

The Value high school teachers place on CPD for their professional development

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Abstract - It is well-accepted that continuing professional development (CPD) is a significant contributor to improving teacher effectiveness. When teachers place great value on CPD, they would engage in and in turn we can assure that CPD's goals would be achieved. This paper reports on a study that explored the motivation of high school teachers in Saudi Arabia to engage in CPD programmes. It adopted a mixed methods (MMR) sequential explanatory design utilising an online questionnaire completed by 425 high school teachers and focus groups with 29 high school teachers. The results showed that high school teachers highly valued CPD programmes for their professional development. In particular, the value of CPD on their teaching abilities and their students' academic achievement was highlighted.

Keywords- Teacher professional development – CPD – The value of CPD – Mixed method research – High school teachers – Teaching skills – Students' outcomes

Introduction

CPD is considered an important factor in relation to teachers' professional development. Through CPD, teachers can improve their knowledge, skills and abilities (Desimone, 2011; Karabenick, 2011), and, when teachers perceive CPD as valuable, they are encouraged to participate in CPD to accomplish their professional needs (add reference). CPD is a broad concept that includes different learning experiences and emphasises lifelong learning (Fraser et al., 2007; McMillan et al., 2014). Hence, the definition of CPD adopted in the current study is that CPD is "continuous ... process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organisation and their pupils (Padwad & Dixit, 2011).

The importance of CPD for teachers

The importance of CPD for effective teaching is well-documented in the literature, particularly the advantages it can provide in relation to teacher capabilities, student learning outcomes, overall school and educational reforms. For example, Day (1999) reports that the dynamic and complex nature of teaching requires that teachers engage constantly in learning activities. Similarly, Musset (2010) stressed that enhancing teacher abilities has a significant influence on teaching effectiveness and other aspects of education.

Similarly, CPD can help teachers to increase their knowledge and understanding of specific disciplines and new concepts, enhance their ability to represent particular concepts, and make use of the most effective strategies to handle the misconceptions of specific content (AFT, 2008; Lessing & De Witt, 2007; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). According to Timperley et al. (2007), CPD is considered important for empowering teachers with a better understanding of their students, how to assess their learning outcomes, and knowing the best ways that students can learn.

Moreover, CPD is important in relation to meeting teachers' professional and personal needs which can enhance their effectiveness (David & Bwisa, 2013). Because no two teachers are the same and have different needs, CPD should address individuals' needs to ensure enhancing the quality of each teacher (Lessing & De Witt, 2007; Timperley et al., 2007).

In addition, CPD plays a key role in promoting students' learning outcomes. Stoll, Harris, and Handscomb (2012) emphasised that improving students' learning outcomes should be considered the main purpose of CPD and improving teachers' skills and knowledge through CPD can contribute to this aim. This is because, as Musset (2010) and Timperley et al. (2007) have reported, there a positive connection between the quality of teachers and the performance of their students.

CPD can also have a positive impact on whole-school improvement as the quality of the school system is closely linked to the quality of teachers and the outcomes of their students. (Day, 1999; Scheerens, 2010). Lessing and De Wit (2007) reported that there was a strong connection between successful CPD and the quality of the whole school development. Similarly, Stoll et

al. (2012) stated that when CPD enhances the effectiveness of teachers' practices, it will result in having effective schools.

Additionally, CPD can play a critical role in relation to educational reforms. The literature on CPD reports that with the recent focus on educational reforms, enhancing teacher quality has been considered the cornerstone to achieving these reforms (Desimone, 2011; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Schleicher and OECD, 2016). Scheerens (2010) cited the consensus of opinion among ministers of education in the European Union that excellent teaching is critical for high-quality education. Hence, effective CPD that enhances teacher quality can help to attain the desired goals of educational reforms (Almazroa, 2013; Phillips, 2008).

Teacher perceptions of the value of CPD

Recognising the value that teachers place on CPD for their development is critically important in relation to understanding teacher motivation to engage in such programmes. In this regard, the expectancy x value model is useful as it explains that the value people place on a task indicates their motivation to engage in such a task (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). This model will be further discussed in the next section. The literature shows that teachers' perceptions regarding the value of CPD for their professional development are generally positive (Alharbi, 2011; Hustler, McNamara, Jarvis, Londra, & Campbell, 2003; Karabenick & Conley, 2011; Kempen & Steyn, 2016). In Hustler et al.'s, (2003) study with a sample of more than 2000 teachers, they reported that overall teachers expressed their satisfaction with their CPD experiences.

However, while teachers generally perceive CPD as valuable, the literature reports that the value teachers place on CPD varies depending on the nature of the CPD itself. Research has shown that teachers perceive CPD valuable when it is relevant and applicable to their classroom (Hustler et al., 2003); when it provides teachers with experiences that can be applied within their own classrooms (Stoll et al.(2012), and when it is carefully adapted to specific contents and contexts (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Additionally, Hustler et al. (2003) found that the CPD that teachers valued the most was CPD that had been chosen by them. Autonomy, which can be defined as people having a choice and control over their own behaviour, is one of the three psychological needs in the learning environment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Figure 1 shows that

these needs are competence (obtaining mastery of tasks and learning different skills), autonomy (having a choice and control over their own behaviour) and relatedness (feeling connected to others).

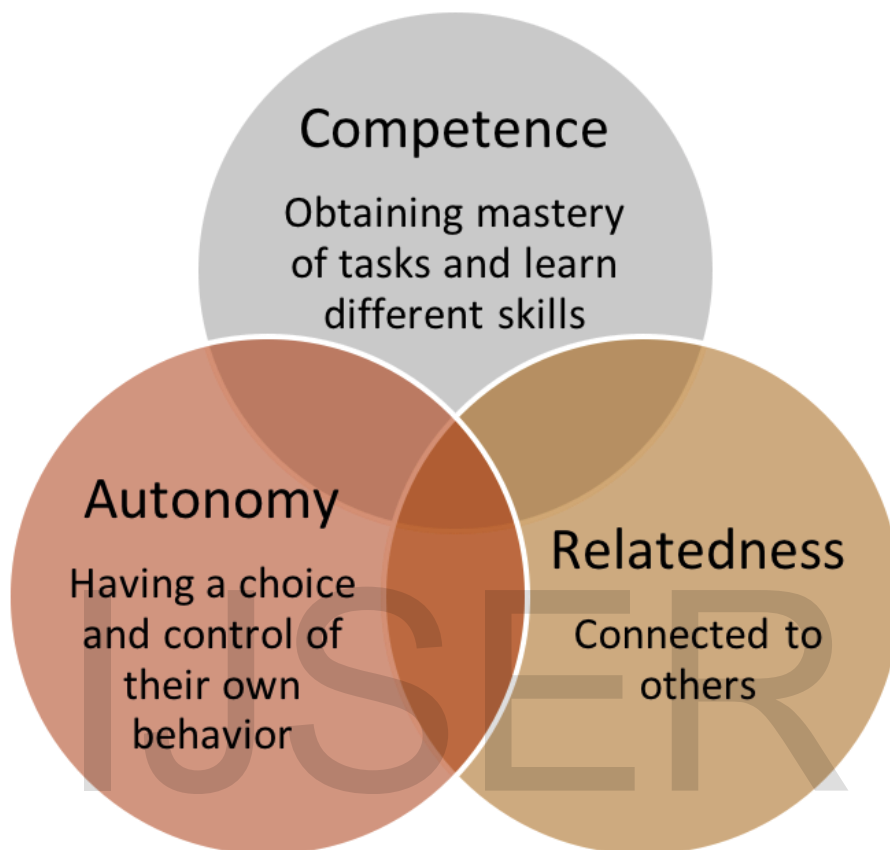


Figure 1. Three psychological needs of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000)

Ryan and Powelson (1991) stressed the importance of people's relatedness in enhancing their motivation to engage in learning tasks. Additionally, Alharbi (2011) found that Saudi Arabian teachers placed a significant value on cooperation and networks with other teachers as they found these activities valuable in solving their problems. Thus, when CPD supports collegial interactions among teachers, where teachers can relate to each other, it can enhance a positive influence on teacher motivation to engage in CPD (Johnson, 1984; McMillan, McConnell, & O'Sullivan, 2014).

Value-Expectancy model

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) assert that learner motivation to engage in learning can be described in relation to the value they attach to tasks and the level of achievement they expect. Thus, when a learner values a task but does not expect to succeed in it, or when they have high expectations of success but do not value the task, they will lack the motivation to engage in that task. McInerney and Liem (2008) stated that valuing a task appears to be the initial impulse for people's decision to engage in the task as they tend not to perform a task of little value.

This model includes four different kinds of value that can influence people's motivation to engage in a task. They are attainment value, utility value, intrinsic value and cost value (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Attainment value involves the personal importance of engaging in a task and attaining success (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; St. George, Riley, & Hartnett, 2008). Utility value concerns how well a task helps to achieve personal goals. This kind of value can explain why some students study a subject that they do not enjoy because it is related to their future goals. Both kinds of value assert the possibility of the influence of extrinsic values on sustaining motivation (St. George et al., 2008). The third kind of value is the intrinsic value which refers to the enjoyment that individuals can obtain from their engagement in the task (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; St. George et al., 2008). The final type is cost value, described by Eccles and Wigfield (2002) as a critical factor. This illustrates the negative side of performing a task, such as anxiety and concerns of failure and missing an opportunity as a result of choosing a task.

For such importance of CPD for teachers as well as the significance of understanding the perceived value of CPD that teachers place on CPD, the purpose of the current study was to understand to what extent high school teachers in Saudi Arabia perceive CPD as valuable. It also provided an understanding of the application of value- expectancy theory

Methods

This study was positioned within the pragmatist paradigm and used mixed methods research for data collection and analysis. As outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2017) "pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis in the mixed methods study" (p. 12), thus, researchers should look at several approaches to gathering and analysing data for further

precision rather than adhering to one single way (e.g. quantitative or qualitative). Figure 2 shows the process of these two phases.

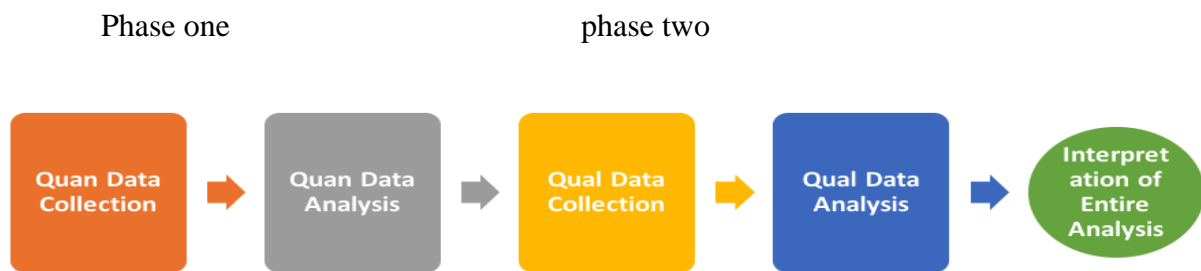


Figure 2. Sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007)

The first phase of the research involved an online questionnaire which was advertised and distributed through WhatsApp. The researcher sent the invitation and link to the questionnaire to networks of secondary school teachers in Saudi Arabia using WhatsApp and asked them to spread the invitation to their networks of secondary school teachers (Snowball technique). In total, 425 high school teachers in Saudi Arabia completed the questionnaire.

Phase two consisted of focus group interviews. Questionnaire participants who lived in the province of Jeddah were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in this phase, and 29 participants volunteered. These volunteers were organised into six focus groups, each group focusing on one aspect of teacher motivation in relation to CPD. This paper focuses on one of these focus groups which examined the aspect of the value high school teachers place on CPD for their professional development.

Data Analysis

Employing the sequential explanatory design consisting of quantitative and qualitative phases, the data was collected and analysed in the first phase using an online questionnaire, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis using focus group interviews. Then, the results of both phases were interpreted.

The questionnaire was developed using Google Forms which is part of the Google Suite. Google Forms is a useful means that help to organise data, create charts to visualise trends in an appropriate way and can connect the data to a spread-sheet to make it much easier for the

researcher to conduct more inferential and statistical processes (Mallette & Barone, 2013). Thus, it helps me to analyse the data and implement the needed statistical procedures to bring about the main findings of the online questionnaire. This is when the researcher would utilise the findings of the first phase in order to prepare for the discussions of focus groups in the second phase which in turn will enrich the findings of the first phase.

For the second phase, focus groups transcripts were completed so that the audio-taped transcripts were thoroughly read more than once in order to define codes which helped to create themes that summarised the qualitative data for the final integration process. The coding process was conducted manually as well. The researcher adopted a “theory-driven” coding approach while he was looking for themes in the data to get more elaborative answers for specific questions that the survey did not provide, using colour pens, highlighters and pencils to indicate potential patterns as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006).

Results and discussion

In order to address the study question which is to what extent CPD is valuable for teachers, the findings have been organised into two sections. The first section addressed the value respondents placed on CPD in relation to specific aspects of teaching and learning. These aspects consist of teaching skills and knowledge and student academic outcomes. The second section addressed the findings of the value of the main types of CPD which are formal and informal.

In relation to the first section, the findings of the first phase showed that the majority of participants believed that CPD was very valuable or valuable, as shown in Table 1. Also, Table 1 shows that when participants were asked to rate the value of CPD in bringing about positive outcomes in relation to some specific aspects of teaching and learning, they indicated that CPD was valuable in all provided aspects. The data showed that the value of CPD in these aspects ranged from the least common reason it was valuable - "broadening your knowledge of the subject", with approximately 70%, to the most common reason it was valued which was "improving their teaching skills", with approximately 85%.

Table 1

The Value of CPD on Aspects of Teaching and Learning

Objectives	Very valuable	Valuable	Little value	No value	Not applicable
Improving your teaching skills	40.80%	44.50%	11.5%	2.5%	0.4%
Motivating you to learn more	43.80%	37.50%	13.6%	4%	0.9%
Developing your confidence as a teacher	46.20%	33.90%	13.6%	3.3%	2.8%
Improving your ability to understand how students learn better	37.50%	41.70%	16%	3%	1.6%
Knowing educational theories around students' learning	38.60%	39.30%	17.4%	6.1%	1.4%
Developing your class management skills	35.10%	42.20%	22.1%	5.8%	2.3%

Broadening your knowledge of the subject	37.50%	32%	22.1%	5.8%	2.3%
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Additionally, findings from the focus group showed that participants thought that the CPD in which they had engaged was valuable for developing their profession. One teacher claimed that they felt that their professional capabilities improved through a specific CPD programme called “Empowerment Programme” which also motivated him to look for another programme (FG T2). Another teacher (T4) affirmed that “We found the value of CPD when addressing issues related to our reality, school, students and curriculum” (FG T4).

In line with this, Karabenick and Conley (2011) reported that teachers were motivated to engage in CPD programmes when they perceived the programmes as valuable and essential for improving their professional skills and knowledge. Hence, the value that teachers placed on CPD provided reasonably substantial evidence that they had the motivation to engage in these programmes.

To achieve a better understanding of the role of value teachers place on CPD and their motivation to engage in, several studies have suggested that applying the framework of the Expectancy x Value Theory is beneficial here (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Karabenick & Conley, 2011; Schieb & Karabenick, 2011; Thomson & Kaufmann, 2013). This theory determines people’s engagement in, and the value they place on tasks. According to Karabenick and Conley (2011), studies that investigate teacher motivation within the framework of the Expectancy X Value Theory show that there is a relationship between teacher motivation and their engagement in CPD programmes when they place a value on these programmes. McMillan et al. (2014) also stated that teachers who valued CPD programmes were motivated to seek and pursue CPD activities in response to their needs personally and/or professionally. Four components of task value represent the key aspects of this theory are discussed below.

First, utility value refers to the participants’ concerns about their job goals and needs. CPD programmes are valuable in this regard as they empower teachers with their professional skills, such as improving teaching skills and classroom management skills. This has been emphasised

by the focus group participants who found that CPD programmes they had engaged in providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge. Therefore, such value of CPD programmes led participant teachers to express their interest in engaging in other CPD programmes.

Second, participants have an attainment value that highlights the personal importance of the task. Participant teachers found CPD programmes help them to gain skills and broaden their knowledge of the curriculum and then enhance their students' academic achievements. The attainment value enhanced teacher motivation to engage in CPD programmes as they learned more and felt more confident as teachers.

Third, intrinsic value refers to the enjoyment that participants gain from their engagement in CPD programmes. This was confirmed by participant teachers who were interested in engaging in CPD programmes when these programmes connected to their personal and professional goals even if there were some difficulties associated with it. For example, the focus group teachers had engaged in "Enabling Programme", which lasted two months, with 10 hours' commitment every week and had strict rules regarding attendance and required additional work. Nonetheless, they expressed that they enjoyed engaging in such programmes and were intrinsically motivated to do so.

Finally, the value of CPD programmes has some cost that could lead to some obstacles. Although teachers were interested in engaging in CPD programmes, they could be required to exert more effort and spend extra time and, in some cases, money to engage in CPD programmes. Besides, it would comprise some negative emotions. The focus group teachers outlined some of those: for example, some teachers had to travel every week several hundred kilometres to engage in CPD programmes, and they had to pay for it themselves, while others had to relocate to another city for a few years to accomplish their professional development.

In addition, the findings align with other studies that found that CPD was perceived valuable by teachers when directly related to enhancing the required knowledge and skills for both teachers and students and when they provided opportunities for professional practising (e.g. Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Postholm, 2012). Therefore, when these aspects have not met, teachers might not feel motivated to engage in CPD. According to Hustler (2003), teachers can

have negative stances towards CPD when they perceive CPD not making worthy contributions to improved teaching and learning.

The value of CPD for improving teaching skills and knowledge

The focus group (FG) participants affirmed that CPD programmes were valuable with regard to their teaching skills and knowledge. For example, one teacher (T2) said that “Empowerment Programmes that have 80 hours for two months were very valuable in improving my teaching skills” (FG T2). A Physics teacher (T1) also confirmed the value of CPD in enhancing their knowledge when stating: “To bring something new to my students, I always do online research to prepare my lessons and this keeps me continuously up to date with the new knowledge” (FG T1).

The literature affirms that teachers are mindful of the importance of being well-equipped with a wide range of professional skills and knowledge, particularly in the current climate of rapid change and technological advances (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Musset, 2010). Enhancing teachers’ skills and knowledge is considered as a central goal of CPD (Cohen, 1995; Desimone, 2011; Desimone et al., 2002). Thus, Desimone (2011) stated that “the substantive features of professional development programmes — not their structure — matter when it comes to enhancing teachers’ knowledge, skills, and classroom practice” (p. 69).

In both phases of the study, it was found that teachers valued CPD when it enhanced their knowledge regarding teaching subjects and educational theories. In particular, the focus group participants reported that CPD programmes were valuable in enhancing their knowledge and helped them to keep up-to-date with changing knowledge. This finding is in line with other related studies that stress the importance of teachers being engaged in CPD, particularly in this world where the knowledge is rapidly changing and growing exponentially (Desimone, 2011; Desimone et al., 2002; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

When comparing the perceived value of CPD on improving teachers' skills and improving student learning, analysed data showed that teachers perceived CPD more valuable in relation to teaching aspects. This finding was highlighted by the participants identifying items related to teaching skills and teacher quality, such as improving your teaching skills, motivating you to learn more, and developing your confidence as a teacher as being more valuable. The reason

for this could be that teachers believe that improving themselves is an important step for improving their students' learning. When teachers become better and their skills have been developed, it predicts that students' learning outcomes will be developed as well. This idea is reflected by researchers such as Timperley et al. (2007) who claim that “teachers’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions have direct and serious implications for the success of the students they teach.” (p. 9).

The value of CPD for improving student academic outcomes

In terms of increasing students’ academic outcomes, the participants of the focus group confirmed that the new educational strategies acquired through CPD helped them to motivate students to engage more in learning activities which in turn enhanced their learning outcomes. For example, one teacher (T3) said: “Active learning strategies made students more active, they now engage in learning actively and jointly” (FG T3). However, the participants claimed that CPD needs to pay more attention to issues related to how students can learn better. As one teacher (T4) said, “CPD recently is oriented only to how to teach properly, not how to understand how students learn better” (FG T4).

With regard to the value of the main types of CPD, formal and informal, the questionnaire participants were asked to indicate what value they placed on a list of formal and informal CPD programmes. The majority of participants believed that all formal and informal CPD they were given were either very valuable or valuable (Table 2).

Table 2

Information about Teacher Participation and the Value They Perceive in Formal and Informal CPD

CPD activities	Participation		Value of CPD				
	Yes	No	Very valuable	Valuable	Little value	No value	NA

Formal Activities							
Educational diploma	57%	42.9%	37%	29%	11%	3.5%	19.3%
Education conference or seminars	81.8%	18.1%	29%	47.1%	12.2%	3.7%	7.7%
Training programmes out of school	95.7%	4.2%	35.8%	39.1%	17.9%	4%	3%
Training programmes inside school	80.8%	19.1%	27.1%	34.6%	25.7%	4.4%	8%
Visiting peers classes in another school	60.8%	39.1%	29.7%	33.4%	17.6%	4%	15%
Informal Activities							
Online learning	55.8%	44.1%	30.4%	37%	16.7%	2.5%	13.2%
Visiting peers' classes in school	73.5%	26.4%	29.9%	41.5%	18.1%	3.5%	6.8%
Meaningful discussions with peers	91.2%	8.7%	38.9%	45%	11.3%	1.1%	3.5%
Independent research	42.9%	57%	29.4%	26.1%	18.1%	5.8%	20.2%
Professional reading	74%	25.9%	37.7%	37.2%	12.5	2.3%	10.1%

Collaborating with other teachers	85.3%	14.6%	42.6%	43.3%	8%	1.4%	4.4%
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Indeed, improving students' learning outcomes is considered the ultimate goal of education (Kirkwood & Christie, 2006; Stoll et al., 2012). Therefore, several studies affirmed that CPD should aim to provide teachers with various opportunities to learn and understand how their students learn better and thus enhance their academic outcomes (AFT, 2008; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2011; Guskey, 2002). Teachers should understand strategies that facilitate student learning, and understand ways to evaluate these strategies and assess their students' learning. Timperley et al. (2007) stated that CPD is considered important in empowering teachers with important strategies to better understand their students, assess their learning outcomes, and help students to learn better.

The value of formal CPD

In terms of the value of formal CPD activities, the majority of participants believed that all formal activities were either very valuable or valuable. Table 2 shows that the most valuable formal activity was educational conferences or seminars with approximately 76% indicating this. The next most common valuable formal activity was training programmes out of school, where approximately 75% of participants emphasised its value. Interestingly, training programmes inside school, which were among the most formal activities in which participants had engaged, were shown as the least valuable formal activity with 61% of participants indicating that these programmes were valuable, although this is still high (Table 2).

The findings also showed that the largest number of participants were those who attended formal CPD. The focus group participants attempted to explain this finding. They claimed that school principals usually try to force teachers to attend formal activities in order to meet some requirements of educational supervision centres. A teacher (T1) stated that “There are performance indicators that each school has to meet, so many school administrators force teachers to attend these activities whether valuable or not” (FG T1). Other teachers agreed with this, as one teacher (T2) claimed: “these activities mostly are of little value” (FG T2). Furthermore, they emphasised the significance of educational conferences in spite of their scarcity. One teacher (T1) stressed that “conference organisers and presenters are usually well

qualified and well prepared” (FG T1). Another teacher (T3) supported this by saying: “The conferences that I attended were very valuable” (FG T3)

The value of informal CPD

With regard to informal CPD activities, Table 2 shows that participants engaged in all these informal CPD activities. Remarkably, most participants (approximately 91%) had engaged in meaningful discussions with peers. This was followed by collaborating with other teachers with approximately 85% of participants showing that they had engaged in this. In terms of the value of informal CPD activities, the majority of participants believed that all formal activities were either very valuable or valuable. However, it is noteworthy that the most common informal activities in which participants had engaged in, mentioned above, were perceived to be the most valuable. As shown in Table 2, collaborating with other teachers was the most valuable informal activity with approximately 86% of participants pointing out its value. The second most valuable informal activity was meaningful discussions with peers with approximately 84% of participants indicating this was valuable. The data also showed that the least valuable informal CPD activity was independent research. However, approximately 55% of participants still identified this as either very valuable or valuable even though about 20% of participants pointed out that independent research was not applicable to them (Table).

Regarding informal CPD activities, the focus group participants gave some reasons for their popularity. Firstly, they stated that informal activities usually occur without any external compulsion. This made teachers have their own agency to choose what they need to improve. Besides, since teachers work in the same school, it is easy for them to meet and have meaningful discussions with peers about different issues related to their students and school. Also, teachers in school usually have scheduled departmental meetings within teaching subjects; hence, new teachers can benefit from experienced teachers. A teacher (T5) claimed that “When a peer told me that he used this technique or strategy with his students and it worked well, I was keen to use it as peers know our school and students better than others” (FG T5). Moreover, they know their students’ needs and school facilities better than any external people involved in formal activities. One teacher (T4) stated: “When we meet with peers and discuss needed issues, we learn from each other more than we learn when we attend training programmes out of school” (FG T4). In addition, confirming the value of professional reading in enhancing teachers’

professional development, one teacher (T2) said: “Sometimes we face difficult questions from students, so if we do not do research, it will be troublesome” (FG T2).

Comparing the value of formal and informal CPD, the data indicated that informal CPD was perceived by participants as more valuable for their professional development than formal. As can be seen from Table 2, meaningful discussions and collaborating with peers were indicated as valuable or very valuable by 84% and 86% of participants respectively, while the most valuable formal CPD activity was educational conferences or seminars with 76% of participants acknowledging its value. However, when the questionnaire participants were directly asked to identify which one was more influential on their motivation to engage in CPD. The results showed an almost even distribution for both types of CPD. The data revealed that while just less than 50% of participants believed that informal CPD had more impact on their motivation to engage in CPD, just over 50% believed that formal CPD had more impact.

Discussing this issue with the focus group participants, they also reached no agreement on which type of CPD programme was more valuable and thus influential on their motivation to engage in them. Some teachers believed that there is no difference between these two types of CPD, while others asserted that informal CPD was more valuable and influential. One teacher (T2) stated: “I do not see any difference between them as teachers can choose what they want from informal and formal CPD as well, in particular when using the Achievement Portfolio Service” (FG T2). Another teacher (T4) also supported this idea by saying that “if they leave the option for teachers to attend what they want, I will say that the influence of these two types of CPD is equal” (FG T4). Furthermore, another teacher (T1), standing on the side of informal CPD, declared that “I highly support informal CPD since teachers usually have high motivation to engage in it as they choose what they need even though it could be at their cost” (FG T1). Additionally, a teacher (T5) said that “one of the disadvantages of formal is that the presenters might be unqualified which is rarely the case in informal as it is subject to teachers' choice without any coercion or obligation” (FG T5).

Analysed data showed that participants valued and engaged in both types of CPD to improve their skills and knowledge. As mentioned above, teacher engagement and the perceived value of CPD can indicate that teachers are motivated to engage in CPD programmes. The focus group participants also affirmed that they were motivated to engage in both types of CPD. However, in relation to which type of CPD was most motivating, analysis of the two phases'

data revealed the difficulty of determining whether formal or informal programmes had more influence on teacher motivation as they seemed to have a similar impact. This finding was found to be in line with an on-going debate between researchers who have taken sides while some remained in the middle. Postholm (2012) reported that teachers from different countries, such as European nations and the U.S.A., appreciated formal CPD and considered it fruitful for their professional development. On the other hand, informal CPD plays a vital role in teacher motivation to improve their teaching quality and meet professional needs. Goodall, Day, Lindsay, Muijs and Harris (2010) stated that informal networking with peers was highly effective in improving teachers' qualities.

However, several studies stress the importance of avoiding this dichotomy and focusing more on enhancing learning (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; McMillan et al., 2014; Webster-Wright, 2009). These researchers believe that teachers can learn through engagement in various learning activities whether formally or informally. McMillan et al. (2014) stated that CPD should keep a balance between formal and informal activities, and provide teachers with opportunities to engage individually and collegially. Desimone (2011) also stated that "the substantive features of professional development programs — not their structure — matter when it comes to enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and classroom practice" (p. 69).

The outcomes of the discussion with focus group teachers led to the emergence of some important ideas. Firstly, focus group participants believed that the most important factor is the perceived value of CPD in meeting teachers' professional needs. Unless CPD is valuable for teachers in relation to improving their skills and facilitating obtaining further knowledge, teachers will most likely not be motivated to engage. These findings are supported in the literature, for example, Goodall et al. (2010) and Postholm (2012) reported that among important elements of effective CPD was the relevance of CPD to teachers' professional needs and their school context.

Secondly, when teachers feel autonomous and have agency over their own decisions regarding engagement in CPD, they tend to be more motivated to engage (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Accordingly, Postholm (2012) declared that teachers' autonomy plays an important role in relation to their learning and development. Hence, when teachers' voices regarding their engagement in CPD are heard, they can be more interested in engaging in such programmes.

Finally, as some participant teachers confirmed that there is no difference between these types of CPD as teachers need both to improve their profession. This indicates that teachers should access a wide range of CPD in order to help them to achieve the desired outcomes. In line with this, Cordingley et al. (2015) stated that there is no specific CPD that can be considered the most valuable for teachers, hence, teachers need a variety of activities that are aligned with goals, and can be applied in the classroom with other elements of CPD.

Conclusion

This findings of this study showed that teacher participants perceived CPD as valuable for their professional development. The value/importance that participants placed of CPD was in relation to improving their skills and knowledge, and improving students' academic outcomes. Participant teachers believed that all formal and informal CPD was valuable and influenced their motivation to engage in them. While training programmes inside and outside school and conferences and seminars were perceived as the most valuable formal CPD, meaningful discussions and collaboration with peers were the most valuable informal activities. The participants perceived the most influential type of CPD on their motivation was those that meet their professional needs.

Findings from this study could be beneficial for policymakers in Saudi Arabia, particularly the recognition that the majority of high school teachers who participated in this study, placed a high value on CPD and were motivated to engage in such programmes. Policymakers could take advantage of this by focusing more on the effectiveness and quality of CPD and by ensuring that educational reforms regarding CPD meet teachers' professional needs and are delivered by expert facilitators.

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