

HOW IN-SERVICE TEACHERS ARE MOTIVATED TO PURSUE DOCTORAL DEGREE

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Abstract:

There have been numerous studies in recent years on various sorts of teacher is professional development programs. A few studies looked into the effects of higher education degrees like PhDs on the school performance of teachers. The main aim of this study was to identify the factor that motivates a teacher, for higher education and its impact on their professional development. This study explored the teacher perception and experience related to the doctoral study. NVivo11 was used in managing the answers of respondents. The data were collected through the structured interview from twenty participants to get t in-depth understanding. Results show that the both personal and professional factors are very responsible for pursuing doctoral study. The teacher with a PhD degree reported positive effects of PhD degrees on their professional development.

1. Introduction:

Different motivational factors, varying from personal to professional development, influence a person's decision to pursue a PhD degree. The individuals who have professional backgrounds pursue higher education to boost their self-esteem and prove themselves capable (Wellington and Sikes, 2006). It is also important for an individual to gain a PhD degree to gain confidence and authority. The motivation for pursuing a PhD was connected with intellectual challenge and self-actualization (Scott et al., 2004).

Many studies have found that factors related to a person's professional development influenced their decision to pursue PhD study. In this type of motivation people pursue the PhD degree only for their new career development and to improve their professional practices (Loxley and Seery 2012; Scott et al., 2004). Other motivations for pursuing a PhD, according to several studies, include gaining experience, employment duties, and future career situations (Jablonski, 2001; Leonard and Coate, 2005). Other sources of professional motivation are attractive salary and gaining respect (Loxley and Seery, 2012).

Doctoral studies include a variety of personal and professional effects. Gaining knowledge in certain subjects, research experience, self-assurance, the growth of writing abilities, and the development of an international perspective are only a few examples. According to Wellington and Sikes (2006), professional doctorate skills are seen as assisting students in reflecting on their own practice and the practice of the institution where they work, rather than being immediately relevant to professional practice or enhancing practice. According to these studies, PhD degrees appear to be extremely beneficial to an individual's personal and professional lives. Many studies have also discovered that individual contributions to doctoral studies might result in costs in terms of money, time, and interpersonal relationships (Kowalczyk-waledziak et al., 2017; Leonard, Becker and Coate, 2005; Wellington and Sikes, 2006). The higher degree can increase the teachers writing skills. They can learn how to write a difficult and

complex topic in a simple form. They are able to transfer difficult phenomena in an easy and simple way. They can learn difficult concept more easily and better way. This could be beneficial to their professional progress. They started to learn in a critical way and it can increase their intellectual ability. It can increase their self-esteem and self-confidence. They are more confident to pay their duties in an efficient way.

Research indicates that professional development is one of the major factors of professional life which attract in-service teachers to pursue PhD degrees. Studies confirm that a large majority of teacher continue to enhance their knowledge and skills. They always manage to get some spare time and keep studying formally or informally. Therefore, they start something that would allow them to do something different from their routine tasks. The main reason of looking for such a change included students' lack of motivation for education and teachers' personal feeling of lack of challenging tasks along with little interest of teachers. Another factor that motivates in-service teachers is to their desire improve their learning by improving their professional practices (Scott et al., 2004)

Present study intended to fill the gaps related to this area. In the past, the effort of school teachers in different educational set up has become greater concern of discussion because of its complexity and emergence of new issues. In this context, pursuing teachers for further education and professional development involves preparing in-service teachers for a variety of tasks. However, in this study, the researcher wanted to study about the factors that are responsible to affect the motivation of in-service teachers for doctoral education.

2. Significance of the Study

The present study may be helpful in many ways. This study would be helpful to understand why teachers pursue their PhDs, although they are already in-service. This study also explains why in-service teachers pursue PhD. It also elaborates the further related factors that respondents think that are important to pursue a PhD. The motivation for holding PhD may be associated with intellectual challenges and personal fulfillment (Scott et al. 2004). Enhancing salary and gaining prestige is also a motivational factor for teachers (Loxley and Seery, 2012). Desimone (2009) found that teacher professional learning has a positive effect if leadership is active and learning culture is well developed in the school. The present study would be useful for the teachers to understand various types of participants about decision to pursue PhDs.

3. Research Questions

1. What are the factors that attract the in-service teachers to pursue their PhD?
2. Does the higher degree achievement such as PhD affect in-service teachers' performance?
3. What are the effects of PhD qualification on in-service teachers' professional development?

4. Theoretical background:

Present study builds on "Achievement Goal Theory". It describes that all motivation can be linked to one's progress toward a goal. There are two types of goals, according to this theory: performance goals and mastery goals. The purpose of performance is to satisfy one's ego by seeming smart in front of peers or to achieve a sense of superiority. Mastery goals are driven by a desire to fully master a skill or notion, as the name implies. Students that are striving for mastery will complete a project when they are proud of it rather than when it meets the minimum

standards. They may continue to work on the assignment after it has been submitted for evaluation (Brandmo, 2013).

The objective of participating in a learning process is the focus of achievement goal theory. Individual pursuits of competency and assessments of one's own abilities are the focus of achievement goals (Elliot, 2005). Learning and development are at the heart of mastery goals. Performance goals are more concerned with the performance than with the others. Individuals who obtain a sense of competence by achieving personal mastery goals are called task involved, whereas those who gain a sense of competence by exhibiting superior performance in interpersonal relationships are considered ego involved.

The objective, focus, and purpose of a person's achievement behavior are referred to as achievement goals. These objectives are dynamic cognitive constructs that reflect future-based possibilities and adapt to changes in the person and situation. It refers to how people assess their own competence or incompetence, rather than the degree of aspired performance. The importance of achievement goals in regulating a wide range of affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes was the focus of achievement goal theory.

5. Delimitation of Study

This study was delimited to the in-service PhD candidates at University of Okara. This delimitation was considered necessary in view of the time constraints and access issues due to novel Corona virus pandemic.

6. Limitation of Study

This study was restricted to the University of Okara due to some financial issue of the researcher and shortage of time available to complete this study amid COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, a small sample size was selected due to the above mentioned reasons. The weakness of this study was also that the data collection was not easy due to the pandemic. As the data was collected from a small number of respondents from within the district of Okara. Therefore, results may not be generalized to whole country

7. Research Design:

This study used generic qualitative approach to explore the factors that attract the in-service teachers to pursue their PhD. Moreover, how the higher degree achievement such as PhD affect in-service teachers' performance.

Qualitative research is solving and interpreting the chaotic and rich world of humans' lived experiences not defined by the need for numeric order (Schaefer, Roller, & Lavrakas, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Grosseohme (2014) defined qualitative research as the systematic collection, organization, and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or conversations to explore the meaning of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context. This study used a qualitative research approach to gain a more in-depth understanding of the topic.

8. Respondents:

Any research study needs some population that is defined by some characteristics that are linked with the objective of the study and are relevant to the topic (Maxwell, 2012). The characteristics of the respondents included the fact that they should be in service and they should be pursuing their PhD. The population of this study consisted of all the teachers enrolled in PhD programs in Punjab . The sample of this study was twenty PhD teachers from the University of

Okara. Purposive sampling was used in this research.

9. Data Collection Procedures:

A research interview is a good way to get information. A research interview is conducted with the help of an interviewer, who directs the conversation and asks questions. To begin, introduce yourself and strike up a cordial yet professional dialogue. Explain the research's objective, the significance of their participation, and the length of the interview. The researcher also discusses the interview format, including whether or not the interview will be recorded.

In this study, the semi structured interviews were used for data collection. Interview was conducted face to face. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic the SOPs were followed as provided by the government and institution. Ethical issues were under consideration to make good rapport with respondents. To make them comfortable and relax during the data collection procedure, special permission was sought from respondents to record the interview. To keep the identity of the respondents, their names were replaced with numbers such as T1, T2, T3 and so on.

10. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by using qualitative analysis technique i.e. thematic analysis. All the procedures of thematic analysis are followed for justifiable analysis of data. A way of examining qualitative data is thematic analysis. It is a good method in research when the researcher is trying to know about the people's views and experiences. During thematic analysis, activities such as familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and identifying themes, and writing up were used.

11. Results:

The interview data was entered in qualitative analysis software, NVivo11 to managing the answers of respondents. The analysis of data reveals certain patterns from which three themes were generated. These themes and relevant subthemes have been described below.

Theme 1: Personal Accomplishments

The respondents were asked about the factors that motivated them to pursue their PhD. In response they told many reasons in which personal accomplishment was one. Respondents pointed out many aspects in different ways that concluded that they pursue their PhDs for their personal accomplishment. For example, T8 said

I choose to pursue my doctorate degree for my personal accomplishment. I hoped that it have a positive impact on my personal life. My personal motivation was to achieve the higher degree. I consider PhD as a challenge for me it is my dream to pursue a PhD degree. I also selected PhD for my financial benefits with a hope that it would improve my earning benefits. It improves my financial conditions.

Respondents highlighted other areas which may be categorized this main theme. The subthemes contributing to theme are discussed one by one in following sections.

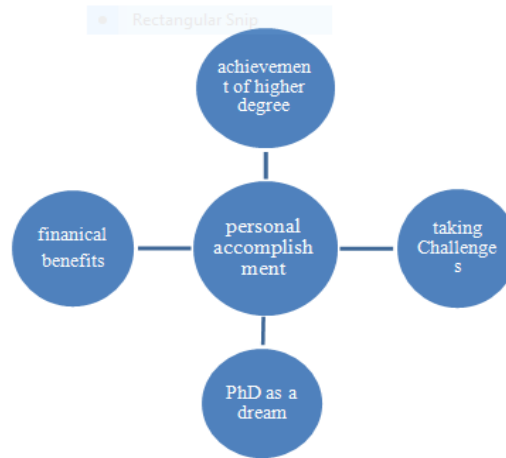


Figure: Theme 1 Personal Accomplishments

Sub Theme 1.1: Achievement of Higher Degree

Teacher T1, T5, T9 and T12 said that they pursue PhD degree because they wanted to achieve the higher degree. For example, T9 said

I wanted to gain the higher degree that motivates me to pursue the PhD. Achievement of the higher degree had an impact on my personal accomplishment. It can improve my personal accomplishment. It will bring positive impact on my personal life.

Sub Theme 1.2: Financial Benefit

Teacher T7, T10, T18 and T4 thought that they pursue the PhD degree because of their financial benefits. For example, T8 said

I thought that PhD improves my financial conditions. I wanted to associate my PhD with my financial benefits. PhD will increase my salary. The PhD will also beneficial for me at the time of retirement.

Sub Theme 1.3 Taking Challenges

Teacher T19 and T8 said that they pursue the PhD because they take PhD as a challenge. For example, T19 said

I consider PhD as a challenge for myself. I am a challenge taker person in life. I had achieved many qualifications. I selected PhD as a challenge because I believe that this degree will give me hard time that will, ultimately, create better qualities of a teacher in me. So taking PhD as a challenge motivates me to pursue a doctoral degree.

Sub Theme 1.4 PhD as a Dream

Teacher T13 and T4 said that PhD is a dream for them. It is their dream to become a researcher. For example, T 13 said

It is my dream to do a PhD. I wanted to connect with the research process. For the fulfillment of my dream I wanted to get the PhD

degree. I wanted to become a researcher.

Therefore, we can conclude from the data analysis that respondents believed that personal accomplishment was necessary for the in-service teachers to pursue a higher degree.

Theme 2: Professional Accomplishment

The respondents were asked about the factors that motivated them to pursue their PhD. In response they told many reasons in which professional accomplishment was included. Respondents pointed out many aspects in different ways that concluded that they pursue PhDs for their professional accomplishment. For Example, T9 said,

The doctoral degree changed my professional life. It brings a reasonable change in my professional career. My professional motivation for doing PhD is learning of better teaching techniques. It helps me to learn new teaching techniques. The doctoral degree also creates a greater sense of responsibility that motivates me to get higher degree. The gaining of new knowledge is also my professional motivation to get the doctorate degree. The better interactive abilities also create after getting the higher degree. I wanted to learn how to interact people in a good way that motivates me to get higher degree.

Respondents highlighted other areas which may be categorized this main theme. The subthemes contributing to theme are discussed one by one in following sections.

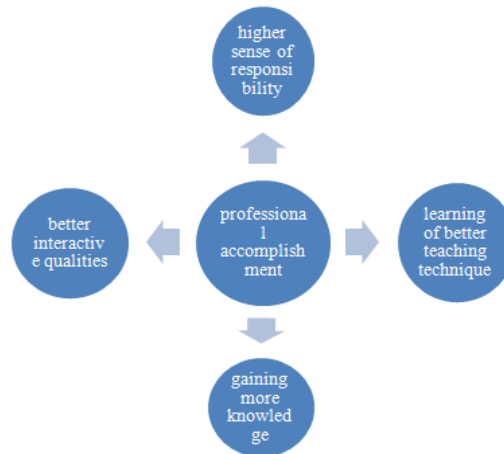


Figure: Theme 2 Professional Accomplishments

Sub Theme 2.1: Learning of Better Teaching Techniques

Teacher T4, T6 and T14 said they pursue a doctorate degree because they want to gain better teaching techniques. For example T4 said

I wanted to use different techniques in my teaching. The use of different teaching techniques helps the teachers to engage the students. I wanted to learn about different methods of teaching. I wanted to know more about the teaching learning process. I wanted to know about which method of teaching is suitable for the students according to their mental level. I also know about which method is useful to increase the academic achievement of students.

Sub Theme 2.2: Better interactive qualities

Teacher T8, T13, T19 and T1 said that to gain better interactive qualities they want to pursue a higher degree. For example T1 said

I wanted to know how to interact with others in a better way. I wanted to communicate with others confidently.

Sub Theme 2.3: Gaining More Knowledge

Teachers T13 and T10 thought that gaining more knowledge is also motivate them to gain the doctorate degree. For example T13 said

The PhD will increase my knowledge. After gaining the higher degree I can know about the students learning difficulties in a better way. I had no doubts about my teaching and answer the questions more easily.

Sub Theme 2.4: Higher Sense of Responsibility

Teachers T7 and T11 think that the PhD can create the higher sense of responsibility among them. For example, T7 said

I started work with great responsibility and it had a better effect on my professional life. It had a positive impact on my professional life. PhD creates a greater sense of responsibility in me.

Therefore, we conclude from the data analysis that respondents believe that professional accomplishment was necessary for the in-service teachers to pursue a higher degree.

Theme 3: Teacher's Performance

The respondents were asked about the factors that motivated them to pursue their PhD. In response they told many reasons in which Teacher's Performance was one. Respondents pointed out many aspects in different ways that concluded that they pursue their PhDs for better performance. For Example, T14 said

The doctorate degree has changed my performance. It had a positive effect on my performance. It helps me to improve my student's grades. The teacher performance is directly linked with the student's grades. If the teacher performance is good than the students learning outcomes are increased. It also helps me to change my attitude towards the students and organization.

Respondents highlighted other areas which may be categorized this main theme. The subthemes contributing to theme are discussed one by one in following sections.

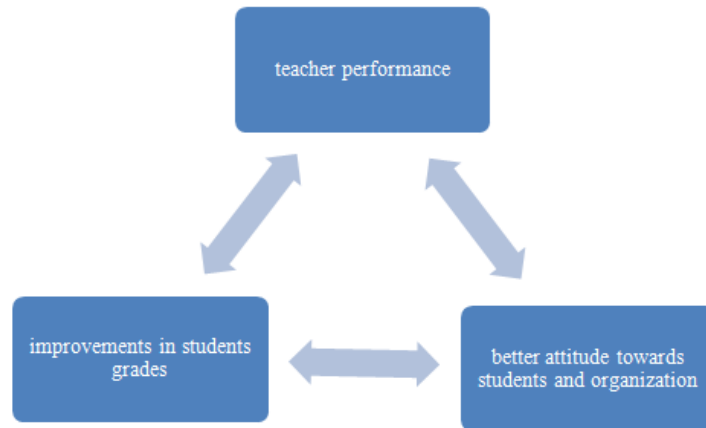


Figure: Theme 3 Teachers Performance

Sub Theme 3.1: Improvements in Students' Grades

Teacher T6 and T2 thought that the improvements in the student's grades are also a source of motivation for the in-service teachers to pursue the higher degree. For example T2 said

After getting the PhD I changed my teaching styles. It had a positive impact on students learning outcomes. Their learning outcomes had increased and it had a good impact on my professional development.

Sub Theme 3.2: Better Attitude towards Students and Organization

Teacher T19 and T17 and T8 thought that the PhD helps to improve the attitude towards the students and organization. For example, T19

I am able to learn how to behave with students and the organization. PhD helps me to improve my attitude towards students and organization.

Therefore, we conclude from data analysis that respondents believe that teacher performance was an important factor for the in-service teachers to pursue a doctorate degree.

12. Findings

There are some findings that were made in light of the analysis of the data in this research. The findings of this study suggested that teachers pursue their PhD degrees on the basis of the following aspects;

1. **To follow an academic career:** Some respondents believe that in-service teachers go for PhD degrees because they want to follow a better opportunity for their professional career. Some respondents think that the in-service teachers go for PhD because they belong to an academic background. Their academic background encourages them to pursue a higher degree.
2. **Previous education record:** Some respondents also believe that their previous education record also motivates them to pursue a higher degree. Their previous research study motivates them to pursue a higher degree. They want to continue their research and fulfill the gaps of the previous research topic.

3. **Personal motivation:** Some respondents believe that they are personally motivated to pursue a higher degree. They want to become a researcher and connect to the research process
4. **Necessary for their professional development:** Some respondents also find out that having a PhD degree is necessary for their professional development. They improve their professional development with the help of higher degree. Respondents also think that it is their dream to pursue a higher degree. They know about different method of the teaching that makes the teaching learning process more effective. They also know about how different method of teaching is implemented in the classroom. Having a PhD degree can increase their salary and it has a positive effect on their professional development.
5. **With the help of professional training improve students' learning:** Respondents believe that with the help of the higher degree they can improve the students learning. The teacher who has a higher degree can teach effectively to the students. The teacher use different method of teaching to increase the students learning outcomes. The students learning outcomes can increase with the use of different methods of the teaching. So it can increase the professional development of the in service teachers.

The findings from the data collected through interviews determine that the personal and professional motivation are very important aspects in the teacher's motivation due to which they wanted to do their PhD degrees. Thus, they are personally and professionally motivated to carry out a higher degree. There has a positive impact on their professions and students' learning outcomes and on the working environment. The in-service teachers pursuing higher education for acquiring the modern knowledge in their field is perceived by the most of the interviewed teachers. It can increase their self-confidence to perform the activities. The findings also show that the PhD have a big impact on the professional development of the teachers. The teachers can change their teaching techniques. So, it can be considered as an effective form of change in their professional training.

The findings of this research also show that the teacher having the higher degree has a greater impact on the school environment. The teachers are more engaged in the teaching learning process. This can be important for the good reputation of the school. Timperley et al. (2007) suggest that for teacher professional development to be effective, it needs to occur on the organizational level. The findings of this research also suggest that after getting the higher degree the student's attitude with students and organization is changed. They know how to behave well with students and the organization.

Some findings also show that teachers pursue higher degree only for the sake of financial benefits. Most of the opinions of teachers from interviews suggest that they pursue the higher degree because it increases their salary and other professional benefits. They also believe that doing PhD will be more beneficial at the time of their retirement. The most interviewed also suggest that pursuing the higher degree has a good and positive impact on the learning achievements of the students. The learning outcomes can be changed if the teacher used the modern techniques of the teaching. Some findings also show that teachers pursue the higher degree because it is their dream to get a higher degree and sometimes they are influenced by their parents to pursue a higher degree.

13. Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, in-service teachers pursue PhD degrees for a variety of reasons. Some in-service teachers consider that they will be able to increase their salaries while others think that it will develop good professional value to their profiles. Thus, as a whole, majority of in-service teachers considers that PhD may change the teacher's way of thinking, the school environment and the learning outcomes of the students. It is a possible strategy to improve professional training. It can also enhance the students' learning. The findings also conclude that in-service teachers pursue a higher degree because they want to connect with the research and they want to work as a researcher. There are some internal and external factors that motivate in-service teachers to pursue a PhD degree. The PhD degree is beneficial for both personal and professional development.

When in-service teachers personally motivated to pursue a PhD it should be the intrinsic motivation because they are doing PhD for their own satisfaction. The engagement due to enjoyment of an action is intrinsic motivation. The internal factor that motivates for higher education includes to desire to become a researcher and continue the studies. The other type of motivation is external motivation that means doing something not because peoples enjoy it because they want to earn some reward. It is characterized that when students are motivated to learn not by the personal interest but for a desire to meet the expectations of their parents and teachers.

The PhD can improve their personal and professional life. The in-service teacher with higher degree can brings change in the school environment and the students perceive it in a good way. It could be seen as a suitable professional learning technique. Individual involvement in a PhD program may come at a cost in terms of money, time, and social contact. They interact with different peoples and it affects their personal life. Sometimes the in-service teachers pursue a higher degree only for the sake of increase in the pay. Sometimes in-service teachers pursue a higher degree to improve the students leaning by improving their professional learning. They used different method to improve the students learning.

Some respondents also find out that having a PhD degree is necessary for their professional development. They improve their professional development with the help of higher degree. Respondents also think that it is their dream to pursue a higher degree. They know about different method of the teaching that makes the teaching learning process more effective. They also know about how different method of teaching is implemented in the classroom. Having a PhD degree can increase their salary and it has a positive effect on their professional development.

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