The Challenges That Principals Face While Implementing School-Based Teacher Professional Development Programs

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Abstract—Education and training policies are developed from time to time to improve the quality and efficiency of a country's education system. The school-based teacher professional development program was introduced to the school system in 2019 with new guidelines to enhance the professional development of the teacher, who is a key stakeholder in education. Along with these guidelines, planning, organizing and implementing school-based teacher professional development programs is a major responsibility of the principal. The purpose of this study was to uncover the challenges faced by principals in the North Central Province in this process. As the sample of this study using mixed research methodology, 40 principals representing AB, 1C, 2 and 3 type schools in Anuradhapura and Polonnaru districts were selected under random sampling method. A questionnaire was used as data collection instruments and 15 statements were given from the questionnaire to uncover the problems and challenges they face in implementing school-based teacher professional development programs. The responses received for that were analyzed quantitatively using simple statistical methods using the 21 software. According to the data analysis, it is difficult to find qualified resource persons for school-based teacher professional development programs, insufficient financial allocation for the programs, lack of expected support from teachers to plan professional development programs, unwillingness of teachers to participate in programs conducted outside of school hours, professional development goals In addition to the challenges of not receiving the necessary technical guidelines from the authorities to create an established school culture, it was revealed in this study that principals face challenges in providing physical resources in the implementation of school-based teacher professional development programs. Therefore, it can be concluded that professional development programs are not quality or effective. Involvement in professional development programs and the use of the resulting training in the learning and teaching process Use as a criterion in the promotion process of teachers Increase the financial allocation given to each school to overcome the challenges of financial allocation and physical resources Planning of professional development programs at the education division level Implementation and Teacher Professional Development Centers were proposed to overcome human resource related challenges by forming a resource pool of experts consisting of University and National College of Education lecturers and other suitable external persons.

Keywords— Professional Development, Professional Development Guidelines, School-Based Teacher Development Programs, Principal Role, Education and Training Policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning process is directly impacted by teachers' professional development. According to Newton (1998), a staff development program is a deliberate process that improves the quality of student learning by identifying and addressing the unique needs of staff within the context of society as a whole. Professional development methods help one acquire a new mentality as well as a variety of skills that support the growth of one's abilities, connections, and relationships. The primary objective of professional development programs in schools is to raise standards for instruction and learning. A school makes sure that teachers have the chance to upgrade their knowledge and abilities.

Due to curricular revisions and educational reforms, there are occasionally many changes in education. As a result, instructors need to be aware of these changes and are under more pressure to maintain high standards of academic accomplishment for their pupils. To address the situation, education officials should design effective professional development programs for teachers. Teachers should receive the knowledge and skills they need through professional development programs to enhance their instruction.

The demands of their school must be understood by the principals, who must then support the implementation of fresh professional development initiatives and maintain expected improvements. There are many different requirements and desires for professional development. As a result, the principal's duties and responsibilities should include imparting the most recent information on research-based staff development, providing leadership for staff development, and acting as a change agent in the school.

The principal's role is to lead the faculty members in the direction of the institution's mission. The caliber of the instructor needs to be raised in order to uphold the standard of education as a whole. According to Baron (2008), the principal, who recognized the value of professional development, worked to advance the careers of his employees. The principal should establish programs for teachers' professional development. According to Bossi (2009), the teachers' attitudes directly affect the steps taken for their professional growth under the direction of the principal. When instructors have a bad attitude, the principal finds it difficult to

execute professional development initiatives. According to the National Education Commission's (2016) 2016 report, administrators should consult with teachers when establishing school-based teacher professional development activities. The National Education Commission suggests this because, while creating professional development programs in schools, principals fail to consider teachers' needs and attitudes.

The areas of management, personnel development, and curriculum should all fall under the purview of the principle. According to Fullan (1993), it is the role of the principals to support teachers and expand their possibilities for professional growth.

According to Brock and Grady (1997), the principal is critical to creating and maintaining a positive school climate. To that end, administrative support for learning objectives must be ongoing when instructors are at the center of learning in order to spur growth. Conflict resolution and varied models show the distinctiveness of the principal's role. When a principle lives out his values and objectives, he sends a strong message to the community. Brock and Grady (1997) have further demonstrated how leaders can affect a school's culture by choosing and promoting people with particular values, abilities, and capabilities. The principal's desired goals are strongly supported by teacher professional development, and by providing the required resources for collective professional development, the school can be guided toward the principal's goal through fostering cooperation among all parties. In a community of students, principals, and all teachers, devoted learners become lifelong learners, according to Brock and Grady's further explanation in 1997. It is evident that effective professional development initiatives promote collaboration and a positive school climate, and the principle can play a special role in establishing a high-performing institution.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this study, a survey design that is a part of the quantitative research methodology was used. From the random selection, 40 principals from the North Central Province were chosen. The Questionnaire was chosen to collect the data. Percentage and mean values were utilized to analyze data in quantitative data analysis. The final questionnaire was created based on the findings of a preliminary survey of 10 principals. This study's primary goal is to identify the difficulties principals have while putting school-based teacher professional development programs into place. As a result, the study's execution was focused on two distinct goals.

1. Identifying difficulties encountered when implementing programs for school-based teacher professional development
2. Making suggestions for the creation of teacher professional development programs centered in schools

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The school-based professional teacher development programs, which were launched in 2019 and began in 2012, were implemented across the whole Sri Lankan educational system. A manual for this is the School-Based Professional

Teacher Development Guidelines (2019). With this objective in mind, it is anticipated to be revealed what difficulties the principals encountered in carrying out the aforementioned programs in accordance with the aforementioned instruction code, the circulars, and the financial allocations made by the Ministry of Education. Questionnaires given to the sample of principals were used to gather quantitative data.

15 statements were taken from the questionnaire given to the sample of principals in order to identify the difficulties in implementing school-based teacher professional development programs. pertaining to the responses "Strongly Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree." Five possibilities were presented. The five options listed above were each given a value between 1 and 5. The Likert scale had a minimum value of 1 and a maximum score of 5. Between these two integers (5-1) is a 4-digit range. To achieve an equal mean value across the five groups, divide the range of four groups by five (4/5) 0.8 Mark 1 on the Mean: 1.80 "Strongly Disagree, 1.81 - 2.60 Disagree, 2.61 - 3.40 Neutral, 3.41 - 4.20 agree, and 4.21 - 5.00 strongly agree" were separated into five scales, and the data was analyzed in accordance with those divisions.

Any program for professional development must have resource people. Employing resource people with expertise specific to each program will increase the success of any program. 50% of principals disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed when asked if it was simple to find such qualified resource people. The sample as a whole agreed with the aforementioned statement in a 22.5% to 5% ratio. 17.5% gave a neutral response. A median value (x=2.73) was calculated based on the mean value obtained for all of the sample's replies. Despite this average response, it was discovered that it can be challenging to locate knowledgeable resource people for professional development programs.

Resources—human, material, and financial—are necessary for an activity to succeed. Building up financial resources is crucial for developing both people and physical resources. The preparation of teacher professional development programs at individual schools should be adequately funded for the principals. 65% of the sample stated that they do not receive enough financial provisions in this regard. Additionally, 2.5% vehemently disagreed with the previous assertion. As a result, it becomes clear that principals encounter financial difficulties while developing effective professional development initiatives. However, 20% of the principal sample acknowledged obtaining sufficient financial support. Students may have responded in this way because schools are appropriately funded, as funding for school-based professional development programs is proportional to the student population. 12.5% of the sample also gave neutral responses. It was also discovered that there are insufficient financial resources allocated for developing school-based professional development programs, as indicated by the mean value obtained for the total replies (x=2.50). A lack of funding makes it unlikely that school-based teacher professional development programs will be effective.

TABLE 1: Principal Responses to Challenges Faced by Principals in Implementing School-Based Teacher Professional Development Programs

Statements	1		2		3		4		5		Mean Value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Finding qualified resource persons is easy.	2	5.0	20	50.0	7	17.5	9	22.5	2	5.0	2.73
Funding for professional development programs is adequate.	1	2.5	26	65.0	5	12.5	8	20.0	-	-	2.50
Teachers are assisted in planning professional development programs.	1	2.5	21	52.5	10	25.0	6	15.0	2	5.0	2.68
Willingly participates in professional development programs conducted during school hours.	1	2.5	3	7.5	4	10.0	30	75.0	2	5.0	3.73
Actively participates in professional development programs held on weekends or after school hours.	2	5.0	10	25.0	22	55.0	6	15.0	-	-	2.80
All teachers are involved in professional development programs conducted during the summer holidays.	2	5.0	22	55.0	10	25.0	6	15.0	-	-	2.50
Teachers are easily involved in online professional development programs.	-	-	2	5.0	4	10.0	30	75.0	4	10.0	3.90
Experienced senior teachers are available to implement school-based education.	1	2.5	6	15.0	8	20.0	23	57.5	2	5.0	3.48
Assists in conducting needs surveys to select professional development programs.	1	2.5	9	22.5	13	32.5	15	37.5	2	5.0	3.20
Technical guidelines are available from the authorities to create a school culture aimed at professional development.	3	7.5	21	52.5	12	30.0	4	10.0	-	-	2.43
11. The Deputy Principal and senior teachers are supported for the professional development of teachers.	-	-	-	-	7	17.5	33	82.5	-	-	3.83
The Deputy Principal and Senior Teachers are assisted in solving the problems and practices in the school related to the learning and teaching process.	1	2.5	2	5.0	7	17.5	26	65.0	4	10.0	3.75
Teachers are assisted in designing professional development programs taking into account their prior knowledge and experience.	4	10.0	8	20.0	8	20.0	18	45.0	2	5.0	3.15
Human resources are sufficient to monitor the teaching and learning process of the teachers to ensure the quality of their teaching.	4	10.0	10	25.0	10	25.0	15	37.5	1	2.5	2.98
It is easier to acquire the physical resources needed to implement professional development programs.	6	15.0	18	45.0	16	40.0	-	-	-	-	2.25

< 1.80 - strongly disagree.   1.81-2.60 - Disagree.   2.61-3.40 -neutral.
3.41- 4.20 - Agree**.**   > 4.21 Strongly agree.

Targeted activities for teachers include school-based professional development programs for educators. For professional development programs to be successful, teachers need assistance. 52.5% of respondents who were asked if teachers are assisted in creating programs for teacher professional development replied no. Similar to that, 2.5% strongly disagreed with the creation of professional development programs. 15% of the sample agreed that professional development programs improve planning, whereas 25% disagreed, and 5% strongly agreed. The school's administrator needs to put the programs that the teachers and the teachers' union want into place. Planning such programs requires assistance from teachers. But it became clear from the sample's responses that there is no support for it. The mean response value (x=2.68) for all responses showed a neutral result. However, it is acknowledged that principals struggle with a lack of teacher support.

School-based teacher professional development programs may be used in a number of situations. To find out if principals encounter difficulties when implementing school-based teacher professional development programs, three statements were offered. First, it was determined whether teachers voluntarily took part in professional development sessions held during school hours. In the sample, 75% of people agreed, and 5% strongly agreed. It was discovered that during-school professional development activities piqued instructors' interests more than outside of them. The mean value of the overall responses (x=3.73) verified it as well. 10% of the sample reacted in a neutral manner, while 7.5% disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed with the aforementioned statement. Additionally, it was shown that a

minimum amount of respondents oppose the introduction of professional development programs during school hours since it interferes with students' ability to learn and be taught.

Programs for the professional development of teachers in schools Teachers were also questioned about their involvement in professional development activities that take place on the weekends or after school. 55% of the sample gave a neutral response. Additionally, 5% strongly disagreed, and 25% disagreed. Only 15% of the sample consented to hold professional development sessions on the weekends or after school. Professional development programs held on weekends or after school had a neutral response, as indicated by the mean value of the overall responses (x=2.80). As a result, it becomes apparent that professional development seminars are reluctantly held on weekends or after school. Additionally, the answers to the questions in section 4 of the questionnaire submitted to the primary sample were verified.

Utilizing vacation time wisely and putting professional development initiatives for teachers into action are both possible during term leave. When asked how teachers participate in the execution of professional development programs during the summer vacation, 55% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed with the statement. As a result, it was discovered that principals have difficulties while putting professional development programs into practice throughout the winter break. 15% of the sample stated they would like to participate in professional development activities during the semester break, while 25% of respondents were neutral. It was corroborated by the mean value (x=2.50) found during the analysis of the overall findings that the principals have

difficulties while putting professional development programs into action throughout the summer vacation.

There are many online lectures and training programs available nowadays. Online professional development courses are also accessible. 75% of principals who were asked to assess teacher participation in online professional development programs believed that instructors readily participate in these programs. 10% of the sample also said they strongly agreed with the previous statement. It was proven that the teachers agree to implement the professional development programs online based on the mean value found in the analysis of all replies (x=3.90): 90%. It's possible that teachers' actions were motivated by their ease of participation in online professional development programs, which allow them to connect whenever and however they like. 10% of the sample also gave neutral responses. Only 5% of the teachers who were surveyed said they opposed running the classes online. Some educators are hesitant to hold online professional development sessions.

Mentoring is the practice of professional development for junior teachers under the supervision of a veteran teacher with more experience. Senior teachers with years of expertise are present in every school. They can help other instructors advance professionally through their experience and guidance. Senior educators ought to take the lead on this. In this regard, 57.5% of the principal sample's responses indicated that senior teachers are available for school-based instruction. 5% highly agreed as well. 15% of the sample disagreed, 2.5% strongly disagreed, and 20% of the sample replied neutrally. Finding the support of senior instructors for the implementation of professional development programs was found to be without difficulty. This was further supported by the mean response value (x=3.48) for the entire sample.

Programs for professional development should be put in place in accordance with instructor needs. To learn about the demands of teachers, surveys should be done. Teachers must encourage it. When asked if teachers support needs assessments to choose professional development programs, 37.5% of principals said yes, and 5% said definitely yes. 32.5% of the sample gave a neutral response. Additionally, 22.5% agreed, with 2.5% strongly agreeing, that instructors should help with the creation of needs analyses to choose professional development initiatives. 50% of respondents either agreed or disagreed with the aforementioned statement. The total mean value of the responses (x=3.20) showed that teachers participated in the needs survey for professional development program selection to a moderate extent. As a result, it becomes clear that the teachers' contribution will change over time.

The School-based Professional Teacher Development Guidelines (2019) have provided the required guidance for the professional development of school-based teachers. However, authorities should provide counsel to administrators regarding the financial support each school receives and the challenges that come with finding suitable resources. It was questioned if the administrators would get the required technical advice to construct a professional development-focused school culture. 52.5% of the sample said they do not get technical advice
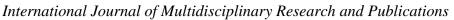
from the authorities on how to construct a professional development-focused school culture. In addition, 7.5% vehemently disagreed with the previous assertion. The authorities lack the technical requirements required to establish a school culture focused on professional growth, as indicated by the mean value obtained for the total replies (x=2.43). Because the principals do not receive support from the authorities to resolve the technical issues that arise in the planning and implementation of professional development programs, implementing successful professional development programs has become difficult. Additionally, 10% of the sample admitted that the authorities provided the technical guidance required to establish a school culture focused on professional growth, while 30% gave ambivalent responses.

Teachers who are new to the profession or have less experience might benefit greatly from the guidance of senior and deputy principals. They can also plan and carry out new teacher professional development initiatives. When asked if they had support for that, the principals reported that 82.5% of the sample agreed with them. 17.5% also indicated neutrality. But it was disclosed that there is no challenge in that regard by stating that a high percentage of senior instructors and deputy principals back the principal. The mean value received for the total number of responses, (x=3.83), further supported this.

In order to address issues and practices in the school that are relevant to the learning and teaching process, the principle can work with the deputy principal, senior teachers, and special programs focused at teacher professional development. When the principals were questioned about this, 65% agreed and 10% strongly agreed with the aforementioned remark. As a result, it was discovered that the principal receives assistance from the deputy principal and senior teachers in addressing issues and procedures in the school that pertain to the learning and teaching process. 17.5% gave a neutral response. However, 2.5% strongly disagreed with the aforementioned assertion, and 5% disagreed. It was further supported by the mean value (x=3.83) of the total number of replies. However, it was determined from the analysis of the total responses (x=3.75) that the deputy principal and senior teachers assist the principle in addressing issues and procedures in the school that are connected to the process of learning and teaching from the mean value of 75%.

Programs for professional development should be created with teachers' needs and experience in mind. When the principal was questioned about getting assistance from teachers for that, 45% of respondents agreed, and 5% strongly agreed. Accordingly, it was discovered that the teachers support the principal in creating professional development programs while taking into account their existing knowledge and experience. However, 20% of the sample gave neutral responses and said that teachers had not offered them any support. 10% of respondents said they strongly disagreed as well. There were moderate (x=3.15) responses in the responses when the responses for the complete sample were analyzed.

Focusing on ongoing observation of instructors' learning and teaching processes is one strategy that can be utilized to enhance the quality of their instruction. The school should

provide qualified human resources for that. When asked about this, 37.5% of the principal sample said there was enough human resources to oversee the teachers' teaching and learning processes. 2.5% of respondents also said they strongly agreed with the statement. Also, 25% of respondents said they agreed with the statement but were impartial. The data analysis also showed that 10% of respondents strongly disagreed. Accordingly, it was established that there are, to some extent, human resources available to teachers who can improve the quality of their instruction by keeping an eye on their own learning and teaching processes. The mean result (x=2.98) found for all replies further supported that notion.

Teachers can easily provide the necessary physical materials and carry out the programs using them in order to establish high-quality teacher professional development programs at their schools. It can enhance teachers' ability to teach. When the principal was questioned about the availability of physical resources for the execution of school-based teacher professional development programs, 45% of the respondents said it is difficult to obtain physical resources. Furthermore, 15% of respondents said they strongly disagreed with the aforementioned assertion, indicating that it is challenging to obtain physical resources. 40% of respondents also indicated their neutrality. The fact that it is challenging to supply the necessary physical resources for the implementation of school-based teacher professional development programs was further reinforced by the mean value (x=2.25) obtained for the overall replies. Physical resource provision presents difficulties for principals.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Data from this study were reviewed to learn more about the difficulties administrators have while putting school-based teacher professional development programs into place. These findings could be reached as a result of the data analysis.

Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify teachers' specific professional development needs, involve teachers and other staff members in the planning process, and offer a range of professional development delivery methods including workshops, seminars, online courses, mentoring, and peer observation, Collaborative learning communities, allocating adequate resources (financial, time, and personnel) to effectively support professional development initiatives, acknowledging individual teachers' interests and passions, using data to measure impact on teacher performance and professional development programs on student outcomes Foster a school culture that values continuous learning and encourages professional growth Ensure that professional development programs are aligned with the overall goals and vision of the school Create a supportive and non-judgmental environment where teachers fear failure It can be suggested as conclusions to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and network with educators from other national colleges of education, universities, and teacher professional development centers where it is easier to try new ideas and techniques without.

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