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Designing professional development to help teachers to implement curriculum in private schools in Dubai

تصميم أسس التطوير المهني لمساعدة المعلمين على تنفيذ المناهج الدراسية في المدارس الخاصة في دبي

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

Professional development of teachers is a very essential issue to tackle with the introduction of new innovations and advancements to the educational industry and its surrounding environment. This study has overviewed literature of research on this domain before conducting the methodology that consisted to collecting teachers' opinions through TALIS Questionnaire, developed by OECD. Results have revealed a shortage in the professional development of teachers in Dubai.

Keywords: teachers, professional development, curriculum design, schools, students, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Abstract (Arabic)

التطوير المهني للمعلمين هو مسألة أساسية بحاجة للمتابعة بسبب الابتكارات الجديدة والتقدم المشهود في قطاع التعليم بالإضافة إلى البيئة

المحيطة بها. وقد استعرضت هذه الدراسة أدبيات البحث في هذا المجال قبل إجراء المنهجية التي لجأت لجمع بيانات المعلمين من خلال

الذي وضعته منظمة التعاون والتنمية في الميدان الاقتصادي. وقد كشفت النتائج عن نقص في التطوير المهني للمعلمين TALIS استبيان

في دبي

الكلمات الرئيسية: *المعلمون، التطوير المهني، تصميم المناهج، المدارس، الطلاب، دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة*

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my loving husband.

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 1. Introduction

I.   Introduction

Nowadays, dramatic changes in the educational system are noticed in the entire world (Vosniadou, 2007). Several studies have recognized that the quality of teachers has a direct and effective impact on teaching, and that quality of teachers is the variable with most influence on students' learning outcomes. Corcoran (2007) explained a relation between the learning of students and other controlled factors such as class size, technology utilization, and budgets allocated, such as teachers' salaries and school facilities. His study revealed that teachers' quality and certifications have an active and direct impact on students' achievements.

While teachers are considered as one of the key changing elements for this change to happen, professional development programs are placed and organized in educational systems to help teachers to reform main concepts in educational systems of schools and universities (Supovitz, J. A., & Turner, H. M., 2000). Nowadays, educators outstandingly acknowledge the fact that teachers are not considered as one of the factor that can change their educational systems but as the main driving force for this change which accredits the effect professional developments on teachers to help systems to begin the change.

This new prominence has been generally understood by both teachers and leaders in schools as it stresses on the importance of teachers' role and enhances teaching as a profession. On the other hand, Wenglinsky (2002) clarified that this emphasis has been

taken as an indicator that teachers don't possess enough experience and skills in teaching to allow them to practice their profession, which has a negative impact on teachers' motivation and educational systems' outcomes.

Nowadays, professional development programs occupy a key role in educational system as many educators relate students' achievements to teachers' quality (Supovitz, J. A., & Turner, H. M., 2000). In the past few years, schools started new policies to improve protocols used to appoint and prepare teachers, such as certifications, experience and professional development programs prepared for teachers before starting their service to help develop their in-service activities (Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, H., & Fung, I., 2008). On the other hand, other educators explained the need of other actions, such as policies and resource allocation, to be taken by schools that can improve teachers' knowledge and reflect on schools' performance.

Continuous teachers' training is considered to be an effective factor in increasing teachers' performance, as ongoing training sessions have a stronger impact than occasional sessions (Sparks, D. 2002).

Teachers' professional development has reached an agreement area between teachers and schools' leaders that professional development is a lifelong practice which starts with the primary preparation which teachers receive before joining teaching professions (Supovitz, 2000).

II.   Statement of Problem

Guskey (2002) has claimed that professional development is changing rapidly on different aspects. Therefore, professional development is currently discussed as concepts and plans used to improve teachers' efficacy and skills during a certain period of time, as outcomes of professional development could change as organization requirements change.

In addition to that, professional development can be presented in different models to allow others to utilize specific concepts and research implemented in certain districts or countries rather than acquiring the same used protocols. Thus, this study is to present a general and comprehensive coverage on designing a professional development on small and large groups to help teachers reaching their goals.

Obviously, and for any professional development to be organized to give its outcomes, leaders need to relate various factors in schools together to come up with needed outcomes (Garet, 2001).

As teachers are the effective driving force in schools' systems, many others forces in the educational structure should be allocated and optimized to assist teachers in achieving their role and to producing effective outcomes. However, there is not enough research conducted in the country of the United Arab Emirates in general, and Dubai in specific, to find out the optimal and calculated plans in developing the educational system, when it comes to professional development of teachers while introducing new curricula.

III. Purpose of the Study

This study will examine useful definitions of professional development and the major role that professional development plays in schools towards improving teachers' skills, knowledge and performance. This study will present major steps needed toward planning a powerful and effective professional development programs the educational industry in Dubai, with all needed factors which suite all parts in the educational systems with some evidences form educators of how effective training for teachers can result in improving students results and acquired skills match new days requirements. This study will discuss the importance of professional development to help teachers in implementing science curriculum in Dubai.

On the other hand, this study can be viewed as a step forward in research on this topic and a source of guidance to improve many weaknesses in schools.

IV. Significance of the Study

School's educators continuously implement efforts to enhance the efficacy of teachers in different domains in school district; this is where the role of professional development comes, to meet various levels and outcomes (Van, 2001).

Leaders in schools, such as decision makers, need to determine the skills and capabilities of their staff to be able to improve their educational systems while focusing on strengthening their vulnerabilities. Professional developments can be considered as

an effective investment area to help leaders, such as curriculum specialist, principles and others, to point out fundamental areas needed for improvement.

V.   Research Questions

The research questions that are utilized to drive this research paper to its objectives are as follow:

RQ1.   What should schools consider while designing effective professional

development programs in Dubai?

RQ2.   What are barriers, faced by educators in Dubai, which reduce the effect

of professional development on teachers?

RQ3.   To what extent should teachers, at schools in Dubai, be involved in

designing a professional development?

VI.   Hypotheses

Professional development represents a general field which can influence all areas for improvement and to cover general student needs. Professional Development aims at exploring students' experience during their learning process, specifying the role of teachers to deliver their curriculum effectively, and several others.

Louis (1998) clarified that leaders can benefit from professional development programs to guide teachers and students towards goals set by schools. Moreover, leaders can use findings of this research as a better way to evaluate their support and facilitating services provided to their teachers in their system. Results of this study would be

valuable for teachers as well, as these results can lead teachers to a general understanding of their role in implementing new and existing curriculum following new strategies in their educational systems.

Thus, the hypotheses that this research makes are as follow:

RQ1.   What should schools consider while designing effective professional development programs in Dubai?

H0. Only the financial and motivational factors need to be taken into consideration.

H1. Financial and motivational factors need to be taken into consideration along with several other factors.

RQ2.   What are barriers, faced by educators in Dubai, which reduce the effect of professional development on teachers?

H0. Barriers faced by educational institutions are either internal or external ones.

H1. Barriers faced by educational institutions are both internal and external to the school's environment.

RQ3.   To what extent should teachers, at schools in Dubai, be involved in designing professional development programs?

H0. Teachers should be slightly involved in designing professional development programs.

H1. Teachers should be considerably involved in designing professional development programs.

VII.   Structure of the dissertation

Within this section, a simple skeleton of what was discoursed within this research paper was revealed. The research questions and the hypothesis were defined based on the the purpose of this research and the problem provided.

The literature review in the following chapter inspects followed theories and models on the area of professional development for teachers, and how it can impact the introduction of new curricula.

The methodology chapter defined the pursued technique of data collection and research and exposes the practices utilized in analyzing it.

Additionally, chapter 4 shows the findings of the research and investigates the outcomes for assumptions to be obtained.

Finally, the chapter 5 reviews the outcomes and initiates new prospect for future research and proposes fresh recommendations. It also discusses the limitations faced by the researcher during the conduction of this research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

I. Chapter Overview

Generally, professional development exists in different areas and work places to enhance the performance of staff, including managers and principals (Guskey, 2002).

Several definitions have aroused throughout the history to determine the meaning of professional developments. For instance, Elmore (2002) define PD as the expression used to label or address out activities in organizations. Epstein (2002) referred to it as the delivery of several aspects at various levels for different purposes to increase teachers' and students' levels when educational systems are introduced. Whereas Borko (2004) viewed it as presenting, designing, training and follow up on the needed techniques to implement new methods to deliver new concepts and improve existing ones.

Literature and academic research studying professional development structured general basics to design activities for professional development that include:

1- Activities serving the mission of the organization.
2- Activities helping achieve outcomes from professional development.
3- Activities continuing from a year to another.

Professional development was found as a tool to improve schools by improving the quality of their instructional guide and the academic performance of students. Educators suggest that professional development will have an effective influence on

educational systems, if correctly applied and designed, considering all known aspects (Joyce,2002).

The aim of this chapter is to examine the concept of professional development, primarily depending on performed research over history. Thru the chapter, works regarding the history and background of professional development, within the educational sector, will be studied. Moreover, concepts relevant to professional development and teachers will be reviewed, whilst portraying the main models and theories.

II.   Importance of Professional Development in Teaching

Despite the fact that teaching is one of the first professions found in life, it is considered as a continuously changing profession due to the variations in the external environment. Teacher development is a process that increase teachers' experience to gain more information and to realize new amendments introduced to teaching process. Previously, professional development was considered as a source to improve in-service teachers for the benefits of the system, and that's why it was conducted as small and short workshops for special purposes.

Elmore (2002) stated that professional development has been advanced over the past few years to be considered as ongoing plans to develop teachers' proficiency in teaching and to help teachers to gain new experience through planned and systematic sessions.

As a result of efficient implementation of professional development, general awareness of the importance of professional development has been flagged up and noticed; readers and researches can see this by noticing the general views as:

a.   Available literature found, including needed documents, reports and models, which help educators and teachers to better understand the importance of professional development and its effect in the educational systems, in addition to many other useful resources to clarify the optimal methods and techniques to construct effective professional development programs (general frame, key elements, needed interaction between all agents included in the educational systems)

b.   The increasing acknowledgment of international organizations of the importance of professional development and its effect on educational systems, as preparing teachers through professional development has a noticeable reward of achieving learning systems outcomes.

c.   The support of the educational system to educational organizations to start initiatives with regards to new implantation techniques of different types of PD programs and explicit its importance to improve teaching skills and enhance teaching performance.

On top of PD programs being considered as a powerful resource for teachers to acquire knowledge and skills, PD programs can be seen as a way to gather teachers together to exchange experience and to discuss different issues leading to the construction of strong work relationships.

Schools leaders can use PD as a chance for teachers to share their teaching practices since teachers won't have enough time during workdays to attend each other classes.

Little (1993), generalized the fact that professional development planners can find out other benefits of PD:

1- Focuses on individuals', groups' and school needs.

2- Allows teachers to develop their skills and knowledge from local and external sources.

3- Reflects one of the best sources of information for teachers over long period of time

4- Is directly related to teachers' and students' results and achievements.

5- Offer teachers the chance to encounter others' teaching experience, especially those with recognized experience in different districts. By this, teachers have the chance to learn, observe, reflect and develop their experience and skills.

Researchers highlighted the importance of professional development from different views and aspects. One of these aspects was placed to enhance the function of professional development. Researchers believed that when policies in schools fail to lead to change, this can be attributed to many reasons, such as teachers resistance to the change on their instructional methods in classrooms or the lack of knowledge and experience of policy makers to convince teachers to follow policies.

III.   Background information

Professional development is an extensive term that affects different organizations in different sectors and industries. Rhodes (2009) clarified that professional development took different forms such as workshops, seminars and courses offered over a short period of time.

Recent researchers defined professional development as an ongoing process needed and designed for the progress and growth of the teachers' experience and knowledge; where these PD programs are to be followed by continuous supervision supported by feedback (Elmore, 2002).

Van (2001) recommended that the titles and content of professional development programs to be set and decided by teachers, upon their needs and urgent issues. That need clarification, to improve educational systems. Since professional development is a continuous process, specialists expect that by the end of any professional development program, teachers will be able to evaluate their development, in term of content, the level of new knowledge they gained, and many other factors that might affect their achievement.

Timperley (2008) stated that professional development is used, not only to improve existing skills, but also to introduce new skills to the educational system and to allow teachers to get enough knowledge for effective implantation of latest information, while conveying the curriculum. Teachers seeking professional development need enough time to get proper training outside classrooms, continuous cooperation with all

needed supporting materials in classrooms, coaching, and receiving constructive feedback. For feedback to be beneficial, teachers need to provide evidences of their work in a structured manner to receive directed orientation.

Joyce (2002) stated that, in the past, professional development used to be presented as a workshop demonstrated by an external expert, with minimum participation from the teachers' side. These workshops lasted for a short period of time of a couple of hours for a couple of days. Unfortunately, not enough efforts were directed towards evaluating such workshops to discover the level of improvement and development on the level of teachers' behavior, knowledge or skills, after attending PD.

Penuel (2009) expressed the general factors that should be taken into consideration while designing professional development to help deliver curricula in an optimal manner. Those factors can be summarized as follows:

a. The nature of the current curriculum

b. Instructions designed to yield outcomes of the curriculum

c. The methodology and teaching practices required

d. Assessment practices assigned

e. The nature of learning nature and environment created for students

f. Work conditions of teachers.

Accurate and reliable sources of all needed data serve a valuable resource for a planner to set professional development goals related to teachers, students, leaders and the educational system, as a whole, to ensure effective implementation. There are other

factors that schools' directors needs to take into consideration as they have an influence on the success of the professional development; they can be summarized as the budgets allocated for professional development, time assigned and the expertise engaged.

If professional development programs are believed to develop the educational system and effectively influence learning systems, professional development designers need to consider training as essential step for in-service and pre-service teachers (Corcoran, 1995).

IV.   Models of Teachers' PD

Professional development is a wide and broad term that can be designed in different ways and for different purposes. While professional development programs are usually designed by leaders and developers, some other professional development can be designed by teachers themselves, where teachers will determine the professional development outcomes, as per their needs, and allocate their time and determine the activities that help them to implement professional development. In this case, schools and leaders should help facilitate the role of teachers and the progress of the professional development (Little, 1993). Those professional development programs can be modified by teachers upon external feedback from schools or other teachers sharing same experience and concerns.

Professional development can be distinctively tackled when the plans of school directors are set throughout regular meetings with teachers, to discuss curriculum issues, teaching procedures and other aspects.

On the other hand, professional development helps in creating a more sociable-friendly environment in schools, while increasing the level of communication and trust between the staff, which typically reflects on a stronger and well-established educational system (Bogler, 2004).

Other types of professional development are described when teachers are offered to design the professional development programs with their goals, plans and all requirements, in addition to being responsible of measuring their validity and productivity with continuous feedback on their professional development. In this case, teachers are held responsible to carry on these PD programs and to keep them as ongoing procedures. Such type of professional development is useful to:

    a. Discuss professional issues and personal perspectives.

    b. Coach teachers and provide peer support.

    c. Develop curriculum and strategies used for implementation.

    d. Discuss and explore real life problems collaboratively.

This form of professional development is widely used in designing curriculum enhancements, where teachers share the obstacles they face and suggest amendments.

Studies reflect a positive attitude from teachers toward this kind of professional development as teachers feel that through their career and experience gained, they can make their schools a better place.

V.   Logic of PD in Teaching

Teaching is considered as a relatively complex process because teachers need sufficient knowledge and different strategies to support the learning process as much as possible. Thus, professional development was introduced to enhance teachers' skills and to facilitate their role, with maximum capacity of delivery.

Many scientific researches show a direct relation between professional development and teachers improvement, which reflects on students' results and achievements. This descriptive relationship was given to a high quality professional development, which has a clear and strong effect on teachers' improvement.

The below figure, developed by Supovitz (2000), shows the relationship of factors leading to improved student achievement.
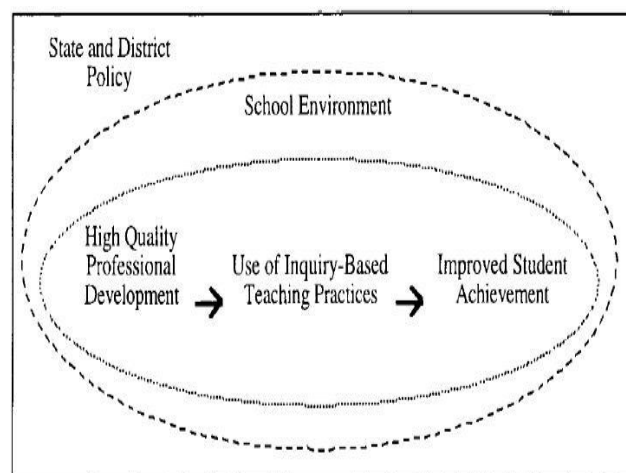
Figure 1: Model depicting theoretical relationship between professional development and student achievement.

Knowing that PD programs are still organized by schools and educational organizations using simple data, there are no fixed and constant setting elements to be considered while placing all several types of professional development (Hunzicker, 2011). Educators and school supervisors can effectively plan for professional development by firstly evaluating their needs, beliefs and needed practices to be able to agree on the best way to design a professional development program.

Mentors involved in PD are seen as providers for support, guidance and needed feedback, who can also sue their resources and reflect on results after implementing outcomes of PD programs.

VI.   Characteristics of PD Design

Professional development designers need to prioritize main the characteristics when a professional development program is being planned, to ensure the achievement of the set outcomes of professional development.

In general, Jimoyiannis (2010) summarized the main requirements of effective professional development, as follows:

1) Required Material and Supporting Documents

Usually, during professional development, all supporting material and resources will be available during professional development time to present professional development with high quality outcomes. When schools leave teachers after professional development without supporting documents, teachers will be performing with existing

material and techniques, available in schools, which will negatively influence curriculum implementation.

2) Teachers' Equality

When training is planned for certain teachers rather than demonstrating professional development to all teachers in the district, this will keep effective information or knowledge in the hands of some, instead of all. In this case, some students will be receiving high quality teaching, while others will be receiving minimum skills and knowledge, which at the end will affect the whole educational system. Thus, professional development should be considered as a continuous and comprehensive ongoing course, for all teachers.

3) Presentation of Professional Development Knowledge Level and Availability of Resources

A significant role in this loop, as professional development, needs to be delivered by specialists who possess this knowledge and can deliver it in a detailed manner. This will help teachers understand the best ways while implementing the curriculum and keep those facilitators as a reference for all teachers. On the other hand, this will help school's leaders to keep track of teachers' performance for ongoing follow-up. Also, availability of resources will keep teachers able to implement all instructional guides as designed, otherwise teachers will revert back to their traditional methods of application.

4) Communications Between Teachers and Curriculum Designers

When school leaders are aware of the importance of such kind of communication, educational systems can ensure a better level of outcomes, as teachers will be able to transfer their weakness areas directly to those who can advise them effectively. In addition to that, and before starting professional development, teachers need to understand the importance of implementing curriculum as designed and the importance of professional development to help teachers to achieve what is required from them.

5) Introduction of Professional Development Programs

Designers can draw main standard to introduce professional development for teachers and explain the importance of the curriculum and its implementation as instructed and expected. This will help teachers to deeply understand the general standards they need to rely on while implementing their curriculum. This guidance can help and clarify to teachers the main pathways to plan for effectively instructional plans to meet students', systems' and the curriculum's needs.

On the other hand, teachers can be taken as effective members in updating or starting new techniques when implementing curriculum.

As advised by Joyce (2002), professional development can be one of best and live techniques to enhance curriculum through:

- Reviewing the curriculum

- Starting new initiatives as changes to be done on curriculum to meet new outcomes

- Plans needed to cause the change

- The development required to keep the changes in place and to meet other higher standards

- The implementation of novel changes through new instructional guides

- Setting new plans to keep the effect of new positive change on students' development.

VII.   Professional Development and Schools' Policies

In order for a professional development to produce its outcomes, to affect teachers effectively and to cause change in systems, school leaders should help and allow professional development to achieve this by placing certain types of policies in schools, where these polices can motivate teachers to consider professional development as a pathway for their improvements during their work years (Lieberman, 2006)

These policies should be subject to any updates to match changes and reforms. Also, policies should be comprehensive where teachers are involved and considered in these policies. This consideration can take place in promotions of teachers after the evaluation of all gains during professional development. When policies are found in systems to support professional development then outcomes of professional development can be said to be supported by many sides to enhance the role of professional development and show its results at different levels.

Policies addressing teachers' concerns, specifically those made to enhance students achievements and addressing issues regarding all aspects of educational system (as curriculum, assessment system) are to be more helpful and effective towards supporting reform of educational systems.

Avalos (2011) found that teachers' enrollment in well-organized professional development, supported by school managers and polices, enhances teachers beliefs with values, beliefs and importance of teaching to cause changes on different life aspects (Joyce, 2002)

VIII. What knowledge should leaders possess before they suggest and plan a professional development?

Researchers have defined various levels and types of knowledge leaders should have to be able to construct a professional development program as an effective source of teachers' development.

Leaders should consider and review their knowledge against:

1) General required knowledge in any educational system at any level

Leaders should have enough knowledge in different aspects in educational systems such as class management, knowledge of school environment and teaching strategies and knowledge on implementing best practices to enhance students learning process.

2) Knowledge in subject:

As leaders might not be able to gain subject knowledge for different subjects, other teachers can help leaders to design professional development concerning subject knowledge

3) General Educational knowledge

Leaders need to know general aspects of teaching, teaching strategies, areas of understanding and misunderstanding when teaching in classroom is considered. This will help professional designers and leaders to point out common issues with teachers for improvements and development.

4) Knowledge on strategies

Knowledge on strategies on how to implement curriculum effectively and using different modern techniques as this will help teachers to drive educational systems toward outcomes and reforms needed.

5) Comprehensive knowledge of educational system requirements from teachers

If leaders are aware of these requirements, this will help conduct pre-service training form new teachers in schools which will help them create a better understanding of techniques, teaching strategies and system outcomes.

Educators believe that teachers learn how to be teachers through training and enrollment in different professional development aspects for different purposes. While

it was assumed that training teachers at the level of pre-service is the only training that teachers will receive during their career life, new educational systems consider that pre-service training is the very first step in developing teachers. Pre- service training is taking place in universities for teachers who need extra information on teaching and its strategies, this course might take place and an extra course offered by teachers with intention to start their teaching career (Van, 2001).

For leaders, gaining enough knowledge to plan, ways to implement and the needed assessment of professional development is a learned skill where developers can learn through designing many professional development programs and study more about professional development with all the aspects surrounding the creation of professional development. Leaders can receive needed help from school administrators, teachers, students and might extend to parents to create successful professional development. Though researchers provide plenty of resources for educators to design professional development, yet there is always an area left for designers to cover using the environment around and schools and system status and requirements, where known standards can be modified accordingly.

In order for a professional development to produce their outcomes, time factor plays an important role, as district should allocate enough time for teachers to gain the maximum benefits from training they receive. When professional development is taken as ongoing procedure that is needed to be applied daily over different time intervals, then educators expect effective outcomes of PD.

Most schools and systems don't grant enough time for professional development to deliver all details and outcomes as planned, where teachers need to extend their working hours or to attend school during summer time to be able to attend and engage in their professional development.

Countries tried to solve this problem in diverse methods, as in some systems, teachers with less load are to be involved more in planning for professional development and to attend more sessions (Hart, 2003).

Funding professional development is another factor where designers need to look at when suggesting professional development for teachers, as funding to conduct professional development is usually low compared to other areas. In some cases when schools suffer from high expenses, funds for professional development is the first element to be cancelled. School should behave to solve this obstacle in different ways, as assigning teachers with good and recognizable skills to conduct required professional development under the supervision of school supervisors.

Birman (2000) cleared other ways to fund professional development as in some cases, schools can get professional development funded by other organizations like universities or to create a group of different persons as teachers, students, supervisors and parents to decide on type and title of professional development to be considered and to drop others to reduces expenses at the end.

Suggestion to keep costs low can be many, an example to that can be working with a determined number of teachers and send them to external development professionals

to acquire knowledge and to express this knowledge to others through internal professional development in schools. Then, in this case, schools don't need to allocate yearly budget for external trainers whenever certain professional development titles are highlighted.

Other choices, which usually school leaders will be looking at firstly is to look for cheaper contracts to deliver the professional development content.

Developed countries unify type of professional development needed to be delivered during the year in all schools which allows all school to welcome PD and support the occurrence of these professional development in their district.

Finally, schools need to equip their teachers with minimum training on using technology as professional development are found to be easily delivered in school equipped with technology. Using technology can help professional development presenters to save their time while delivering content of professional development. Computers are basic needs in professional development as it simplifies facts and content of professional development, while some other schools prepare their classroom with computers don't train teachers on using them to implement their professional development. Since technology knowledge is a basic skill nowadays, educational systems need to adopt the using of technology in their classes and lessons (Schlager,2003).

IX.   Teachers' Attitude Towards PD

Teachers concerns against professional development are recognized as the gap between professional development theoretical outcomes and the actual ones. When these gaps are studied to be considered and broadly looked at, we expect more effective and well planned professional development (Borko,2004).

Many teachers showed negative attitude against professional development as they consider professional development as a useful source of information but not connected to their curriculum or the delivery of curriculum as it can be done without attending professional development courses. This factor can be eliminated or reduced only when school stakeholders review their professional development content and conditions when professional development were designed.

Other teachers see that professional development presents general information that can be found from different resources, so attending professional development will not be with valuable extra knowledge to what they can gain by themselves (Borko,2004)

Other teachers see that PD is truly seen as a source of new skills and strategies, but curricula are not designed to consider these ways as essential factors to deliver the curriculum, so professional development should be allocated by curriculum supervisors and as a part of their curriculum.

Teacher receiving professional development see presenters or facilitators as a source of valuable knowledge but when teachers are pushed to take part of professional

development where facilitators are not well prepared or has less knowledge than expected, teachers will acquire less knowledge and will have low perceived credibility towards presenters which will reflect at the end of the level of teachers' engagement and participation.

On the other hand, teachers considered the time when professional development is constructed as an important factor to give opportunity to teachers to gain maximum knowledge from professional development. Little (1993) defined different resources such as optimal times during the academic year, as providing professional development before the start of the year can give enough time for teachers to discuss and learn more about the content of the professional development.

Educators consider teachers as driving forces in any educational system, which gives a new opportunity for schools' leaders to use their teachers' knowledge and their experience to build and construct useful professional development with legit targets. Teachers can provide professional development designers with main areas to be considered again or developed to align curriculum with PD outcomes. Here is where educators can minimize the difference between theoretical requirements of PD implementations and the actual ones.

The role of schools' leaders is to build the bridge that connects reality to theoretical rules while designing, developing and implementation of professional development, and this is supposed to enhance teachers; attitude and motivation.

X.   Evaluation of PD

One of the steps and protocols that schools should follow post the conduction of professional development is to evaluate professional development versus its overcome general to avoid pitfalls in the future, since professional development is a continuous series of actions (Guskey, 2002).

Evaluation of a professional development is an investigation to know whether professional development gave its results to its audience and whether this professional development approach is worth to continue offering. This evaluation is usually done through a systematic procedure, that includes data analysis to clarify and point out the main areas that need improvement, followed by recommendations or suggestions.

Evaluating professional development has changed over time in the same way that professional development conduction has evolved.

Evaluation of professional development examines many fields which are supposed to be considered as the desired outcomes, including different levels and fields (Guskey,2000):

1- **Participant engagements during professional development**

Parameters which can be measured are questions to address different areas such as the activities presented, questions asked and level of information teachers receive. This part might extend to further areas of investigation like questions addressing situation of the place and service provided (room temperature, food and drinks).

Answers to these questions are usually collected through questionnaires' distribution at the end of sessions. Questions for this part are usually open-ended questions for some parts and rating scale items for others. Researchers can use participants' feedback for further improvements in coming days and other professional development activities. Some example of the questions that might be asked are:

- Was the material provided enough to acquire the knowledge and apply in classrooms?

- Was information provided new to their experience?

2- Participants' gained knowledge

This part investigates the amount and the level of knowledge participants gained after participating in professional development. In order for researchers to collect data regarding this part, goals of professional development should be determined before starting the sessions, then teachers will be asked to reflect on the level of knowledge they found aligned with professional development goal, as previously introduced. Reflections from participants can be collected using different methods as written feedback or written assessment. An examples of the question that might be asked:

- Can teachers drive solution for different weakness areas they might face in classrooms?

3- Level of support offered by organization

Organizations providing adequate support to educators to implement their knowledge from professional development helps to add a higher level of success to the effect of professional development on the educational system. As in some cases, where educators gained enough knowledge and practices with effective plans and ready for implementation in classroom, but schools policies and regulations do not help educators. In this case, failure of professional development to achieve its outcomes is not referred to educators but to the system itself.

Collecting data from this section requires questions related to school facilities, policies and existing educational systems, in addition to extra data concerning different aspects as students results, school meetings and recommendations, and analyzing schools' policies. An examples of the question that might be asked:

- Were activities provided enough to translate the targeted experience?
- Did participant receive enough follow up to enhance their improvement?

4- Type of knowledge participants received

Questions for this part will examine the nature of knowledge gained during professional development and whether the knowledge matches the requirements of the educational systems and can be implemented in for improvements. Answers might be collected by interviews with teachers or through questionnaire. Information from this section will be used for a better delivery of professional development with modified goals, raised by teachers or participants.

5- Effect of professional development on students' outcomes and results

This part can be considered at a later stage after conducting professional development, as teachers need to implement what they learned in their classrooms and measure the benefits of new techniques on their students' level. Data from this section is a source of improving strategies while presenting professional development.

Documents collected post the evaluation are the main concerns after each session and are expected to contain both good and bad reviews regarding professional development. Educators consider this evidence for improvements in professional development to be conducted as more structured one, considering that each part of the evaluation focuses on a certain side when designing a professional development.

Chapter 3. Methodology

I.   **Research Approach**

There is a clear difference between quantitative and qualitative methods where researchers should understand the main difference between them to serve a better understanding of the variables and the results generated (Mertens, 2014).

One of the differences is the number of variables and cases included in the study. Quantitative analysis depends on a high number of cases and few variables while qualitative analysis depends on less cases and many variables.

Types of questions differ also between these two types. As for qualitative analysis, open ended questions or detailed answers are required while it is not the case in quantitate analysis. Other difference could be presented as reality, where in qualitative analysis reality is seen and constructed by both researcher and participant while reality and final conclusions are only related to participant beliefs (Bryman, 2006).

Results of this study will be through the quantitative method to determine major perceptions of teachers toward professional development within effective implementation of curriculum in schools and to relate these results to teachers' resistance to changes through training during school years.

This study focuses on the importance of a change toward teaching practices and its effect on students' achievements. This is why the research needed to reach a higher number of participants than that which can be reached by qualitative research to be able

to compare the highest number of attained participants' opinions. Moreover, when it comes to PD, there are several factors and variables that need to be taken into consideration. Within this research study, questions relating to teachers' perceptions, schools' facilities, the educational system's environment and many more were discussed to be able to reach optimal results through well comprehended inputs. Moreover, the study took place to cover the Dubai region of the United Arab Emirates, which is not considered to be geographically small. One on one interactions with such a high number of participants was tough due to the strict time constraints that the researcher has faced, leading to the ideal data collection method to the quantitative one because it needs less personal interaction with the participants than the qualitative one.

II.   Data Collection

1.   Method

Teacher's attitude and experiences with professional developed were measure through the utilization of Teachers and Learning International Survey (TALIS), developed by the OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), which is a forum of 34 governments and 70 non-member economies work together to promote prosperity and growth on several aspects.

TALIS is developed to measure aspects of effective teaching and the skills of teachers to end up with high outcomes in students' development. TALIS has been developed to provide analysis on the policies of several countries on the matter of teachers;

professional development so that they can amend their policies accordingly (add reference of TALIS 2018 survey).

Two sections of the survey were used; "The Background Information" Section and the "professional Development" Section (**Appendix A: Questionnaire**)

The average time to complete this survey was between 15 and 20 minutes.

Verbal directions have been given to teachers, explaining the procedure of filling the survey. Teachers were guaranteed that full autonomous responding and confidentiality were applied. Over the process, the teachers were notified that they can withdraw from filling the survey at any time, if they find any reasons keeping them from doing so.

Post to the completion of the survey and the analysis of its results, the research is to be published through BUid's platforms.

2.   Site

Teachers from all around Dubai were asked to take part of this survey. This research received high collaboration for the teachers asked to participate. With the intention of trying to achieve high efficiency with truthful and defined responses, I briefly clarified to all respondents that post the completion of this survey, and through their appreciated input, this will contribute to the research on the area of teachers' professional development in Dubai, which will indirectly rely their views and attitudes to their responsible.

3.   Population

A "population" was defined by Kenney and Keeping (1962) as "a finite and actually existing group of objects which, although possibly large, can be enumerated in theory".

As per the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (2011) of the Government of Dubai, the number of schools in Dubai totaled to be 227, ranging from public to private schools. On the other hand, teachers totaled to be 12,250, having knowledge of various classes from kindergarten up until grade 12.

To achieve the objectives of this research, our sample has been drawn out specifically from this population of teachers, working in Dubai, without specifying if they work in private or public schools or the level of classes they teach.

4.   Samples

Sampling is the process, act or technique of selecting a suitable sample of a population aiming at defining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Mugo, 2002). Its purpose is to conclude about populations, from smaller number of participants, while utilizing inferential statistics. It is usually done aiming at achieving higher economic efficiency, in addition to being time efficient (Mugo, 2002).

To determine this study's sample, the 2 factors that have been taken into consideration are the type of profession of the participants (it being a teacher) and the geographic presence of those individuals (residing and working in Dubai, UAE).

The sample consisted of 51 individuals of the research's target population.

III.   Data Analysis

For the purpose of analyzing the data input for constructive conclusions, the researcher has focused on separately observing all combined answers before generalizing the view to reach all data.

Since this research mainly follows an exploratory approach, diverse sorts of analytical practices were exercised to turn findings into conclusions. Data outcomes of the questionnaires was inspected by utilizing graphs and tables, for the researcher to be able to underline the main results.

After that, in the conclusion phase, information of previous research and theories from the literature review were compared to see how the findings of this dissertation vary from what is already available.

To be more precise, data outcomes of questionnaires was transferred into Microsoft Excel sheets, where total answers were shown and averages were calculated. For this purpose, tables covering raw data were transformed into charts and graphs to get the main generic insights on their content.

IV.   Reliability and Validity of the Study

No matter what the nature of a research is, the research needs to be defensible, credible and valid, and this includes quantitative research. In quantitative research, "validity" can be also referred to as "legitimation". The main reason behind conducting a

quantitative research is to be able to make conclusions and interpretations out of data, known as meta-inferences, as per Sullivan and Sweeter (2009).

Knowing that the researcher is a teacher, and following the standards that teachers rely on within their daily activities, the researcher has maintained impartiality to remain unbiassed throughout the whole process. However, the researcher being a teacher has had a positive impact on the data collection phase, which has made it easier to conduct communication with the target population in general, and the sample in specific. Consequently, this individual communication that took place between the researcher and the target population of the study has significantly contributed to the validity and truthfulness of the research.

When it comes to reliability, Zohrabi (2013) stressed on the importance of achieving comparable outcomes. Having the questionnaires outcome with data that is structured in a professional way that allows the researcher or readers of the research to clearly view the answers and understand them is a main contributor to the reliability of the researcher. On top of that, the way that data collection was done on a personal level is also considered another factor to increase the reliability of the data.

Since this has been the method followed by the researcher, the researcher is also not considered to be violating any laws of utilizing and gaining illegal access of knowledge.

V.   Ethical consideration

The main points that everyone agrees on when considering ethics are the guidelines that set right and wrong acts apart. Accordingly, Resnik (2015) considered that the standard that should be adopted by everyone is as follows: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". In the case of this research, respondents' opinions and thoughts are a sacred matter that should be kept fully confidential and only usd upon their consent and approval.

Thus, before any of the respondents were asked to participate with filling their opinions, the researcher assured them that full confidentiality will be practices while dealing with their information, whether it was of their personal information or any professional information relevant to the schools they work at.

In order for the researcher to be able to do that, the researcher explained that to be able to guarantee the data's security and the participants' identities, the questionnaires will not require any information of identification, whether it was on personal data or on professional one.

For participants to be fully comfortable throughout the entire process, the researcher has stressed on the importance of the study and constantly reminded the population sample of what their contribution will be and how appreciated it is.

Chapter 4. Research Findings and Analysis

Nowadays, with the introduction of technology and the development of the external environment surrounding the educational system, students and teacher, education has been witnessing major changes that require all the stakeholders of the educational system to adapt and change. Schools in Dubai usually try to adapt to those changes with the absence of clear academic research on the matter.

The purpose of this research is to study teachers' perception on the concept of professional development to see how together, teachers, the main stakeholders of the industry, and education's key players, like ministers and principals of schools, can make positive impacts on desired outcomes. Just like everything else, professional development mechanisms for teachers need constant enhancements to meet the modern requirements of life and the next section intends to specify what these perceptions are, to end up with a summary that related to answers to the proposed research questions.

The three research questions, as shown previously, are as follows:

RQ1. What should schools consider while designing effective professional development programs in Dubai?

RQ2. What are barriers, faced by educators in Dubai, which reduce the effect of professional development on teachers?

RQ3.   To what extent should teachers, at schools in Dubai, be involved in designing a professional development?

I.   Research Findings

The questionnaire has been divided into 2 sections, the first trying to understand about the background of the respondent, who they really are and it included demographic information, while the second focused primarily on teachers' professional development, which directly relates to their professional life so that they can contribute to findings and conclusions of this research.

1. Background Information

As a start, while trying to understand how female teachers' perceptions differ from those of male teachers when it comes to professional development, we ended up having a 100% of respondents to be female teachers, as the following chart reveals.
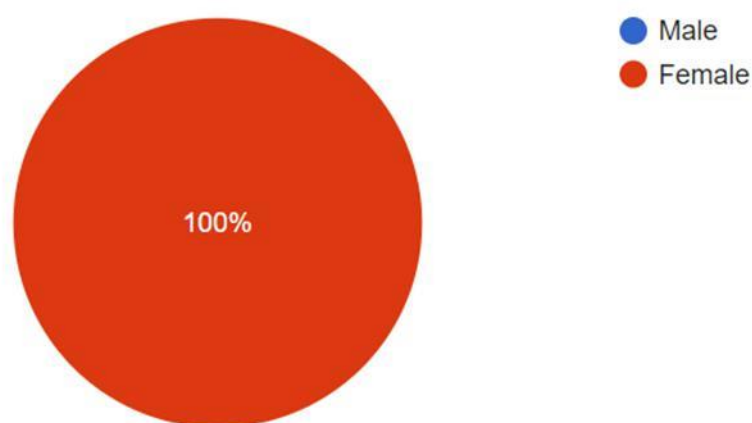

Figure 2: Questionnaire - What is your gender?

Moreover, out of the 51 questionnaires that have been distributed and returned to the researcher, only 2% of the respondents were under 25 of age, 7.8% belonged to the age

bracket between 25 and 29, 52.9% were between 30 and 39 of age, 31.4% belonged

to the age bracket ranging between 40 and 49 years and finally 5.9% were between 50

and 59 years of age. None of the survey respondents aged above 60 years of age.

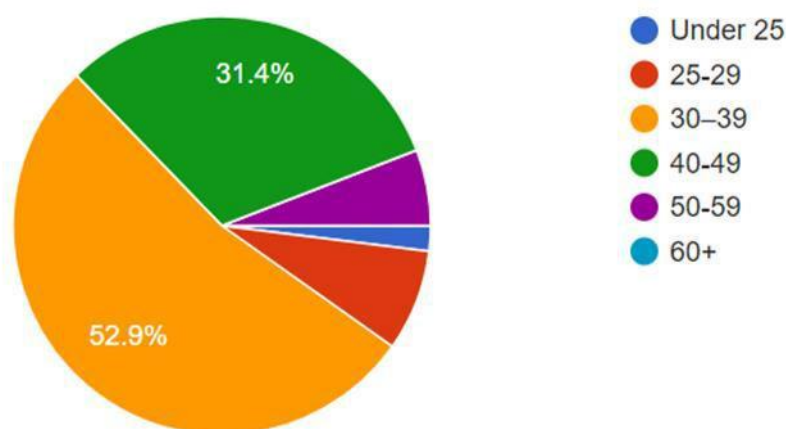Thus, making the mean age of our respondents to be 38.5 years of age.

Figure 3: Questionnaire - How old are you?

Moving forward, when it comes to the employment status of the participating

teachers, 94.1% belonged to the class of full time teachers while 5.9% were part-

timers, with 3.9% having less than 50% of full time hours and 2% having more than

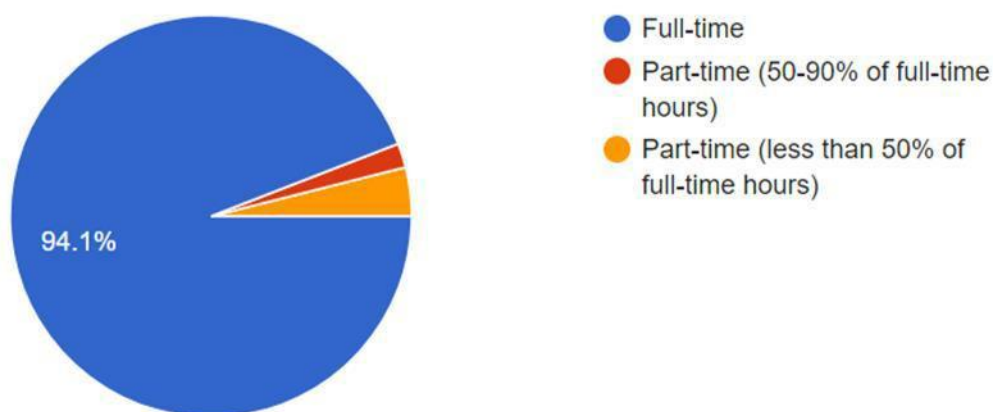50% of full time hours, as shown in the below pie chart.

Figure 4: Questionnaire - What is your employment status?

For their educational achievement, none of the survey respondents were only high school graduates, 54.9% were holders of bachelor's degrees while 45.1% were holders of graduate degrees or higher, as per the below.
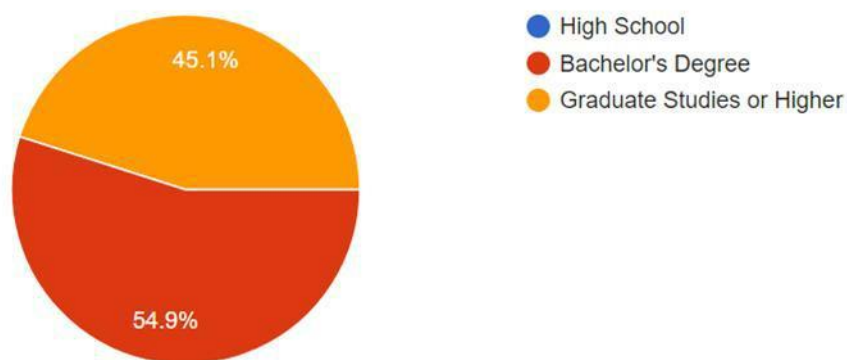

Figure 5: Questionnaire - What is highest level of formal education that you have

completed?

Last but not least of the background information section concerning the experience of the participating teachers in this questionnaire, the least range that was included within this study was that of teachers having between 3 to 5 years of professional experience

to total to be 15.7% of the respondents. 17.6% of the respondents had between 6 and 10 years of professional experience. 27.5% had between 11 and 15 years of teaching experience and 23.5% had between 16 and 20 years of teaching experience and 15.7% had more than 20 years of experience as teachers, as shown below, making the average years of experience of our survey respondents to be 14.54 years.
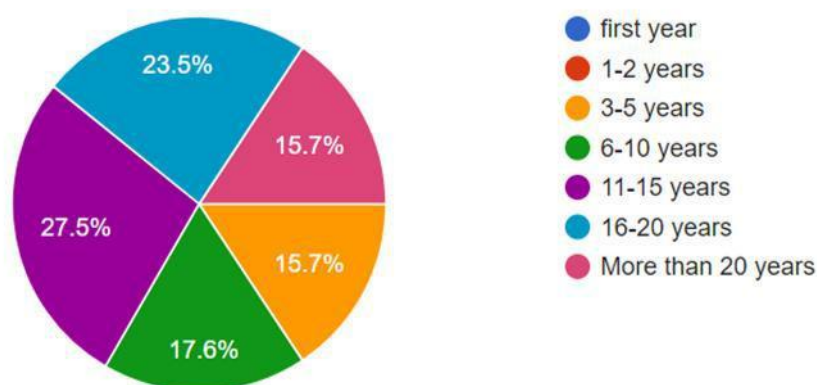

Figure 6: Questionnaire - How long have you been working as a teacher?

This is for the research findings relevant to the background information of the questionnaire respondents. Following to this section will be the research findings relevant to the facts and perspectives of teachers' professional development.

   2. *Teachers' Professional Development*

The first question within this section was to try to understand the frequency of teachers' attendance in Dubai for professional development programs. The following question showed how much the research participants actually attended on the level of several aspects of professional development programs. The results were as shown in the table below.

Type of PD Program	Yes	No
Courses/workshops (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics)	82%	18%
Education conferences or seminars (where teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss educational problems)	59%	41%
Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)	35%	65%
Observation visits to other schools	22%	78%
Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers	61%	39%
Individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you professionally	51%	49%
Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal school arrangement	76%	24%
Average	55%	45%

Figure 7: Questionnaire - During the last 18 months, did you participate in any of the following kinds of professional development activities?

Following to that, and to see how those teachers' motivations were while participating in such professional development programs in case they did participate, and what their motivations would be in case they participate in the future, they were asked about their perception of the importance of various Professional Development Programs and what

impact they see that might apply if they took part and devoted their time to such tasks.

The following resulted to be the answers of this question.

Type of PD Program	Not Applicable	Small Impact	Medium Impact	Large Impact
Courses/workshops (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics)	6%	29%	31%	33%
Education conferences or seminars (where teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss educational problems)	14%	22%	41%	24%
Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)	22%	16%	29%	33%
Observation visits to other schools	25%	18%	33%	24%
Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers	10%	27%	27%	35%
Individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you professionally	18%	24%	29%	29%
Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal school arrangement	10%	22%	39%	29%

Figure 8: Questionnaire - What impact do you think would such professional

development activities have?

In addition, trying to understand teachers' motivation toward actually attending PD programs and how much schools support their faculty to attend such programs, teachers were asked about the total number of days in the past 18 months where they participated in PD Programs. The average number of days for this research's participants was approximately 21 days. The figure below shows the detailed findings pertaining this question.
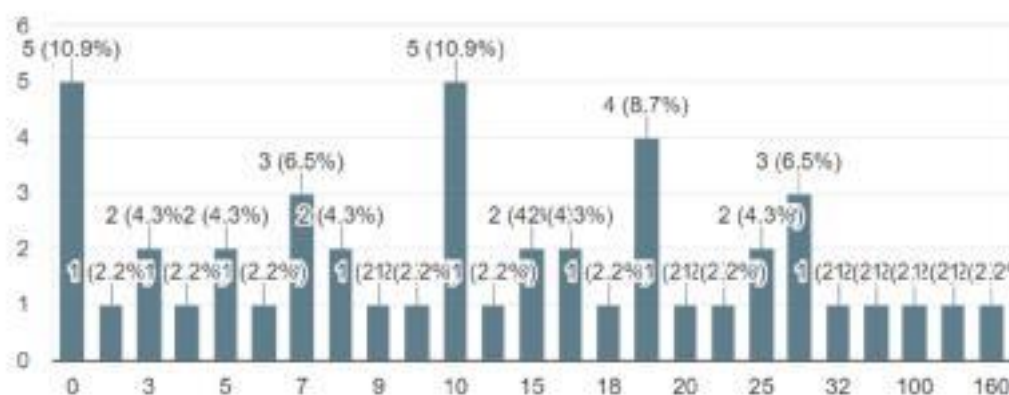

Figure 9: Questionnaire - In all, how many days of professional development did you

attend during the last 18 months?

As for the costs associated with such professional development programs, approximately 78% of teachers who attended development programs did not have to bear any expenses relevant to them. The highest amount that one teacher had to pay when it came to the expenses of PD programs was USD 50,000 for all of the programs attended within the past 18 months, as shown in the below figure.
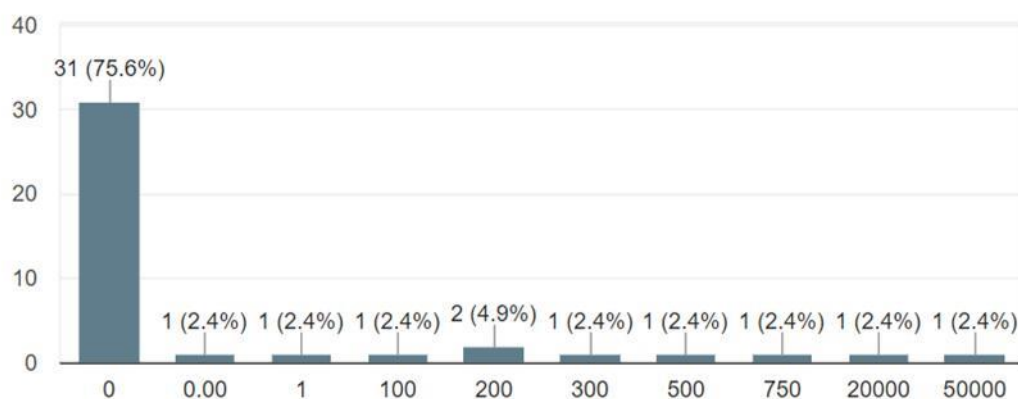
Figure 10: Questionnaire - For the professional development in which you participated in the last 18 months, how much did you personally have to pay for? (In $ USD)

As for the allocated time to take part of these programs, 16.3% of the participants claimed that no time has been allocated from their school's administration, within working hours, for them to devote, while 27.9% claimed that their schools took this into consideration while preparing the yearly schedule. However, 55.8% of the participants stated that the professional development programs that they participated in did not take place within their school's working hour. A summary of the previously mentioned is demonstrated below.
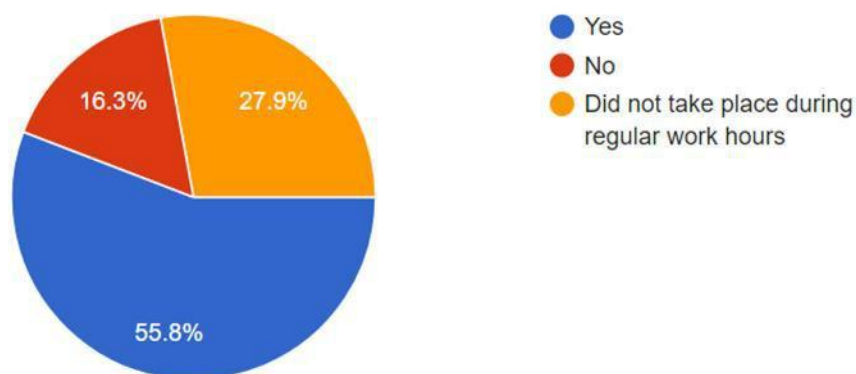
Figure 11: Questionnaire - For the professional development in which you participated in the last 18 months, did you receive scheduled time for undertaking the professional development that took place during regular work hours?

Following this, trying to tackle the issue of informal professional development, and as stated in TALIS, participants were asked to show facts regarding their participation in informal professional development programs in addition to their opinion on how such programs would impact a teacher's professional life. The following show results of this question.

Type of PD Program	Yes	No	Impact			
			Not Applicable	A Small Impact	A Medium Impact	A Large Impact
Reading professional literature (e.g. journals, evidence-based papers, thesis papers)	33%	67%	29%	20%	43%	8%
Engaging in informal dialogue with your colleagues on how to improve your teaching	73%	27%	14%	14%	47%	25%

Figure 12: Questionnaire - Thinking about less formal professional development, during the last 18 months, did you participate in any of the following activities, and what was the impact of these activities on your development as a teacher?

Moreover, teachers were asked about several PD programs to view how much they see their selves lacking such skills. The following table summarized the findings.

Type of PD Program	No Need at All	Moderate to Low Level of Need	High Level of Need
Content and performance standards in my main subject field(s)	23%	62%	16%
Student assessment practices	18%	51%	31%
Classroom management	39%	35%	25%
Knowledge and understanding of my main subject field(s)	44%	38%	18%
Knowledge and understanding of instructional practices (knowledge mediation) in my main subject field(s)	29%	49%	22%
ICT skills for teaching	27%	35%	37%
Teaching students with special learning needs	14%	31%	55%
Student discipline and behaviour problems	29%	45%	25%
School management and administration	27%	49%	24%
Teaching in a multicultural setting	31%	53%	16%
Student counselling	25%	53%	22%

Figure 13: Questionnaire - Thinking of your own professional development needs, please indicate the extent to which you have such needs in each of the areas listed.

Last but not least, participants were asked if they wanted to participate more during the past 18 months with PD programs and about the reasons that prevented the ones who did from doing so. The following figures summarize the findings.
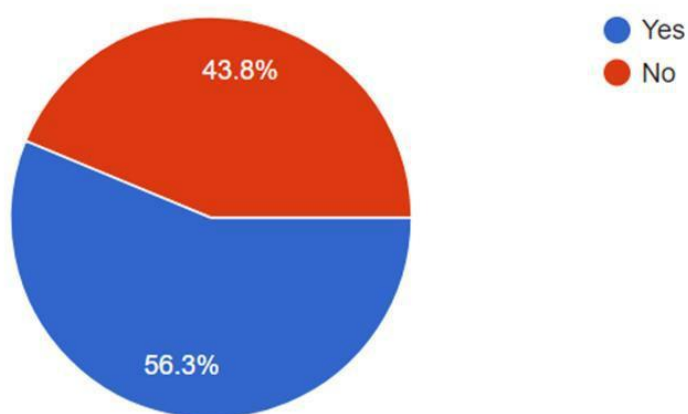

Figure 14: Questionnaire - In the last 18 months, did you want to participate in more professional development than you did?
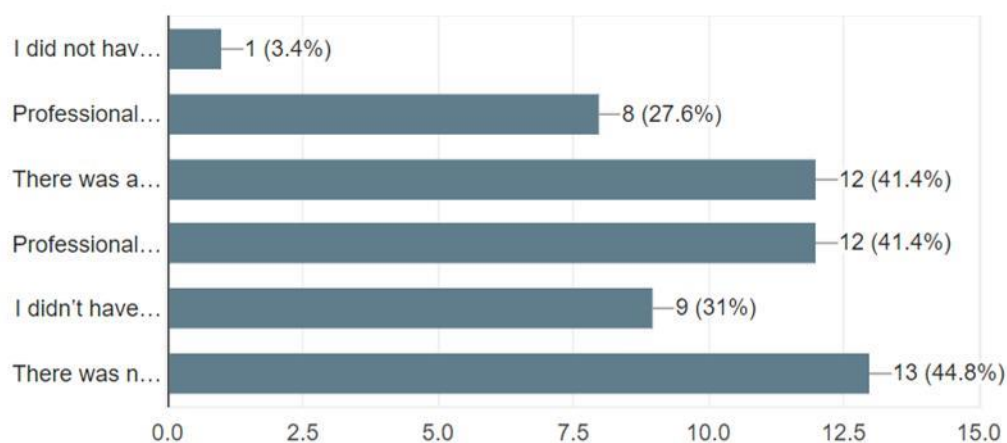

Figure 15: Questionnaire - If 'Yes' in the previous question, which of the following reasons best explain what prevented you from participating in more professional development than you did?

II.   Analysis of Research Findings

On the level of demographics, and taking into consideration the average age of the survey participants, the fact that the mean age was 38.5 years shows that on average, the research participants are experienced individuals, not only in their professional mid-career life, but also in their personal life where they have reached a point of being able to realize their life's goals and objectives leading them to be able to make rational decisions on various levels. Thus, making their answers to the following questions related to professional development more reliable and credible. On top of that, in this age, individuals usually belong to the age of marriage in the eastern culture, where it is the age of having children as well, thus making them understand children's requirements for being comfortable with education and with understanding the required material by the curriculum. The motive that emphasizes this assumption is also the fact that a 100% of the survey respondents were females and would sympathize with their students, considering them to be their own children and thus putting more efforts in delivering what they really need. What also supports the claim that the survey respondents are individuals who are capable of taking rational decisions is the facts that the experience of this research's respondents averaged to be 14.54 years. This reveals the fact that individuals with such an extended experience with a single domain will definitely have the capacity to recognize a field's requirements to be able to stay involved in it for this period of time.

Moving forward, and taking into consideration the employment status of our respondents, having a 94.1% of them being full timers shows that they are truly

engaged in their career life and might be willing to give more of their efforts to boost their positions within their field. This claim can be supported by the fact that almost half of the respondents did not settle having bachelor's degrees only but continued their educational journey to complete their graduate education, disregarding whether it was a master's degree or their PhD.

Moving forward to professional development matters, on average, 55% of the teachers did receive a wide variety of the options of professional development programs suggested within the survey during the past 18 months while 45% have not. This acts as a bad indicator towards the support of the educational system in Dubai towards diversity in professional development programs for teachers. Results also show that the majority of the teachers have attended courses and workshops summing up to be 82% of the sample. Also, 59% attended educational seminars and conferences, 61% participated in a network of teachers where they could discuss educational matters. Only 35% did participate in qualification programs and 22% took part of educational visits to other schools. Results show that mostly, the professional development programs that the teachers of our sample participated in were seasonal ones and not continuous processes as suggested and recommended in the literature.

When it comes to the perception of teachers to how professional development programs could affect their performance and competence, a significant percentage for the variety of professional development programs suggested went to being not applicable to their professional career or to have a small impact on it. This acts as an indicator to teachers not having the right mind set of believing in professional development and it shows

demotivation towards this matter. Moreover, only 5 participants devoted more than 30 days of their time within the past 18 months for their professional development which makes it an average of approximately one and a half days per month as a cap. This also shows that not enough time is allocated to such a critical issue. However, the good thing is that 75.6% of the participants did not have to incur any costs pertaining their participation in professional development programs. This shows the support of the educational system towards teachers' welfare. However, this might not be enough. Another important issue to address is that 55.8% of the teachers who participated in professional development programs did it throughout the working hours which indicated the educational system's support towards such programs and its integration within the curriculum, in addition to possibly making it a compulsory work task to tackle.

On the level of informal professional development, there was a negative attitude towards academic professional development as 67% of the sample did not any research works, such as journal articles, evidence-based papers and thesis papers, within the past 18 months, and only 8% thought of it as having a significant impact on their career life. However, 73% did participate in informal conversations regarding contemporary teaching practices and modern issues to result with having improvement points within their techniques. This shows tendencies towards social informal professional development rather than taking the academic orientation of professional development in teaching practices. This can be taken positively and negatively at the same time since teachers are leaning more towards practical, realistic and applied approaches rather

than relying on theories. However, they are not being updates on the industry's latest findings not only on teaching practices but also on several related topics, such as the psychology of students for instance. To add to that, when shown several types of professional development programs, such as Student assessment practices, classroom management, Knowledge and understanding of their main subject field(s) or knowledge and understanding of instructional practices (knowledge mediation), the majority of the teachers claimed that participating in such programs would be waste of time by stating that they are of no need at all or are of low to medium importance.

Last but not least, a significant number of the participants totaling to be 43.8% did not wish to have taken part of more professional development programs within the past 18 months while 56.3% did. This takes us back to the point that motivation is not a clear aspect of teachers' view towards professional development programs. This is either because no enough support is being given to them by their responsibles, no enough informative sessions and awareness campaigns are being devoted to clarifying the importance of professional development, life's obstacles and requirements are keeping teachers from focusing on this matter or because they simply don't want to develop.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

I.   Summary of the Study

The purpose behind conducting this study was to attain more research perspective on the area of teachers' professional development in Dubai and its effect of the curriculums' implementation. Additionally, was truly being investigated in this thesis is the requirements that need to be considered by schools while designing effective professional development programs, in the region of Dubai, what are barriers, while implementing those programs, that will reduce the effect of professional development on teachers and the extent to extent which leaders should involve teachers in designing professional development programs.

To reach those outcomes effectively, TALIS questionnaire, developed by the OECD, has been utilized while taking into consideration the professional development part targeting teachers to study their perspective on the matter.

Several results have aroused throughout the process that will definitely affect how professional development is tackled in Dubai and how curricula are structured and designed.

II.   Key Findings

The research has brought out several theories post to the analysis of its results.

1. *Teachers Attitudes:*

    a. As a start, regarding the motivation of the teachers, this study has deduced

        that teachers in Dubai generally demotivated regarding professional

development programs since they did not show having the right mindset on this regard and did not reveal their beliefs in its effects and impact over the educational system in Dubai.

b. When asked whether if they would like to participate in professional development programs in the near future, some of them clearly stated that they believe that it is a waste of time, by stating that there is no need for them or low need.

c. However, this study showed that teachers are more willing to take part of informal social professional development activities instead of those with academic background, where they can, more or less, benefit from each other's experiences, leading to them benefiting of real life examples and scenarios instead of theories.

d. This can prevent them from obtaining up to date information on the industry's advancements and innovations on a diversity of matters.

2. *Educational System's Support*

a. Relatively low support to the diversity in professional development programs in Dubai has been shown by the industry towards the main actors within the educational system, the teachers.

b. The educational system supports teachers to attend professional development activities and programs through paying for their fees, thus relieving teachers from the burden of handling the expenses associated with such programs.

  c. However, professional development has seen a seasonal approach instead of a continuous one.

  d. On top of that, no enough time has been allocated to professional development programs by the educational system. However, 55.8% of the teachers who participated in professional development programs did it throughout the working hours which indicated the educational system's support towards such programs and its integration within the curriculum, in addition to possibly making it a compulsory work task to tackle.

3. *Reasons behind the problems faced by professional development in Dubai:*

  a. No enough support is being given to them by the schools' responsibles, such as principals and coordinators.

  b. No enough informative sessions and awareness campaigns are being devoted to clarifying the importance of professional development.

  c. Life's obstacles and requirements are keeping teachers from focusing on this matter

  d. Teachers simply not having the right mindset of development and learning new things

Thus, the answers to the research questions of this chapter, stated in chapter, are as follows:

 RQ1. What should schools consider while designing effective professional development programs in Dubai?

Thus, the 3 factors that need to be taken into consideration are as previously mentioned within the key findings of the research study, which are:

- Teachers attitudes towards professional development

- The educational system's support towards professional development

- Reasons behind the problems faced by professional development in Dubai

RQ2.   What are barriers, faced by educators in Dubai, which reduce the effect of professional development on teachers?

- Negative teachers' attitudes

- Teachers not having the right mindset of development

- Mot enough support by the educational system towards professional development and now enough awareness campaigns devoted to this matter.

RQ3.   To what extent should teachers, at schools in Dubai, be involved in designing a professional development?

- This question needs further research in order to be answered since teachers did not get enough awareness on professional development. However, logically speaking, teachers should be involved only after the right mindset has been implemented within their approach.

III.   Recommendations

Several recommendations have evolved post to the analysis of the research findings.

As a start, special focus needs to be addressed by the ministry of education in the United Arab Emirates towards awareness campaigns targeting the establishment of the right

development mind set for teachers to change their perception of professional development. Moreover, schools need to tackle professional development in a different way where they add it as a requirement of the job tasks, thus turning it from a seasonal activity into a continuous one that accompanies teachers within their career journey.

IV.   Limitations

Limitations of the study are as follows:

4. Responses for this study was based on the honesty and accuracy of participants in this study.

5. Responses were collected form some teachers (willingly participated) to describe how their implementation of curriculum can be improved by professional development.

6. Data was collected from teachers in some schools in Dubai and not from all private schools in Dubai.

7. Questions used in survey did not reflect all factors affecting the use of professional development to enhance teachers' implementing of curriculum they teach.

8. Some teachers might be unable to translate their beliefs clearly.

9. This study was conducted over a certain period of time, so teachers' responses might change by time as they develop their teaching abilities and skills.

10. Teachers responses reflect their attitude toward PD conducted in their schools under conditions set by school which might be not the ideal conditions when PDs are conducted.

11. Teachers who took part of the survey are all females, which eliminates the perspectives of male teachers.

12. Answers received through the survey, intended to tackle all research questions, were not enough to address all points associated with the topic.

V.   Scope for Further Study

Several topics, which stood in the full and absolute effectiveness of this thesis paper, have been defined for recommendation of future research:

1- More research needs to be done on the extent to which teachers are motivated or demotivated regarding professional development in Dubai, in a way that can be quantifies, to be able to determine the associated risks and efforts in order to prevent the negative impact of not following such programs and specify the extent of the needed actions.

2- Conduct more research tackling a wider variety of topics pertaining professional development in a way were teachers could possibly express their beliefs more freely, most probably through qualitative research.

3- Dedicating professional interviewers, possible belonging to the field of psychology, to be able to truly study the perception of teachers and their orientations.

4- Research dedicated to the obstacles that have lead teachers in Dubai to have limited professional development passions to find the proper and optimal solutions to dealings with such problem, based on firm sources.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Background Information

These questions are about you, your education and the time you have spent in teaching. In responding to the questions, please mark the appropriate box.

1. **What is your gender?**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯   Male

   ◯   Female

2. **How old are you?**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯   Under 25

   ◯   25-29

   ◯   30–39

   ◯   40-49

   ◯   50-59

   ◯   60+

3. **What is your employment status as a teacher?**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯   Full-time

   ◯   Part-time (50-90% of full-time hours)

   ◯   Part-time (less than 50% of full-time hours)

4. **What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯   High School

   ◯   Bachelor's Degree

   ◯   Graduate Studies or Higher

5. **How long have you been working as a teacher?**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯   first year

   ◯   1-2 years

   ◯   3-5 years

   ◯   6-10 years

   ◯   11-15 years

   ◯   16-20 years

   ◯   More than 20 years

Professional Development

In this survey, professional development is defined as activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher.
Please only consider professional development you have taken after your initial teacher training/education.

6. **During the last 18 months, did you participate in any of the following kinds of professional development activities?**
   Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
Courses/workshops (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics)	◯	◯
Education conferences or seminars (where teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss educational problems)	◯	◯
Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)	◯	◯
Observation visits to other schools	◯	◯
Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers	◯	◯
Individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you professionally	◯	◯
Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal school arrangement	◯	◯

7. **What impact do you think would such professional development activities have?**
   Mark only one oval per row.

	Not Appliccable	Small Impact	Medium Impact	Large Impact
Courses/workshops (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Education conferences or seminars (where teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss educational problems)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Qualification programme (e.g. a degree programme)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Observation visits to other schools	◯	◯	◯	◯
Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers	◯	◯	◯	◯
Individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you professionally	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal school arrangement	◯	◯	◯	◯

8. In all, how many days of professional development did you attend during the last 18 months? (If you answered '0' (zero) → Please go to question 17)

_____

9. For the professional development in which you participated in the last 18 months, how much did you personally have to pay for? (In $ USD)

_____

10. For the professional development in which you participated in the last 18 months, did you receive scheduled time for undertaking the professional development that took place during regular work hours?
Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Did not take place during regular work hours

11. For the professional development in which you participated in the last 18 months, did you receive a salary supplement for undertaking the professional development activities that took place outside regular work hours?
Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Did not take place during regular work hours

12. Thinking about less formal professional development, during the last 18 months, did you participate in any of the following activities, and what was the impact of these activities on your development as a teacher?
Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No
Reading professional literature (e.g. journals, evidence-based papers, thesis papers)	◯	◯
Engaging in informal dialogue with your colleagues on how to improve your teaching	◯	◯

13. What impact do you think would such professional development activities have?
Mark only one oval per row.

	Not Appliccable	A Small Impact	A Medium Impact	A Large Impact
Reading professional literature (e.g. journals, evidence-based papers, thesis papers)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Engaging in informal dialogue with your colleagues on how to improve your teaching	◯	◯	◯	◯

14. Thinking of your own professional development needs, please indicate the extent to which you have such needs in each of the areas listed.

Mark only one oval per row.

	No need at all	Moderate Low level of level of need	High level of need
Content and performance standards in my main	◯	◯	◯
subject field(s)	◯	◯	◯
Student assessment practices	◯	◯	◯
Classroom management	◯	◯	◯
Knowledge and understanding of my main subject	◯	◯	◯
field(s)	◯	◯	◯
Knowledge and understanding of instructional practices (knowledge mediation) in my main subject field(s)	◯	◯	◯
ICT skills for teaching	◯	◯	◯
Teaching students with special learning needs	◯	◯	◯
Student discipline and behaviour problems	◯	◯	◯
School management and administration	◯	◯	◯
Teaching in a multicultural setting	◯	◯	◯
Student counselling	◯	◯	◯

15. In the last 18 months, did you want to participate in more professional development than you did?

Mark only one oval.

◯ Yes

◯ No

16. If 'Yes' in the previous question, which of the following reasons best explain what prevented you from participating in more professional development than you did?

Check all that apply.

☐ I did not have the pre-requisites (e.g. qualifications, experience, seniority).

☐ Professional development was too expensive/I could not afford it.

☐ There was a lack of employer support

☐ Professional development conflicted with my work schedule.

☐ I didn't have time because of family responsibilities.

☐ There was no suitable professional development offered.

☐ Other: _____