

Public School Teachers' Participation and Their Needs for Professional Development

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Abstract – The demand of the 21st century for quality education and the fast changes brought about by technological advancement necessitates teachers to undergo continuous professional development. The study was conducted to determine the participation of the public school teachers to trainings, seminars, and conferences as avenues for professional growth and development and the areas of trainings, seminars, and conferences that the teachers wanted to undergo for them to strengthen their capacities to become effective teachers of the 21st century. The descriptive research design was utilized in the study with 300 public teachers who were randomly selected from the City Schools' Division of Alaminos, Pangasinan, Philippines served as respondents of the study. Findings revealed that a very large percentage of the public school teachers were not able to attend or participate in various trainings, seminars, or conference that could serve as avenues for their professional development.

INTRODUCTION

With the very fast changes brought about by the advancement of technology and the demand for quality education, professionals need to improve their knowledge and skills continuously by pursuing the graduate studies or through participation in trainings, seminars, and conferences.

The goal of the 21st century education is to provide quality education among the learners. In the endeavor to provide a higher level of students' achievement, teachers undergo professional learning as a primary mechanism to improve their capacity. (Dunn, Hattie, & Bowles, 2018). Professional learning or development is all about teachers learning, learning how to learn, and utilizing knowledge for the greater benefit of the students. It is a complex process, which requires the cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively, the capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands regarding convictions and beliefs and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change (Avalos, 2011). Teacher professional development (TPD) is thus an essential aspect of the life of a teacher. As TPD is strongly coupled with the lives of teachers, it is inevitable that it is also entangled in the complexities of school, people, policies and practices (Tan, Chang, & Teng, 2015). Productive teacher development occurs when teachers participate in the planning,

implementation, and evaluation of CPD programs offered (Geldenhuis & Oosthuizen, 2015).

The goal of all teacher professional development initiatives is the for teachers to learn (Skultety & Gonzales, 2018). Teacher educator professional learning, like teacher education, can be messy and complex (Patton & Parker, 2017). PTD mean daily professional and personal growth teacher, a long, continuous process that starts from the beginning of preparation for the profession and continue until the end of life, a process that is realized in different ways, which involves training of teachers with new knowledge, skills, strategies in the respective areas of competence and application of appropriate technology (Jovanova-mitkovska, 2010) learning new information, growing one's understanding of various pedagogical approaches, and continually engaging in processes of curriculum renewal. The emerging trend of the use of innovative technologies to support teachers' teaching and learning is indicative of the increasing dominance of technology in educational environments. One aspect of the use of technology is the developing online technologies where teachers are in an online interactive platform to share knowledge on their teaching practice (Zandi, Ming, & Krish, 2014). Teachers have to know and use all new technological resources which facilitate the teaching and learning process (Hussein, 2013).

Experiential learning in teacher professional development is not a novel concept and its reported use

has focused on the experience of teachers developing their practice whilst in the classroom: experimenting, reflecting and adapting new theories, practices, and content they have been introduced to in their professional context (Girvan, Conneely, & Tangney, 2016). Engagement in communities of practice provided a foundation for collaboration and reduced isolation, allowing participants to extend teaching and research capacities. Significant social dynamics and group processes that shaped their practice included a common focus, personal and professional relationships, safe but challenging spaces and shared commitment (Patton & Parker, 2017).

Teachers' PD participation is measured with continuous variables that evaluate both quantity and quality of teachers' PD engagement. The variables that measure the quantitative aspects of teachers' PD participation describe the number of teachers' self-reported participation in regular and supplementary PD activities. The variables that measure qualitative aspects of teachers' PD participation are inspired by frameworks of design features for high-quality PD activities (Fischer et al., 2018). Research has shown that there was a strong link between the antecedent beliefs and behavioral intention of teachers intentions to engage in professional learning (Dunn et al., 2018). Pleasant emotional experiences in PD also led many teachers to become more engaged in future PD experiences, particularly when they attended multiple sessions with the same trainer. Pleasant emotional experiences in PD also inspired some teachers to reflect on their teaching and alter their instructional and philosophical approaches (Gaines et al., 2019).

Teachers engaging in professional development face several dilemmas. The first dilemma concerns the issue of needs that are served through engagement in professional development activities. The second dilemma is related to teachers' sense of responsibility to their pupils when they are engaged in professional development activities. The last dilemma is related to the first and it deals with whether professional development activities should be made compulsory or whether it should be voluntary for teachers. Understanding the tensions and dilemmas of professional development as experienced by teachers allows the policymakers and professional developers to make better decisions so that the fidelity of professional development policies and programs can be enhanced (Tan et al., 2015). Teachers who serve more time for professional development

activities appear to be in more positive attitudes towards professional development. Further, young teachers have more positive attitudes towards professional development activities than the older ones. (Nicosia, 2012).

Teachers experienced growth by incorporating students as professional development collaborators, traveling as teachers, learning with assumption-challenging academics, developing core and lasting professional relationships, and working in professions outside of education (Sprott, 2019). Different stakeholders (governments, school principals, teachers) are involved, and their diverse perspectives and degrees of involvement (distinguishing between TCs realized bottom-up or top-down) impact TCs. Finally, several conditions for success were reported: supportive leadership, group dynamics and composition, and trust and respect (Packer, Kyndt, & Vangrieken, 2017). Through effective professional development in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), teachers can help students gain knowledge, skills, and dispositions to build and support sustainable communities (Ateskan & Lane, 2018).

The study was conducted to determine the participation of public school teachers to trainings, seminars, and conferences as avenues for professional growth and development. Likewise, the study identified the areas of trainings, seminars, and conferences that the teachers wanted to undergo in order for them to strengthen their capacities to become effective teachers of the 21st century. Results of the study can serve as a basis for the development of teacher development plan for the City Schools Division of Alaminos and in the provision of trainings, seminars, and conferences for teachers.

METHODS

The study made use of the descriptive research design as the objective of the study was to determine the participation of the public school teachers to trainings, seminars, and conferences as avenues for professional growth and development. Likewise, the study determined the areas of trainings, seminars, and conferences that the teachers wanted to undergo in order for them to strengthen their capacities to become effective teachers of the 21st century. A total of 300 teachers teaching from the City Schools Division of Alaminos, Pangasinan, Philippines served as

respondents of the study. The teachers were randomly selected. Before the conduct of the research, the researcher requested permission from the Division Superintendent. The data were gathered using a survey questionnaire and were analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly, frequency count and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majority of the teachers had not attended training (54.67%), seminar (55%), and conference (68%) at the division level. The same was observed at the regional, national, and international level.

Table 1. Level and Number of Training, Seminar, Conference Participated by the Public School Teachers

Level and Number	Training		Seminar		Conferences	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Division Level						
0	164	54.67	165	55.00	204	68.00
1 - 5	100	33.33	110	36.67	78	26.00
6 - 9	28	9.33	20	6.67	17	5.67
10 or more	8	2.67	5	1.67	1	0.33
Regional Level						
0	171	57.00	181	60.33	224	74.67
1 - 5	80	26.67	79	26.33	61	20.33
6 - 10	29	9.67	31	10.33	14	4.67
11 or more	20	6.67	9	3.00	1	0.33
National Level						
0	183	61.00	200	66.67	217	72.33
1 - 4	87	29.00	85	28.33	78	26.00
5 or more	30	10.00	15	5.00	5	1.67
International Level						
0	211	70.33	216	72.00	212	70.67
1 - 4	71	23.67	71	23.67	78	26.00
5 or more	18	6.00	13	4.33	10	3.33

Findings revealed that a very large percentage of the public school teachers are not given the opportunities to undergo professional learning and development through participation to training, seminar, or conference. It has to be noted that teacher professional development (TPD) is an essential aspect in the life of a teacher. As TPD is strongly coupled with the lives of teachers, it is inevitable that it is also entangled in the complexities of school, people, policies and practices (Tan, Chang, & Teng, 2015).

Teachers' PD participation is measured with continuous variables that evaluate both quantity and quality of teachers' PD engagement. The variables that measure the quantitative aspects of teachers' PD participation describe the number of teachers' self-reported participation in regular and supplementary PD activities. The variables that measure qualitative aspects of teachers' PD participation are inspired by frameworks of design features for high-quality PD activities (Fischer et al., 2018). Tables 2 – 4 present the number of participants of the public school teachers to different training, seminars, or conferences.

Table 2. Participation to Training, Seminar, Conference on New Trends in Teaching and Teaching Pedagogies

Area	Training		Seminar		Conferences	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
New Trends in Teaching						
0	198	66.00	214	71.33	255	85.00
1 - 4	76	25.33	66	22.00	39	13.00
5 or more	26	8.67	20	6.67	6	2.00
Teaching Pedagogies						
0	195	65.00	222	74.00	261	87.00
1 - 4	76	25.33	65	21.67	33	11.00
5 or more	29	9.67	13	4.33	6	2.00

As shown in Table 2, a very large percentage of the teachers have not attended to training (66%), seminar (71.33%), and conferences (85%) regarding new trends in teaching. Likewise, a very large percentage of the teachers have not attended training (65%), seminar (74%), and conferences (87%) on teaching pedagogies. It has to be noted that education is changing at a fast rate

for the last decade as brought about by advancement in information technology and as dictated by the economy. Teachers should keep abreast of the changes in their fields for them to be able to transmit the required knowledge and skills that are expected to their students. The teachers must be able to employ the right teaching pedagogies for teaching and learning become effective.

Table 3. Participation to Training, Seminar, Conference on Leadership and Management

Area	Training		Seminar		Conferences	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Leadership						
0	211	70.33	239	79.67	271	90.33
1 - 4	64	21.33	45	15.00	24	8.00
5 or more	25	8.33	16	5.33	5	1.67
Management						
0	234	78.00	269	89.67	280	93.33
1 - 4	53	17.67	25	8.33	17	5.67
5 or more	13	4.33	6	2.00	3	1.00

Aside from the roles of the teachers to impart the best knowledge and skills to their students, teachers are playing varied roles in school and the community. Results also revealed that a very large percentage of the teachers were not able to participate in training (70.33%), seminar (79.67%), and conferences (90.33%) on

leadership. Likewise, a very large percentage of the teachers were not able to participate in training (78%), seminar (89.67%), or conference (93.33%) on management. Effective leaders and managers are effective teachers. Schools need leaders who have a vision for improving quality and learning outcomes, and

who are also effective at ongoing management tasks. For teachers to possess leadership and management skills, they must participate in trainings, seminars, and conferences. The acquisition of leadership and management knowledge and skills will improve the teachers' performance in the classroom and school.

Table 4. Participation to Training, Seminar, Conference on Research, Publication, and Statistics

Area	Training		Seminar		Conferences	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
A. Research						
0	183	61.00	217	72.33	248	82.67
1 - 4	54	18.00	45	15.00	28	9.33
5 or more	63	21.00	38	12.67	24	8.00
Publication						
0	185	61.67	207	69.00	251	83.67
1 - 4	79	26.33	67	22.33	40	13.33
5 or more	36	12.00	26	8.67	9	3.00
Statistics						
0	179	59.67	187	62.33	250	83.33
1 - 4	80	26.67	83	27.67	42	14.00
5 or more	41	13.67	30	10.00	8	2.67

Like in the other areas, a huge number of public school teachers have not participated in training, seminar, or conference along research, publication, and statistics. The Department of Education now requires teachers, especially those holding master teacher rank, to conduct research. The teachers must possess knowledge and skills in research, publication, and statistics. This knowledge and skills can be acquired through their participation to various trainings, seminars, or conference.

Table 5. Training, Seminar, Conference Needs of the Public School Teachers

AREA	f	%
1. Preparation of effective learning material resources.	226	75
2. 21 st century teaching strategies	214	71.3
3. Classroom management	213	71
4. New trends in the profession	200	66.7
5. Conduct of Research	196	65.3
6. Statistics and Design	196	65.3
7. IT integration in teaching/ in the practice of the profession	196	65.3
8. Writing for Publication	186	61.3
9. Leadership and Management	160	53.3

The teachers were asked for particular trainings, seminars, or conferences that they want to undergo as part of their professional development. Of the different areas identified, 75% of the teachers wanted to undergo training, seminar, or conference on the preparation of effective learning material resources while 71.3% wanted to undergo training, seminar, or conference on the different 21st century teaching strategies. The teachers also wanted to have trainings, seminar, and conference on leadership and management, IT integration in teaching, the conduct of research, statistics and design, and writing for publication.

The goal of the 21st century education is to provide quality education among the learners. In the endeavor to provide a higher level of students' achievement, teachers undergo professional learning as a primary mechanism to improve their capacity. (Dunn, Hattie, & Bowles, 2018). PTD mean daily professional and personal growth of a teacher. It is a long, continuous process that starts from the beginning of preparation for the profession and continues until the end of life. It is a process that is realized in different ways, which involves training of teachers with new knowledge, skills, strategies in the respective areas of competence and application of appropriate technology (Jovanova-mitkovska, 2010) learning new information, growing one's understanding of various pedagogical approaches, and continually engaging in processes of curriculum renewal. The emerging trend of the use of innovative technologies to support teachers' teaching and learning is indicative of the increasing dominance of technology in educational environments. (Zandi, Ming, & Krish, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that a large percentage of teachers have not undergone any training, seminar, or participated in conferences along new trends in teaching, teaching pedagogy, leadership and management, research, publication, and statistics. Having knowledge and skills on the different areas mentioned above are vital in the performance of their duties and functions not only as classroom teachers but for the various roles that they are playing in school and the community. The public school teachers recognized their need for training, and seminar along those areas for them to become more efficient and effective. There is a need for the teachers to get abreast of the emerging trends in their fields, and to

learn the effective pedagogies and strategies in teaching for the more significant benefits of the learners.

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