with a higher level of self-efficacy in comparison to those who started their professional responsibilities without any formal pre-service training (Bandura, 2001). Research outcomes of this dissertation highlight that research participants are well-aware of the significance and need for different types of teacher professional development programmes.

- **Need for In-service Training programmes**

Teachers know that pre-service training programmes provide the novice teachers with the knowledge and skills that are essential for a teacher. These programmes help them to start their careers with confidence. The research participants are also aware that trained novice teachers bring new information and techniques for their senior colleagues who are unable to obtain them due to either unavailability of in-service training or their own inability to attend them for personal or professional reasons. Similarly, they are well-aware that in-service training programmes are useful to enhance the teachers' performance in advanced phases of their careers and help them to learn new skills and technologies that are emerging due to research and development. Most of these research participants acknowledged that in-service training

programmes enable the teachers to excel in their field whereas workshops and seminars are useful for those who cannot spare a long period of time for professional development activities, either due to their personal or professional responsibilities. This awareness of the significance of teachers' professional development can motivate them to avail themselves of the opportunities in different types of training programmes and use them for their career growth. This is aligned with the studies conducted by Boyle et al. (2004), Karimi (2011), Ross and Bruce (2007), Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) Little (1994), Kelly and McDiarmid (2002), Bandura (2001) and Kennedy (2005).

▪   **Relationship Between Teachers Professional Development and Their Performance**

These research findings suggest that teachers' professional development and training programmes are vital for the effective performance of duty and all types of teacher training programmes are important in different phases of a teachers' professional career. Education is a field that involves considerable research and development, it is therefore necessary to provide the students with the most recent knowledge and skills. In order to deal with these challenges, teachers need to obtain this new knowledge and learn new skills that can help to impart this new body of knowledge to students. Teachers' professional development programmes enable them to deal with changing scenarios and the growing demands of their profession and equip them with new knowledge and skills that they need in order to perform their duties effectively. This is in line with observations made by Adnyani (2015) and Boyle et al. (2004).

▪   **Need for Teachers' Professional Development in Context of the KSA**

The literature review conducted for this research study referred to the fact that the Saudi government is allocating a considerable amount of financial resources for improvement in the field of education, thus scarcity of resources is not the basic reason for unsatisfactory conditions prevailing in this area. It is observed that most of the research participants are not satisfied with what is offered to them in the name of professional development. Research findings highlight that the majority of school teachers are not satisfied with the opportunities available for professional development and consider them either insufficient in number or unable to provide the required knowledge and skills. But at the same time, the majority of teachers are not willing to commit themselves to these professional development programmes as they are not offered at a suitable time or are not accompanied with the facilities or incentives that can motivate teachers to participate in these programmes and excel in their professional duties. These facilities or incentives can include paid leave to attend these programmes and special increments for the teachers who attain these training events and apply them in classroom settings. In this scenario, it can be inferred that the actual problem is a lack of planning regarding designing a suitable offer that can motivate the teachers to actively participate in these programmes. This all is in line with the work of Adnyani, (2015), Tanang and Abu (2014), Poskitt (2005), Tanang et al. (2014), Ariff et al. (2016), Bachtiar (2016), Coburn (2016), Gabriel et al. (2011) and Peter (2012).

▪   **Impact of Teachers' Professional Development on their Confidence and Sense of Self Efficacy**

This dissertation revealed that besides being useful for the career development of teachers, continuous professional development programmes also increase teachers' confidence and sense of self-efficacy which improves their performance in classroom settings and in different aspects of the educational process. It is observed that the teachers, who have had the opportunity to attend different types of professional development programmes, usually show improved performance in delivery of content, use of teaching resources and classroom management that results in improved educational outcomes for their students, this is one of the most important indicators of the effectiveness and success of such programmes. This all is aligned with various studies conducted by scholars such as Bandura (2001), Bachtiar (2016), Coburn (2016) and Gabriel et al. (2011) that present the same point of view.

- **Need for Techers' professional Development Programmes on Regular Bases**

The findings of this study also highlight that teachers' professional development is an ongoing process and a challenging task that cannot be accomplished without thoughtful and well-planned efforts of all the stakeholders involved (KSA government, school management and teachers). Teachers are the key stakeholders in the educational process so there are high expectations from them regarding the success of the educational process, that cannot be met until they are highly trained for the performance of their duties. In the educational process, teachers play an important role in the delivery of national curriculum in classroom. It is also mentioned that monitoring of such programmes and provision of feedback is vital for the success of such programmes. This is clearly aligned with the observations of Powell et al. (2003) and Gabriel et al. (2011).

- **Significance of Distance Learning Programmes**

The academic literature consulted for this research study revealed that in-service training programmes are very effective for enhancement of the teachers' performance in advanced phases of their career. Such programmes help them to learn new skills and technologies that enable them to impart the new body of knowledge to students that is emerging as the result of academic research. These training programmes help the teachers to develop their careers and grow professionally, whereas distance learning programmes and brief workshops and seminars are beneficial in another way. They are useful for the teachers who cannot allocate a lot of time for their professional development related activities because of their personal or professional responsibilities.

- **Relationship Between Teacher's Professional Development and Their Career Growth**

I have observed through a comprehensive literature review that teachers' professional development programmes help teachers in their career growth (Ariff et al., 2016) besides increasing their sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001). It is observed that the teachers who have access to different types of continuous professional development programmes better perform more effectively in classroom settings and their improved performance can result in improvement in different aspects of the educational process; such as delivery of content, use of teaching aids and educational resources. Trained teachers also display better classroom management skills.

- **Relationship Between Teachers' Professional Development and Students' Learning Outcomes**

In the same vein, the research findings of this study indicate that there is a positive correlation between teachers' CPD programmes and students' learning outcomes. Research participants of this study believe that securing student learning outcomes is one of the most important indicators of effectiveness and success of such programmes. This point of view is presented in a number of studies conducted by Peter (2012) and Porter et al., (2002).

- **Cooperation of Different Stakeholders for Effective Educational Process**

Various scholars have argued that a successful educational process does not take place in isolation and requires the cooperation of all the stakeholders involved in this process; such as government, school, teachers, parents and the students themselves. They maintain that the desired results cannot be achieved until all these stakeholders play an effective role in this process. But at the same time they suggest that teachers are an important part of the educational process, thus they can play a more significant role in comparison to other stakeholders if they are duly qualified and properly trained. It can be stated that the high expectations of teachers regarding the success of the teaching and learning process are unrealistic as the educational process is a shared responsibility that should be fulfilled by all the stakeholders, including governments schools, parents and teachers. Sometimes non-governmental organisations are also included as a stakeholder in this process but only one stakeholder (in this case, the teacher) can achieve the desired results when all the stakeholders are collaborating and working effectively. Some researchers suggest that teachers play the role of a "tool" in the educational process that is responsible to deliver whatever is planned by the government or other appropriate organisations. Teachers deliver the national curriculum in the classroom (Tanang and Abu, 2014). Teachers' professional development programmes should be designed in the light of the specific aims and objectives that can be used to evaluate their effectiveness and success (OECD, 1998).

- **Need to Improve the Quality of Teachers' Professional Development Programmes**

The role of teachers is very important in the context of Saudi Arabia as the nation is still struggling to improve its educational standards which is vital for its economic growth and social well-being. As a matter of fact, excellent educational plans prepared by governments or schools and good educational policies or curricula are meaningless if teachers are not well-equipped with the knowledge and skills that are required for their proper implementation in order to meet the students' needs (Ariff et al., 2016). A number of researchers argue that just merely implementing different types of professional development programmes cannot ensure any change or improvement in educational process or students' learning outcomes. These programmes can bring a change if they are designed to achieve some specific goals and their input methods and content is selected accordingly. It is imperative that these courses are designed thoughtfully and can meet the expectations of participants in these programmes (Allen et al., 2016; Tanang and Abu, 2014).

I have inferred from these research findings that generally teachers and teacher trainers are well aware that the existing conditions regarding teachers' professional development programmes are not satisfactory and need to be improved. These research findings answer the research question and suggest that, despite the continued efforts of the Saudi government regarding the establishment of an effective educational system and provision of different professional development programmes, the existing conditions are not ideal and there is room for improvement.

4.3 Limitations of this Study

This study is conducted in the context of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, thus its research findings may not be generalised with other parts of world as it depicts the particular condition that are different from other countries Furthermore, as the data for this study is collected from the teachers of an urban government school thus it cannot be generalised for private school teachers or for the teachers working in remote rural areas. Collection of data from teacher trainers (through interview) was not an easy task as they were not motivated to spare some time for providing information and I had to convince them that this research will be beneficent for teachers and teacher trainers in the KSA.

4.3 Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be postulated that teachers' professional development is necessary for providing a quality education for learners. The provision of a quality education needs proper planning and the implementation of a teachers' professional development programme. Due to constant research and development in almost all the fields and rapid emergence of technology, it is imperative that teachers are provided with adequate training so they can deal with the current and emerging challenges in an effective manner, teachers' continuous professional development is a key strategy in updating their knowledge and skills in order to make them effective practitioners. Research indicates that teachers' professional development programmes not only enhance their confidence and sense of self-efficacy but help them to excel in all the aspects of the teaching process. It is also observed that trained teachers are better regarding the delivery of content, use of teaching resources and time and classroom management in comparison to their untrained counterparts. Teachers' professional development enables them to improve students' learning outcomes which can be considered the ultimate goal of the entire educational process.

Besides teachers, teacher trainers also need adequate opportunities for their own professional development to enable them to perform their very important duty (teachers' training and professional development) in an effective manner. A comprehensive review of existing academic literature and the outcomes of this study revealed that all the types of teachers' continuous professional development programmes available (pre-service, in-service, workshops, seminars and online courses) are useful. They can enhance teachers' performance in different phases of their career and boost their confidence. In the context of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

it is important that teachers are offered adequate opportunities for their professional development.

4.4 Recommendations

In the light of the outcomes of this research study, I have identified some possible recommendations for relevant authorities and for the researchers who are interested in working in this area:.

For relevant Authorities

• The Education department should revise the existing policies for resolving these problems and controlling the obstacles that hinder teacher access to these programmes . The Education department should add new objectives in these policies that are consistent with international practices. These aims and objectives should be finalised in the light of research studies that are conducted in the context of Saudi Arabia in recent times. Furthermore, guidance should be taken from programmes that are implemented in the countries with similar conditions and have been successful in the achievement of their aims and objectives. Consultation with such programmes will ensure effective design and implementation and meaningful evaluation of teachers' professional development programmes.

• The Education department should involve Saudi universities and other internal and external educational institutions with extensive experience in this area in designing, implementing and evaluating of teachers' professional development programmes.

• The Education department should devise new strategies to involve all the teachers in professional development programmes. Teachers should be provided with financial rewards or bonuses if they voluntarily participate in such programmes. Furthermore, their promotion should be linked with their enrolment and successful completion of these programmes.

• Designing of these programmes should be based on teachers' needs for improvement in their knowledge (subject matter) and skills (teaching strategies and methods). It should be ensured that teachers are offered professional development programmes on a regular basis and the school authorities release them to participate in them.

• Teachers should be provided with long-term professional development programmes as they prove to be more effective in comparison to short term programmes. But short term professional development programmes must be offered as they are useful for fulfillment of more pressing needs.

• The Education department should train the teacher trainers for effective implementation of professional development programmes. These teacher trainers should be provided with adequate training in local and international universities so that they are well aware ofemerging trends and can guide the teachers in the right way.

• The Education department should apply new approaches for providing professional development programmes to a great number of teachers in an appropriate manner. These programmes can be conducted in schools or in a virtual setting (through distance learning technologies). This will make these programmes more accessible for teachers.

• The Education department should ensure the evaluation of these programmes before, during, and after their implementation through effective methods and instruments. Furthermore, on the basis of research studies conducted in a local context, authorities should design new methods for evaluation of these programmes that are relevant to local practices and social norms.

• The Education department should develop a proper infrastructure for teachers' professional development. A separate department should be developed for this purpose that is well equipped with all the necessary facilities, such as libraries and access to information technologies that can be used for the growth of the education sector.

• It should be recognised that there is a pressing need to focus on teachers' continuous professional development for enhancing the educational process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It should be ensured that all the novice teachers are provided with pre-service training and nobody should be allowed to join this profession, that is the basis of all other professions, without proper professional education and training. This policy should be enforced for all levels and subject areas as teachers' training is essential for all the subjects and levels. Pre-service teachers' training can help novice teachers to start their professional careers with confidence. Pre-service teachers' training not only improves their sense of self-efficacy but it is related to teachers' performance and students' learning outcomes as well.

• Teachers should be offered in-service training programmes on regular basis. These programmes should be offered at a suitable time so the teachers can feel motivated to attend them without facing obstacles regarding their professional and personal responsibilities. Teachers should be offered reasonable incentives to participate in these programmes so they can improve their knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical skills through these programmes, this should ultimately be beneficial for their classroom practice. In-service training should include the use of technology in classroom settings in order to attract the IT literate students of today. In-service training will improve the teachers' knowledge besides boosting their sense of self- efficacy and confidence.

• The Education department should provide the teachers with short term professional development programmes, such as workshops and seminars. They can be useful for providing information and skills in a short period of time for those who cannot spare a long period of time for their professional development activities because of their personal of professional commitments. The Education department should organise these short-term sessions in a way that a number of teachers can access them and can benefit from them.

• Sometimes, the teachers cannot participate in professional development programmes due to financial and organisational reasons for example, either they cannot manage to finance their participation in these activities or they are not supported by their organisations that do not release them to attend these training programmes. The Education department should ensure that schools provide financial support and time for teachers in order to motivate them to participate in different types of professional development programmes, either long term such as in-service training programmes or short term such as workshops or seminars.

- The Education department should devise a policy that that ensures that teachers' professional development is necessary for their promotion and organisational growth. Teachers should be informed that their participation in continuous professional development programmes will support their career growth. Such policies have proved to be useful in different parts of world, thus it can bear positive result in the context of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well. Such policies provide extrinsic motivation for teachers to actively participate in these programmes which can result in the enhancement of knowledge and skills besides boosting their confidence.

- The Education department should focus on training of teachers' trainers as well. They should be provided with adequate opportunities for professional growth as teacher professional development is the backbone of the entire educational process. Teacher trainers must be equipped with the most recent knowledge and skills so they can satisfy the needs of teachers who will in turn impart this knowledge to their students. Teacher trainers should be encouraged to participate in professional development activities that are available in traditional and virtual settings. These training programmes will enable the teacher trainers to deal with the challenges posed by the age of globalisation.

- The Education department should ensure that the teachers' professional development programmes include technology and are based on a flexible and rigorous curriculum in order to enable the teacher trainers to acquire problem solving skills. They can demonstrate and transfer these skills to trainee teachers who can use them in the classroom setting. This all can enhance the students' learning outcomes which is the ultimate goal of the educational process.

- The government should improve the existing infrastructure and environment related to teachers' professional development. It should be widened and more teacher trainers should be appointed so all the teachers can be offered different types of long term and short term training programmes. These should include in-service training programmes, workshop, seminars and special courses that can equip Saudi teachers with the knowledge and learning abilities that they need to deal with the challenges of an ever changing state of knowledge and technology.

- The Government should provide scholarships and exchange programmes for teachers and teacher trainers so they can update their knowledge and skills in international higher education institutios. It will not only enhance their competencies and capabilities but will boost their confidence as well and they will be able to perform their duties in a more effective manner.

I expect that this all will have a positive impact on the Saudi educational system that is aimed at empowerment of Saudi citizens. In the long run it can invigorate the country's economy by providing the skilled manpower to work on highly technical projects at national and international level. Research indicates that continuing professional programmes can ensure that students are provided with a high quality education that results in social well-being. Thus the authorities and officials should make concrete efforts for implementation of these recommendations.

For Future Research Studies

• Generally, the currently available research studies on the topic of impact of teachers' continuous professional development are focused on investigating the conditions prevailing in developed countries and only a few studies have concentrated on these practices in developing nations. Further research on this topic should focus on developing nations, especially the KSA, who are still struggling to improve their educational systems. These studies should obtain the first-hand knowledge about the problems faced by these regions so a suitable solution for them can be devised.

• Further research can concentrate on the effectiveness of different types of professional development programmes. Researchers can investigate which type of professional development programmes are more effective in comparison to others, in relation to different subject areas and how long these programmes should be. Research on these aspects of teachers' professional development programmes can help the relevant authorities to design and execute successful and effective programmes.

• Researchers can investigate the effectiveness of distance learning programmes. They can reveal how these programmes can be made more attractive and engaging for teachers, and how they can be used to improve teachers' knowledge and skills in an effective manner. This is a very important area for further research as distance learning programmes are the most cost-effective and accessible means for providing professional development programmes for the teachers who are unable to participate in other professional development programmes due to their personal or professional commitments.

4.5 Final Words

I have completed a comprehensive literature review that has enabled me to understand the significance of teachers' professional development in general and specifically in the context of Saudi Arabia. This literature also explained different models of teachers' professional development and highlighted the general practices prevailing in the KSA. After that I conducted primary research and collected, organised and analysed my primary data. I discussed the findings of this study in detail and made some recommendations for relevant authorities and future research studies.

I have revealed that teachers' effective professional development can be explained as:

"Effective professional development is on-going, includes training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support. Successful programmes involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to ones they will use with their students and encourage the development of teachers' learning communities. There is growing interest in developing schools as learning organizations and in ways for teachers to share their expertise and experience more systematically"

OECD (2005,p12)

I have concluded that the issues related to teachers' professional development programmes in the KSA are not based on scarcity of financial resources as the Saudi government is spending generously on the education sector. It is quite correct to state that the problems faced by the

teachers regarding their access to these programmes and their effectiveness are due to a lack of proper planning and serious follow-up by relevant authorities. There is a crucial need to put in a more system for designing, implementing and evaluating of these programmes. In the KSA, teachers face numerous challenges regarding the access to these programmes. The most prominent amongst these are the financial costs and time required to attend these programmes, government and educational institutions should support teachers so that they can overcome these challenges. Finally, it can be stated that academics and professionals are fully agreed with the notion that teachers' continuous professional development is vital for the success of the educational process.

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