Perceptions of the Key Stakeholders on Professional Development of Teachers in Rural Pakistan

Ali Nawab

Abstract
Professional development (PD) has generally been associated with the learning opportunities teachers avail externally. However, the latest trends propagate grounding PD activities in the work place with the assumption that such shift will not only enable teachers to be engaged in ongoing learning but also help them to find contextual solutions for their specific issues. For other academics, however, PD refers to all the planned and unplanned activities which teachers avail to improve their practices. In this background, this research explored how relevant stakeholders in rural Pakistan perceive PD. Using a survey method and questionnaire tool, data were collected from teachers, school leaders, education department officials, and representatives of PD providers. The outcomes showed that majority of stakeholders associate PD to external learning opportunities provided to the teachers. In addition, there is a lack of shared understanding among different stakeholders with regard to the meaning of PD. These conclusions have implications for PD providers and educational reformers. Teachers should be oriented on latest trends in PD as well as supported to use the latest school-based PD models for their ongoing development.

Keywords
professional development, professional learning, rural Pakistan, perceptions of stakeholders

Introduction
The process of change might not have been witnessed with such intensity in human history as it is today. This speedy process has brought many challenges for schools and teachers given that the students of 21st century are expected to be equipped with complex analytical skills, problem-solving capacities, and high-order thinking (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Meeting these expectations becomes further challenging as students accessing education today are greater in number and diverse with regard to their emotional and social backgrounds (Lohman, 2000). Whereas the achievement of students has closely been linked with the capacity of teachers (Guskey, 2002), teacher development has also been attracting increasing attention from academics and practitioners.

Usually teachers enter the profession attending a pre-service training where they learn the art of teaching. However, given the explosion of knowledge on an ongoing basis, teachers need to constantly update their practices through availing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Consequently, a variety of professional development (PD) models, types, and approaches have been suggested and implemented for teacher development. The traditional models such as workshops are usually located outside the school or work context. These models have been criticized on their failure to address the real needs of individual teachers (Webster-Wright, 2009). Consequently, there is a growing trend to locate teacher development activities in the work context with the assumption that teachers find contextual solutions for their emerging issues through collaborative inquiry into their practices (Fullan, 2002).

However, PD may not be confined to the opportunities teachers avail externally or to the activities grounded in the work context. Many respected academics believe that PD refers to all the planned and unplanned activities which help teachers to bring about change in their classroom practices (Day, 1999; Fullan, 2002). Building on this definition, scholars suggest various types of PD, the most common being the traditional and reform types (Garet et al., 2001). The traditional types of PD, aiming at transmission, are usually located outside school. The reform models, on the contrary, are located in the work context giving more autonomy to teachers to manage their own learning. Others believe that
a PD may be evaluated by its features; not type or process (Desimone, 2009). However, the identified characteristics of PD have been found inconsistent and contradictory (Guskey, 2000), leading to the conclusion that the type or characteristics of PD are determined by the contextual needs and realities of teachers (Saunders, 2014). The contextual realities, on the contrary, influence the perceptions of stakeholders on PD. For example, previous studies revealed that teachers view PD as a process of skill acquisition (Alibakhshi & Dehvari, 2015) and consider and possibly experience external PD as the only learning opportunity (Cole, 2005; Nabhani et al., 2013).

In the context where this study was conducted, PD activities are generally planned and implemented by external agents. However, these activities have failed to significantly affect the practices of teachers (Nawab, 2017). One of the reasons behind the failure of the existing PD programs is that they are externally driven and less informed by the views of the real stakeholders especially teachers (Nawab, 2018). Despite frequent calls to design PD based on the views, experience, and realities of stakeholders especially teachers, however, this requirement has remained unattended (Ali, 2011; Mohammed, 2006). Especially in rural areas, we do not know how informed are the models of PD implemented in the region by the perceptions and views of the relevant stakeholders. In other words, how aligned are the views of stakeholders and models of PD being implemented in the study region? Stakeholders may be perceiving PD differently and receiving PD against their expectations. Another assumption is that the perceptions of the stakeholders are influenced by the PD they experience. They may perceive PD the way they experience it. It is because how PD is practiced will determine how PD will be perceived and also the other way round. For example, if teachers access only external PD opportunities, they are more likely to associate PD with only external PD activities. Teachers engaged in school-based activities are less likely to associate PD to only external activities. Consequently, the PD which the teachers experience is likely to establish their beliefs regarding what is PD and how it is practiced.

In this background, the current research explored the perceptions of key stakeholders in a remote rural region of Pakistan to understand how they perceive PD and to what extent there is a shared understanding on the meaning of PD among these stakeholders. Understanding this phenomenon will not only add contextual insights to the existing knowledge on PD of teachers but also help PD providers to draw on the views of relevant stakeholders while designing their PD programs.

PD

Within education, PD, CPD, professional learning (PL), and in-service are contested terms, and in the literature, clarity of differences between these terms is lacking. In some countries, PD refers to initial teacher education whereas CPD is associated with PD taking place after initial teacher education (King, 2014). Similarly, for most developed countries, in-service education includes those teacher education activities that follow initial professional certification. However, in some developing countries, teachers enter the profession without any certification, and in-service teacher education activities are the only preparation they receive for teaching (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In addition, some authors including Fullan (2007) and Easton (2008) prefer using the term PL instead of PD arguing that the word development suggests a deficit model where someone supposedly having greater knowledge or skills teaches or does something to others who are assumed to be lacking in knowledge. These authors argue that as teachers need to change on an ongoing basis, they require to be engaged in PL on a daily basis. However, the analysis of the meaning of both PD, and CPD and PL within the scholarly literature reveals that even the definitions of PD include qualifying terms such as “ongoing,” “informal,” and “internal” among others that are otherwise usually associated with CPD or PL. It suggests that there is no clear difference between PD, PL, and CPD.

The following definitions of PD provided by renowned academics that have frequently been referred in PD literature will allow readers to appreciate the meaning of PD and how this term connotes CPD and PL.

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. (Day, 1999, p. 4)

Professional Development is an ongoing and systematic process that includes activities such as discussion, investigation, experimentation with new practices, learning, expansion of knowledge, acquisition of new skills, and the development of approaches, stances, knowledge, and work tools. (Shagrir, 2012, p. 23)

Professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students. (Guskey, 2002, p. 381)

The analysis of the definitions given above suggests that PD is a broad concept having many dimensions. First, PD could be either “formal” or “informal” or in other words, “planned” or “natural.” Formal learning is conscious and planned such
as workshops, structured peer coaching and mentoring, and so on. The natural or informal learning, on the contrary, happens any time through any source such as observation, reflection, informal talk, trial and error, and so on (Marsick & Watkins, 2015). Second, as emerges from the given definitions, PD is an ongoing and sustained process by which teachers continually update their practice through exploiting many strategies. It is not confined to a particular event such as a one-off workshop. Finally and importantly, the aim of PD is improving the “quality of education in the classroom” or enhancing the practices of teachers to enhance the achievements of students.

How PD unfolds in practice? Generally PD models or types are classified into traditional versus reform types (Garet et al., 2001) or traditional versus innovative models (Koo & van Veen, 2012). The traditional types of PD such as workshops usually take place outside school or classroom. The reform models such as study groups or mentoring and coaching, on the contrary, are usually located in the work context.

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) indicate certain assumptions underpinning the traditional models. First, through training, teachers will equip themselves with those behaviors that were lacking previously. Second, there are certain teaching techniques need to be learnt and to be replicated in the classroom. Teachers learn these vital techniques through attending training. However, the effectiveness of the training or traditional model of PD has been criticized on certain grounds. One argument against this model is that even if well designed, learning cannot be transferred in the same form from training venue to the classroom (Webster-Wright, 2009). This argument is further supported by the concern of teachers that learning experiences that are provided by external agencies who have no connection with schools are remote from classroom realities (Putnam & Borko, 2000). The focus in this kind of context remains on transmitting knowledge, which rarely enables teachers to develop skills or to implement improved teaching practices on their return to school (Cole, 2005). Moreover, individual attendance at external PD tends to focus on individual teachers’ learning needs rather than recognizing and contributing to school-wide improvement needs (Easton, 2008). Even when a teacher develops the required skill sets that align with challenges in their own school contexts, without a PL culture in school, the opportunity or possibility of an individual teacher to influence the practices of other teachers is extremely limited. “A single messenger has to be extremely persuasive in order to convince the majority of the school staff that a new approach should be adopted” (Cole, 2012).

In addition, traditional or external PD models are largely one-off activities aiming at mastery of a selected set of knowledge and skills (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002) and as such aim to provide advice and tips for teachers to try in the classroom regardless of the need (Ball & Cohen, 1999). In this way, teachers are treated as “technicians” who are taught some particular behaviors and then expected to replicate them in their classrooms (Timperley, 2008). This approach not only implies transmission but also moves the emphasis from the “knowledge-deficient” professional to the “knowledge-possessing” provider (Webster-Wright, 2009, p. 713). The provider of teacher education is considered to know everything, whereas the teacher is believed to be lacking knowledge. Such technical models are considered inappropriate if the purpose of PD is developing a skilled and well-educated teaching force (Dadds, 2014).

Criticism of traditional models of PD as well as the adult learning theories and situated perspectives of learning have gradually led to growing recognition that learning is an ongoing and collaborative process. This appreciation, termed as reform models, has shifted approaches to teacher learning from developing an individual through a one-time activity to an ongoing practice-based collaborative inquiry. The approach builds on the conceptualization of learning as a social practice that engages the mind, body, and socially organized setting (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Learning is unique to every individual and context and, as Brown and Duguid (1991) believed, “Like a magpie with a nest, learning is built out of the materials to hand and in relation to the structuring resources of local conditions” (p. 48). Support for this interpretation of learning also comes from Fullan (2002) who argues that learning in context “is the learning with the greatest pay-off because it is more specific (literally applied to the situation) and because it is social (thereby developing shared and collective knowledge and commitments)” (p. 417).

Different teachers and schools have their own learning needs, which they plan, implement, and reflect upon if the learning activities are situated in their specific work context. Hunzicker (2011) suggests that to situate learning in the work context and to align PD with the needs of teachers, we need to shift from a “one-shot,” “sit and get” model to an approach where learning is embedded in everyday activities of teachers.

This embedded model of learning is a process of ongoing inquiry and reflection on practices. Instead of learning within a short span of time, this model assumes that the goal of teacher education is lifelong ability to learn through ongoing inquiry (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Knowing is no more remembering and repeating information; it is, rather, discovering and using it (Simon, 2000). This perspective of learning and knowledge has shifted the views of how teachers might teach and what students might do in the classroom (Ball & Cohen, 1999). Teachers need to understand about the disposition of students; how children learn, what they are like, what motivates them, what their problems are, and what they need to know. Ball and Cohen believe that unless teachers learn from practice through inquiry, they may not fulfill the emerging expectations from them. To be able to do what they are expected to do now, they have to ask and answer “what is working? What is not working? For whom are certain things working or not working?” (p. 10). To ask and
answer these questions, teachers need to learn how to investigate and inquire. They have to draw some conclusions from their inquiry, and such conclusions have to guide their future practices. Ball and Cohen argue that all these could be learned from practice in the context, and “to propose otherwise would be like expecting someone to learn to swim on a sidewalk” (p. 12). Similarly, Thiesse (1992) maintains that “the most enduring mode of teacher development occurs on the job as teachers diligently work in their classrooms searching for, trying out and modifying strategies that best respond to the needs of their students” (p. 92).

Some scholars, therefore, even suggest replacing the term PD with PL (Easton, 2008; Fullan, 2007). Easton (2008) argues that the word development suggests that someone does something to others such as someone talks to teachers to motivate them or a specialist increases the knowledge of teachers regarding state standards. Such development or training fits the factory model of education where employees are told how to tighten a screw or animals are trained to sit and to roll. For teachers, such development is not enough given that knowledge explodes speedily forcing schools and teachers to update their practices on an ongoing basis. As educators need to change and improve on ongoing basis, the occasional training and development do not serve the purpose. PL theories suggest that teachers “need to be able to think pedagogically, reason through dilemmas, investigate problems, and analyze student learning to develop appropriate curriculum for a diverse group of learners” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005, p. 392). Consequently, teachers take responsibility for their self-development (Watson & Michael, 2005). Research supports this view revealing that teachers can change their practices if they play a key role in the change process (Wells, 2014).

The renewed conceptualization of PD has led to the emergence of several other innovative and reform-oriented approaches to learning and development such as PL communities, discourse communities, collaborative PD, and communities of practice (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Killion & Roy, 2009; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Wenger, 1998). Over the past few decades, such approaches to learning have been receiving growing attention from academics and practitioners. These approaches not only encourage grounding teacher development activities in the workplace but also portray learning as a social process that requires the participation of more individuals in the learning process. Bransford et al. (1999) maintain that teachers learn from other teachers through formal and informal meetings and sharing ideas. Teachers have a natural disposition to talk to each other, and this tendency can be mobilized to gradually utilize common educational purposes starting with informal exchanges and moving toward formalized learning experiences, peer coaching, and other forms of collective learning (Avalos, 2011).

Although hindered by hierarchical system and high teacher workloads as reported from Asian context (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012), the collaborative learning models such as PL communities result in collective responsibility, collaboration, and mentoring ultimately leading to improved teaching practices for teachers and enhanced learning for students. Research also reveals that PL communities “have the power and potential to generate teacher agency, teacher leadership and teacher innovation in ways that lead directly to improvement in learner outcomes” (Harris et al., 2017, p. 231).

The other forms of collective learning include professional discourse, watching and discussing teaching videos, lesson observations, mentoring, co-teaching, discussion of student work, action research, study groups, and so on (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Cross, 2011; Desimone, 2011; Easton, 2008; Erat, 2007; Meirink et al., 2009).

To sum, as the analysis of the literature presented above suggests, PD refers to all those ongoing natural and planned opportunities a teacher avails inside or outside classroom aimed to improving and updating educational practices. Although, there is a growing trend to ground such activities in the work context, teachers may also avail external opportunities to be connected to the emerging knowledge base. An interesting question in this background is, how stakeholders in a rural context of a developing country, Pakistan, perceive PD? Understanding their views will have several significances. First, the research will surface whether the key stakeholders in this remote region have understanding of and orientation to the updated models of PD? Second, the research will also unfold the extent to which the key stakeholders in this region have shared understanding regarding what is PD and how PD takes place. The outcomes will be helpful for PD providers to intervene drawing on the views of relevant stakeholders. Moreover, the areas requiring improvement will also be identified which the PD providers may focus during their PD programs.

Research Method

The setting for this study was Chitral: a north-western remote rural district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in Pakistan. The area of Chitral stretches over 14,850 km², making it the largest district of the province. According to a survey report by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (2015), the total population of Chitral is 479,000 with a literacy rate of 54% (70% for males and 37% for females).

Traveling to the remote region of District Chitral is quite challenging due to tough geographical and infrastructural conditions. To avoid any disruption in data collection, therefore, the research was delimited to the town Chitral. Aligned with the purpose of the research, teachers, school leaders, Assistant District Education Officers (ADEOs), and representatives of PD providers were taken as participants to collect data from. The Annual Statistical Report of Government Schools (Pakhtunkhwa, 2017–2018) shows 133 teachers working in government boys and girls high schools in the town Chitral. Using random sampling procedure (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009), 50 teachers were short-listed to whom...
invitation letters were sent; 28 of them responded positively and accepted to be part of the study. With regard to school leaders, there are eight government high schools in the town Chitral. Invitation letters were sent to all the school leaders of which five responded positively. Officials from Education Department and representatives from PD providers, on the contrary, were recruited through purposive sampling procedure (Bloor, 2001) aimed to consult with those individuals having the responsibility for working with schools, teachers, and school leaders.

Aiming to understand how key stakeholders perceive PD, this research collected the views of participants through their written responses to a brief and simple open format question namely “How you define PD or what is PD for you?” The question was posed in English with the assumption that in the native language of the participants, there are no terms to use for different connotation of PD. For example, if a participant associated PD with lifelong learning, there is no word or term in Chitrali language to be used for lifelong learning. On the contrary, due to the exposure of teachers in this particular context to PD activities and related literature, they have developed better understanding of various terms and concept related to PD. This assumption was further supported when the question was piloted to some individuals of the population in the real situation. They were found to be more comfortable with the given question.

Although this research gathered data in a written form, it was tilted toward qualitative approach methodologically because it is the purpose of the research which determines its approach (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990). The purpose of this study was not to collect quantitative data on predetermined responses rather to understand the situation through open format question allowing the participants to share their views on the basis of their own experience.

The emerging data were read again and again looking for common patterns with regard to the views of stakeholders on PD. Each word, phrase, and sentence were critically looked at to understand what they tell on the perception of stakeholders on the meaning of PD. Based on the critical analysis of the words and phrases used by the participants, they were attributed to either traditional or reform models of PD. For example, the phrases such as PD as “acquisition of knowledge,” “obtaining information,” and “polishing skills of individuals” were attributed to the traditional PD. On the contrary, the phrases such as “ongoing process of reflection” and “planned and unplanned activities for continuous learning” were categorized into reform models. Further analysis was carried out to identify any differences among the various groups of stakeholders on PD. The findings are presented and discussed in the following section.

Findings

In response to an open-ended question in the questionnaire on the meaning of PD, the research participants recorded a wide range of definitions. To provide readers with a fuller range of the responses aiming to enhance the trustworthiness of the subsequent conclusions, the definitions of PD emerging from the questionnaire are provided in Table 1.

An analysis of the definitions of PD as listed in Table 1 shows that stakeholders in the research region attach a variety of meaning to PD. The phrases derived from their definitions indicate the breadth and diversity of the stakeholders’ views on the meaning of PD. Accordingly, PD is viewed as

1. acquiring knowledge and skills
2. obtaining information
3. to refine basic skills and ideas
4. to enhance individual capability
5. guidance such as workshop
6. training which provides skills
7. activities done to improve the skills of teachers
8. systematic effort to bring change in classroom
9. to develop a positive attitude
10. a continuous process/an ongoing learning
11. reflecting on one’s own practices
12. learning from others
13. observing others
14. planned and unplanned activities

A critical analysis of the phrases listed above indicates that the views of stakeholders range from PD being a process of acquiring knowledge to PD as an ongoing process of reflection, observation, and learning from others. In other words, stakeholders hold both conventional and reform or innovative view of PD. While defining PD, some participants recorded such words and phrases which demonstrate a conventional view of PD. For example, the words “training,” “acquiring,” and “obtaining” suggest that for some participants, PD is gaining knowledge and skills from others. In this sense, PD is a process where a more qualified agent transfers knowledge and skills to less knowledgeable teachers. Such conventional view of PD could be elicited from the views of many other participants. For example, one participant considers PD as a guided activity such as a workshop, stating that PD is “to polish the basic skills and ideas of an individual through guidance such as workshop and other related activities.”

This definition of PD carries several meanings. First, the phrase “to polish the basic skills and ideas of an individual” suggests that PD is refining the skills of individual teachers. The focus on “individual” teachers marginalizes the value of group learning or something done for or done by a group. Second, the other phrase, “through guidance such as workshop” indicates that PD is a process of directing teachers through some one-time event. Similarly, the phrases “training” and “activities done to” also support the views that PD is about the activity of imparting and acquiring skills.

These representative quotes taken from teachers tend toward a conventional view of PD perceiving it as a process
where individuals acquire information and skills through attending guided workshops. This view of PD is broadly consistent with training or deficit models of PD (Kennedy, 2014). The purpose of these models is transmission, aiming at preparing teachers to implement reforms that address deficits in their practices. The training models have been criticized on the grounds of their failure to actually improve teaching practices (Webster-Wright, 2009). Against this background, the recent reform or innovative models (Garet et al., 2001) advocate that development is not a one-time activity of transferring knowledge or skills from one individual to others. Rather, it is a sustained process of teachers collectively engaging in reflection on their work to enhance teaching. And that this learning is preferably conducted in the work context.

Although school leaders and education department officials have also recorded phrases such as “training” or “activities done to,” as Table 1 indicates, the majority of participants reporting a conventional view of PD were teachers. However, because teachers mainly recorded a conventional view of PD, it does not mean that they might disagree with the reform view of PD. On the basis that the reform view did not explicitly emerge from their perceived meaning of PD, it is assumed that the teachers in the research region lack orientation on and exposure to the recent development in educational literature on what constitutes effective PD. This finding, however, is not surprising given that even in some other contexts, teachers view PD as a process of skill acquisition (Alibakhshi & Dehvari, 2015) and consider and possibly experience external PD as the only learning opportunity (Cole, 2005; Nabhani et al., 2013).

In contrast to the teachers’ view of PD as a process of acquiring knowledge and skills through attending workshops, the majority of school leaders reported that coupled with enhancing skills, PD is also about developing a positive attitude. While defining PD, a school leader noted that PD refers to “all those activities which are carried out to enhance the required skills as well as to develop a positive attitude in a person towards his profession.”

Although similarly to the teachers, school leaders attach skill development to PD, unlike the word “acquire” or “obtain” which the teachers frequently used in their definitions of PD, the word “enhance” as used in this definition suggests that PD is more than just transmission. It is something that is applied in the classroom, or using the words of another school leader and supported by Guskey (2002), PD is “to bring positive change in the classroom.” Moreover, school leaders have also highlighted the development of a “positive attitude” toward their profession and the need for change is often a fundamental pre-requisite for application of

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**Table 1. Meaning of PD for Stakeholders.**

| Meaning of PD                                                                 | Participant |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| PD means being enlightened of new teaching learning skills and to introduce  | Teacher     |
| them into the classroom.                                                      | Teacher     |
| The process of acquiring knowledge and skills that allow you to make         | Teacher     |
| progress in your career.                                                      | Teacher     |
| To polish the basic skills and ideas of an individual through                 | Teacher     |
| guidance such as workshop and other related activities to enhance             | Teacher     |
| individual capability.                                                        | Teacher     |
| PD is obtaining more and more information about our profession.               | Teacher     |
| PD is the process through which teachers familiarize themselves with         | Teacher     |
| modern ideas and teach students using modern strategies.                     | Teacher     |
| All those activities which enhance an individual’s overall skills is called PD | Teacher     |
| Skills such as communication skills, leadership skills, management skills,   | Teacher     |
| etc.                                                                          | Teacher     |
| The training that provides skills to a teacher relevant to his subject so    | Teacher     |
| that the teacher could effectively use those skills in classroom.             | Teacher     |
| PD is a broad term that can refer to a variety of education, training, and    | School leader|
| development opportunities. PD is a systematic effort to bring about positive  | School leader|
| change in classroom.                                                          | School leader|
| All those activities carried out to enhance the skills and knowledge and     | School leader|
| also develop a positive attitude in a person toward his profession.           | School leader|
| Professional development is a process of developing individuals, organizations,| School leader|
| and larger society with skills, knowledge, and attitude regarding their     | PD provider  |
| relevant fields.                                                              | PD provider  |
| It is an ongoing process of reflecting on one’s own practices or learning     | PD provider  |
| from others the purpose of which is enhancing knowledge and skills related   | PD provider  |
| to a particular profession.                                                   | PD provider  |
| Process of improving one’s capacities through education, training, and       | PD provider  |
| observing others.                                                             | PD provider  |
| Continuously keeping oneself updated with the new and updated knowledge     | ADEO         |
| (both content and pedagogy) to be able to facilitate students’ learning      | ADEO         |
| according to the teaching needs of the rapidly developing and                 | ADEO         |
| technologically advanced world.                                               | ADEO         |
| Any planned and unplanned activities which improve/enhance learners’        | ADEO         |
| existing knowledge, skills, and attitude to bring improvement in her or his  | ADEO         |
| work.                                                                        | ADEO         |
| Any ongoing development of knowledge and skills of an individual in her or   | ADEO         |
| his field of practice.                                                        | ADEO         |
| By PD, I mean all the planning and activities done to improve the skills of  | ADEO         |
| teacher either content or methodology.                                       | ADEO         |

Note. PD = professional development; ADEO = Assistant District Education Officers.
new skills. Although school leaders moved from acquisition to enhancement as well as added attitudinal aspect to the meaning of PD, their views did not address or support reform types of PD such as inquiry, reflection, collaboration, networking, or any other reference to school-based models of PD. Again, this conclusion needs to be taken with caution. A failure to mention reform models does not necessarily mean that school leaders disregard those models. However, it can be inferred if they had any orientation to reform models of PD, they would have featured in their responses.

Although any explicit reference to PD as an element of reform does not emerge even from the views of ADEOs, they do consider PD to be “an ongoing development” or “unplanned activities,” which is a different perspective of PD in contrast to most teachers and school leaders. Considering PD as an ongoing process implies conceptualizing it as not a once-off activity. However, at this stage, it is unclear whether “ongoing” to them means attending external workshops time and again or learning continually in the workplace by exploiting all learning opportunities. Similarly, “unplanned activities” refer to “natural learning experiences” (Day, 1999), which are usually associated with reform models where learning happens on the basis of unplanned observation, reflection, or discussion with others. It suggests that in contrast to teachers and school leaders, ADEOs’ perceptions of PD are incorporating some elements of reform models of PD.

The analysis of data coming from PD providers reveals that compared with other stakeholders, they have greater orientation to reform models of PD. This conclusion is drawn based on the phrases such as “an ongoing process,” “reflecting on one’s own practices,” “observing others,” and “learning from others” noted by the PD providers. These perspectives on PD are well supported by the advocates of reform models. Accordingly, PD is an ongoing process that includes natural and planned activities such as reflection, observation, discussion, and experimentation (Day, 1999; Fenwick & Tennant, 2004; Nesbit et al., 2004; Shagrir, 2012). However, what is considered more significant in the reform models, and missing in the definitions noted by the PD providers, is the “collaborative” and “job-embedded” nature of PD (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004, p. 10). It might be that they either lack orientation to the collaborative and job-embedded nature of PD or appreciate it but did not mention such views explicitly in their definitions.

A figurative representation of this phenomenon, on the basis of a cautious analysis of data, is provided in Figure 1. As the figure shows, teachers are at one end of the continuum, holding more conventional views of PD while PD providers are at the other end with view weighted more toward reform models of PD. In between are the school leaders and ADEOs. The location of ADEOs at the continuum is to indicate that, compared with school leaders who are located close to the teachers at the continuum because of their conventional view of PD, ADEOs hold a reform view of PD.

Another significant insight emerging from above analysis is that there is no uniformity in the views of stakeholders on the meaning of PD. They view PD through different perspectives. It is interesting to note that the demographic data provided in the questionnaire on PD indicated that compared with teachers and school leaders, PD providers and ADEOs have relatively greater access to PD opportunities and thus to updated knowledge on PD. Given their greater access to PD experiences and the teachers and school leaders’ limited access, it is understandable that this variation in perceptions of PD emerged from this research. It suggests that PD providers working on capacity building of teachers in rural context hold reform-oriented perceptions on PD. However, teachers lack such orientation perhaps because of their exposure to only limited external PD activities.

**Conclusion**

In pursuit of the question, how key stakeholders in rural Pakistan perceive PD, this research revealed that the majority of participants especially teachers hold a conventional view of PD believing it to be a process of acquiring knowledge and skills by attending workshops and other related activities. Although PD providers and some of the education department officials view PD as an ongoing process of reflecting on one’s practices, no explicit references were made to the collaborative learning, job-embedded learning, mentoring, and other reform models of learning. However, it is reiterated that these conclusions are made based on what the participants have noted in their responses to the questions in the questionnaire. When they consider PD to be a process of acquiring knowledge and skills, it may not be claimed that they disregard the reform models of PD. Similarly, when participants report improved practices as an outcome of PD, it does not mean they neglect student achievement. Nevertheless, two major conclusions may be drawn based on these findings. First, the majority of stakeholders in the research region lack orientation to the reform models of PD. Otherwise, there could have been explicit references to these models while defining PD. It might be that stakeholders in the research context have mainly experienced a training model of PD and this is reflected in their responses. Second, stakeholders in the research region lack a shared understanding on the meaning of PD. Different stakeholders associate different meaning to PD.

These apparently simple conclusions have significant implications for the educational reformers and PD providers.
working on the capacity building of teachers in rural Pakistan. As the view of the stakeholders especially teachers reflect a traditional view of PD, it is more likely that the educational reformers and PD providers might not have oriented teachers on the possibilities of the reform models of PD. As PL has replaced PD in latest approaches to PD of teachers, teachers in the rural Pakistan should also get exposure to the PL models. For this purpose, change agents especially those working on capacity building of teachers in rural Pakistan should revisit their models and approaches.

Although this study has gone some way toward understanding the perceptions of key stakeholders on PD, it has certain limitations. First, the data were collected through written responses. As there were some female participants, it was not possible for the researcher to personally interact with them to conduct interviews. Otherwise, face-to-face interviews might have produced more in-depth data on the topic compared with the written responses. Second, the question given to the participants was in English which demanded response in English. As explained in the Methods section, this decision was taken owing to the limitation with the native language of participants which lacks words and phrases for terms associated with PD. Some of the participants might not have been able to openly articulate their views on PD in English. These limitations may be considered while reading the findings of this research. Despite the seeming limitations, the research brings forth significant insights about an untraded trail having huge implications for the educational reformers and PD providers working on the capacity building of teachers particularly in the developing world.

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**ORCID iD**

Ali Nawab [https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2481-5434](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2481-5434)

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