

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING UNIVERSITY TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Shazia Abdul Sattar***Preschool Teacher, Zikora Day Nursery and Preschool, London, United Kingdom*shaziasattar99@gmail.com**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18617439>**Keywords**

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Abstract

In the evolving landscape of higher education, professional development (PD) plays a pivotal role in enhancing teaching effectiveness and academic quality. However, university teachers' participation in PD programs remains uneven, especially in developing countries like Pakistan. This qualitative study explores the motivational factors that influence university teachers' engagement in professional development activities across public and private universities in Lahore. Guided by Self-Determination Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the study employs a purposive sampling strategy to conduct semi-structured interviews with 35 faculty members from diverse academic disciplines. Thematic analysis of the interview data reveals five major themes: intrinsic motivation (personal growth, teaching passion), extrinsic motivation (certification, promotions), institutional support (administrative encouragement, resource availability), peer influence (collaborative learning), and barriers (time constraints, irrelevant content). The findings highlight a complex interplay of personal, institutional, and socio-cultural factors shaping faculty participation in PD. While many educators view PD as essential for professional growth, systemic barriers and lack of contextual relevance often reduce enthusiasm and engagement. The study contributes to the understanding of faculty motivation within the specific socio-educational context of Pakistan and provides actionable recommendations for university leadership and policymakers to design more responsive and motivating professional development frameworks. This research adds to the growing body of literature emphasizing the need for localized, teacher-driven, and institutionally supported professional development initiatives in South Asian higher education systems.

Introduction

Professional development (PD) in higher education has emerged as a cornerstone for institutional advancement and teaching excellence across the globe. In the face of rapidly evolving pedagogical methods, digitization, and international quality assurance standards, the professional growth of university teachers has gained increasing importance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Internationally, PD is often embedded within academic institutions as a

continuous process that supports teaching, research, curriculum innovation, and leadership development (OECD, 2020). Countries such as Finland, the UK, and Canada have institutionalized PD systems that prioritize not only instructional capacity but also the psychological and motivational aspects of faculty engagement (Avalos, 2011). In the Pakistani context, however, the landscape of higher education professional development is still maturing. Since its inception in 2002, the Higher

Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has initiated several faculty development programs; however, participation and impact have remained uneven across institutions (Aslam et al., 2012). Various studies have identified the lack of structured PD opportunities, inconsistent institutional support, and inadequate incentives as barriers to meaningful participation (Rasheed, Humayon, & Awan, 2016). Shah et al. (2024) noted that faculty in Pakistan frequently perceive PD as a secondary priority due to workload pressures, lack of financial rewards, and limited relevance to their immediate academic responsibilities.

Importance of Teacher Engagement in PD

Active teacher engagement in PD activities is a significant determinant of the quality of education imparted at the tertiary level. Research suggests that motivated and well-trained faculty are better equipped to deliver student-centered, innovative, and research-informed instruction (Iftikhar et al., 2022). Furthermore, continuous PD not only upgrades pedagogical skills but also contributes to teachers' career satisfaction, academic productivity, and institutional loyalty (Borko, 2004; Shahzad & Khan, 2023). PD serves as a mechanism for faculty to keep pace with international academic trends, technological shifts, and the evolving expectations of 21st-century learners. In Pakistan, particularly in urban educational hubs like Lahore, universities are striving to compete on a global academic stage. As a result, there is a growing recognition of the role of PD in maintaining instructional relevance and quality (Dilshad, Hussain, & Batool, 2019). However, engagement is often influenced by individual motivational factors, ranging from intrinsic drivers like professional growth and intellectual curiosity to extrinsic incentives like promotions, salary increments, and institutional recognition (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020). Therefore, understanding these motivational undercurrents is essential for enhancing teacher participation and optimizing PD program design.

Statement of the Problem

Despite policy-level initiatives and the availability of PD programs, a significant proportion of university teachers in Pakistan, especially in Lahore, remain either disengaged or selectively involved in professional development opportunities. This gap raises critical questions about the underlying motivational factors (or lack thereof) that govern faculty behavior in this context. Most prior studies in Pakistan have either adopted quantitative methods or focused on program evaluations, leaving a dearth of in-depth qualitative insights into faculty motivations (Ahmed et al., 2024; Qureshi, 2016). In a city like Lahore, which hosts a dense concentration of both public and private sector universities, the lack of consistent teacher engagement in PD signals a need to explore the personal, organizational, and socio-cultural dynamics that affect motivation. Teachers' voices are largely missing from the discourse on PD, especially regarding how they perceive its utility, relevance, and impact. Without this understanding, universities may continue to design programs that fail to resonate with faculty aspirations or institutional realities.

Research Questions

This study seeks to explore the following qualitative research questions:

1. What intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors influence university teachers' participation in professional development activities in Lahore?
2. How do institutional structures, leadership, and peer environments impact faculty motivation toward PD?
3. What are the perceived barriers and enablers to sustained professional engagement among university teachers?

These questions aim to unpack the motivational ecosystem that shapes PD involvement in the specific academic, cultural, and administrative context of Lahore's universities.

Significance of Study

This research holds academic, practical, and policy relevance. Academically, it adds to the limited qualitative literature on teacher motivation and

PD in South Asian higher education settings. By foregrounding faculty experiences and perspectives, the study provides a grounded understanding that complements and deepens existing quantitative surveys. Practically, the findings are of interest to university administrators, professional development trainers, and faculty affairs departments seeking to increase participation and satisfaction rates. At the policy level, this research can inform the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and provincial education authorities in designing more context-sensitive and motivationally aligned PD frameworks. For example, Shahzad and Khan (2023) emphasize the role of leadership support, autonomy, and recognition in enhancing PD participation, elements often overlooked in generic training models. The insights from Lahore, a metropolitan academic hub, could serve as a reference model for similar urban centers across Pakistan.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study is intentionally confined to public and private universities in Lahore, a city that represents a diverse cross-section of Pakistan's higher education institutions. The study focuses solely on university-level teaching faculty, excluding administrative staff and non-teaching personnel. Additionally, the research adopts a qualitative design, using interviews and thematic analysis, to capture in-depth narratives rather than broad statistical trends. The study does not attempt to measure the effectiveness of existing PD programs or to evaluate specific training content. Instead, it seeks to explore faculty motivations, perceptions, and constraints through their lived experiences. The findings may not be generalizable to all of Pakistan, but provide rich contextual insights applicable to other urban educational settings.

Literature Review

Motivational factors in teacher PD span both intrinsic and extrinsic domains. Intrinsically, faculty are often driven by the desire to improve teaching effectiveness, enhance subject-matter

expertise, and stay updated with pedagogical trends (Guskey, 2002). These motivations are especially pronounced when educators believe that PD contributes directly to student learning outcomes and personal growth (Richter et al., 2011). Extrinsic motivators, on the other hand, include institutional rewards such as promotions, salary increments, performance bonuses, and recognition by peers or leadership (Runhaar, Sanders, & Yang, 2010). Studies have shown that while intrinsic motivation may initiate participation, sustained engagement often depends on tangible institutional support (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Moreover, peer influence and collaborative culture have emerged as strong social motivators. For example, teachers are more likely to engage in PD when their colleagues participate, and when institutional leaders foster a community of continuous learning (Vangrieken et al., 2017). In the South Asian context, cultural and hierarchical factors also shape motivation. A study by Qureshi (2016) in Pakistan found that many faculty members feel obligated to participate in PD due to institutional pressure rather than personal drive. Such coercive models often fail to yield meaningful outcomes and can reduce motivation over time.

Professional Development Practices in Higher Education

Globally, PD in higher education is becoming increasingly multifaceted, encompassing workshops, faculty learning communities, online courses, mentoring, and action research (Rafiq et al., 2025). Institutions in the UK, Canada, and Australia have developed structured PD pathways linked to national teaching standards (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid, & McKinney, 2007). These frameworks emphasize reflective practice, peer collaboration, and evidence-based teaching strategies. In contrast, PD practices in many developing countries remain underdeveloped. In Pakistan, PD initiatives are largely driven by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), such as the Faculty Development Program (FDP), the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme, and partnerships with foreign institutions

(Aslam et al., 2012). However, studies suggest that these programs are often delivered in a top-down manner with limited customization to institutional or faculty needs (Dilshad, Hussain, & Batool, 2019).

Furthermore, challenges such as lack of follow-up, limited financial support, rigid scheduling, and irrelevant content have been cited as barriers to effective PD in Pakistani universities (Shah et al., 2024; Afzal & Rafiq, 2025). While some universities in urban centers like Lahore have begun adopting blended and modular PD models, there is still a long way to go in terms of making these programs inclusive, needs-driven, and motivationally supportive.

Global vs. Pakistani Context

The global discourse around PD emphasizes personalization, faculty agency, and impact assessment, principles that are only partially integrated in the Pakistani higher education system. Countries like Finland and Singapore invest heavily in teacher-led PD, where faculty are empowered to design their own learning trajectories and are given institutional autonomy to experiment and innovate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Such models not only enhance motivation but also elevate teaching quality and academic culture. By contrast, PD in Pakistan is still evolving within a bureaucratic and compliance-driven model. Research by Rasheed, Humayon, and Awan (2016) shows that faculty in Pakistan often view PD as an obligation rather than an opportunity. A lack of institutional incentives, minimal involvement in PD planning, and poor alignment with faculty interests contribute to low participation rates, particularly in public universities. Nevertheless, promising trends are emerging. Private universities in Lahore have started to localize PD by integrating feedback loops, mentoring systems, and digital learning tools (Rafiq et al., 2024). These innovations, though limited in scale, signal a potential shift toward more motivationally responsive models.

Gaps in Existing Research

Despite increasing attention to PD in Pakistani higher education, several critical gaps remain. First, most studies have employed quantitative methodologies that fail to capture the nuanced, lived experiences of faculty members (Iftikhar et al., 2022). Second, little attention has been paid to the motivational dynamics that influence PD engagement, particularly how intrinsic and extrinsic factors intersect with organizational culture and policy frameworks. Moreover, research on PD has often treated faculty as a homogenous group, ignoring how motivation may vary based on discipline, gender, career stage, and institutional type (Ahmed et al., 2024). There is also limited insight into urban academic ecosystems such as Lahore, where diverse institutional practices coexist within a single metropolitan setting. Most importantly, faculty voices are underrepresented in the design and evaluation of PD programs, which undermines their effectiveness and sustainability. This study aims to address these gaps by conducting a qualitative exploration of the motivational factors influencing university teachers in Lahore, thereby offering context-rich insights that can inform both institutional strategies and national policies.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study is guided by two complementary theoretical frameworks: Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000), and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Self-Determination Theory provides a robust lens to understand how university teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influence their engagement in professional development. The theory emphasizes three core psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which, when fulfilled, enhance internal motivation and sustained engagement. In the context of professional development, faculty members who perceive greater autonomy in selecting learning activities, feel competent in applying new knowledge, and experience meaningful peer relationships are more likely to engage

meaningfully in such programs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Kyndt et al., 2016). Complementing SDT, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between *motivators* (achievement, recognition, professional growth) and *hygiene factors* (salary, policies, work conditions), helping to explain both participation and non-participation in institutional PD initiatives. For example, the presence of motivating factors may drive teachers toward voluntary participation, whereas the

absence of hygiene factors may result in dissatisfaction or resistance, despite the availability of programs (Shah et al., 2024; Rasheed et al., 2016). The integration of these two theories provides a nuanced framework to examine both the internal desires and external conditions shaping teacher behavior, making them particularly suited for exploring professional development in the diverse institutional ecosystem of Lahore's universities, as shown in Figure 1 below.

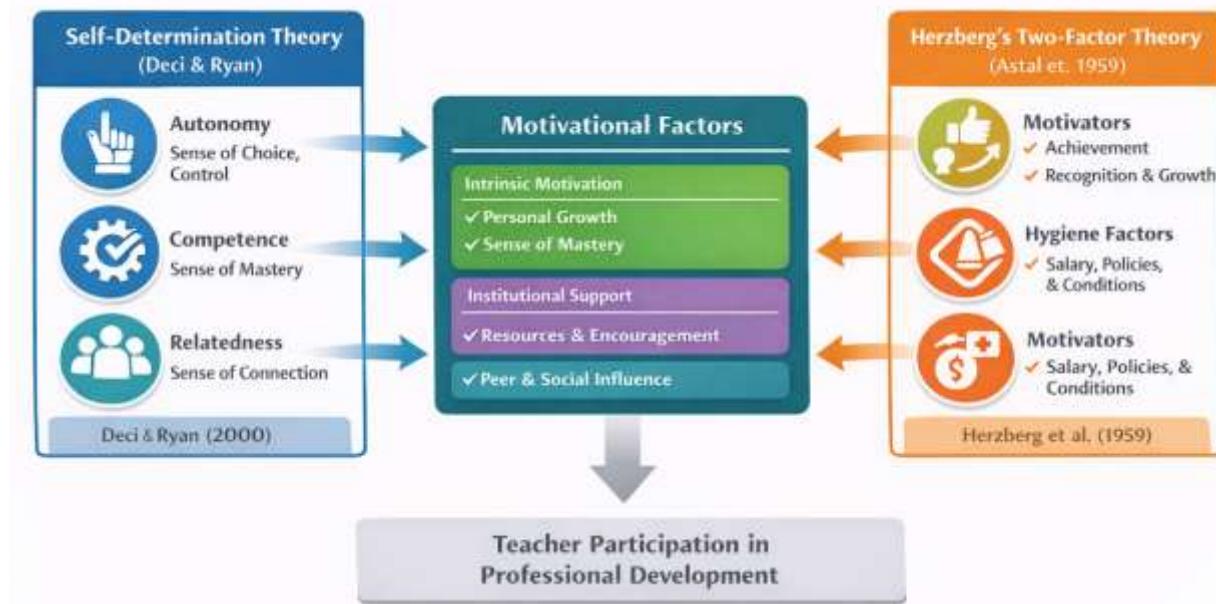


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Research Methodology

This study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which is appropriate for exploring the subjective meanings and lived experiences of university teachers regarding their participation in professional development (PD). The interpretivist approach assumes that reality is socially constructed and best understood through the perspectives of individuals within their specific contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given the complex, multifaceted nature of motivation, and its interaction with institutional structures, policies, and cultures, the interpretivist paradigm allows the researcher to capture the richness and

depth of participants' experiences in their own voices. This approach is particularly suited to educational research where human factors, perceptions, and social interactions are central (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory research design to investigate the motivational factors influencing university faculty engagement in PD. An exploratory design is suitable when limited prior research exists in a particular context, in this case, Lahore, Pakistan, and when the objective is to uncover insights rather than to test hypotheses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This design enables the researcher to ask open-ended questions,

observe patterns, and develop an interpretive understanding of motivational dynamics from the ground up.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in selected public and private universities located in Lahore, the educational and cultural hub of Pakistan. Lahore is home to a diverse range of higher education institutions, including well-established public universities and rapidly expanding private sector universities. This diversity offers a rich environment to examine the variation in motivational factors, PD policies, and institutional support structures. The rationale for selecting Lahore stems from both its academic significance and logistical considerations. As a metropolitan center, Lahore reflects many of the challenges and opportunities facing higher education across urban Pakistan. Its concentration of universities provides a critical mass of faculty members with varying academic disciplines, levels of experience, and organizational cultures, making it an ideal setting for a study focused on professional motivation. Moreover, its geographic accessibility and institutional density enhance the feasibility of conducting in-person interviews.

Participants

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research to select information-rich cases (Patton, 2002). Participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research questions and their potential to provide diverse perspectives on professional development engagement. Specifically, the study targeted university faculty members with teaching responsibilities at both public and private universities in Lahore.

Inclusion criteria required that participants:

1. Have at least two years of teaching experience at a recognized higher education institution in Lahore.
2. Have participated in at least one formal or informal PD activity within the past two years.
3. Be willing and able to provide informed consent for a recorded interview.

A total of 35 university teachers were selected to ensure a diverse range of voices across gender, disciplines, and institutional types. The sample size was considered adequate for achieving thematic saturation, a key indicator in qualitative inquiry whereby no new insights emerge from additional data collection (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Data Collection Methods

The primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews, which provide both structure and flexibility to explore participants' experiences in depth. An interview guide was developed based on the theoretical framework and research questions, covering themes such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, institutional support, perceived relevance of PD, and barriers to participation.

Interviews were conducted in-person where possible, or via secure online platforms (Zoom) in cases where participants preferred virtual interaction. Each interview lasted between 40 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent. Field notes were also maintained to capture contextual observations. The semi-structured format allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences while enabling the researcher to probe emerging themes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, following the six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and imported into qualitative analysis software (NVivo) to assist with coding and data organization. The coding process was both inductive and deductive: some codes were derived from the theoretical framework ("autonomy," "recognition"), while others emerged directly from the data. Related codes were grouped into sub-themes, which were then clustered under broader themes that answered the research questions.

To ensure trustworthiness, several strategies were employed:

- Credibility was addressed through triangulation of data sources and member checking, where selected participants were invited to review their transcripts and preliminary findings.
- Transferability was enhanced by providing thick descriptions of the context, participant profiles, and data excerpts.
- Dependability was supported by maintaining an audit trail of the research process.
- Confirmability was addressed by keeping a reflexive journal to monitor researcher bias and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to standard ethical research practices in accordance with institutional and

international guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. They were provided with an information sheet detailing the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any time, and how their data would be used. Confidentiality was strictly maintained. All participant names and institutional affiliations were anonymized during transcription and reporting. Unique pseudonyms were assigned to protect identities. The data was stored on encrypted devices accessible only to the principal investigator. Before data collection began, ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the lead researcher's university, as well as permissions from participating institutions where required, as the whole research process is shown in Figure 2 below.

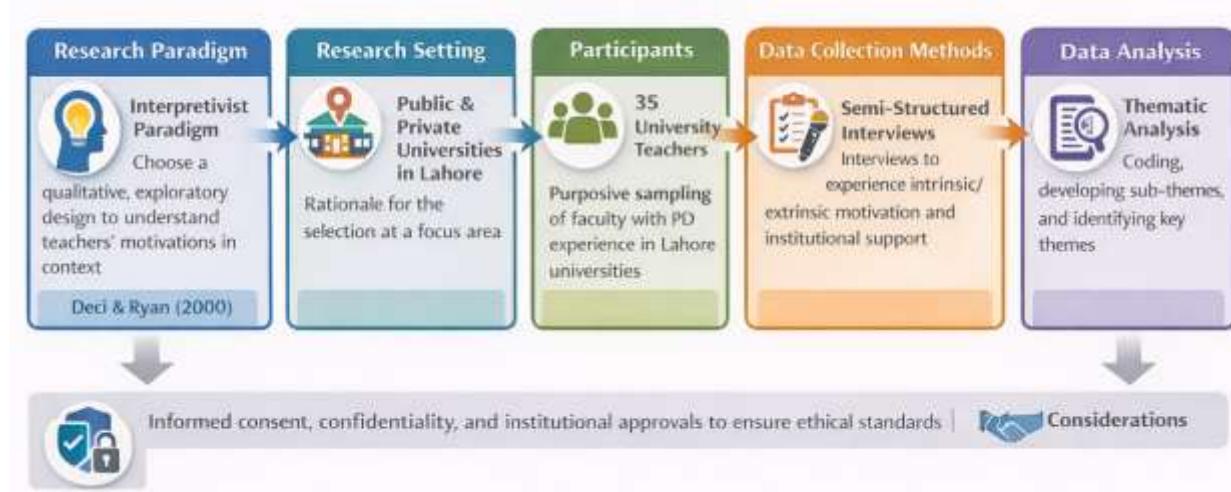


Figure 2: Research Process

Findings

This section presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of 35 semi-structured interviews with university faculty members in Lahore. The analysis yielded five major themes: Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic

Motivation, Institutional Support, Peer Influence & Collaborative Culture, and Barriers to Participation, see Table 1. Each theme is presented with supporting sub-themes and participant quotations that illustrate the patterns within the data.

Table 1: Themes Extracted through Thematic Analysis

Coding	Sub-Themes	Themes
Student success, learning joy, curiosity, classroom innovation, reflective teaching	passion for teaching, growth	Intrinsic Motivation

Coding	Sub-Themes	Themes
certificates, promotion points, recognition, salary benefits, policy compliance	career advancement, external reward	Extrinsic Motivation
funding, access to PD, leadership support, time slots, institutional incentives	administrative support, access barriers	Institutional Support
peer sessions, joint attendance, mentoring, learning communities, shared goals	social learning, peer motivation	Peer Influence & Collaborative Culture
overload, tight schedule, content mismatch, fatigue, repetition	time pressure, perceived irrelevance	Barriers to Participation

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation emerged as a dominant theme influencing faculty engagement in professional development (PD). Two major sub-themes were identified: passion for teaching and desire for personal growth.

Passion for Teaching

Many participants expressed that their core motivation for participating in PD activities stemmed from their genuine interest in improving their teaching practices. They viewed PD as a way to enrich their classroom experiences and foster student engagement.

“I don’t attend workshops just to tick a box. I go because I want to be a better teacher for my students. When they understand a difficult concept, that’s my reward.”

Participant 7, Assistant Professor, Public University

“Professional development helps me innovate. I’ve always enjoyed teaching, and learning new strategies makes it even more exciting.”

Participant 19, Lecturer, Private University

Personal

Growth

Faculty also identified professional development as a route to personal and intellectual enrichment. They saw PD as a chance to stay current with academic trends and expand their knowledge.

“It’s not only about teaching. I want to grow personally, learn new tools, publish better, and feel that I am progressing.”

Participant 12, Associate Professor, Public University

“The workshops I choose are not mandated. I select those which push me intellectually. That’s

what keeps me motivated.”

Participant 28, Lecturer, Private University

Interpretation

These responses suggest that intrinsic motivation is a powerful driver for PD engagement, particularly when opportunities are aligned with faculty values and self-perception as educators. The sense of fulfillment, growth, and commitment to students underscores the importance of designing PD that supports self-directed and meaningful learning.

Extrinsic Motivation

While intrinsic factors were strong, many participants also cited extrinsic motivations such as certifications, promotions, and salary increments as influencing their decisions to engage in PD.

Certifications and Career Advancement

Certificates were perceived as crucial for building professional profiles, especially when applying for promotions or competitive grants.

“These certificates are almost mandatory for our promotion files. Whether you learn something or not, you need that paper.”

Participant 5, Assistant Professor, Public University

“Sometimes I attend only to collect the certificate, especially when I know the content isn’t that new to me.”

Participant 22, Lecturer, Private University

Promotions and Salary Increments

PD activities were also viewed as part of the appraisal system in some universities, contributing

directly to career advancement and monetary benefits.

"The more trainings you have, the better your chances during annual reviews. That's how our institution works."

Participant 17, Lecturer, Private University

"Yes, I do care about growth and learning, but let's be honest, some of us are there for the pay raise that comes with added qualifications."

Participant 33, Associate Professor, Public University

Interpretation

Extrinsic motivators serve as pragmatic incentives for participation. While they may not foster deep engagement, they play a critical role in initiating or sustaining participation, especially in competitive or bureaucratic environments.

Institutional Support

Institutional factors were identified as significant enablers of or barriers to faculty participation in PD. Two major sub-themes emerged: availability of resources and leadership encouragement.

Resources and Accessibility

Participants emphasized that institutional infrastructure, such as funding, scheduling, and access to training, either enabled or constrained their engagement.

"We have no budget for external workshops. If you want to attend, you pay yourself, and not everyone can afford that."

Participant 14, Assistant Professor, Public University

"In our department, they allocate time and even arrange on-site sessions. That makes it so much easier to attend."

Participant 30, Lecturer, Private University

Leadership Encouragement

Supportive leadership was highlighted as a crucial motivator, where department heads and deans either encouraged or discouraged PD through formal and informal policies.

"Our dean personally invites us and even attends some sessions. That kind of backing matters."

Participant 2, Lecturer, Private University

"Honestly, unless the head pushes us or ties it to performance, no one takes it seriously."

Participant 9, Lecturer, Public University

Interpretation

Institutional commitment to PD, through policies, funding, and leadership modeling, directly impacts faculty motivation. Universities that embed PD into their academic culture are more likely to see sustained engagement.

Peer Influence & Collaborative Culture

Many faculty members shared that their engagement was shaped by colleague participation, peer encouragement, and a sense of community learning.

Collaborative Learning

Some institutions promoted peer-to-peer training or created informal faculty learning communities, which helped normalize PD participation.

"When my colleagues go, I go too. We usually discuss what we learned afterward, and it creates a kind of positive pressure."

Participant 6, Lecturer, Public University

"The best sessions are the ones we conduct ourselves, faculty sharing their strategies. It's practical and motivating."

Participant 18, Assistant Professor, Private University

Social Influence

In several cases, participants indicated that the presence of colleagues or group invitations encouraged attendance, even when personal interest was low.

"If I'm the only one attending, it feels isolating. But when it's a group effort, it becomes more engaging."

Participant 13, Lecturer, Private University

"Sometimes it's not about the content, but the experience with colleagues that makes the session worthwhile."

Participant 27, Assistant Professor, Public University

Interpretation

Peer networks and social learning dynamics are vital in shaping motivation. Faculty members are more likely to participate when PD is framed as a collective or collegial effort rather than an individual obligation.

Barriers to Participation

Despite recognizing the value of PD, many participants cited practical barriers such as time constraints, workload, and lack of content relevance as hindering their consistent participation.

Time and Workload

A majority of participants described academic overload, teaching, administrative duties, and research expectations as major deterrents.

“We are already stretched thin. Taking time out for another seminar means pushing something else aside.”

Participant 4, Associate Professor, Public University

“Even when I want to go, I can't. Lectures, grading, meetings, it never ends.”

Participant 26, Lecturer, Private University

Lack of Relevance

Some faculty felt that PD sessions were generic or disconnected from their subject expertise, reducing their perceived value.

“Most of the content is too basic or not tailored to my field. It doesn't add much.”

Participant 21, Assistant Professor, Public University

“If the training is repetitive or superficial, it feels like a waste of time.”

Participant 8, Lecturer, Private University

Interpretation

Barriers such as poor scheduling, irrelevant content, and administrative overload significantly dampen motivation. Without flexible, faculty-centered PD models, even motivated teachers may disengage.



Figure 3: Mind Map of Thematic Analysis

Figure 3 visually presents the mind map of the five core themes derived from the study's thematic analysis: Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Institutional Support, Peer Influence & Collaborative Culture, and Barriers to

Participation. Each theme represents a key dimension influencing university teachers' engagement in professional development. Together, they illustrate the complex interplay of personal values, institutional structures, social

environments, and practical challenges that shape faculty motivation in Lahore's higher education landscape.

Discussion

This study set out to explore the motivational factors that influence university teachers' participation in professional development (PD) in the context of Lahore, Pakistan. The findings addressed the three guiding research questions by revealing a nuanced understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, institutional and peer-related influences, and structural barriers. The theme of intrinsic motivation, rooted in passion for teaching and personal growth, emerged as a powerful driver for PD engagement, aligning with previous literature that emphasizes the importance of internal satisfaction and the desire for professional mastery (Guskey, 2002; Kyndt et al., 2016). Likewise, extrinsic motivators such as certificates, promotions, and monetary incentives were widely cited, confirming studies in both Pakistani and global contexts that show how institutional appraisal systems shape faculty behavior (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020; Rasheed et al., 2016). Furthermore, the findings highlight the critical role of institutional support and leadership encouragement in promoting PD engagement, consistent with research from both developed and developing countries (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Shah et al., 2024). The role of peer influence and collaborative culture also emerged as a strong social factor, echoing previous findings that collegiality, mentoring, and professional learning communities enhance motivation (Vangrieken et al., 2017). Barriers to participation such as time constraints, workload, and irrelevant content were prominent, supporting earlier research that identified these factors as major hindrances to sustained engagement (Dilshad et al., 2019; Iftikhar et al., 2022).

Confirmations and Contradictions with Existing Research

The study's findings largely confirm existing literature on faculty motivation toward professional development. For instance, the dual

presence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators confirms the conceptual overlap found in both Self-Determination Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, as well as empirical research across various regions (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Herzberg et al., 1959). The presence of both positive and instrumental motivations reflects the layered reality of faculty engagement in complex institutional ecosystems. The emphasis on institutional leadership and administrative infrastructure also supports prior studies showing that when universities provide time, resources, and incentives, participation in PD increases (Rasheed et al., 2016; Shahzad & Khan, 2023). The particular finding that peer influence can significantly encourage participation adds to the body of research that views professional learning as a social, rather than solely individual, activity (Avalos, 2011; Kyndt et al., 2016).

However, this study diverges slightly from some global findings in terms of the weight faculty assign to extrinsic incentives. In contrast to models from Western countries, where intrinsic motivation is often emphasized as primary, Pakistani faculty demonstrated strong reliance on promotions and financial rewards, suggesting a more context-dependent motivational structure. This may reflect the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of professional progression in Pakistan's higher education system, as noted by Ahmed et al. (2024) and Qureshi (2016). Another notable contradiction lies in the perception of PD relevance. Whereas much global literature assumes faculty view PD content as beneficial, several participants in this study expressed skepticism regarding its applicability. This disconnect suggests the need for localized and discipline-specific PD programming, a concern underexplored in international frameworks.

Interpretation through Theoretical Framework

Interpreting these findings through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), it is evident that faculty engagement in PD is significantly influenced by the satisfaction of their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When participants described the freedom to select

relevant PD programs or the intellectual challenge of workshops, these experiences reflected autonomous motivation. Likewise, peer collaboration and supportive leadership align with the SDT principle of relatedness, reinforcing the importance of social belonging in learning contexts (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Simultaneously, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory helps explain why some motivators (such as recognition, achievement, and personal growth) act as strong incentives, while the absence of hygiene factors (like time, funding, and logistical support) leads to dissatisfaction. Many participants reported attending PD sessions primarily for promotions or salary increments, which, while extrinsic, also served as powerful motivators. This balance between satisfiers and dissatisfiers reinforces Herzberg's theory as a practical framework for interpreting PD participation behavior in structured institutional settings. Taken together, these theoretical lenses offer a comprehensive understanding of the push and pull forces that shape faculty behavior. The findings underscore the need to create PD environments that satisfy internal motivational needs while minimizing external barriers, thus bridging personal agency with institutional structure.

Implications

The findings of this study carry significant implications for stakeholders in higher education. University policymakers must create enabling environments by integrating professional development (PD) into institutional strategy, providing time, recognition, and resources to faculty. Program designers should tailor PD initiatives to be contextually relevant, flexible, and aligned with adult learning principles to enhance faculty motivation and engagement. For the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, the study underscores the need for national PD standards, incentive structures, and feedback-driven program evaluation to ensure PD is both effective and equitably accessible across institutions.

Limitation of the Study

This study is limited by its geographical focus on Lahore, which, while academically diverse, may not represent the full spectrum of higher education experiences across Pakistan. Additionally, the qualitative design and purposive sampling mean that findings are not statistically generalizable, though they offer rich, contextual insights. Future studies could expand to rural universities or adopt mixed-method approaches for broader applicability.

Conclusion

This study concludes that university teachers' participation in professional development is shaped by a complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, institutional support, peer influence, and structural barriers. Faculty engage most meaningfully when PD opportunities align with their personal growth goals, are supported by leadership, and are embedded in a collegial culture. However, time constraints, rigid structures, and irrelevant content often hinder participation. Based on these insights, it is recommended that universities and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) adopt faculty-centered, flexible, and incentivized PD models. Programs should be designed collaboratively with teachers, incorporate mentorship and reflective practice, and be evaluated regularly to ensure sustained engagement and impact.

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