

Abstract

This dissertation entitled as “Professional Development and Reflection on Teaching as a Career among University Teachers” is based on three studies. These studies are interlinked with each other in a sense that study I is an exploratory research which uncovers the opinions of university teachers towards their teaching profession and it also identifies the sources of professional development which can be utilized by the university teachers to attain professional excellence in their career. The identification of sources of professional development provided a base for study II which was aimed on development and validation of “Sources of Professional Development Scale (SPDS)” by Akram (2018). Furthermore, the study III validated the scale through qualitative inquiry by carrying out in-depth interviews with experienced teachers to reflect upon their teaching as a career.

The study I which was exploratory in nature highlighted the opinions of university teachers towards teaching as a profession. Mixed-method research design was followed in a study and the purposive sample consisted of 202 university teachers with age range from 25-58 years with varying designations. A self-generated questionnaire consisting of 14 open-ended questions was designed to extract information regarding their selection of teaching as a career, sources of professional development in teaching and their satisfaction with teaching as a career was administered to university teachers along with Stage Concern Questionnaire by (George, Hall and Stielgelbauer, 2006) to investigate the concerns of teachers in university setting. The qualitative part of the study was analyzed through deductive content analysis which indicated that it was the passion of 90% of the respondents to be a university teacher. Furthermore, the study indicated that the training

followed by workshops and research publications are considered by both male and female university teachers as important parameters for professional excellence. However, females are more inclined to consider teaching as a stereotypical job for women than men. Moreover, this study has identified the financial incentives such as monetary benefits, salary, grant for academic trips and research along with non-financial incentives such as respect of teachers and professional alliance are the important sources of gratification of university teachers. The study highlighted the professional development programs, well-equipped classes, safe and secure environment are the utmost professional needs of the university teachers. Similarly, the study unveiled the co-curricular activities followed by research exposure and paper presentation and publication contributes significantly to the professional development of the teachers. On the contrary, it also highlighted the constraints which hampered the teaching progression such as fewer opportunities to grow, followed by peer pressure, lack of job structure and management issues. The quantitative phase of the study indicated that lecturers are higher in their concern of refocusing due to their professional survival and associate professors were significantly higher in their personal concerns due to changing trends in teaching setup. However, the results indicated that males exhibited more collaboration concerns as compared to female teachers. although, there was no significant differences in terms of gender and designation among university teachers on job satisfaction which indicate interesting finding that male and female university teachers and with varying ranks more or less enjoy same level of job satisfaction.

The study II was aimed to construct a “Sources of Professional Development Scale (SPDS)” and had five phases namely: Items generation, content validation through

Aiken's V coefficient, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and convergent validity. Keeping in view the results of study I, previous literature and theoretical frameworks on professional development the initial pool of 127 items were generated which was then deduced to 48 items due to representation of construct under evaluation. Then, opinion of five academicians was taken on the 48 items scale with 1 (not appropriate) – 10 (most appropriate) and ratings were statistically evaluated by Aiken's V coefficient. As a result, 17 items were removed from the scale on the basis of expert's opinion and the resultant scale was of 30 items scale. Moreover, the pilot study on 10 university teachers also indicated that the scale is appropriate in assessing the construct. After piloting, the scale was administered on 205 participants and the exploratory factor analysis resulted exclusion of 10 items and generation of two factors namely: professional progression and professional recognition with 11 and 9 items respectively. Afterwards, the data of 224 participants was collected for confirmatory factor analysis of the scale and it resulted in removal of five more items resulting in 15 items scale with professional progression (8 items) and professional recognition (7 items). The overall, reliability of the scale was .84 which is highly acceptable. In the last, the convergent validity of the 15 items scale, SPDS, was assessed with 5 items scale, TAP (Torff, Sessions, & Byrnes, 2005), as both scales were evaluating the same construct. So, the results indicated that the significantly positive correlation of TAP with SPDS scale and its factors as well which means that the scale possesses construct validity.

Lastly, the study III used the qualitative inquiry to validate the resultant scale by means of in-depth interviews with professors who reflected on their career and

highlighted the sources of their professional development as university teacher. Four professors (2 male & 2 female) were interviewed to explore their teaching experience in universities of Pakistan and the IPA resulted in 15 super-ordinate themes which highlighted different aspects of their life-time teaching. Participants of the study claimed teaching to be profession of prophets, blessing for oneself and others, good way of catharsis as well as accountable profession while talking about their general perception of teaching. They also mentioned good communication skills, love for knowledge sharing, urge for professional knowledge and presence of mentors for being in teaching along with perception that Almighty chose this profession for them and they evolved as teacher over the years. Teachers also showed their concern that teaching is technology driven now which faces dishonesty in terms of time and knowledge and also features egalitarianism with reciprocal role of students. While reflective process, they also highlighted that now students look for short cuts as they focus more on quantity rather quality of knowledge as technology is facilitating and damaging the teaching system at the same time. Teachers also reflected on their professional change as they switched from books to discussion in classes, started factual teaching, became patient, and are open to change. Gaining students attention, motivating them, respect for diversity in classroom, professionalism and humor were key features of successful teaching in present scenario. When asked about sources of professional development in university teaching they pointed out paper publication and presentation, workshops, seminars, trainings, reflection on teaching, higher education and curiosity for knowledge as most prominent ones. According to participants, the major weaknesses of Pakistani teaching system were focus on rote learning, lack of indigenous literature, excessive teaching and non-teaching tasks

as well as lack of curiosity in students and teachers. Professors believed that reflection leads teachers to progression, learning from ones mistakes, life-long learning and make them more flexible in ones approach. The participants of the study believed that knowledge sharing, mentorship, personal growth of students, personal and professional growth of faculty was their major contributions.

The present work has great theoretical contribution in the Pakistani higher education system as here actual sources and issues of university teaching are targeted and discussed for further progression of educational system. The present dissertation have few limitations as its results can only be applicable on university teaching as well as the scale being generated in the present study is specifically for university teachers. In future, researches can be conducted on college teaching and the results can be merged to talk about overall teaching system in Pakistan at collegiate and university level.