



Recognized by: Higher Education Commission (HEC), Government of Pakistan

Sustaining Professional Competence in Resource-Constrained Contexts: Perspectives of University Teachers in Balochistan

Shahzad Haider

School Education Department, Lasbela, Balochistan, Pakistan

Shazibaloch17@gmail.com

Laiba Moin

English Lecturer, Memon medical Institute and Hospital (affiliated with KU) Karachi, Pakistan

laiba.moin@mhef.edu.pk

Hafsa Haider

B. Ed (Hons) Student LUAWMS, Uthal, Lasbela

ABSTRACT

The research examined the views and experiences of professional competence and sustainability among the faculty members of the Balochistan university, especially when they are in resource-restricted settings. The qualitative phenomenological technique was applied in which interviews were conducted with the sampled faculty in the university and the transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis. The findings showed that professional competence is much higher than the mastery in a field. It is also interested in ethical practice, reflective practice and a degree of contextual flexibility and student centered practice. The teachers showed their power in breaking the institutional barriers through peer collaboration in self-motivated organization and innovations of the teaching process. The findings identified deeply rooted systemic constraints; for example, inadequate infrastructure, constrained professional growth and absence of institutional recognition and reward systems. Respondents mentioned that for competence maintenance, there has to be presence of leadership, equity in resource distribution, and policy contexts that address local and grounded realities. It must be noted that, to improve the existing level of teacher competence in Balochistan, there is need for more systematic dependence at the institutional and policy levels, to achieve larger and more sustainable goals in higher education.

Keywords: Professional competence, university teachers, resource constrains, sustainability, Balochistan

INTRODUCTION

Professional competence has been considered as one of the pillars of quality higher education. It also involves the knowledge of teachers, pedagogical skill, moral accountability, and responsiveness to different learning circumstances (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Effective teachers in universities do not only pass disciplinary knowledge to the students but also develop their critical thinking skills, creativity and professional values. Scholars like Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) and Haider et al. (2023) state that professional competence is not a static quality, but a dynamic process that develops during the process of reflection, collaboration, and constant learning. It can be defined as a combination of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions that make teachers to act successfully in the constantly evolving academic conditions. This competence in higher education is directly associated with student learning outcomes, the quality of the curriculum and institutional credibility (Shulman, 2015).

Nevertheless, in under-resourced and developing areas like the Balochistan province, the largest and least developed province in Pakistan, it is very difficult to retain and develop professional competence. Educators often work in settings that are characterized by a lack of proper infrastructure, learning resources, opportunities to engage in professional development, as well as ineffective organizational support (Mukhtar et al., 2021). According to Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC, 2023), there are some systemic challenges in the Balochistan universities, such as lack of qualified faculty, outdated technology, and lack of research and innovation funding. These limitations provide the situation where professional competence is to be maintained, to a significant degree, not by institutional programs but by an individual initiative, personal motivation, and informal learning (Shah and Khan, 2020). In spite of the difficulties they confront, university teachers in Balochistan exhibit extraordinary dedication and resilience to their work and profession (Rasheed, et al., 2025; Shahzadi, et al., 2025; Naz, et al., 2022). Though they face difficulties in the provision of resources, bureaucratic processes, and the maintenance of teaching standards, they find ways to address these hurdles. Such situations compel to pose and address the question of the impact on professional competence of teachers in these conditions. The little literature on teacher development within low-resourced context suggests self-directed, collegial, and reflective practice as means of professional advancement for educators (Avalos, 2011; Zeichner & Liston, 2014). Still, within Balochistan's higher education context, there has been little to no primary research investigating the use of these strategies. The literature within Pakistan has predominantly centered on teacher training, instructional competence, pedagogical, and professional development at the school level (Rehman & Malik, 2018; Saeed & Mahmood, 2019), whereas the higher education teaching faculty has received significantly less attention (Haider et al., 2023).

Professional competence in Balochistan's universities has systemic and contextual challenges. For example, Baloch (2021) notes that underfunding,

geographical remoteness, and political instability have long affected institutional performance. Faculty may have training workshops and research collaborations blocked by logistical barriers, which are sometimes infrastructure related. Also, socio-cultural and administrative factors like hierarchies, lack of academic freedom, and bureaucracy are likely to stifle motivation (Khan & Ahmed, 2020). Therefore, professional competence is most likely motivated by personal drive and a sense of responsibility and adaptability to mostly, overly, or completely challenging situations.

Professional competence is also an expression of teachers' self-efficacy, reflective capacity, intrinsic motivation (Bandura, 1997; Korthagen, 2017). The more the teachers view the professional challenges as a learning experience, the more they are likely to engage in self-initiated learning processes, such as online workshops, informal collaboration, and open educational resource networks. These are self-leadership practices, which are essential in staying competitive without training. The self-determination theory and theories on adult learning assume that intrinsic motivation and autonomy are central to the development of professionalism especially where the external opportunities are scarce (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Consequently, investigating how teachers in Balochistan draw upon individual and collective assets to sustain competence can provide vital information on adaptive professionalism in higher education.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Sponsored several activities like the Faculty Development Program and the National Academy for Higher Education. However, universities in Balochistan have engaged very little. Faculty members overcoming challenges like travel distances and lack of institutional support, especially poor digital connectivity, have very little access to these. Consequently, competence development is reliant on informal networks and personal effort, and not on any systemic support (Rahman & Baloch, 2021). This is in stark contrast to the situation in the rest of the world where, as higher education expands, professional development and collaboration among peers become institutionalized to promote systemic support for teaching (OECD, 2019).

Research suggests that educators in constrained contexts display what Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) call 'adaptive expertise'. These educators learn to 'do more with less' and to 'make pedagogy fit'. They learn to 'contextualize' pedagogy to local needs and keep 'ethical' under pressure (Nisar, et al., 2025; Basharat, et al., 2023; Naz, et al., 2020). Nevertheless, in Pakistani higher education, these adaptive practices go undocumented. Most 'deficit' studies focus on teachers' 'strategies' and 'stamina' within the system (Ali & Tariq, 2017). This has resulted in a gap concerning professional competence and how it is exercised, negotiated and ultimately sustained in difficult contexts like Balochistan.

On the other hand, the socio-political and organizational contexts of universities in Balochistan have a crucial impact on educators' professional lives (Azhar & Imran, 2024). The lack of transparency, 'arbitrary' policy implementation, and the absence of support from leaders who 'demotivate' (Baloch, 2021) have a

cumulative effect of 'burn out'. Still, under these conditions, some educators 'ethically' teach, 'engage' with learners, and keep their 'academic' commitment (Phulpoto, Oad, & Imran, 2024; Oad, Zaidi, & Phulpoto, 2023). It is crucial to understand what 'enabling' these teachers is so that it can be included in rethinking 'professional' development in the context of Pakistan's border regions.

Considering these realities, the problem of the study becomes the gap between the policies and the realities of university teachers' experiences in the under-resourced contexts of Balochistan. While national and institutional policies have acknowledged the importance of teacher competence for quality assurance, the teacher work conditions in universities of Balochistan seem to neglect this objective (Rahman & Baloch, 2021). Furthermore, the lack of context-sensitive studies on how university teachers understand, construct, and maintain professional competence within constrained resources is problematic, especially when professional competence is touted as vital for higher education reform. These gaps in context-sensitive research have resulted in under-equipped policymakers and administrators failing to grasp the core issues of teaching quality in under-resourced universities.

Ultimately, the current study aimed to collate how university teachers in Balochistan experienced the sustaining of professional competence to understand resourcefulness. The focus here is on the strengths as opposed to the deficits. The emphasis is on adaptive capacity, resilience, and intrinsic motivators under challenging conditions. The context and meaning of professional competence is best studied through a qualitative phenomenological approach, which is also designed to study the lived experiences of individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study was prompted by certain contextual gaps and conceptual concerns that were outlined in the background, and it was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do university teachers define and perceive professional competence within resource-constrained settings?
2. What strategies do teachers employ to sustain or improve their professional competence?
3. How can universities better support professional competence development under resource limitations?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study described the experiences of university teachers in under-resourced environments in higher education. A qualitative study design allows for rich descriptions rather than numerical summaries which is ideal for the purpose of this study. The study sought to understand how teachers maintained and sustained a systemic professional competence within a system. A phenomenological approach was taken to capture and describe the experiences of the teachers and the meaning they attributed to those experiences. This approach helped the researcher understand the professional resilience of teachers to systemic resource limitations in higher education within Balochistan.

The study focused on full-time university teachers working in Balochistan's public sector institutions. The researchers specifically chose participants with a minimum of three years teaching experience and direct experience with scarcity of resources for each university. This is in line with a purposive sampling approach. Adult purposive sampling focuses on depth of understanding rather than breadth (Patton, 2015). Each group of 10-15 teachers was expected to yield a balanced number of diverse and rational data in order to achieve balanced representation of all the data (Oad, et al., 2024; Imran & Akhtar, 2023). The researchers approached the participants via direct invitations and referrals after proper institutional approvals and ethical clearance.

In the process of collecting data, the researchers prepared the list of the main issues and asked questions mostly of an open-ended type, following the method of the semi-structured interviews enabling the participants to voice their opinions freely. These were 45 to 60 minutes' interviews that were recorded with the consent of the participants.

The researchers employed the thematic analysis framework, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) in the collection and analysis of data by making use of the six processes included in the framework, namely familiarization, coding, identification of themes, reviewing, definition, and reporting. In the attempt of giving the participants and the data the due respect, pure inductive themes were formed. The study used the principles of member checking, peer debriefing, and data source triangulation, as developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in regards to credibility. The researchers and the subjects of the study put in place that the integrity of the ethical principles of consent, anonymity and confidentiality was observed. Generally, the researchers believed that the study had succeeded in portraying the realities of the university teachers in Balochistan concerning the professional competence that they had maintained in the lack of resources.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data analysis was conducted through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) in the sequence of the three research questions that were used to conduct the study. The interview transcripts were read several times to get familiarized with the stories of the participants. The coding of the statements was done both in primary and secondary coding whereby the key statements could be sorted in core themes and subthemes that summarized shared experiences. There was constant contrasting and pondering of the themes to refine them. To find a way of achieving trustworthiness, the researcher employed triangulation of data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The analysis led to three major themes that were distributed across three research questions.

Theme 1 – Teachers' Perceptions and Constructions of Professional Competence

As university educators of Balochistan believe, professional competence is relative and is defined under some circumstances within the realities that are created by the academic, moral, and situational aspects. To the respondents, competence

does not simply mean accomplishment of knowledge and pedagogy but it is also a moral responsibility and a question of how one remains strong to the system pressures. The idealized frameworks and localized adaptations illustrated in their perceptions pointed to the problem of their limited scope of practice.

Knowledge and Pedagogical Understanding

Most educators consider professional competence as the command of the subject and the capacity to expound on the subject matter under some limitations. The mastery of content was considered a requirement that would lead to building of credibility and confidence. One of the participants phrased it in the following manner,

a good teacher should be well versed with their subject even without technology, what you know gives you power in the classroom. One more respondent replied, we do not have multimedia, smart boards, but when you know the topic, you can make the students know the topic as well. Even such a teacher remark as competence means being able to adapt your style of teaching to whatever you have—even that is only a white board and a piece of chalk. conveys the same message.

Although the teachers focused on knowledge, flexible pedagogy was also regarded as an indicator of competence. One told me,

I will have to modify my presentation based on the size of the class or the backgrounds of students. It is that flexibility that makes competence in this case. The other participant added... it is not about implementing fancy methods; it is knowing your students and making a decision what works.”

Ethical Responsibility and Student-Centered Commitment

Competence also was related to moral integrity, honesty and fairness. The gaps in the accountability systems were indicated by the respondents, and one of the areas of professionalism which are linked to ethical conduct. In the quote this feeling was depicted,

“Competence does not belong to what you teach, but to the manner of your conduct, to be fair in marking, to be punctual in the classroom. It is in the setting of supervision is minimal that one of the teachers came up to indicate the importance of personal ethics in problem-solving. More so, the teachers referred to their ethical duty to the learners when they addressed the students in their quote that they could not give them a failing grade despite the lack of facilities. One of them expressed the mood of numerous individuals, the possibility to make the preparation beyond my comfort because my learners need excellent instruction.”

Resilience and Contextual Adaptability

With a more resource adequate attitude, teachers themselves had defined the term professional competence not in terms of the capacity to survive, but in terms of capacity to adapt. The quote well-defined a mark of professional uniqueness., “...competence here means surviving without the necessary tools and still managing to deliver.” Another articulated the often cited challenges,

“there are power cuts, dismal internet and delayed salaries, but the classes went on. That is that ability in our world. Over one participant noted the difficulties

of dealing with two or more roles at the same time as shown in the quote, "...I am a teacher, an administrator and sometimes even a counselor- competence means being able to do all of these things at the same time."

This demonstrated a rooted understanding of competence one not influenced by bureaucratic idealism but rather by hard work, creativity, and awareness of the local situation.

Theme 2 – Strategies Employed to Sustain and Improve Professional Competence

In response to the question of how they maintained or improved their professional competence, a majority of the respondents described a reliance on self-initiated, informal, and contextually inventive strategies. Because of a lack of systematic structured institutional training, self-learning, collegial interactions, and reflective practice became the primary focus of many teachers. This professional ecosystem remained resilient and resilient for resources and supports other than the institutional framework.

Self-Directed Learning and Digital Learning

The teachers interviewed for the study claimed, and were able to provide instances, of their utilization of self-directed online learning and Open Educational Resources or OER as valuable and viable default alternatives for training and instruction for professional development as they described,

"...most of us learn from YouTube or free online courses because workshops are rare". Participants self-directed learning was empowering as described by one of the teachers, "...I realized that if I wait for official training, I'll stagnate. So, I learn independently". Narratives that were shared showed that professional competence development was self-initiated and intrinsic without dependent institutional supports and scaffolding.

Collaborative Support and Peer Networks

Teachers sharing ideas and problem-solving within strong informal collegiality is a key strategy. One participant explained,

"...we have WhatsApp groups where we exchange lecture notes and discuss classroom issues." Another participant continued, "...peer discussions are our substitute for professional development. We teach each other." This collaboration, even in different departments and institutions, helped create small communities of practice. One lecturer explained, "...our network keeps us alive professionally; it's where learning really happens." This collaboration, even in different departments and institutions, helped create small communities of practice. As one lecturer explained, "...our network keeps us alive professionally; it's where learning really happens."

Reflective and Contextualized Teaching Practices

Reflection within classroom experiences is another central strategy for sustaining teachers' competence. For participants, reflection lacks a formal evaluative structure and should instead entail continuous adjustment.

"...after every class, I think about what went right or wrong and try something new next time," a teacher explained. "...reflection helps me deal with

frustration; it reminds me that small improvements matter,” another participant said. Using locally relevant examples while teaching was also noted as a teaching competence sustaining practice. “...I teach economics through local market examples because students relate to that...” said one participant. One more individual remarked, “...competence means connecting theory with local reality; that’s how students engage and learn.”

Innovation within Constraints

The teachers were found to be resourceful in their use of the available resources, as per technological constraints.

“One teacher replied that he uses his phone as a visual aid because the projectors are not functioning. The rest of the teachers discussed the development of handouts and instructional resources, with one teacher saying, “...we are resourceful because we have to be; the fact is that this is the part of our qualification. These quotes indicate how educators transformed the attitude towards a pedagogical limitation to that of pedagogical creativity and self-efficacy.”

Theme 3 – Institutional and Structural Support for Professional Competence

The respondents were requested to consider how higher education institutions could be used to help build professional competence considering the plight of higher education in Balochistan. The structural challenges and constructive recommendations were indicated by teachers. They were exact on the necessity of individual initiative but demanded that competence improvement needs policy and institutional backing too.

Professional Development Opportunities

Some of the respondents also shared the same opinion about the lack of systematic training and development opportunities. One lecturer said,

“...we hardly get any workshops or refresher courses.” And another articulated, “...there is no formal mechanism for continuous professional learning. You’re on your own.” Continuous professional learning should not be left solely for individual teachers to pursue on their own. In-service training or professional development sessions would be a valuable way to help teachers and other educators revise and refine their pedagogy and assist empirical- and research- driven. “...we need structured capacity-building programs that focus on teaching innovation, not just administrative updates,” recommended one participant, while another expounded, “...professional development should be seen as an investment, not a formality.”

Recognition and Support from Institutions

Participants perceived that the onus is solely on the institutions and administrators to create conducive and motivating environments for teachers to pursue and achieve professional growth. “...sometimes we innovate, but no one notices. Recognition matters,” said one educator. This was echoed by others as well. As one senior teacher explained,

“...head of departments should support and motivate a culture of sharing innovations and effective teaching practices.” Others felt that supportive leadership,

motivating environments, and well-designed reward and recognition systems helped create an organizational culture conducive to the achievement of such goals. "...the vast majority of our systems of evaluation are far too bureaucratized and fail to take into account the quality of teaching that occurs in the classroom, which is dedication on the part of one participant. This underscored the necessity of institutional creative practices that could encourage and incentivize institutional creativity.

Infrastructure and Resource Support

A lot of the participants spoke about the necessity of the basic infrastructural enhancement to make competence development not an abstract concept. The failures in the classroom environment are not, by any means, a concept. One teacher remarked,

"we discuss quality teaching, and lots of us do not even have operational classes. One said, nore, professional competence does not develop spontaneously, it requires supplies, good internet, libraries, and instructional materials....". Teachers today are expected to perform to modern academic standards while there is support to meet even minimum institutional expectations. This is the sense of constructive optimism many expressed, which is important to have. One of them stated, "... when universities offer even minor perks such as improved connectivity or course content it would be a huge difference. Another made this optimistic further when he said... teachers are willing to grow, but they require the system to walk with them.

The three questions studied via interviews showed that there was indeed a lack of resource in terms of professional competence in Balochistan. It was the individual strength, moral devotion and artistic resistance to the system. The need of institutional reinforcement is still maintained by self-sustained, collaborative, and reflective competence that was reported in the research. The resource constrained environments study identifies that systemic reform on the professional competence front is a group challenge, but the challenge in the individual effort to tackle is also a personal determination.

Discussion

The research found that the contextual definition of professional competence among university teachers in Balochistan was largely contextually determined and motivated by contextual interdisciplinary knowledge, pedagogical flexibilities, an ethical motive, and endurance. This multifaceted and, at the same time, complex contextual concept of competence is based on and confirms the literature available. In agreement with Darling-Hammond's (20217) framing of competence as an integration of knowledge, judgement, and practice, participants pointed out that to gain credibility, one must master the subject. However, they also pointed out that competence entails the ability to simplify instruction in the absence of pedagogical resources and technology. This balance reflects Shulman's (1987) call for pedagogical content knowledge, but in our situation, the knowledge was content and context knowledge.

The teachers' emphasis on ethical relations and student centred responsibility correlates with Korthagen's (2017) assertion that the learning and competence of

teachers is inextricably linked to identity and values. The moral purpose, as defined by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) and also central to professional capital, reinforces the ethical dimension to the responsibility of the teacher. Competence in some literature is viewed predominantly as a 'technical' component or the 'output' of some function (e.g., competency frameworks espoused by certain policy circles). The participants' views of the study demonstrated contextual understanding of professionalism that was humanistic, rather than a 'checklist' approach.

The findings highlight reliance on teacher individual agency versus institutional provision as a source for ongoing growth and learning. Many teachers used self-paced learning through digital resources, MOOCs, open-access journals, reflective practice, and even informal peer networks. Lifelong learning literature and self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Day and Gu, 2010; Akram, Fatima, and Ahmad, 2024) and Wenger (1998) community-of-practice model where informal interaction among colleagues is an important source of professional learning reflect those trends. These limitations were not found in other settings that experienced peer collaboration and Internet sources to support professional development (Avalos, 2011; Gu and Day, 2013; Ahmad, Sewani and Khoso, 2024). We determined the appropriateness of grassroots as powerful motivators of competence.

Data to feedback revealed that the romanticized attitudes to teacher resilience must be approached sensibly. Beltman et al. (2011) concept of teacher resilience flourishing resulted in the creative perseverance of the participants. But Sahlberg (2011) warns that the structural failure may be disguised through excessive reliance on personal strength. While teachers showcased local innovations and improvised materials, their narratives pointed to the risks of burnout and systemic neglect. This casts the 'tension' in literature concerning resilience as an inadequate institutional investment and, simultaneously, an admirable trait (Gu & Day, 2013; Fullan, 2016; Akram, Sewani, & Ahmad, 2024).

The advocates for the development of reflective practice as Schön (1983), and Zeichner & Liston (2014), where the former discusses the importance of the reflective practitioner and the latter advocates for reflective teaching as something fundamental to professional development. The researchers in this study noted the teachers engaged in this exercise for the purpose of practical improvement and gradual improvement in their practice, an exercise congruent with the findings of Korthagen (2017) who states that reflection in action is the anchor of real development and perhaps, development is an underdeveloped theory. However, the absence of formal appraisal systems may in part explain this, and as noted in the literature, for reflection to lead to improvement, in the absence of feedback and formal professional development, it needs to be integrated with other available learning opportunities (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020; Kolachi et al., 2024; Shah, Ali & Ahmad, 2024; Phulpoto, Oad, & Imran, 2024).

Missing technology and infrastructure (or lack thereof) was significant and noted. Participants' use of mobile phones, downloaded content, and offline work as substitutes for institutional digital capacity aligned with Mishra and Koehler (2006)

about technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) being both skill and infrastructure. Our findings extended that perspective by showing teachers' attempts to instantiate TPACK-like practices under severe constraints thus foregrounding the "ecology" of competence: knowledge + pedagogical skill resources. This supports the OECD (2019) and Darling-Hammond & Hyler's (2020) policy messages that investment in teacher training and connectivity surrounds technology integrated with pedagogy. Without such investment, the balance of expectation around teacher tech-enabled competence remains unrealistic.

Institutional leadership and recognition as such became necessary enablers. Teachers' calls for supportive leadership, recognition of innovation, and formative performance systems paralleled Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins's (2008) claims about the centrality of school leadership for fostering teacher learning. Where leadership was absent or bureaucratic, motivation and creativity were undermined a point consistent with Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination framework: the components of autonomy, relatedness, and competence must be supported for intrinsic motivation to be sustained. For instance, the results of the study agree to the organizational theory which claimed that autonomy-supportive and trustful contexts would enhance teacher agency and their job satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Fullan, 2016; Ahmad, Noorani, & Ali, 2024).

In some literature like the World Bank and NGO frameworks, there is the suggestion that standardized, centralized PD and accountability systems can enhance quality at scale. In contrast, some of the participants argued that top-down systems do not always meet the needs of the locality. This response is, of course, the essence of postcolonial and context-sensitive education research through use of technology and artificial intelligence (e.g., Ali & Tariq, 2017; Oad et al., 2024). This is not to say that institutional investment is not necessary; however, it also needs to be designed with flexibility and context. Avalos (2011) and OECD (2019) are two scholars who have argued that the irrelevance of PD is often due to a 'one size fits all' approach. The key point is that the data supports those scholars who advocate for the blended approach: formal, funded, and contextually local PD is designed in partnership with community practices at the grassroots level (Day & Gu, 2010; Wenger, 1998; Ahmad, Sewani, & Ali, 2024; Imran, Sultana, & Ahmed, 2023).

This study also contributed to the scholarship around teacher identity. The ethical dimension of the professional identity that teachers stake on competence is ongoing, with pride resting on local relevance. This aligns with Beijaard et al.'s (2004) work on the conceptualization of teacher professional identity as dynamic and layered. This identity lens also explained the persistence of the participants.

As mentioned by Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) and Korthagen (2017), competence was not solely an extrinsic motivator; competence was self-sustaining and part of the community-wide purpose. Only self-sustaining competence within the community was mentioned. The findings also opened critical equity and policy questions. If the competence of individuals in the peripheral regions is largely sustained through ingenuity, the gap between the well-resourced and the under-

resourced institutions will surely expand. This aligned with global concerns regarding the digital divide and inequitable access to professional learning (OECD, 2019). Hence, policies needed to incorporate the issues of infrastructural investment (connectivity, libraries, labs), context-responsive professional development (PD), leadership development, and systems to identify and share local pedagogical innovations across the region (Darling-Hammond & Hyster, 2020; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Ahmad, Noorani, & Sewani, 2025; Imran & Akhtar, 2023).

Overall, the study was in line with literature regarding the significance of knowledge, reflection, practice communities, and ethical purpose while also addressing some of the tension described by CTED critics. The findings captured the double-edged imperative of keeping teacher agency and adaptive expertise while transforming institutional structures so competence is recognized, scalable, and enabled, rather than reliant on individual struggle.

Conclusion

This study focused on how university teachers in Balochistan sustained their professional competence in challenging contexts. It showed that competence was framed as an evolving combination of knowledge of the subject, ethics, flexibility, and dedication to student learning, and not as a static assumption. Teachers demonstrated creativity and resilience even in the absence of formal institutional support, which was reflected in their self-directed learning and professional growth, collaborative learning, and reflective practice. However, self-directed professional growth and self-initiative in learning showed the presence of systemic challenges, including underdeveloped predictors such as professional and social recognition of their efforts. The study brought about the recognition of the fact that although individual efforts are important, there are and must be institutional structures which enable.

Advanced competence in Balochistan shows considerable personal and systemic institutional attention. It fosters the necessity of paying attention to the balance between an individual teachers' reflective growth and the institutional provision of supportive attention, including appropriate and proportional resources, innovative and moral leadership, and collaboration. Only then will the professional resilience of Balochistan's universities be translated into educational excellence in the long run.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and discussions of the study.

- ✓ Design contextualized frameworks for Balochistan's higher education sector for the defining and evaluation of teacher professional competence.
- ✓ Establish professional development opportunities for all university teachers to be continuously funded and resourced.
- ✓ Support innovative and flexible teaching and learning with equitable access to digital devices and infrastructure.

- ✓ Create systems of recognition and reward for teachers on all efforts to improvement and the innovation of teaching and learning.
- ✓ Develop professional learning programs that include collaborative and reflective practices and mentoring, and that encourage problem solving.
- ✓ Build the supportive institutional culture of leadership that promotes experimentation and openness to faculty collegial support.
- ✓ Reinstate performance evaluations to focus on professional growth so that punitive evaluations are not the primary purpose of appraisals.
- ✓ Facilitate competence development by providing teaching materials, libraries, instructional spaces, and learning resources.
- ✓ Research on professional competence, student perspectives, and cross national, regional, and discipline differences.
- ✓ Focus on comparative and longitudinal studies to analyze the influence of institutional and policy frameworks on sustained professional development in different regions.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, N., Noorani, Z. & Ali, Z. (2024). Factors Influencing on Job Satisfaction of Secondary School Teachers in Karachi Pakistan . *Research Journal for Societal Issues*, 6(2), 138–152. <https://doi.org/10.56976/rjsi.v6i2.213>
- Ahmad, N., Noorani, Z. & Sewani, R. (2025). Exploring Feedback and Assessment Practices: Perspectives from Prospective Teachers. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 3(1), 953–966. <https://doi.org/10.59075/c39z2h90>
- Ahmad, N., Sewani, R., & Ali, Z. (2024). The use of Smartphones in Shaping of Students' Academic Performance at Secondary School level. *Journal of Social Sciences Development*, 6(2), 128–141. <https://doi.org/10.53664/JSSD/03-02-2024-11-128-141>
- Ahmad, N., Sewani, R., & Khoso, F. J. (2024). Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan. *Global Social Sciences Review*, IX(I), 134-144. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2024\(IX-I\).12](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-I).12)
- Akram, M., Fatima, S. A., & Ahmad, N. (2024). Comparing Students' Science Motivation and their Achievement in Science Subjects at Secondary Level. *Global Social Sciences Review*, IX(II), 72-83. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2024\(IX-II\).08](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-II).08)
- Akram, M., Sewani, R., & Ahmad, N. (2024). Policy Perspective of Special Education Teachers Regarding Quality of Work Life. *Journal of Policy Research*. 10(2), 658–665. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61506/02.00282>
- Ali, W., Javaid, R. J. J. O. X. A. U. O. A., & No, T. I. (2020). A systematic mapping study on customers loyalty in Islamic banking: Comparative analysis by using PLS-MGA. *Journal Of Xi'an University Of Architecture & Technology*, 1006, 7930.
- Ali, Z., & Tariq, N. (2017). *Higher education reforms in Pakistan: Issues and challenges*. Pakistan Journal of Education, 34(2), 45–60.

- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in teaching and teacher education over ten years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 10–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>
- Azhar, Z., & Imran, M. (2024). Ethical Considerations in the Adoption of Artificial Intelligence in Human Resource Management: A Comprehensive Review. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR)*, 11(8).
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.
- Basharat, A., Anum, A., Rashid, I., Naz, K., & Waqar, Z. (2023). Effect of exergaming on rehabilitation of patient with Parkinson's disease. *International journal of health sciences*, 7(S1), 1280-1294.
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(2), 107–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2003.07.001>
- Beltman, S., Mansfield, C., & Price, A. (2011). Thriving not just surviving: A review of research on teacher resilience. *Educational Research Review*, 6(3), 185–207. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2011.09.001>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work* (rev. ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Hyler, M. E. (2020). *Preparing educators for the future: A framework for professional development*. Harvard Education Press.
- Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2010). *The new lives of teachers*. Routledge.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01
- Fullan, M. (2016). *The new meaning of educational change* (5th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Gu, Q., & Day, C. (2013). Challenges to teacher resilience: Conditions that undermine teacher retention in low-resource contexts. *Teachers and Teaching*, 19(4), 487–502. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2013.802833>
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers College Press.
- Hsu, W. K., Huang, S. H., Le, T. N. N., Wahidah, U., Huynh, N. T., & Tai, H. H. (2025). Assessment of Logistics Operations for International Short-Sea Express: A Case Study in Taiwan. *Transportation Research Record*, 03611981251375008.
- Imran, M., & Akhtar, N. (2023). Impact of Ethical Leadership Practices on Teachers' Psychological Safety and Performance: A Case of Primary School Heads in Karachi-Pakistan. *Academy of Education and Social Sciences Review*, 3(2), 172-181.

- Imran, M., & Akhtar, N. (2023). Impact of Ethical Leadership Practices on Teachers' Psychological Safety and Performance: A Case of Primary School Heads in Karachi-Pakistan. *Academy of Education and Social Sciences Review*, 3(2), 172-181. <https://doi.org/10.48112/aessr.v3i2.505>
- Imran, M., Sultana, Z., & Ahmed, S. (2023). THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTIONS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE. *Benazir Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(1).
- Intentions among Healthcare Professionals in Pakistan: A Quantitative Analysis. *Journal of Political Stability Archive*, 3(1), 664-684
- Khan, U. S. D. Z. U., & Khan, S. (2020). Impact of Employees' Behavior on Sales: A Case Study of L'oreal Pakistan. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 4(1), 907-917.
- Kolachi, I. A., Shah, S. G. M., Ahmed, I., Ali, Z. & Ahmad, N. (2024). Factors Affecting English Language Teachers' Participation in Professional Development at Private Universities in Karachi, Pakistan. *Journal of Policy Research*. 10(2), 697-705. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61506/02.00287>
- Korthagen, F. A. J. (2017). Inconvenient truths about teacher learning: Towards professional development 3.0. *Teachers and Teaching*, 23(4), 387-405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1211523>
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership & Management*, 28(1), 27-42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430701800060>
- Masih, S., Saher, S., & Raju, V. (2021). Consequences of self-defeating humor on employee commitment via emotional dissonance. *International Journal of Business and Administrative Studies*, 7(4), 77.
- Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record*, 108(6), 1017-1054. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2006.00684.x>
- Naseer, M., Shah, S. M. A., & Afzal, R. (2025). Organizational Predictors of Turnover.
- Naz, K., Rasheed, I., Ikram, A., & Shahzadi, S. (2022). The Impact Of Social Media Usage On Mental Health Of Youngsters In Pakistan: Mediation Of Depression And Moderating Role Of Parental Attachment. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(11), 1850-1862.
- Naz, K., Sarmad, M., Ikram, A., Rasheed, I., & Khan, M. (2020). Investigating Pharmacists' Perceived Organizational Performance through Learning and Innovation under the Moderating Role of Power Distance. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(07), 10679-10690.
- Nisar, K., Naz, K., Ikram, A., & Rasheed, I. (2025). Analyzing the exercise self-efficacy effect on diabetes self-management through a mediating and moderating mechanism: A quantitative study. *International Journal of Healthcare Management*, 18(2), 378-385.
- Oad, L., Shah, R., Sewani, R., Ahmad, N., Akhtar, N., & Imran, M. (2024). Empowerment of Artificial Intelligence in Learning Optimisation Student

- Perceptions in Karachi, Pakistan. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES*, 47(2), 34-44. DOI: 10.31901/24566322.2024/47.02.1374
- Oad, L., Shah, R., Sewani, R., Ahmad, N., Akhtar, N., & Imran, M. (2024). Empowerment of Artificial Intelligence in Learning Optimisation Student Perceptions in Karachi, Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 47(2), 34-44.
- Oad, L., Zaidi, S.S., & Phulpoto, S. A. J., (2023). Helicopter Parenting and its Influence on the Children of Pakistan: Thematic Analysis. *Spry Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (SJHSS)*, 1(2), 72-87. <https://doi.org/10.62681/sprypublishers.sjhss/1/2/1>
- OECD. (2019). *Supporting teacher professionalism: Insights from TALIS 2018*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1g2h8n40-en>
- Phulpoto, S. A. J., Oad, L., & Imran, M. (2024). Enhancing Teacher Performance in E-Learning: Addressing Barriers and Promoting Sustainable Education in Public Universities of Pakistan. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 8(1), 418-429.
- Phulpoto, S. A. J., Oad, L., & Imran, M. (2024). Enhancing Teacher Performance in E-Learning: Addressing Barriers and Promoting Sustainable Education in Public Universities of Pakistan. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 8(1), 418-429. [https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2024\(8-1\)38](https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2024(8-1)38)
- Rana, A. M. (2015). Inter Relationship between Team Conflict Management, Employee Satisfaction and Organizational Performance. *Information Management and Business Review*, 7(2), 93-99.
- Rasheed, I., Naz, K., Ikram, A., & Nisar, K. (2025). Analyzing the impact of safety knowledge on safety compliance among radiology personnel through mediating and moderating mechanisms. *European Journal of Radiology*, 187, 112052.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Saddique, R., & Haq, A. U. (2025). Assessing the Impact of Regulatory Frameworks on Corporate Governance, CSR, and Firm Performance in Pakistan. *Dialogue Social Science Review (DSSR)*, 3(6), 524-538.
- Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* Teachers College Press.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.
- Shabbir, T., Chandio, A. S., Uddin, S. S., & Ali, A. (2021). The impact of one unit on Sindh's political future after its abolition. *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)*, 4(4), 140-148.
- Shah, S. G. M., Ali, Z., & Ahmad, N. (2024). Analytical study of Awareness of Metacognitive Reading Strategies and Reading Comprehension among

- College Students. *Voyage Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(1), 34–46.
<https://doi.org/10.58622/vjes.v4i1.120>
- Shahzadi, S., Naz, K., Manzoor, K., & Langrial, S. (2025). Exploring the likely relationship between workplace incivility and insomnia: Identifying the mediating and moderating mechanisms. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, 1-25.
- Shaukat, M., Khan, M. L., & Iqbal, M. M. (2025). Religiosity, Gratitude, And Altruism in Young Adults. *Social Science Review Archives*, 3(2), 1484-1498.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–22.
<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.57.1.j463w79r56455411>
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Zeichner, K., & Liston, D. (2014). *Reflective teaching: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.