



PRACTICES AND SUPPORT FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOVICE TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY

Riffat Asif¹, Quratulain Sarwat², Dr. Um E Rubab³, Prof. Dr. Malik Ghulam Behlol⁴

Affiliations:

¹ M.Phil. Scholar,
Fatima Jinnah Women University
Email: riffasif.ra@gmail.com

² PhD Scholar,
Fatima Jinnah Women University
Email: quratulain.sarwat@fjwu.edu.pk

³ Assistant Professor,
Faculty of Education,
Fatima Jinnah Women University
Email: umerubab@fjwu.edu.pk

⁴ Dean Faculty of Education,
Fatima Jinnah Women University
Email: ghulambehlol@fjwu.edu.pk

Corresponding Author's Email:

umerubab@fjwu.edu.pk

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Abstract

The study investigated the mentoring practices of senior teachers and school heads to facilitate the professional development of novice teachers (NT), particularly in enhancing lesson planning, classroom management, and pedagogical practices. This research was conducted as a phenomenological case study, wherein the researcher carried out semi-structured interviews with NT, senior teachers, and school heads operating in the primary schools of Rawalpindi city (20). The findings indicate that NT encounter challenges related to classroom management and behavioural issues with problematic students, are overwhelmed by the administrative responsibilities assigned by school heads, and often lack the support of senior colleagues in areas such as lesson planning, pedagogy, and assessment practices. The lack of academic cohesion among NT, senior teachers, and school heads poses a significant obstacle to reciprocal and ongoing professional development. An institution-based framework is recommended to facilitate the continuous professional development of NT while simultaneously supporting senior teachers. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for structured mentorship programs that foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among educators. Novice teachers often struggle with adapting to school culture and implementing effective teaching strategies due to insufficient guidance. Senior teachers, while experienced, may lack formal training in mentorship, leading to inconsistent support. School heads play a crucial role in bridging this gap by promoting a culture of professional growth. Recommendations include regular workshops, peer observations, and feedback mechanisms to strengthen mentoring relationships. Addressing these challenges will enhance teaching quality and create a supportive environment for both new and experienced educators.

Keywords: Novice teachers, Professional Development, Elementary schools, Senior teachers, School Heads

Introduction

The initial teaching career of up to 3 Years is termed a novice-teaching career that requires intensive support, guidance, and mentoring to learn and practice the art and science of teaching (Feimen-Nemser, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2003). However, it has been established in several studies that Novice Teachers (NT) face multidimensional challenges when they join teaching profession and open the quota of their professional careers (Kuster et al., 2010). The classroom world is somewhat different from the knowledge, attitude, and skills taught in pre-service teacher education program. They need support and guidance to address the emerging challenges in managing the teaching-learning process in the mixed-ability classroom. Studies also established that NT are monitored instead of mentored by the senior colleagues and school administration, which increases the rate of stress, anxiety and burnout. They were assigned academic tasks that are considered tough and challenging without proper orientation and induction training (Ahmed, 2025).



These initial years contribute a significant role in shaping their teaching habits, teaching philosophy, and professional identity. When NT join the teaching field, they perceive that the environment would be the same as they have experienced in the pre-service teacher education program; and they take philosophically based decisions that do not address the ground realities that exist in schools and classrooms. However, the classroom scenario is somewhat different, and they have to face a practical world that is full of ambiguity, disconnection, and challenges. They face administrative, academic, and human relationship challenges at the beginning of their careers. Moreover, challenging classroom management issues, pedagogical dilemmas, limited access to instructional materials (hard and soft), intricacies of planning and organizing lessons, motivating demotivating students and conducting a learning-driven assessment are the key obstacles (Feimen-Nemser, 2003; Melnick & Meister, 2008).

Difficulties in preparing lessons, as they are not competent enough to manage time, present and introduce creative ideas, sequence and interconnect different concepts, and solve classroom problems, are overwhelming for them. Lessons beyond their area of expertise do not emerge as effortlessly as within their proficiency area. Sometimes, they cannot answer students' questions, which lowers NT's morale and confidence (Curtis, 2012). The other main factor affecting NTs' careers is the relationship with colleagues, parents, and school administration. According to Morey, Bezuk, & Chiero (1997), teaching is the only profession where NT have to do equal or added work as has been done by the experienced teacher. They need support and guidance on the part of senior teachers who work as mentors for them. A mentor is a person who offers sincere efforts and support to inexperienced teachers by telling them the ways to improve their teaching. (Christensen & Knezek, 2008). A mentor is always concerned about the achievement of the mentees and overcoming the teaching-learning difficulties. We need to shift the paradigm not only on retaining teachers but also on sustaining teachers too. This shift offers the possibility of new insights into teacher education and about the kinds of spaces needed in school landscapes to sustain and retain beginning teachers (Kuster et al., 2010).

Pakistani Context of the Study

In Pakistan, Teacher Education Programs have undergone several experiments proposed by the donor agencies without observing the ground realities. Blind following and ignoring the existing academic, administrative, and infrastructural realities are major barriers to the successful implementation of the pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. We have started with Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) with 8 Years and 10 Years of entry qualification for elementary school teachers. A Certificate of Teaching (CT) with 12 Years FA /F.SC qualification replaced it. Moreover, the latest USAID intervention of the four Years B.ED Hons program with twelve Years of education is a comprehensive, balanced, and well-thought-out document (Qureshi, 2016; Halai & Khan, 2011). However, the formulation of programs without building the capacities of teacher educators to implement them in true letter and spirit is a key challenge throughout the history of Pakistan. The detail of the preservice teacher education program is explained in table 1 below:

Table 1

Teacher Education Programs, Durations, and Admission Qualifications

Program Name	Duration	Qualification for Admission
1. J.V (Junior Vernacular)	One year	Middle (8 years of schooling)
2. S.V (Senior Vernacular)	One year	Matric (10 years of schooling)
3. C.T (Certificate in Teaching)	One year	F.A./F.Sc. (12 years of schooling)
4. O.T (Oriental Teaching)	One year	F.A. (12 years of schooling)
5. B.T (Bachelor in Teaching)	One year	B.A. (14 years of schooling)
6. B.Ed. (Bachelor in Education)	One year	B.A. (14 years of schooling)
7. M.Ed. (Master in Education)	Two years	B.Ed. (14 years of schooling)
8. M.A. (Master of Arts in Education)	Two years	B.A. (14 years of schooling)
9. B.S./B.Ed. (Hons)	Four years	F.A./F.Sc. (12 years of schooling)
10. MS/M.Phil. (Education)	Two years	M.Ed./M.A. (16 years of schooling)
11. Ph.D. (Education)	Four years	B.S./B.Ed. (Hons), MS/M.Phil.

(Source: Azad (2012) PhD research thesis, International Islamic University Islamabad)



Generally, the graduates produced through these programs lack in-depth familiarity with the school environment and required expertise in organising learning experiences in public schools in Pakistan. Naseem (2014) stated that a lack of collaboration between the school leadership and pre-service education programs runs in the teacher education institutions is also a significant challenge to produce quality teachers. Moreover, at the beginning of their career, NT face challenging conditions in the classroom when they do not obtain support and professional guidance on the part of senior teachers and school heads (Qureshi, 2016; Halai & Khan, 2011). They require in-time and specific guidance from senior faculty and school heads when they begin their careers after completing a pre-service teacher education degree because they are new and inexperienced teachers who have not developed their teaching philosophy yet. In the 4 Years (Hons) Pre-service Teacher Education program, they have been provided opportunities to practice teaching in Cooperating Schools (schools where prospective teachers go for teaching practicum), but the quality of guidance and support is not sufficient enough to learn the art and science of teaching for enhancing their professional competence (Masood & Behlol, 2021; Khan, 2014).

Therefore, the beginning Years of teaching are a discovery and survival phase, full of challenges and difficulties for NT. When a NT joins the teaching field, he/she has a mind-set that the environment would be the same as they have learned in the pre-service teaching education program. However, the scenario is different when they enter the classroom and face the practical world full of ambiguity, disconnect, and challenges. Relationships with senior faculty and with all the school stakeholders play a crucial role in the professional expansion and grooming of NT. Above all, according to Masood and Behlol (2021) and Ali and Haider, (2012), the senior faculty role in supporting the NT is almost non-existent in the Pakistani school system. According to Akhtar, Shah, and Din (2011), pre-service teacher education does not help the NT to apply their knowledge in real classroom settings because of inadequate support from the senior teachers and heads of the school. Consequently, it is necessary to address these issues by finding out the practices and support for NTs' professional development by the senior faculty and school leadership.

Research Questions

1. How do the novice teachers describe their experiences to address the pedagogical challenges with the support and not with the support of senior teachers and school heads in elementary schools?
2. How do novice teachers navigate their professional development by interacting with the school environment and with the support of senior faculty and primary school heads?

Theoretical framework

The social cultural theory of Vygotsky emphasises the role of peers, culture, and values in education and cognitive development. Every culture has its tool, which enables an individual to form his/her mind-set accordingly. Theory underlines the importance of social and cultural connections that play a crucial role in the learning process. It proclaims that knowledge is co-created and that individuals learn from one another through interaction. It is also called a social constructivist theory because, in Vygotsky's opinion, the learner needs to be engaged in the learning process, and learning happens with other people. Therefore, the NTs are the learners and they need to interact and socialise with the school environment with the support of ST and school heads. They need continuous support from their senior faculty and school Heads to grasp and practice learning skills successfully. They are new to the teaching profession and are not very familiar with the school environment, so they have to be guided and driven by their senior colleagues and school heads in this phase. They should not be left alone in this initial stage of their carrier and at the mercy of circumstances. Another essential aspect of sociocultural learning theory is scaffolding, which provides novice enough guidance and support at the right time. These theoretical underpinnings may help to explore the practices of senior faculty and heads in enhancing the professional development of NT in learning the science and art of teaching. This theory is relevant to the teaching profession where teachers work collaboratively.

While Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provides a foundation, incorporating additional frameworks like Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory could offer further insight into novice teachers' confidence development during early career challenges.



Methodology of the Study

Paradigm, Method and Design

A paradigm is a belief system that guides the researcher to choose methods and techniques to collect and analyse data. It plays an indispensable role in the research process and helps the researcher to select suitable methods and research techniques to search for the answers of the research questions (Creswell, 2003). The interpretive research paradigm is based on the postulate that social reality is not singular or objective; personal human experiences and social settings shape it in multiple ways. Interpretivists believe that there is no single reality or truth, and it is interpreted according to the context and specific situation. The NT possess multiple viewpoints about lesson planning, pedagogical strategies, classroom management, assessment, and academic relationship; therefore, the interpretive paradigm has been applied for this study.

Methodology refers to the processes and techniques by which a researcher addresses the problems and strives for answers. Because the study aimed to gain insight into NTs' experiences of their professional development navigation, therefore, a phenomenological case study design was used to investigate the phenomenon. The researcher chose this design to understand how people interpret their experiences, how they create their worlds, and what connotations they attach to their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology research design focus on the study of perceived experiences to understand the reality around us. It is based on the ideas of German philosopher Edmund Husserl in the early 20th century, who believed that human experience is the root of all knowledge. Phenomenology is concerned with the well-organized thinking and analysis of phenomena associated with knowing experiences, so the researcher found phenomenology will best define the experiences that the researcher intends to observe in this study. Phenomenological analysis demands that researchers exclude any previous opinions and personal biases, empathize with the participant's situation, and harmonize with the existing situation to fully understand the studied participants. It describes how human beings experience a professional development phenomenon through their perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings.

Participants of the Study

This phenomenological study has been conducted with those NT who are working in public elementary schools of Rawalpindi city. The participants involved in this study were those NT who have spent 1 to 2 Years in the school, senior teachers with ten or more years of experience, and Heads of institutes working in public elementary schools in Rawalpindi city. The researcher applied a purposive sampling technique to select the participants, and according to Patton (2002), this sample selection technique has exceptional, or typical, attributes to identify those participants who experienced the support and practice phenomenon that is being queried. The participants of the study are given in the table 2 below:

Table 2

Participants of the study

Participants	Gender	Age	Qualification	Experience
Novice teachers	M=4 F=6	21-25=7	MA/B.ED=5	One year=4
		26-30=3	B.ED 4Years=5	Two years=6
Senior Teachers	M=2 F=3	40-50= 3	MA/B.ED=1	15-20 years=4
		50 above=2	BA/B.ED =4	20 years above=1
Primary school heads	M=2 F=3	21-25=3	MA/B.ED=1	15-20 years=4
		26-30= 1	BA/B.ED =4	20 years above=1
		30 above=1		

Semi-Structured Interview

In qualitative approaches, the interview is the most common tool for data collection (Andrew & Halcomb, 2009). The main task of the researcher in interviewing is to acquire the meaning from the dialogue of the interviewees. This type of interview holds an interview guide instead of an interview schedule that provides reliable and detailed information about the phenomena under the study, and grants liberty to interviewees to present views and speak about the phenomena in their way (Patton, (2002). The researcher



formulated and conducted semi-structured interviews with NT, senior teachers and school heads to gather in-depth understanding of the practices and support for NT. Semi-structured interviews are useful to set broad and open-ended questions that allowed participants to express their viewpoints comprehensively. This type of interview allowed the researcher to study the participants' experiences without having any disruptive structures.

The researcher visited five experts and requested their precious opinions and input to improve, modify, and alter interview questions. After the discussion with study experts, the interview was modified; appropriate changes were made and pilot tested. Pilot testing is useful to enhance the research instrument's practical application, reliability, and validity (Cohen, 2008). The best method to pilot-test the instrument is to consult it with people included in the population but not in the sample to predict the concerning issues.

Methods of analysis

The qualitative study focuses on knowing the meaning of the participants' experiences, and how they decode their words, and what meaning they provide to their experiences (Merriam, 2009). The phenomenological interview is a 'conversation' or an interactive engagement between participants and the researcher that is encouraged to reveal the details of their experiences (Cohen, 2008). The researcher followed the active listening approach and accepted the participants' behaviours and attitudes as they were occurring during the interview. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded-- open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. To control the effect of biases in data collection, the researcher analysed subjective consciousness (subjective consciousness is a state of consciousness in which a person is always aware of his or herself and outside factors) of self through reflexivity and writing research journal and reflective notes. Reflexivity skills enable one to be open to hearing experiences in a new way and analyse the phenomenon appropriately. These writing exercises helped the researcher in de-contextualizing and then re-contextualizing novice teachers' lived experiences.

To ensure conformability, the transcription and quotes were discussed with the participants to check their accuracy. The researcher ensured that the transcription and questions are the same as communicated by the participants, rather than the researcher's views herself. Data gathered from NT, Senior Teachers and heads were triangulated, which was useful to check the inconsistencies and personal biases. According to Cohen and Manion (2008), triangulation is a technique that gives a balanced picture of human behaviour in an unbiased and objective way.

Data Analysis

Major themes and sub-themes are given as under in table 3

Table 3

Major themes and sub-themes

Provisional Themes	Emergед Themes	Sub-themes
Lesson Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson planning is a formality • NT practices and challenges in lesson planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significance of the lesson plan guide-book • Guidance of Senior Teachers regarding lesson planning • Rigidity in lesson planning
Pedagogical Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance of Senior Teachers in implementing pedagogical strategies • Use of new technology and pedagogical strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of pedagogical strategies • Challenges involved in designing and using pedagogical strategies • Time and space problems • Use of ICT and experimentation
Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' personality and classroom management • Senior teacher's guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' personality traits • Management style • Novice Teachers and Time/ space management • Senior teacher's guidance
Assessment practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing assessment tools • Meeting students' expectation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional assessment practices • Crowded classes • Senior teachers support and guidance



Provisional Themes	Emerged Themes	Sub-themes
Academic Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition and appreciation • Barriers in professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of professional achievements • Barriers in professional development • Professional, social and emotional barriers • Need of professional networking

Findings, Discussion, and Conclusions

The significant findings and discussions of the study are as under:

Administrative workload of NT

The research indicated that the majority of school leaders and senior colleagues delegate administrative responsibilities to novice teachers (NT) that are not expected to be carried out by them -- managing staff registers, creating and printing assessment sheets for senior faculty, maintain financial records, attending senior teachers' classes, and, most importantly, handling official email correspondence. They are required to be oriented and pass through induction training managed by the senior colleagues before the assignment of these responsibilities, instead of demanding performance off hand. A significant number of these school principals lack education and training in computer technology and rely on the capable NT for assistance in fulfilling official tasks. This gap in technology competence, especially on the part of heads who were taught with traditional methods of teacher training and preparation of record, is not the weakness on their part but a challenge of the system and old-time legacy. It is required to be fulfilled by either providing training to them or the provision of competent supporting staff instead of throwing the responsibility to NT. These responsibilities undoubtedly contribute to the professional growth of NT; however, the excessive workload may have detrimental effects on their performance and retention within the education sector. Moreover, it may also result in deterioration of the relationship between heads and NT. Morey, Bezuk, & Chiero (1997) and Ahmed (2025) discovered that teaching is the only profession where NTs are required to undertake equal or additional work compared to their more experienced counterparts.

The program initiated by the Government of the Punjab Education Department aims to guarantee the universal enrolment of primary-aged children within the school's catchment area; however, Senior Teachers often exploit it. To ensure both classroom attendance and universal enrolment, the entire responsibility falls on the NT to conduct door-to-door visits for enrolment. The NT feels demeaned and disrespected as they are compelled to run from door to door while the Senior Teachers remain inactive. In this regard, the Senior Faculty, being more experienced and better connected within the community, could potentially execute this task more efficiently than the NT. Furthermore, it has been noted that the NT experiences significant stress and fatigue, and they strongly believe that "it is not the responsibility of teachers to fetch children from their homes to guarantee full class attendance; otherwise, an inquiry will be initiated against their schools." The process of teaching and learning is inherently a voluntary, curiosity-driven, and personal endeavour that can not be genuinely pursued under coercive and stressful circumstances. The research conducted by Ahmed, Faizi, & Akbar (2020) corroborates these findings, indicating that many NT face challenges stemming from school head teachers who exhibit a non-supportive administrative and academic demeanour.

Support in Lesson planning

The study revealed that both novice and experienced teachers are neglecting the significance of lesson planning, treating it merely as a formal requirement, rather than engaging with it in a meaningful way. Experienced teachers often suffer from a seniority complex, believing that their long tenure exempts them from the necessity of lesson planning, as they have been teaching the same subjects for several years. They fail to recognise that each lesson represents a distinct and valuable opportunity for enhancing their professional growth. They perceive teaching as a repetitive task that remains unchanged throughout their careers, lacking any form of adjustment, modification, or enhancement.

Consequently, NT lack role models and support in developing their lesson plans, and often feel discouraged by overcrowded classrooms. They are seeking support in addressing pedagogical challenges that are often lacking in schools. The concept of learning community which they have studied in literature, is nowhere in schools. Therefore, they feel all alone in the field without any guidance and support to address the



ever-emerging challenges of human relationships, classroom discipline, organisation of lessons, relating ideas to life, etc. This situation may perpetuate traditional pedagogical approaches that do not allow for the exploration and implementation of innovative teaching methods. Previous research has also shown that traditional learning environments persist and maintain a strong influence over the educational system in Pakistan (Ahmed, 2025). The evaluation of lesson planning by educational authorities is conducted as a formal procedure rather than a professional development initiative. Its primary focus is on completing the curriculum rather than on providing oversight that would enhance the quality of lessons.

The study found that lesson-planning guidebooks provided by the Punjab government are not simultaneously delivered to the schools. Few schools obtain the latest ones, while the rest have no in-time provision. Moreover, capacity building of teachers is urgently required to be based on these guides. Otherwise, this learning resource will be of little use. The Senior Teachers have certain reservations about the number and nature of learning activities incorporated in the guides.

Engaging students in lessons and sustaining their focus is a continuous challenge in the classroom. However, the factors that divert attention of students from the learning process are also continuously changing, which requires relevant tips and tricks to respond to the situation. The NT are new in the field and may learn how to engage students in lessons with the passage of time and working with senior colleagues in team teaching. A company of senior colleague also ensure the provision and practice of a variety of pedagogical practices to NT for effective engagement in the learning process. However, these collaborative learning and team teaching practices are missing for the mentoring of NT in elementary schools of Pakistan. Martin (2023) also verifies the results of the study that the complicated learning process of NT can be supported and enhanced by the support of senior colleagues in the 'community learning environment'.

The rate of discipline problems and delinquent incidents can be decreased by working in a collaborative and team-teaching environment, which may also provide greater confidence and promote resilience in NT. When NT works in the company of senior colleagues, it will result in the enhancement of his/her social competence, which may develop the capabilities to address the individual differences and behavioural problems of students in the classroom by looking through multiple perspectives.

Pedagogical and Assessment Practices

NT observed that implementing innovative teaching strategies in the classroom poses challenges due to students' reliance on textbook-centred and teacher-led learning. They also noted a lack of support from senior faculty and school leadership for experimenting with innovative, student-centred learning methods. Furthermore, they asserted that senior faculty often discourage the use of creative pedagogies, fearing it may lead to disciplinary issues and difficulties in classroom management. Most importantly, assessment practices do not align with innovative pedagogies; instead, they emphasise rote memorisation of concepts rather than engaging students in creative, critical, and problem-solving activities. Previous research (Zeichner, 2012; Wilson & Christie, 2010) supports the notion that students' resistance and the misalignment of assessment practices are significant barriers to developing creative and critical thinking skills. The study also found that many Senior Teachers do not assist or guide NT in the assessment process, believing they are sufficiently knowledgeable and capable of teaching and assessing lessons based on their recent learning. Hover and Yaeger (2004) indicated that pre-service teacher education often fails to equip NT with the ability to apply their knowledge in actual classroom environments due to insufficient support from Senior Teachers and institutional leadership. Masood & Behlol (2021) concur that the involvement of senior faculty in supporting NT is nearly absent within Pakistan's school education system. The relationship appears to be quite inflexible, rigid, and bureaucratic, offering minimal support for the professional development of novice teachers.

Academic Relationship

The study also found that the Senior Teachers possess the perception that the school heads grant more importance and liberty to the NT as compared to the senior faculty. Whereas school heads think that Senior Teachers are rigid, stubborn, and inflexible in their commitment in the majority of cases in academic cooperation. This situation has created a conflicting environment among NT, Senior Teachers, and school heads that have to be addressed for the smooth functioning of school activities. The findings reveal that the engagement of NT to grow and expand the scope of their professional development required encouragement



on the part of senior colleagues and heads of institutions.

The study also revealed that NT are also part of problem and contribute to their challenges due to inexperience and behavioural issues. Shouting, strong facial expressions and humiliating students to establish the authority as a teacher, and awarding corporal punishments and abusing add insult to the injury. It creates rivalry and tense situations for the NT and students, and has significant negative effects on the learning process. Teachers need to behave more politely and humbly in order to effectively manage their classrooms.

Conclusions and Implications

Most Senior Teachers do not have a sense of commitment of furnishing models and mentoring to NT to improve their profession, which is mandate in curbing the classroom administration problem, introduction of progressive pedagogical and assessment activities, as well as establishment of self-regulation in learning space in schools. Consequently, the latest lesson planning, delivering, and learning-related assessment rules and practices drilled during preservice teacher education programs are not applied and investigated by the NT. Such academic theorization-practice gap comes along with a cyclic trend that brings with it old practices that end up hurting student performance. The Superiority complex that is ingrained through the completion of years of teaching experience among the Senior Teachers does not allow them to re-live or re-assess their ways in teaching. This change reluctance is usually mainly due to system inertial rather than personal reluctance because institution rewards seldom motivate pedagogical innovation. This continues to create the status quo of the traditional learning pedagogies that fails to embrace the new ideas in teaching approaches and professional advancements of the NT.

We can also deduce that the head of the school assigns his or her administrative functions to NT, which dwindles their performance through demotivation. This bureaucratic burden affects female new teachers specifically harder, because the cultural convention tends to provide them with more caretaking responsibilities beyond school. They are worn out, powerless and stressed. Moreover, NT is not getting adequate respect and having cordial academic relationship with Senior Faculty because of different reasons. This gap is worsened by the lack of formal mentorship programs and new teachers find themselves in tricky situations with school politics which they have to figure out. The atmosphere of conflict between senior teachers and NT has also been promoted by trust and close relations with the heads of NT. Similarly senior teachers observe NTs as being proud and arrogant thanks to their high education level and this is the reason why the NTs would not like social interactions. This conflict between generations represents a wider pattern of social change in educational achievement and needs special conflict resolution training.

Capacity building workshop to improve the practical skills of the Novice Teachers (NTs) is required. Such workshops ought to be job-embedded, where training is combined with work in the classroom and reflection period. NTs have the desire and are exploring every chance to advance and enhance their professional skills. These workshops need to be differentiated and be more practical in application as well as blending in with what has been planned as activities in the teaching guide. Micro credentialing might have the advantage that participation is motivated by providing real career enhancement rewards. It has been proposed that an institutional level strategic plan is formulated that can support continuous professional development of both NTs and senior teachers. This plan ought to have a required period of collaboration time without the need to do this kind of work outside school time which is not feasible.

This plan ought to be supported with an implementation framework which considers the tough local contexts. Testing feasibility at pilot schools in volunteering schools could be a way to subsequently do it nationally. Moreover, re-evaluation of the consistency of portion of curriculum, training, and evaluation should take place, and bushy parts must be handled. Communities of practice should assist people in closing it by creating resource developments via peers. They should strengthen induction programs and make them stringent to ensure that the teachers are well equipped to meet the challenge, they will encounter in the real teaching environment. An ascending induction process coupled with greater responsibilities within 3 years is better to develop gradual competency. Based on the main findings and the conclusions obtained in the course of conducting the research, a general model of the further development of Novice Teachers has been offered. Reciprocation of academic relationship exists between NTs, senior teachers (STs) and school heads with the main emphasis on transition of a collaborative school environment, personalities characteristic, beliefs and

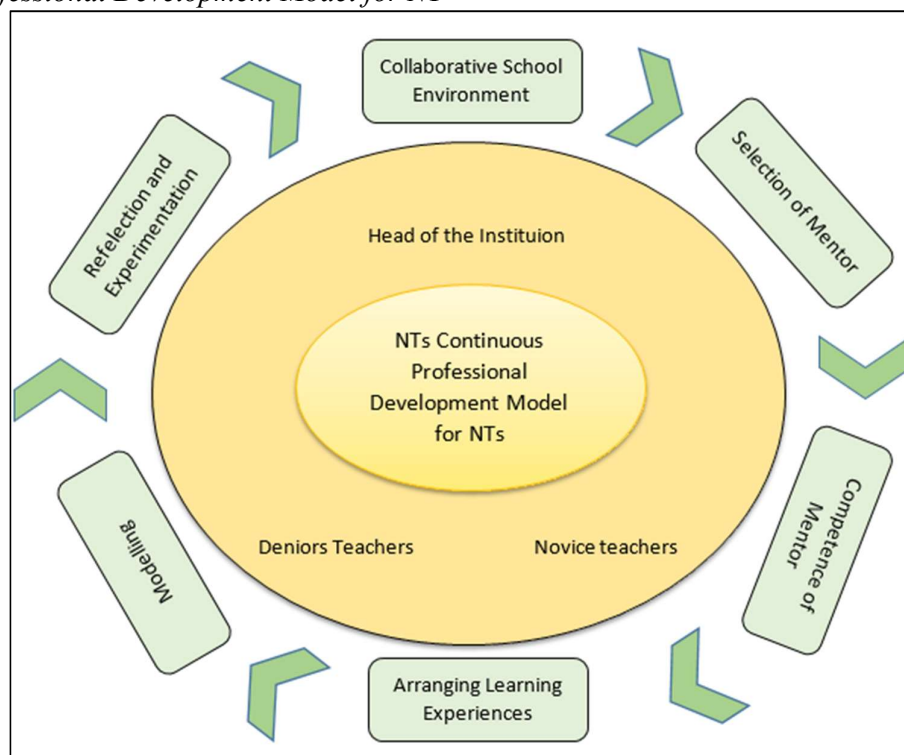


attitudes, learning experience, professional relationships, and mutually admired respect. To maintain this model, the ministry in charge of education should have specific funding on mentorship programs and reward outstanding mentors with national awards.

The continuous professional development model for NT is as under:

Figure 1

Continuous Professional Development Model for NT



Novice teachers are facing multiple instructional, classroom management and interpersonal challenges with students, colleagues, and the community. To address those challenges, we need a collaborative school environment that focuses on continuous professional development to facilitate and launch novice teachers. We recommend the selection of committed, capable, and learning colleagues to work as mentors to provide orientation and modelling opportunities to novice teachers. They observe the teaching and learning process of their mentees to organise learning experiences that may lead to the development of creative, critical, collaborative, and efficient communication skills. The novice teachers are required to be supported in this community-based learning environment to practice the science and art of teaching learning to become an expert professional, which is a lifelong activity.

The recurring themes of administrative overload and mentorship gaps suggest systemic issues that cannot be resolved solely through individual relationships. Policy interventions, such as protected mentorship time and reduced non-teaching duties for novices, may be necessary structural solutions.

Limitations of the Study

Although the present study offers good information on the issues that novice teachers in Pakistani public elementary schools can struggle with, dozen or so limitations have to be admitted.

To begin with, a small size of sample ($N = 20$) was used with geographical limitations in terms of sampling urban schools in Rawalpindi. This constrains externalisation of results to the rural setup or any other part of Pakistan that might have very different structures of infrastructures, facilities, and culture.

Second, due to the self-reported information that is collected in a semi-structured interview, there is a possibility of response bias even though the instrument is rich in qualitative information. There is a possibility of underreporting negative experiences because of the hierarchies associated with power (e.g., novice teachers



would be unwilling to criticize senior teachers or Head teachers). Observation as a triangulation of classroom or administrative records would have strengthened validity.

Third, the research design lacked school level factors (e.g. student teacher ratios, subject specialisation, or socioeconomic status of students) that could underlie the experience of new teachers. To take an example, classroom management woes in high population schools (40+ students) are probably different from those presented in smaller settings.

Fourth, the phenomenological way, albeit suitable to study lived experiences, does not allow making causal inferences. Such tracking over a period of 3-5 years of the same teachers may show how the difficulties change with experience.

Lastly, the professional development model that is proposed is not tested even though it is theoretically valid. To actually implement it, it would be necessary to manage systemic barriers (e.g. time restrictions, no incentive to train mentors), which are not the focus of this paper.

The gaps could be filled by future research using mixed methods, rural samples, and pilot interventions.

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