

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

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Abstract

Teachers training and professional development play an essential role to enhance classroom practices and quality of education. From past few years, it is observed that educational institutes focus more on quality of educational strategies and strengthen teaching practices to improve students' learning. Total Quality Management was originally formed by industry, but now it is widely used in educational field for its idea of continuous improvement in systematic evaluation, collaboration and teamwork. This study examines the role of TQM strategies in enhancing teachers training and professional development in private schools of Sialkot, Pakistan. This qualitative research study aims to explore existing teachers training practices, investigating teachers' experiences about professional development, highlight challenges in training programs, and recommend strategies to improve them by using TQM principles. This study employed qualitative research approach with a descriptive case study design. Purposive sampling were used and 8 teachers were selected from primary school, who were part of training programs. Data were collected by using semi-structured interviews in order to get thick description of teachers' views and practical experiences. Collected data were analyzed through IPA analysis to identify common themes and patterns about teacher training quality and TQM implementation. This study is likely to highlight problems in existing professional development systems, including lack of follow-up, low participation of teachers, insufficient practical trainings, and weak feedback systems. Furthermore, this study tends to emphasize that by integrating TQM in teachers' training improved professional development effectively, continuously and sustainably in schools.

Keywords:

Total Quality Management, Teacher Training, Professional Development, Private Schools, Qualitative Research, Pakistan

Introduction

Quality education is considered to be the most important factor in the intellectual, social and economic development of any nation (Carney, 2022). Among all components of teaching and learning teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' learning experiences and academic progress? Therefore, improvement in quality of teaching through teachers, training and professional development has become an essential concern for educational institutions globally (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In most of the schools, prime purpose of organizing teachers'

trainings is to enhance teaching strategies, classroom management skills, and understanding of pedagogies. Despite taken these precautionary measures, number of teacher training sessions remains theoretical, inconsistent, and do not directly linked to the real classroom settings, particularly when it comes to developing counties like Pakistan(Avalos, 2011). This situation shed light on the need for more systematic and quality oriented methods for teacher development.

Total Quality Management is a system that emphasizes on ongoing development, teamwork, accountability, leadership support, and meeting needs of customers (Deming, 1986). In fact TQM was originally developed for business and industrial sector, but now its principles are now employed in educational field to enhance quality of teaching and performances of institutes. As per (Sallis, 2014), TQM in education promotes a culture of ongoing improvement where teachers, administrators, and stakeholders work together for better educational outcomes. In teacher training, TQM provide systematic planning, continuous feedback, reflective teaching practices, and ongoing professional support for teachers.

Teacher professional development is most effective when it aligns with the needs of the classroom. Research shows that short term workshops or lecture-based training sessions often do not lead to productive changes in classroom practice because they lack follow-up support and relevance to real classroom contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). An effective professional improvement should include teamwork, reflection on teaching, mentoring, and opportunities for teachers to keenly take part in the learning process(Guskey, 2002). However in most private schools, teacher training programs are designed without proper need assessment and involvement of teachers. Therefore teachers face number of challenges while implementing newly learned strategies in real classroom settings. In Pakistan, there is limited research done on TQM Total Quality Management particularly in private schools of cities such as Sialkot, on how its principles are linked with teacher training and their professional development practices(Sallis, 2014).

Although, number of schools conduct training sessions for teachers, but they face various challenges such as weak quality checks, inadequate leadership support, lack of follow-up, and low teacher involvement continue to decrease effectiveness (Bush, 2020; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2010). Therefore, this study seeks to explore how TQM strategies can improve teacher training and development by inspecting teachers' practices, challenges, and views about existing professional development practices. The study is likely to contribute valuable insights for school leaders, policymakers, and teacher educators seeking to improve the quality and long-term effectiveness of teacher training programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Research Objectives

1. To explore the current teacher training and professional development practices in private schools of Sialkot.
2. To examine teachers' views and experiences regarding the effectiveness of current training programs.
3. To identify the major challenges and gaps in implementing quality teacher training and professional development practices.
4. To investigate the role of Total Quality Management (TQM) strategies in improving teacher training and professional development.
5. To propose practical recommendations for enhancing teacher training programs through the application of TQM principles.

Research Questions

1. What are the current teacher training and professional development practices in private schools of Sialkot?
2. How do teachers perceive and experience the effectiveness of current training programs?
3. What are the major challenges and gaps in implementing quality teacher training and professional development practices?
4. How can Total Quality Management (TQM) strategies contribute to improving teacher training and professional development?
5. What recommendations can be proposed to enhance teacher training programs through the application of TQM principles?

Literature Review

To enhance quality of education Teachers' training and professional development is essential. Researchers believe that teachers perform better in classroom when they are provided with continuous practical training related to classroom requirements. Teachers training is effective when it provides support to teachers in improving their classroom strategies, teaching methodologies, communication skills, and outcomes of students' learning (Bush, 2020). However, number of schools face challenges in providing high-quality professional development programs for teachers. One of the key theme found in the literature is the need and importance of continuous professional development. Research indicates that teachers training should not be restricted to short seminars or one day training session. Rather, professional development should be a continuous process through which teachers get regular support, chances to reflect on their practices, and feedback (Guskey, 2002). Studies reveal that teachers learning is more effective when they get trainings aligned with real classroom practical situations and includes collaboration with colleagues. Darling-Hammond et al. 2017 found that teachers training programs becomes more effective when they focus on active learning, mentoring, collaboration, activities related to real settings of classrooms. This point toward the fact that hands-on and collaborative learning is more constructive than only theory and lectures.

Total Quality Management (TQM) in education focuses on constant improvement, teamwork, leadership, accountability, and enhancement of its quality (Deming, 1986). Schools have used it widely to enhance teaching and learning. Although, TQM was originally used by industrial sector but latter researchers employed its principles in educational institutes. Sallis 2014 shed light on the way TQM helps schools in establishing a culture of teamwork where whole staff members work together to enhance educational quality. Support from school leadership is also essential, as school leaders encourages and motivate teachers and strengthen professional development practices (Bush, 2020). Hargreaves and Fullan 2010 states that development of teacher is more effective in trustworthy environment, collaboration and shared responsibility.

A main issue found in literature reviews the gap between classroom practices and the trainings teachers received, as teacher face difficulties while inculcating the learnt strategies due to its theoretical nature and insufficient follow-up support (Avalos, 2011). In context of Pakistan, other challenges such as lack of resources, weak mentoring system, and low teachers' participation cause further decrease in its effectiveness. Although, TQM and teacher training have been studied separately, but limited researches explored how they both can be integrated in order to enhance teacher development in private schools, especially in Sialkot. Most of the exiting studies explored the policies rather than teaching experiences. This study fills the gap by exploring teachers' experiences and their role of TQM in professional development.

Methodology

This study uses Qualitative research approach to examine how Total Quality Management (TQM) strategies can enhance teacher's training and professional development in Private schools of Sialkot, Pakistan. Qualitative research is considered to be the best fit when the goal is to understand human experiences, views, and their meanings in depth(Yin, 2018)(Creswell & Poth, 2016). As this study examines teachers lived experience regarding professional development and implementation of TQM, this is why, qualitative research design is adopted for data collection and analysis.

Research Design

In this study descriptive case study design was employed. Case study research permits the researcher to explore a particular phenomenon with in real life context(Yin, 2018). This study employed this design because it examines specific settings; private schools in Sialkot and seeks to explore how TQM strategies are viewed by teachers in their professional development activities.

Sampling Strategy

Ten participants were selected by using purposive sampling form private schools of Sialkot, including 5 teachers, 2 coordinators and 3 principals. This non-probability sampling ensures that selected participants are chosen due to their specific traits relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2014). This sample size is apt for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), as it allows a rich and detailed understanding of participants' lived experiences individually(Smith et al., 2021).

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, as they are widely applied in qualitative research because of their features such as flexibility in exploring responses while keeping the discussion aligned with research question(Bryman, 2016). An interview guide consisting of open-ended questions was developed with themes such as teacher training organization, quality monitoring, teacher involvement, implementation challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Each participant were interviewed individually one- by- one, audio recorded with participants' consent that lasted approximately about 30 to 45 minutes, including probing questions. Informed consent were taken and their responses were kept fully confidential.

Data Analysis: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

To analyze data Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used, it's a qualitative approach which helps researcher to explore how people understand and interpret their personal and social experiences(Smith et al., 2021). IPA was considered appropriate for this study because it allowed an in-depth exploration of participants' subjective views of professional development and TQM practices. According toSmith 2021 framework, each transcript was read number of times to become familiar with the responses, after which exploratory notes were made and meaningful experiential statements were derived. These were grouped into Personal Experiential Themes (PETs) for all participants, then compared across all ten cases to develop Group Experiential Themes (GETs) that represent common experiences and collective patterns.

Trustworthiness

Various strategies were employed to ensure **trustworthiness** of this research. To check accuracy of participants' perspectives and interpretations, **member checking** was done. **Thick description** was used to give detailed and context-rich accounts of participants' experiences with in their context(Lincoln, 1980). The researcher maintained reflexivity throughout the research study, as the researcher examined personal assumptions regularly and their possible impact on data interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed all essential ethical procedures. This study ensured willingness of all participants, and were informed about the aim of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained at all stages of the research. All Participants were guaranteed that their responses would be used specifically for academic research purposes.

Findings and Results

In this section findings of the study derived from the analysis of participants' semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 participants from private schools in Sialkot, Pakistan. The data were analyzed by using (IPA) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which resulted in the identification of Personal Experiential theme (PETs) and Group Experiential Themes (GETs). The key finding are organized under emerging thematic headings representing the collective experiences and views of participants regarding teachers' training, Total Quality Management (TQM) and professional development.

Theme 1: Structured and Regular Teacher Training Systems

All 10 participants stated that their schools teacher trainings are organized regular in structured manner. These sessions are conducted with different schedules such as monthly, bi monthly, at the beginning of the session, and weekly basis. Participant 2 clearly stated that *"their school principal plans training sessions every two months in which teachers get guidelines about classroom management, how to engage students, and how to use new technology to support students in their studies."* Participant 3 told that in their school *"teachers trainings organized at two levels: grade level training sessions and training sessions for whole-staff. Grade level training takes place after every 2 weeks."* Participant 8 described that *"teacher trainings are held with proper schedule regularly on every Saturday of month, during summer break these sessions lasts for 10 to 15 days, and for new teachers whenever they required"*. These finding reflect that trainings held in schools regularly but timeframe and structure is different. Mostly participants reported about follow-up mechanism such as classroom observations, copy checking, and feedback meetings, which shows alignment with TQM strategies of continuous monitoring and enhancement.

Theme 2: Leadership Support as a Driver of Professional Development

One of the major theme all participant highlighted was school leadership support teacher professional development and played a fundamental role. Participants consistently highlighted that principal's constant support plays crucial role in providing positive learning environment. Participant 1 stated that leadership should show respect towards teachers. *"If principal find that teacher is unable to maintain class control then principal shouldn't insult teacher in front of students, instead principal should identify the weaknesses and provide proper training and support to the teacher."* Participant 1 also added, *"if principal is supportive than teacher will openly share their problems and challenges with management without hesitation."* Participant 5 expressed that they got strong support from their kind leadership, saying, *"Our school Dean is our problem solver, our problems are her first priority, she is also very kind and loving."* Participant 7 also stated that *"school leadership should provide them positive environment where they can discuss challenges with them openly and can experiment with new teaching methods without fear of negative criticism"*. These finding aligns with theory of transformational leadership, which emphasizes on motivation, appreciation, and support are key elements for teacher development.

Theme 3: Positive Impact of Training on Classroom Practice

All participant stated that teacher training had a positive influence on their classroom teaching practices. Participants consistently highlight the shift from traditional lecture-based teaching to

activity-based and students-centered approaches. Participant 1 described a clear transformation, stating,

“In the beginning of my carrier I used old teaching methods but students struggled to understand. However, after shifted to new teaching methods such as phonics, and activity based learning, students started understanding very fast and improved their reading and writing skills.”

Participant 5 highlight specific classroom improvement, stating, *“before the training I was working hard to gain students attention, but afterward, I was capable of keeping students involve by asking questions during lessons and regularly refocusing students attention after every second.”*

Participant 6 highlighted the use of new technology, noting, *“I also guided teachers to use AI tools such as chat GPT and other online apps to enhance their lesson plans.”* Participant 8 labelled a comprehensive pedagogical shift:

“Now I have left boring teaching practices of using board for reading and writing. Now I focus on interesting lesson plan and students engaging activities such as, storytelling, role-plays, drawings, riddles, ice breaking questions and use of body language while teaching.”

These finding shows when teacher get training relevant to their real classroom settings, it improved instructional practices and successfully transfer teaching and learning from traditional to modern setup.

Theme 4: Collaborative Learning and Teacher Involvement

Participants reported different levels of participations and involvement in planning and designing training programs. Participant 6, the vice principal, stated, *“Planning a training session is a collaborative process where teachers and coordinators share their perspectives regarding the selection of the topic, their suggestions considered seriously and include in professional development activities.”* Participant 9 similarly reported active engagement, noting, *“Yes, in our school teachers involved in planning and designing the leaning programs. Our suggestions are always considered. Whenever we practice innovations, we highlight drawbacks and bring them in management’s notice.”* However, Participant 7 highlighted limited involvement, stating,

“The teachers are involved in designing training programs but to some extent, as they asked to share their feedback and suggestions regarding topics where they are facing challenges. However, I believed that teacher could be involved more actively while planning training sessions so that the sessions become more relevant to the real life classroom needs.”

Participant 1 underlined the value of teamwork among colleagues, saying, *“We also collaborate with other colleagues and share knowledge with so that all teachers can improve their skills together.”* These findings shows the importance of moving toward partaking professional learning groups in schools.

Theme 5: Challenges in Implementing Training

Despite sharing positive experiences, all participants shared several major challenges they are facing that restricted the full potential of professional development programs. Most reported challenge was the time constraints and excessive workload. Participant 1 stated that pressure as: *“The major challenge a teacher usually faced in classroom is syllabus completion in given time*

limit, that makes the training sessions brief and teachers are unable to implement fully in the classroom.”Participant 7 further added,

“Teachers already deals with heavy workloads, such as lesson planning, coordination meetings, notebooks checking, assessments other classroom elated responsibilities. As a result, when training sessions are conducted after long working hours, it’s difficult for teachers to pay full attention, stay focused and energetic after a long working day.”

Participant 3 pointed out extensive structural and environmental hurdles:

“Number of challenges teachers usually faced are implementation of strategies they had learnt in training sessions in the classroom like dealing with large group of students, energy crisis, coping with changes occur in weather conditions, lengthy syllabus designed to compete with other schools, as a result students are often suffering with depression.”

Participant 10 pointed out the availability of resources didn’t meet the existing need, stating, *“In mostly classrooms modern technology and required teaching Audio/visual aids are not available. That is why teachers are unable to implement the strategies they were taught during trainings in their classrooms.”* This highlights the ongoing gaps between classroom realities and training content.

Theme 6: Feedback Mechanisms and Quality Monitoring

Participants stated the existence of several tools for observing and improving quality of teaching. Classroom observation is used as a key method to measure teaching quality. Participant 2 shared a positive experience with the observation system: *“Our principal give positive feedback after taking observations regularly. Number of teachers like this idea as this system helps them to become better teacher by overcoming their professional weaknesses.”* Participant 6 stated a complete monitoring cycle: *“After the training sessions, teachers asked for the reflections and understanding regarding the trainings. Then they are observed during their classrooms. If any gap is observed in their understanding, then training sessions are again held for teachers.”* However, Participant 3 shared discomfort about the observation system, stated that *“mostly teachers feel uncomfortable during their classroom observations and get stressed in front of their students, as they felt that it’s their auditing going on rather than monitoring.”* Participant 10 acknowledged this stress by teachers, stating, *“Sometimes teachers perform below average as compared to their normal class routine because of this monitoring, as they feel hesitant. Knowing that someone is observing them, they become nervous and less confident while teaching in classroom.”* These findings shows that effectiveness of quality monitoring depends on positive and constructive feedback rather than being punitive.

Theme 7: Recommendations for Improving Teacher Training

Participants 1 vice principal of private school provided relevant, practical and valuable recommendations for redesigning training programs: *“I will first visit classrooms to take teachers observations, identify problem teachers are facing. After that I will prepare training session as per the teachers’ need. After conduction the training I will further follow-up to provide further support.”* Participant 2 suggestedto conduct meeting very often but they must be short: *“A brief meeting should be conducted on monthly basisto discuss about the progress of teaching strategies*

employed in classrooms.” Participant 3 put emphasis on valuing teacher autonomy: *“Teachers’ training sessions should be organized during school timings so that their personal lives don’t get disturbed. Training sessions must be included use of new technology and interesting topics, especially use of AI, ICT and activity based learning.”* Participant 6 proposed a composed scheduling model: *“I will conduct training sessions for teacher after every 2 weeks, so that teacher get a chance to implement taught strategies.”* Participant 10 emphasized on greater teacher opinion, stating, *“I would also take teacher’s suggestion before selecting topic for training in future, so that the upcoming sessions can be planned better addressing teachers needs and challenges they faced during classroom teaching.”* “These recommendations collectively reflect TQM strategies of ongoing improvement, needs-based planning, feedback based on observation, and stakeholder involvement.

In general, the finding shows that TQM principles such as consistent improvement, leadership support, trainings that meet teacher’s needs, feed-back system, and collaborative learning have significant potential to enhance professional development of teachers in private schools of Sialkot, Pakistan. However, structural challenges such as time constraints, availability of resources, workload, and the gap between theory and practice must be addressed systematically to ensure that training leave long- lasting impact by improving the classroom practices and student learning outcomes.

Discussion

This study shed light on the strategies that operate under Total Quality Management (TQM) and discovered how these strategies contribute to improving teacher training and professional development in private schools of Pakistan. The finding shows that mostly schools practice to maintain structured and regular teacher training systems, which highlight the commitment of institute to capacity building a professional development. This aligns with principles of TQM that pointed out systematic planning, ongoing improvement, and quality assurance as important factors of organizational effectiveness.

However, clear difference between the depth and quality of training sessions varied significantly across institutions. Some schools provided comprehensive and multi-level training programs, on the other hand some conducted only basic level trainings. This variation recommends that although training systems exist, they do not always fully follow the principles of continuous improvement. Sallis 2014 states that effectiveness of TQM in educational institutes required a quality to integrate daily practices instead of treating training as a temporary and periodic activity. The findings show that a true quality culture is still in the process of building in many private schools of Sialkot, Pakistan.

Leadership as a Catalyst for Quality Improvement

This study shed light on the critical feature of school leadership that shaped teachers’ professionally. Participants reported repeatedly that when leadership is supported and connected respectfully with staff, builds safe environment where teachers can try new strategies, reflect on their routine practices and grow professionally. This finding of this research study aligns with the transformational theory, which gives leaders an important position for motivating and developing staff capacity. Psychological safety was highlighted by participants as an important factor affecting teacher engagement. When teachers feared criticism, they became shy and less active in training participation. Hargreaves and Fullan 2010 also emphasize that trust, cooperation among staff, and shared responsibility are crucial for sustainable professional learning. From the perspective of

TQM, commitment of leaders is foundational element because leaders play a prominent role in establishing culture of an organization and quality outcomes (Sallis, 2014).

Training Transfer and Classroom Impact

The results revealed that teachers training influence positively environment of the class when it was practical and relevant to the classroom culture. Teachers stated that after attending teachers training, their teaching shifted from traditional lecture-based instruction to more student-centered approaches. This supports Darling-Hammond 2017, who highlighted active learning and applicability in classroom as key components of effective professional development. However, training was not always successfully transferred to classroom practice because of its structural barriers such as heavy workloads, lack of time, large size of class, and inadequate resources. Avalos 2011 also shed light on the consistent theory-practice gap in developing contexts, where training outcomes are often restricted by insufficient follow-up and contextual challenges.

Collaborative Learning and Teacher Agency

This study showed that collaboration among teachers was highly valued, especially through peer discussions, sharing each other's personal experiences and joint planning. However, participation of teachers while designing a training programs was limited in various schools. In most schools teachers engaged in training programs as a consultant rather than to work as a decision-making body, indicated restricted professional agency. According to Guskey 2002 professional development works best when teachers are actively take part in shaping the learning process instead of receiving it passively. Giving teachers a stronger role in designing training programs supports TQM principles of stakeholder participation and shared responsibility, which are important for sustainable improvement.

Challenges and Implications for TQM Implementation

Major challenges such as time constraints, pressure of workload, insufficient resources, and weak follow up mechanisms were identified to hinder the effective implementation of TQM in teacher training. These results highlight systematic problems in Pakistan's private education sector, where professional development is mostly considered as an extra responsibility instead of an integrated approach for improvement (Bush, 2020). Effective implementation of TQM needs continuous training, practical, and supported by sufficient institutional resources and proper monitoring systems. Participants recommended needs-based training, shorter sessions, regular feedback-driven cycles, and more teacher involvement. These recommendations are aligned with fundamental TQM principles such as continuous progress and involvement of stakeholders. As a result, this study shows that TQM strategies can bring significant improvement in teacher professional development when they are supportive by effective leadership, culture of working as a team, and sufficient resources.

Conclusion:

This study examined TQM strategies in teacher training and professional development in private schools of Sialkot, Pakistan, using a qualitative case study design with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Findings revealed structured training systems reflecting institutional commitment, yet constrained by time limitations, heavy workloads, and inadequate follow-up support. Leadership support significantly enhanced teacher motivation and willingness to adopt innovative strategies, aligning with TQM principles emphasizing leadership commitment and continuous improvement (Sallis, 2014). Practical, needs-based training positively influenced instructional practices and student engagement. Collaborative peer learning emerged as a notable

strength; however, teacher involvement in program planning remained limited, necessitating stronger participation to reflect TQM's stakeholder responsibility principles (Deming, 1986).

Overall, integrating TQM strategies into professional development can foster sustainable teacher training within Pakistan's private school context.

Recommendations and Implications

School leaders should adopt transformational leadership practices that provide support to teachers' well-being, safeguard psychological safety, and encourage open communication. According to Hargreaves and Fullan 2010, constructive feedback in classroom observations help to enhance teachers' confidence and professional development. Therefore to create positive and professional learning environment supportive leadership is essential requirement.

Training programs should be restructured as ongoing, practical, and updated as per teachers' needs rather than separately designed theoretical workshops. According to Hargreaves and Fullan 2010, effective professional development must involve active learning of teachers, must be relevant to real classroom practice, and provision of opportunities for reflection and should be apply practically throughout the academic year.

Schools need to improve their feedback and evaluation mechanisms by regularly using teachers' input to improve future programs. This aligns with TQM principles such as stakeholder contribution and ongoing quality enhancement (Deming, 1986). Moreover, teachers should be given more chances to participate in planning training programs, because teachers better understand classroom challenges and students' learning needs (Guskey, 2002). This improves the relevance and effectiveness of professional development.

Finally, policymakers need to resolve structural issues like unnecessary workload, limited resources, and large class sizes to ensure that TQM-based professional development can bring lasting improvements in classroom practice.

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