

# INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND WOMEN COLLEGE TEACHERS PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT PUBLIC SECTOR COLLEGES

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## ABSTRACT

The study is entitled, "Institutional Support and Women College Teacher's Participation in Continuous Professional Development at Public Sector Colleges" Institutional support is widely recognized as a determinant of teacher's engagement in professional development. This study investigated the institutional support and its relationship with participation of Women College teachers in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities of the public sector colleges located in Punjab (Pakistan). The technique adopted was a quantitative survey using cross sectional design. A stratified random sampling was used to carry out sampling from 300 female teachers of various colleges in the Divisions of Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur. Washington University's Five-Level Model of Professional Development (1986) was utilized to develop a structured questionnaire. The SPSS software was used to calculate descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression. The overall level of institutional supports was found moderate ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ). There was a strong positive association between institutional support and CPD participation ( $r = .61$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Regression analysis showed that institutional support explained 37% of the variance ( $R^2 = .37$ ,  $F = 86.4$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in the participation in CPD. Administrative encouragement, flexible scheduling, and resource availability were the top predictors. The results have illustrated the need for structural institutional support for women teachers to allow meaningful access to professional learning. In order to foster gender-inclusive inclusive, participatory CPD cultures, policy changes and institutional commitments will be needed to take place in public colleges.

**KEYWORDS:** institutional support, continuous professional development, women college teachers, CPD participation, Punjab, public colleges

## INTRODUCTION

Sustaining opportunities for professional learning is an essential determinant in teaching quality in higher education, in addition to an academic teacher's academic preparation. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is the primary means by which teachers develop their pedagogical skills, keep their subject matter content up-to-date and respond to varying classroom needs. However, CPD attendance is not consistent. It's influenced by individual drive, institutional norms, policy environment and access to practical support available by the organizations to its faculty members.

There is a pivotal role that women college teachers in Pakistan play in the education system. They make a significant proportion of teachers in public sector women's colleges in India, and therefore shape the learning journey of thousands of young women every year. Nevertheless, their needs for professional development have garnered little scholarly attention. The majority of the CPD programs offered in Pakistan are targeted at school or university level teachers, thereby neglecting women teachers of colleges, who operate in a MOGAFI space between these two groups (Rafiq-uz-Zaman, 2023; Mumtaz et al., 2024).

Add to this, there are no institutional provisions that promote women teachers' CPD. Heavy workloads, inflexibility in the schedules, family obligations, and mobility limitations because of cultural considerations limit the participation of women in professional training, as found in other South Asian studies (Javed & Akhter, 2024; Shehzadi et al.,

Saleem et al., 2024; 2024; Shehbaz et al, 2025; Arshad et al., 2025). These barriers can become permanent when the institutions that are in place do not set up conditions that enable these. Barriers can become chronic if the institutions in place do not allow for enabling conditions of time allocation, financial support and administrative encouragement. Organizational support is one of the most important factors for the success of CPD according to Guskey's Five-Level Model of Professional Development (2000). At this stage, the model looks at whether or not colleges provide opportunities for educators to learn, try new things and maintain sustainable change. Even a well-designed CPD program fails to have an effect if not supported by institutions.

This study took a particular instance from a broader doctoral study aimed at looking into the status of institutional support for women college teachers in Punjab and to see if there is a significant relationship between institutional support and participation in CPD activities of women college teachers. The study adds to the increasing body of evidence regarding gender-responsive professional development and outlines practical implications for college administrators and for provincial policy makers.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the perceived level of institutional support among women college teachers in Punjab.
2. To examine the relationship between institutional support and CPD participation.
3. To determine whether institutional support significantly predicts CPD participation among women college teachers.

### HYPOTHESIS

H<sup>1</sup>: Institutional support is significantly associated with women college teachers' participation in CPD programs.

H<sup>2</sup>: Institutional support significantly predicts CPD participation among women college teachers in Punjab.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Institutional Support as a Driver of Professional Development

In the educational context, institutional support is defined as the resources, policies, administrative encouragement, and organizational structures that are offered to support teachers' professional development (Demirkol, 2023; Ansari et al., 2025). It involves practical aids such as time allocation, incentives, training facilities and substitutes. This also includes both invisible factors like leadership encouragement, collegial culture and professional achievement recognition.

There is a wealth of international research that supports the notion that institutional assistance is one of the most significant factors for teachers' engagement in professional learning. Garet et al. found that teachers with a positive attitude towards their schools were significantly more likely to participate and make changes in their classroom. Likewise, Joyce and Calhoun (2024) found that even if the CPD program was technically appropriate, it did not yield lasting changes in teacher behavior unless the program was supported by the organization.

This is especially true when it comes to higher education. The most frequently cited barriers for faculty members to engage in CPD in under-resourced public institutions are time constraints, administrative indifference, and limited financial support (Popova et al., 2022). Perry et al. (2022) pointed out that a commitment to providing high-quality CPD requires special institutional structures and resources, including leadership commitment, learning time, and accountability mechanisms.

### Gendered Dimensions of Institutional Support

Institutional support is particularly important to women teachers. The findings from Pakistan and neighboring countries prove that women teachers are exposed to gender specific challenges for professional development which are not experienced by male teachers. These include mobility restrictions, family caregiving responsibilities, lack of gender-inclusive training schedules, and lack of representation in decision-making roles (Shoab et al., 2025; Shehzadi et al., 2024).

Elrayah (2022) found that lack of institutional support for professional learning among women teachers in developing countries are the factors contributing to their burnout and dissatisfaction with their work. Likewise, Khalili (2024) showed that women from conservative societies who received flexibility in their schedule and the administrative duty, engaged more in formal CPD than those women who did not receive flexibility. The results indicate that institutional support is not only beneficial for women teachers but it is also a condition that makes it possible for them to participate in the CPD.

Despite the significance of CPD, government policy documents recognize it as a priority while few attempts are made to translate such a priority into institutional gender specific arrangements in Pakistan. Even when women teachers are motivated, they are unable to engage in CPD due to lack of onsite childcare, female mentors, flexible training windows, and recognized career incentives to engage in CPD (Iqbal & Ali, 2024; Okpalauwaekwe et al., 2024; Saleem et al., 2025).

### **This product was created by Guskey.**

This model, by Guskey, Five-Level Model of Teacher Change, offers a structured approach to the understanding of the production of improvement from CPD. The third level of the model, organizational support and change is directly applicable to the present study. At this point, the model looks at whether or not institutions create the factors for the teacher to implement newly acquired skills. According to Guskey, organizational support is the key that makes or breaks the effectiveness of CPD. When teachers feel supported through encouragement, learning materials and structures, they will more likely remain committed to professional learning and apply what they have learned in their classrooms (Gidari & Kakana, 2022).

In addition to this, the model also recognizes the importance of institutions "signaling" their priorities through support or lack thereof. If CPD is seen as an 'add-on' and not as an embedded part of the institution, the message sinks in and teachers begin to see the practice of CPD as not part of their institutional mission. In such colleges, it becomes a vicious circle of lack of development for female teachers (Lomba-Portela et al., 2022; Kurteshi & Rrustemi, 2025).

### **RESEARCH GAPS**

The relationship between institutional support and CPD participation is well established in international literature; however there are few empirical studies which have focused on women college teachers in Pakistan. The research available is predominantly at secondary (school) or tertiary (university) level. Research efforts in colleges in rural and semi-urban areas in Punjab are limited and unique. This study fills that void with quantitative evidence from a systematically underrepresented population.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

A cross-sectional survey design in a quantitative approach was used in this study. For this design, the investigator wanted to be able to collect data systematically from a large sample of teachers at various institutions within a specific timeframe. The quantitative approach allowed uses of inferential statistics for testing of hypotheses and determining relationships between institutional support and CPD participation.

### **POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

All the female teachers of public sector degree level college of Punjab in three divisions of Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur have been targeted. After screening and cleaning the data, 300 questionnaires were retained for final analysis out of an initial distribution of 360 questionnaires. Stratified random sampling technique was used to get the proportional representation in cluster-wise divisions and different size colleges.

### **RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The data obtained were gathered by a structured questionnaire, designed by the researcher based on the Guskey Five-Level Model of Professional Development. The questionnaire consisted of two major subscales which are relevant to this study. The first assessed perceived institutional support on three aspects: administrative encouragement, provision of time/resources, flexible scheduling, financial support, and recognition of CPD participation. The second subscale related to how often, what kind, and how much CPD activity someone participated in. A five-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) was used on both scales.

Five academic experts in those fields of educational research and teacher development were asked to validate the instrument. Thirty teachers who were not part of the main sample were included in a pilot study.

The degree of internal consistency was acceptable with Cronbach's alpha of .84 for institutional support and .81 for CPD participation, which is above the recommended value of .70 (Izah et al., 2023). The ethical issues and procedures required for the collection of data. Ethical issues and procedures needed to collect data.

The research was conducted over two teaching semesters. Before the data collection, researcher obtained written permission from the principals of each participating college, and from the Punjab Higher Education Department. It was an optional survey and the respondents were given absolute confidentiality.

Questionnaires were given out to teachers face-to-face and teachers were given enough time to fill them out. The instruments did not include any personal information.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for analyzing the quantitative data. Level of institutional support and CPD participation were described using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations). Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to the relationship between the two variables and the strength of the relationship was determined. Simple linear regression was used to test if there was a significant institutional support to CPD. All tests used a threshold of  $p < .05$ .

## RESULTS

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A total of 300 women college teachers were selected from public sector colleges of Punjab to form the sample. Most respondents (67%) were in the 31-45 age group with 18% in the <30 age group and 15% over 45 years of age. The educational levels of the respondents in terms of qualification were as follows: 48% had a master's qualification, 32% a Masters of Philosophy qualification, and 20% a doctorate. Teaching experience varied from less than five years, fifteen years or more than fifteen years, with 28% of teachers having less than five years, 42% having five-ten, and 30% having more than ten years. 54% sample colleges were in urban colleges; 46% in rural and semi-urban colleges.

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics of the institutional support subscale and its dimensions are presented in Table 1. The mean score for institutional support was 3.21 (SD = 0.74), which reflects moderate scores on perceptions of institutional support. There was not a single dimension that lacked support, with administrative encouragement having the highest mean score (M = 3.48, SD = 0.68), and financial support the lowest (M = 2.87, SD = 0.91). The same is true with flexible scheduling (M = 3.09, SD = 0.78) and resource provision (M = 3.14, SD = 0.82), which were both still lower than the scale midpoint of 3.50.

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics for Institutional Support and Its Dimensions (N = 300)

Dimension	M	SD	Min	Max
Administrative Encouragement	3.48	0.68	1.00	5.00
Flexible Scheduling	3.09	0.78	1.00	5.00
Resource Provision	3.14	0.82	1.00	5.00
Financial Support	2.87	0.91	1.00	5.00
CPD Recognition	3.28	0.76	1.00	5.00
Overall Institutional Support	3.21	0.74	1.00	5.00
CPD Participation	3.09	0.79	1.00	5.00

**Note.** M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. Scores based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

### CORRELATION ANALYSIS

To test the first hypothesis a Pearson correlation was computed. The analysis showed a positive correlation between institutional support and the participation in CPD which was statistically significant ( $r = .61, p < .001$ ). This correlation meets the conventional benchmarks for a strong correlation. The complete correlation matrix with individual dimensions of institutional support is included in Table 2.

**Table 2** Pearson Correlation Matrix: Institutional Support Dimensions and CPD Participation

Variable	CPD Participation	p-value
Administrative Encouragement	.58	< .001
Flexible Scheduling	.54	< .001
Resource Provision	.49	< .001
Financial Support	.43	< .001
CPD Recognition	.52	< .001
Overall Institutional Support	.61	< .001

**Note.** All correlations are significant at the  $p < .001$  level (two-tailed). N = 300.

There was a positive statistically significant relationship between each of the institutional supports and CPD participation. Flexible scheduling and CPD recognition were the next strongest associations ( $r = .54$  and  $.52$ ,

respectively), followed by administrative encouragement ( $r = .58$ ). Financial support was also important, but had the lowest correlation ( $r = .43$ ), perhaps reflecting the fact that financial provision is important but not the major factor in decision to participate.

### REGRESSION ANALYSIS

A simple linear regression was used to test the second hypothesis that institutional support was significant predictor of participation in CPD. Support from institutions became the independent variable and attendance at CPD training the dependent variable. The overall model was statistically significant  $F(1, 298) = 86.4, p < .001$ , explaining 37% of the variance ( $R^2 = .37$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .37$ ) in CPD participation. The unstandardized regression coefficient was  $B = 0.64$  ( $SE = 0.07$ ), and the standardized coefficient was  $\beta = .61$ , meaning that in the five-point scale, for every unit increase in perceived institutional support, the unit increase in the frequency of CPD participation was 0.64. Table 3 shows the complete regression results.

**Table 3** Linear Regression: Institutional Support as a Predictor of CPD Participation

Predictor	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	1.11	0.21	—	5.21	< .001
Institutional Support	0.64	0.07	.61	9.30	< .001

**Note.**  $R^2 = .37$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .37$ ;  $F(1, 298) = 86.4, p < .001$ . Dependent variable: CPD Participation.

Both hypotheses were confirmed. This confirmation was accomplished due to the strong positive correlation between  $H_1$  and  $r = .61$  ( $p < .001$ ). Results from the regression analysis confirmed the presence of  $H_2$ , and institutional support was identified as being a statistically significant predictor of CPD participation with a practically meaningful effect ( $\beta = .61, p < .001$ ).

### DISCUSSION

The findings of this study give quantitative proof of the significance of institutional support that is strong as the predictor of women college teachers' involvement in CPD activities. This finding is consistent with the five levels of engagement in professional development (Joyce & Calhoun, 2024) and with a growing international literature that shows that conditions within the organization are critical to the engagement in professional development (Perry et al., 2022).

Due to the moderate overall mean score for institutional support ( $M = 3.21$ ), this score must be interpreted with caution. It suggests there is some support for CPD engagement within the sampled colleges although it is less than the midpoint of the scale, 3.50, indicating that the majority of teachers do not view their institution as being fully supportive of CPD engagement. The low score for financial support ( $M = 2.87$ ) is consistent with the official and documented shortage of resources among the public sector colleges of Punjab, wherein financial resources allocated to teacher development are often limited or not available at all (Zamir & Wang, 2023; Shah, 2025).

The dimension that most strongly correlated with CPD participation was administrative encouragement ( $r = .58$ ). This result corroborates the results by Kurteshi and Rustemi (2025) that revealed that the teacher perception of how much they were supported in leadership is one of the strongest contributing factors to a teacher's willingness to engage in professional learning. Depression can be a common occurrence in the lives of teachers. Colleagues can become depressed when they are not actively encouraged, publicly shown and structurally supported to participate in CPD. On the other hand, a lack of institutional interest in professional development is indicated by administrative apathy, with a knock-on effect on participation even in the presence of external incentives.

The second highest correlation with women college teachers's engagement with CPD ( $r = .54$ ) is with flexible scheduling is noteworthy. In the Pakistani public colleges, the dual role of professional & domestic responsibilities is more common among female teachers than males. A structural barrier which institutional flexibility can directly combat is rigid training schedules, where the pursuit of training collides with domestic obligations. This aligns with Fitzgerald and colleagues (2023) and Khalili (2024) who found that flexibility with schedule was an important enabler for women's engagement in professional learning.

The model accounted for a significant proportion of the variance (37%) in CPD participation, with a large number of personal, social and contextual factors involved in CPD engagement. The variability that remains may be due to a range of individual factors such as motivation, previous CPD experience, the perceived relevance of the programs offered, and factors relating to the socio-cultural environment that are not within the control of the institution. However, the fact that one institutional variable explains over one-third of the variation in participation rates suggests the transformative power of institutional change.

The results have special relevance with regard to the public colleges of Punjab which have the least developed infrastructure for teacher development. Rural institutions and institutions located in small administrative centers also receive less resource, have fewer training events and have less management efforts for faculty development than their metropolitan counterparts (Shehzadi et al., 2024; Zamir & Wang, 2023). Thus, this is an added disadvantage for female teachers in such assessments, who have been already constrained in their personal and social lives.

The results also raise questions about policy coherence. There is awareness of the need for CPD in principle, reflected in national policies and plans, like the National Education Policy and the Higher Education Commission's plans for faculty development. This study's participants, however, indicated moderate support for these levels, indicating that there is still an enduring disconnect between policy aspiration and institutional reality. If there are no binding requirements, dedicated funding streams, and monitoring mechanisms at the college level, CPD will continue to be a personal initiative undertaken by individual women teachers who have the individual resources and favourable circumstances required for CPD to happen without school support (Popova et al., 2022; Iqbal & Ali, 2024).

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study are three main conclusions. The first is that among the women college teachers in Punjab, institutional support for CPD is at moderate level, being the financial support the lowest end aspect. Second, the level of institutional support is strongly and positively linked to CPD uptake, and most influential are administrative encouragement and flexible scheduling. Third, institutional support is a statistically and practically significant predictor of CPD participation, explaining 37% of the variance in participation rates.

The implications of these conclusions for college leaders, provincial education departments, and national policy makers are clear. It is the responsibility of College principals to make learning to facilitate CPD a central part of their role. This involves developing structured CPD programmes, making CPD participation visible, avoiding excessive paperwork for teachers and setting aside time in the school term for CPD. It is recommended that a framework for institutional support for CPD be developed by the Punjab Higher Education Department where minimum requirements of time would be stipulated, budget allocations made and gender sensitivity be taken into consideration for all public degree colleges.

The Higher Education Commission should have a role in faculty development that is not just limited to the university level, but should include degree-level college teachers at the national level. The following are ways to overcome the structural gaps that this study identified: Incentive linked CPD pathways, regional training hubs for providing access to CPD for rural women teachers, and funding online access to CPD.

The study also advanced the theory bases in terms of empirical support of the model proposed by Guskey in the context of a public college in South Asia. Results reveal that the predictive power of institutional support supports the idea that the level of the organization is not secondary to the effectiveness of CPD, but it is a basic factor. There is a need to explore further how the relationship between institutional support and CPD participation is mediated by particular institutional interventions e.g. mentorship schemes, peer working models, and online CPD platforms. Longitudinal studies would improve causal conclusions and enable researchers to observe the changes in participation rates after institutional change.

## LIMITATIONS

Self-reported data were used in this study, so there is a potential for social desirability bias and subjective perception effects. A major drawback of the cross-sectional design is that it doesn't allow for causal inferences with regard to the directionality of the observed relationship. Limited geographic generalizability to other provinces, and other private sector institutions; the sample was limited to public sector colleges in Punjab. Future studies would benefit from longitudinal or experimental designs, and more regional and institutional sampling.

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