

Innovations

Exploring the Multifaceted Role of School Administrators in Facilitating Comprehensive Staff Professional Development and Advancement

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Abstract: *The intricate role that school administrators play in fostering the success and professional development of their entire staff is examined in this article. It examines the different responsibilities and strategies that administrators employ to help teachers flourish, grow professionally, and engage in lifelong learning. In order to support staff development activities, the article highlights the importance of good leadership, needs assessment, programme design, resource allocation, and evaluation. It accomplishes this by utilising actual research, theoretical frameworks, and useful insights. The best methods, challenges, and moral dilemmas surrounding staff professional development are also examined in the study. Administrators receive guidance on how to give staff development first priority, foster a culture of continuous learning, and offer opportunities for career advancement. The article's conclusion highlights the critical role that administrators play in fostering a dynamic and supportive learning environment that helps teachers succeed in their roles and positively affects student outcomes.*

Keywords: *school administrators, professional development, staff advancement, continuous Learning, career progression*

Introduction

For educators to continue to succeed and grow, school administrators have a wide-ranging and critical responsibility to play in fostering the professional growth and advancement of their staff. In today's dynamic educational climate, the demands placed on educators and school workers are constantly changing, requiring a dedication to lifelong learning, skill development, and creativity. To create an

environment where teachers may thrive and make a substantial contribution to their students' learning results, school administrators are crucial (Plank, 2020). In the field of education, staff professional development is extremely important since it is the foundation for student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and educational quality. According to Sun et al., (2013), through staff professional development, educators can investigate new instructional methodologies, improve their teaching techniques, and incorporate cutting-edge pedagogical ideas into their classrooms. By engaging in continual learning and skill development, teachers can become more adept at providing high-quality instruction to meet the diverse needs of their pupils. Wiljer et al., (2018) stated that professional development initiatives push teachers to keep learning, keeping them abreast of industry advancements, research, and best practices. By participating in ongoing professional development activities, educators can improve their subject matter expertise, broaden their repertoire of instructional strategies, and remain flexible in response to the evolving needs of both their communities and their students. Staff professional development creates a collegial and collaborative atmosphere in schools where teachers may collaborate, share ideas, and learn from each other. In line with this, Voelkel&Chrispeels(2017), observed that by engaging in collaborative professional learning communities that facilitate reflective discourse, cooperative problem-solving, and shared goal-setting, educators can enhance their professional practice and cultivate a culture of shared responsibility for the academic success of their students.

Staff professional development is not only an obligatory activity, rather, it is a transformative effort that empowers educators to continually grow, innovate, and excel in their professions. By investing in the professional development of their staff, educational institutions can boost the quality of all students' educational experiences and outcomes, promote an excellent culture and enhance teaching and learning results. This is the focus of the paper. This paper therefore looks at the various ways that school administrators can support their staff members' career growth and promotion. It examines the different roles, strategies, opportunities, and challenges that administrators have while attempting to foster a culture of lifelong learning and growth in academic environments. Using a blend of theoretical concepts, empirical research, and practical experiences, this study aims to highlight the critical importance of effective leadership, teamwork, and resource allocation in supporting staff development programs.

This paper also examines the complex role of school administrators in professional development and advancement to provide insights, ideas, and best practices for fostering educator growth, enhancing instructional quality, and ultimately enhancing student achievement

The paper draws upon the relevance of a blend of theoretical concepts to highlight the critical importance of effective leadership in facilitating staff professional development and advancement. In particular, the study was guided by the Human Resource Development (HRD) theory that emphasizes the importance of investing in human capital and developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees to facilitate the optimal realization of organizational goals, addresses the diverse learning needs of educators, provide opportunities for career enhancement and skill-building development. It identifies effective strategies for promoting growth and success and contributes to the ongoing dialogue and the improvement of educational practices and outcomes.

The Importance of Comprehensive Staff Professional Development

Providing all employees with comprehensive professional development is essential to improving instruction in educational settings. The significance of professional development in enhancing instructional strategies is examined in this section. Seechaliao(2017), observed that Initiatives for professional development, give teachers the chance to investigate cutting-edge pedagogical ideas, teaching techniques, and instructional strategies. Teachers can experiment with innovative teaching methods that improve student engagement and learning results and make use of cutting-edge technologies through workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning experiences. Driel& Berry (2012), stated that through professional development events, educators can stay up to date with the latest developments in their industries and expand their subject matter expertise. Through participation in curriculum development workshops, disciplinary seminars, and content-specific training, educators broaden their knowledge base, improve the quality of their instructional materials, and gain a deeper comprehension of academic content. This enables them to provide students with instruction that is more impactful and pertinent. Teachers are encouraged by professional development to practise reflectively, which involves analysing their instructional strategies, evaluating the learning objectives of their students, and pinpointing areas in need of development. Teachers develop their instructional practices, become more aware of their own teaching strengths and weaknesses, and work to continually improve their effectiveness as teachers through reflective discussions, peer observations, and self-assessment activities. Teachers can adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate different learning styles, abilities, and interests by learning about instructional accommodations, adaptive technologies, and personalised learning strategies. This will guarantee that all students have equitable access to high-quality instruction and opportunities for success.

Comprehensive staff professional development essentially acts as a spark plug for ongoing enhancements in instructional strategies, enabling teachers to be creative, adaptable, and highly effective in their positions. In order to improve student learning outcomes and academic success, educational institutions can invest in professional development opportunities that support pedagogical innovation, deepen subject matter expertise, foster reflective practice, and cultivate differentiated instruction.

For educators working in educational institutions, ongoing learning is essential to their professional development. Vermunt(2014), opined that initiatives for professional development help instructors adopt a lifelong learning mentality by highlighting the value of continuous learning, self-improvement, and progress. Teachers adopt a culture of continuous learning by actively seeking out opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills, and competencies throughout their careers. They do this by taking part in workshops, seminars, and training programmes. Through professional development activities, educators can remain up to date on the latest research, best practices, and emerging trends in the field of education (Rani et al., 2023). Educators stay up to date and relevant in their fields by staying exposed to new pedagogical approaches, technological advancements, and educational theories. This ensures that their instructional practices are adaptable to the changing needs of students and the demands of the educational landscape. In order to address the different requirements of their students who may come from a variety of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, have disabilities, or have varying academic abilities teachers might benefit from professional development (Gerzel-Short et al., 2019). Teachers can develop the information, abilities, and tools necessary to establish inclusive learning environments where all students feel appreciated, respected, and supported by participating in diversity training, cultural competency seminars, and inclusive teaching techniques. Teachers have the chance to address areas for growth and professional issues through professional development. Teachers receive coaching, mentorship, and advice in negotiating complicated challenges, developing their practice, and overcoming hurdles that may occur in their teaching careers through focused training sessions, coaching, and mentorship programmes.

In essence, professional development serves as a catalyst for continuous learning among educators, fostering a culture of inquiry, reflection, and growth within educational institutions. By promoting lifelong learning mindsets, keeping pace with educational trends, adapting to student diversity, and addressing professional challenges, professional development initiatives empower educators to thrive in their roles, cultivate excellence in teaching, and ultimately, enhance student learning outcomes and academic success.

Understanding the Role of School Administrators

School administrators are the cornerstone of leadership in educational institutions, having a significant impact on the direction, culture, and effectiveness of schools. According to Green(2018), school administrators are tasked with creating a compelling vision for the school community, defining clear goals, and outlining a strategy for continuous improvement. By demonstrating visionary leadership, administrators may energise stakeholders, mobilise resources, and spur cooperative efforts towards a common educational objective. Administrators are critical to the advancement of successful teaching and learning strategies in schools. By providing instructional leadership, administrators help teachers implement research-based teaching methods, use data to inform instructional decision-making, and foster a great culture of teaching and learning (Campbell et al., 2018).School administrators oversee the day-to-day operations of educational institutions to guarantee that all facets of the school community are functioning effectively and efficiently. Through organisational leadership, administrators create policies, practices, and frameworks that support the attainment of learning goals, promote accountability, and optimise the use of available resources.

They can also lead transformative projects that increase education quality and relevance, address new issues, and support fair results for all students by empowering stakeholders, supporting creativity, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

At their core, school administrators are innovators and change agents in the educational system; they are the epitome of leadership in all its forms. Through visionary, instructional, organisational, and transformative leadership, administrators impact the culture, environment, and curriculum of schools, which in turn impacts the learning outcomes and experiences of students.

School administrators perform a wide range of responsibilities that are essential to the smooth operation and growth of educational institutions. School administrators are in charge of developing and implementing strategic plans that outline the main goals, priorities, and projects of the educational institution. Through strategic planning, administrators develop measurable objectives, a distinct future vision, and tactics for achieving organisational greatness. Peregrin (2014), submittedthat finding, hiring, and retaining qualified staff members who are dedicated to advancing the institution's goals and objectives is the responsibility of administrators. Administrators oversee staff development, performance reviews, and professional development opportunities to ensure that educators have the resources necessary to thrive in their roles. Financial planning, resource allocation, and budget creation are all under the purview of administrators in educational institutions. They are responsible for ensuring financial accountability, optimising

the efficient use of resources, and coordinating financial decisions with strategic priorities in order to promote the institution's educational mission. When creating, administering, and evaluating curricula, administrators take the lead in ensuring that teaching methodologies satisfy the requirements of a diverse student body, research-based practices, and academic standards. They assist teachers in creating demanding and interesting curricula, putting into practice successful teaching techniques, and utilising technology to improve education. Administrators try to build a friendly and good school culture in order to foster cooperation, respect, and a sense of community among all members of the school community. They address issues of diversity and equality, provide a safe and nurturing learning environment, and advance children's social-emotional development in order to meet their holistic needs. In line with this, Johnson (2020), submitted that serving as go-betweens for the school and the community at large, administrators foster collaboration and partnerships that enhance educational opportunities and support students' academic success.

Strategies Employed by School Administrators

According to Radović&Bojovic(2019), setting goals and assessing needs are the first stages in creating and executing successful professional development initiatives. School administrators use data from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations to systematically evaluate the professional development requirements of teachers. In order to determine the areas that most require professional development interventions, needs assessments look at a variety of elements, including teacher abilities, student performance data, school improvement goals, and emerging educational trends. To determine top objectives and opportunities for professional development, administrators examine the information gathered from needs assessments. Administrators can create focused professional development goals by using the data from numerous sources to create a triangulation that highlights areas of strength and weakness in present practices, developing difficulties, and opportunities for growth. Together with stakeholders, administrators set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound (SMART) goals that correspond with the priorities and needs that have been recognised (Ashraf et al. 2015). SMART goals steer educators towards observable results and quantifiable enhancements in teaching and learning by offering clear direction, concentrating efforts, and guaranteeing responsibility in the professional development process.

School administrators create and administer professional development programmes that are suited to the requirements and priorities that have been recognised after needs assessments are finished and goals have been set. In order to ensure that

professional development activities address specific areas for improvement and assist the achievement of more general school improvement objectives, administrators match them with the goals and priorities determined during needs assessments.

Programmes for professional development are created by administrators and provide a range of educational options, including online courses, peer learning groups, conferences, seminars, and workshops. Administrators encourage ownership of learning and accommodate a range of learning preferences and requirements by giving educators choice, flexibility, and chances for active engagement (McGarry et al., 2015). Using the most recent research results, educational theories, and best practices in teaching and learning, administrators integrate research-based methods and evidence-based tactics into professional development programmes. Administrators may guarantee that professional development programmes are efficient, pertinent, and in line with contemporary educational standards and trends by firmly establishing their foundation in research. School administrators not only create and carry out professional development programmes, but they also give teachers access to tools, support, and continuing direction to help them grow professionally.

In order to help educators adopt new teaching approaches, navigate obstacles at work, and accomplish their professional objectives, administrators give them access to peer mentors, instructional coaches, and expert mentors. Administrators make sure that educators have the tools and support they need to take part in conferences, workshops, and other learning opportunities by setting aside specific time and money for professional development events. School budgets and schedules that prioritise professional development show administrators' dedication to creating a climate of ongoing learning and development. Jäppinen et al., (2016) stated that within schools, administrators establish collaborative learning communities where teachers can exchange ideas, work together on projects, and have continuous professional conversations.

Administrators provide educators with chances to share knowledge, benefit from group experience, and encourage one another on their paths to professional development by cultivating a climate of cooperation and group inquiry. Similarly school administrators utilise many tactics to plan, carry out, and provide assistance for professional development programmes that cater to the requirements and preferences of teachers. Administrators cultivate a culture of ongoing learning and development in educational institutions by carrying out needs assessments, establishing SMART goals, creating engaging learning opportunities, incorporating research-based practices, and offering resources and support. This, in turn, improves teaching methods and student outcomes.

Challenges and Mitigation

Effective professional development programme design and implementation are severely hampered by a lack of resources. School administrators should give professional development projects top priority when allocating scarce resources including money, time, and staff. Lewis & Perry (2015), opined that administrators ensure that resources are allocated to projects that have the biggest effects on student learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness by coordinating resource allocation with strategic goals and identified requirements.

Administrators should look into outside financing options, to augment current resources for professional development such as grants, sponsorships, and collaborations with neighbourhood organisations. Yu et al. (2015), is of the opinion that administrators encourage teamwork, resource sharing, and economical solutions to make the most out of the resources that are already available. Similarly they can maximise the impact of available resources by encouraging educators to exchange materials, experience, and best practices among staff members by establishing a culture of collaboration and resourcefulness.

The efficiency of professional development initiatives and the adoption of new teaching techniques can both be hampered by resistance to change. Within the school community, administrators should cultivate a climate of trust, cooperation, and shared ownership of change projects. They can also reduce opposition and encourage staff members to commit to change by outlining the advantages of the change, clearing up common misconceptions, and emphasising the link between the improved student outcomes and the change efforts.

The implementation of new teaching approaches and educators' engagement in professional development activities are hindered by time restrictions. Opportunities for professional development that have the biggest potential to influence teaching strategies and student learning outcomes should be given top priority by administrators (Gore et al., 2017). Administrators make ensuring that teachers' time is used effectively and efficiently by concentrating on projects that meet needs and are in line with school improvement goals. To fit educators' hectic schedules and conflicting expectations, administrators provide flexible learning options like online courses, self-paced modules, and microlearning chances (Naidu, 2017). Administrators encourage educators to have access to professional development opportunities that are customised to meet their unique needs and preferences by offering them options for anytime, anywhere learning. By giving educators time and mechanisms for cooperation, introspection, and peer learning, administrators help educators incorporate professional development into their everyday work (Baumfield, 2016).

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Professional Development Initiatives

A. **Assessment methods;** Determining the influence of professional development efforts on teacher practice and student learning outcomes require evaluating their efficacy. They also measure changes in teacher knowledge, abilities, and attitudes before and after they participate in professional development programmes by using pre- and post-assessments. It is also important to assess how much educators have learned new skills and information as a result of taking part in professional development efforts by giving assessments that are in line with learning objectives. According to Scarparolo & Hammond (2018), they also assess the application of new teaching techniques and tactics acquired during professional development programmes by conducting instructional walkthroughs and observations in the classroom.

Administrators can spot areas of strength, regions for development, and instructional practice patterns that could need further assistance or reworking by watching educators in action. To evaluate the implementation of new knowledge in teaching practice, administrators examine educator portfolios and artefacts, including lesson plans, student work samples, and instructional materials. In the same vein they also evaluate the effects of professional development programmes on student learning outcomes by gathering student feedback and examining performance data (Didion et al., 2020).

B. **Feedback Mechanisms;** Establishing feedback channels, is essential for gathering input from stakeholders and directing efforts to continuously enhance professional development initiatives. Administrators provide surveys and questionnaires to educators to gather feedback on their experiences with professional development initiatives. By requesting input on the significance, effectiveness, and satisfaction of professional learning opportunities, administrators can pinpoint areas for improvement in programme design and implementation, as well as strengths and weaknesses. Steinert et al. (2016), opined that administrators set up focus groups and stakeholder meetings to encourage conversation and get input about professional development initiatives from teachers, students, parents, and community members.

By providing opportunities for open conversation, administrators can gain a greater understanding of the ideas, concerns and suggestions made by stakeholders to enhance the efficacy and relevance of professional learning activities. Similarly, they support educators in peer observation and feedback procedures to promote reflective practice and collaborative learning. When administrators pair educators for peer observations, they create possibilities

for peer-to-peer feedback and support. This makes it possible for teachers to share best practices, provide helpful feedback, and learn from each other's experiences. Administrators establish cycles of continuous improvement to review and take into account assessment data and stakeholder input obtained from professional development initiatives (Nordberg et al., 2021). They can pinpoint areas of success, areas for development, and practical measures to improve and refine future professional learning experiences by holding regular data-driven talks

Promoting Advancement Opportunities for Staff

Garst et al. (2019), observed that staff members' professional development and career promotion are greatly aided by leadership development programmes. As a result school administrators identify employees as emerging leaders when they demonstrate potential for leadership roles and responsibilities. Administrators use performance observation, recommendation solicitation, and assessment administration to find individuals who have demonstrated leadership, motivation, and a commitment to lifelong learning and growth. In line with the above, Klein et al. (2019), asserted that based on the strengths, areas for improvement, and career objectives of rising leaders, administrators design customised programmes for their professional development. Leadership development initiatives may include opportunities for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, and graduate courses on instructional leadership, organisational management, and leadership theory. Administrators provide seasoned mentors and coaches to prospective leaders so they may provide guidance, support, and constructive feedback on the goals and objectives of leadership development. Mentoring and coaching partnerships assist prospective leaders to overcome challenges, refine their leadership skills, and advance in their careers by offering opportunities for introspection, skill-building, and networking. Bressman et al. (2018), submitted that administrators match educators with seasoned mentors who fulfil mentees' needs and career goals and who possess the required training, experience, and understanding. By providing them with ongoing coaching support, administrators help teachers reflect on their work, create goals, and implement strategies based on research to improve teaching and learning outcomes (Kraft et al., 2018).

Acknowledging and recognising staff for their achievements, contributions, and dedication to their profession is essential to fostering a positive work environment, motivation, and job satisfaction. They also model exceptional teaching practices, leadership initiatives, and community involvement to promote an excellence-driven culture and inspire others to reach higher goals. Similarly they offer opportunities for skill development, career advancement, and professional development to their staff as a token of appreciation and remuneration (Graham,

2015). Possibilities for professional growth could include funding for graduate work, conference participation, membership in leadership institutes, and availability of specific training programmes.

Ethical Considerations and Accountability

1 **.Equity and Access;** Considering equity and accessibility from an ethical perspective is crucial when planning and carrying out professional development programmes. According to Caiyan(2022), in order to fairly distribute resources for professional development among educators and among schools, administrators consider the various needs and settings of both instructors and students.They prioritise underprivileged schools and marginalised educators in order to solve systemic gaps in access to high-quality professional development opportunities and to promote equality. They also use culturally responsive strategies in professional development courses to ensure that learning experiences are inclusive, relevant, and affirming of a variety of cultural identities and origins. By valuing the cultural perspectives, experiences, and expertise of educators, administrators create an inclusive learning environment where teachers feel valued, respected, and inspired to continue learning and developing. They also identify and address concerns regarding schedule conflicts, childcare responsibilities, transportation limitations, and other obstacles to professional development participation that may disproportionately impact specific educator groups

2 **.Transparency and Fairness;** Fairness and transparency are fundamental values that govern the planning, execution and assessment of professional development programmes.Administrators ensure that educators understand the purpose, relevance, and expected outcomes of their engagement in professional development efforts by communicating clear expectations, goals, and objectives (Roth et al., 2018).By being transparent and truthful about learning objectives, assessment criteria, and evaluation procedures, administrators provide educators accountability and trust. Similarly administrators ensure that criteria for evaluation and professional development are fair, transparent, and consistent for all teachers.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, the paper looked at the nuanced role that school administrators play in fostering the advancement and overall professional development of their staff. Administrators have a critical role in creating a supportive and engaging learning environment where teachers can grow, learn, and thrive. By providing resources, leadership, and advice, administrators help teachers enhance their teaching practices, grow their expertise, and improve student results. From needs analysis and programme design to implementation and evaluation,

administrators are essential to fostering a culture of continuous improvement inside educational institutions and ensuring the success of professional development initiatives.

It is evident that encouraging teacher development, student success, and school success depend heavily on funding staff professional development. Therefore, we implore members of the public, legislators, and other education stakeholders to back and prioritise ongoing efforts to provide high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers. By providing adequate funding, resources and support, stakeholders can ensure that educators have access to the knowledge, abilities, and assistance they need to thrive in their roles and positively impact students' learning.

Furthermore, the paper urges administrators to embrace an innovative culture and continuous professional development practices. They can use technology, evidence-based practices and collaborative design to create dynamic and flexible professional learning environments that meet the evolving needs of educators and learners

Recommendations

School administrators must prioritise providing staff members with chances for ongoing professional development and allocate sufficient funds for it

Promote a collaborative and peer-learning culture among all staff members. In order to facilitate collaboration, idea sharing, and mutual support for the professional development of educators, administrators might set up frequent meetings, professional learning communities, and mentorship programmes.

Make certain that staff members have access to a variety of tools and resources to support their professional development. This can mean having access to educational materials, technology tools, funding for further study, and opportunities for mentorship and coaching.

Ensure that the school's mission, vision, and strategic objectives are aligned with the professional development programmes offered.

Promote a growth mindset culture among your staff members to inspire them to take on new tasks, learn from mistakes, and never stop looking for methods to get better.

By regularly evaluating the effectiveness of professional development programmes and gathering feedback from staff members, they can identify areas that need improvement

Clearly outline opportunities for staff members to improve their careers within the school, such as leadership roles, specialty certificates and advanced degrees.

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