

A Project entitled,

The Effectiveness of Professional Development Programs (PDP)

for Kindergarten Teachers in Hong Kong

Submitted by

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CONTENTS

1. Abstract
2. Background
3. Objectives
4. Literature Review
5. Methodology – thematic approach
 - 5.1 Participants & Procedure
 - 5.2 Data Analysis
6. Results – answer by research questions
7. Discussion and Implications
8. Conclusion
9. References
10. Appendices
 - Appendix A: Consent form samples
 - Appendix B: Participant information form
 - Appendix C: Survey questions
 - Appendix D: Interview questions
 - Appendix E: Interview transcripts

1. Abstract

Teachers are expected by various stakeholders to use and provide knowledgeable practises in their classrooms and stay up to date with the latest development ECE practises. There appears to be a lack of research into what kindergarten teachers actually think of the quality of the professional development made available to them.

An exploratory investigation was conducted with kindergarten teachers from private, government funded and international schools to evaluate what they thought of the professional development they have taken part in and how effective and impactful it is on their teaching practise. Qualitative data was collected and analysed using inductive coding and a thematic approach to examine their opinions.

Results show that there is a consistent variation in the quality of professional development received, with positive and negative experiences recorded. The common variables that effect the effectiveness of the professional development were the experience and knowledge of the lecturer and their ability to deliver information in a practically applicable way, the relevance of the subjects and scheduling of the professional development programmes.

The results also imply that teachers value and understand the importance of professional development, but more needs to be done to ensure relevant and useable subject matter is delivered in a practical kindergarten appropriate manner.

2. Background

I have been a kindergarten a in service teacher in Hong Kong for many years and have had a variety of professional development experiences that were positive and negative for a variation of reasons. I have also had lots conversations over the years with my colleagues about the practicality and effectiveness of the professional development programmes they take part in on their daily teaching practise. Consequently, this appeared to be an interesting subject to investigate.

Teachers are expected by various stakeholders to use and provide knowledgeable practises in their classrooms and stay up to date with the latest development ECE practises.

In the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide for early childhood settings in Hong Kong, highlights how teachers take part in designing and implementing the curriculum. The attitudes and knowledge and understanding of the curriculum when they are planning and executing activities in the ECE environment has a direct effect on the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. (Curriculum Development Council, 2017) The guide makes recommendations on how to implement professional development in schools and details the strategies and measures the Education Bureau uses to promote teachers' professional development.

It is the responsibility of schools to provide professional development opportunities for their teachers - as stated in the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide - so they can improve their knowledge and teaching practice throughout their careers and, for the school to retain a well-trained and informed teaching staff. However, the quality, relevance and frequency in schools can vary. Investment in time and resources is lacking in professional development. Instead, teachers are expected to research and fund their own professional development independently.

An article from the Havard Division of Continuing Education suggests that providing professional development can reduce the staff turnover and that staff members improve their professional confidence (Parsons, 2024). A 2019 report from America found that 86% of professionals would change their jobs for one with more professional development (The Execu|Search Group, 2019). The

lack of professional development programmes in a school could lead to a high turnover of staff, losing gifted and prominent teachers to other schools that provide more teacher development and the reputation of the schools could suffer if it is perceived they are not keeping up with research in early childhood development.

There is a lot of research available that discusses the importance of professional development and the types and quality of programs that reflects on the teacher's theoretical knowledge development. Some of this research relates to Hong Kong, but much of it relates to education systems in other countries around the world. There does appear to be a lack of research into the actual effectiveness and practical application of PDP in a kindergarten teacher's teaching practise in Hong Kong Kindergartens.

3. Objectives

Through this research I plan to explore:

1. If kindergarten teachers in local or private kindergartens find the professional development programs, they take part in effective and impactful on their teaching practise.
2. If they find the PDP relevant to a kindergarten environment i.e., is it focused on ECE, is the subject relevant etc.?
3. If the PDP are delivered in an appropriate and supportive manner.
4. What subjects would teachers like to have specifically targeted in their professional development.
5. If the level of PDP access/provision is a factor in their decision making when choosing a job.

4. Literature Review

Professional development refers to the ongoing process of enhancing one's skills and knowledge in a particular field by pursuing further education, participating in training programs, attending workshops or conferences, and acquiring additional qualifications (Parsons, 2022). A longer retention of staff in the school can be included in the benefits of professional development, teachers are more motivated to put their knowledge into practise and aim for higher levels of responsibility and have higher sense of satisfaction and confidence in their practise (Angus-Cole, 2021). In (Schachter et al., 2019) Guidelines for Selecting Professional Development for Early Childhood Teachers, the researchers made recommendations for the creation of professional development programs that are ongoing, which helps to promote a reputation for the value of learning. Teaching methods are constantly evolving, continued professional development helps teachers to stay up to date with the latest practises. Professional development also gives educators the chance to reinforce skills a develop news and share their experience with others. (British Educational Suppliers Association, 2017) as 88% of education leaders in the UK believe that the training teachers receive does not properly prepare new teachers to support children with diverse needs, and professional education can help change that. Continued professional development can help teacher create networks with other teachers in which they can share their experiences and support others promoting collaboration personal growth and best practises in the school. (The National College, n.d.) Through their professional development experiences, teachers are encouraged to practise self-reflection such as their teaching practise, by observing collaborative lessons, educators use alternative teaching strategies in their own classrooms. (Connect Education, 2023). It has also been noted that there is an increase in educators' motivation, improvements in confidence after learning new skills that can be applied in the classroom (British Educational Suppliers Association, 2017) and that professional development has had an overall benefit to the education system, e.g. the contributions to and the development of the school's curriculum.

Teacher development in education is designed to improve their practice in an ongoing process that supports the teacher's knowledge throughout their whole careers (Angus-Cole, 2021). By creating a

culture of professional development within the school that is encouraged and acknowledged with teachers learning as a group or individually, the school follows Vygotsky's social constructivism theory (Vygotsky, 1980) that encourages teachers to progress and develop their understanding collectively through interaction with others. (Angus-Cole, 2021)

The Curriculum Development Council wrote in the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide the quality of teaching can be improved through the continuous enhancement of professional development that will, in turn, develop the growth of their students (Curriculum Development Council, 2017). The Hong Kong Government has been implementing a variety of policies to improve the education quality since the 1990s (Lam, 2015) bringing the focus onto the quality of the teaching and the development of the child in other areas other than academics which brought the professional development of teachers into focus. (Education and Manpower Branch 1993). From 2005 a Teacher Induction Scheme was introduced by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong, to support newly qualified teachers in their first teaching posts. (Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, n.d.). Another professional development scheme is the Collaborative Lesson planning in primary schools (Education Bureau 2012). From 2020/21, newly qualified teachers in public schools or Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools are required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of core training and 60 hours of elective training as part of their professional development. The core training is designed to provide a foundation of essential knowledge and skills necessary for their field, while the elective training allows individuals to tailor their learning experience based on their personal interests or specific needs over a three-year period. (Education Bureau, 2020, p.5) In service teachers are also required to also complete 150 hours of continuing professional development over a three-year period this includes 30 hours to complete two professional development programs or activities such as 'teacher' Professional Roles, Values and Conduct and "Local, National, and International Education Issues" (Education Bureau, 2020, p.6)

The Education Department created a Professional Ladder for Teachers to help provide a clear path in teachers professional development. They used 'T standard' for professionalism initiated by the Committee on Professional development of Teachers and Principals. (Education Bureau, 2023) In

2013, the Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP) was formed to improve teachers' preparation, maintain their continuing professional development, and reinforce leadership in schools. It advises the Hong Kong government on educational policies and programmes for teachers' development. (Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, n.d.) COTAP introduced the T standard to help provide a clear outline for the professional development for teachers and principals. The T-standard is designed to be a reflective tool for educators to reflect on their own professional roles and development.

To help educators maintain their professional development COTAP also introduced the T-Surf24/7 One-Stop Portal for Professional Development to provide resources and information to teachers so they can learn at their own pace. This is part of the newly T-excel@hk, project which will focus on eight areas to support COTAP's overarching purpose in supporting educators and leaders in education. (Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, n.d.) Focuses include unifying standards in the teaching profession, a survey that cover the whole territory, exploring new styles of training, a mentorship scheme, reinforcing professional learning communities and studies of teacher preparation studies. One area 'T-applause' provides a scholarship for primary and secondary school teachers who wish to pursue a master's degree (note: kindergarten teachers are not included in this area). (Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals, n.d.)

To summarise, whilst there appears to be plenty of opportunities and guidelines for schools to provide/initiate professional development with support from the Hong Kong government, it would be interesting to find out the effectiveness of the PDP on kindergarten teachers practise in the classroom. I believe there is a gap in research relating to the professional development in Hong Kong's early childhood education system that I would like to investigate.

Conceptual Framework



5. Methodology

Participants & Procedure

The study sample consisted of teachers from international and local, private and government funded schools. Exploratory research was conducted by sending out 100 surveys using open ended questions to the study sample and 15 semi-structured interviews with kindergarten teachers from local and international private kindergarten schools and local and private government funded kindergarten schools. This method is preferable as it will provide research from across different types of kindergartens found in Hong Kong. All the survey and interview participants were kept anonymous to allow them to answer more freely, confident that their identities remain confidential.

The survey was created in google forms and sent electronically to participants. It consisted of demographic and open-ended questions to ascertain level of qualifications, if they work in private or local kindergartens, how long they have been teaching, what professional development programmes have they taken part in over the last six years, how many professional development programmes programs do they attend each year, was the professional development programmes directly applicable to their teaching practise and how, and what professional development programmes, does the provision of professional development programmes provided by the employer factor into their decision to stay at a school/accept a job offer.

Fourteen face-to-face semi-structured interviews with kindergarten teachers from private and local schools in Hong Kong were conducted. They lasted approximately 20-30 minutes each. The interviews were recorded electronically and then transcribed. Each participant was assigned a number to protect their privacy and they were asked to sign a written consent before the interview begins.

Consent forms were also provided with the survey that explains purpose of the research and how the collected information will be used for. It also stated that the collected information will be kept confidential.

The majority of participants that completed the survey were aged between 35 – 49 years of at 51.5% and below 35 years old at 36.4%. The highest majority of participants hold higher diplomas at 36.4% and the majority have been in-service teachers for 6 – 10 years 25.8%.

5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

To understand the effectiveness of PDP for kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong, using a thematic approach for analysis, the content of the data collected was categorized and analysed using inductive coding to find patterns, frequency of words, and relationships in the data to create themes. The themes derived from the data were *Effective & Impactful: Positive & Negative aspects*, *Subject relevance: positive and negative aspects*, *Delivery: positive and negative aspects* and finally, *the Future*. Those themes were then used to reflect on/answer the research questions, Fig 1 shows the coding process.

	Phase 1 – Initial Coding	Phase 2 – starting to group	Phase 3 - developing themes	Themes
Data - Transcripts	*Scheduling	*Positive effective & impactful	Effective & impactful *Positive effective & impactful	Effective & Impactful: Positive & Negative aspects
	*Size/strength of organisation	*Negative effective & impactful	*Negative effective & impactful	
	*Consideration for specialist teachers	*Lack of PDP	*Strength of organisation	
	*Emotional & physical ability to complete	*Positive management	*Negative scheduling	
	*Lack of PDP	*Positive scheduling	*Lack of PDP for specialist teachers	
	*Internal PDP	*Strength of organisation		
	*Irrelevant subject/info	*Negative scheduling	CONTENT/SUBJECT MATTER	
	*Challenging implementation of subject	*Lack of consideration for specialist teachers	*Relevant subject/info.	
	*Info. overload	*Relevant subject/info.	*Irrelevant Subject/info.	
	*Relevant subject /info	*Irrelevant subject/info.		
	*Negative – content	*Positive face to face	DELIVERY	Subject Relevance: Positive & Negative aspects
	*Positive f2f/interactive	*Positive online	*Lack of PDP	
	*Positive online delivery	*Negative online	*Positive management	
	*Negative online delivery	*Positive trainer's knowledge/exp.	*Positive scheduling	
	*Trainers' knowledge & experience	*Negative trainer's knowledge/exp.	*Positive face to face	
	*Effective & impactful on teaching practise		*Positive online	Delivery: Positive & Negative aspects
	*Recognition	*Recognition	*Negative online	
	*Growth of professional confidence	*Growth of professional confidence	*Positive trainer's knowledge/exp.	
	*Mental well being	*Mental well being	*Negative trainer's knowledge/exp.	
	*Flexibility	*Flexibility		
	*Beginning career support	*Beginning career support	THE FUTURE	The Future
	*Desired future PDP	*Desired future PDP	*Flexibility	
	*Gives insight into school	*Gives insight into school	*Beginning career support	
			*Desired future PDP	
			*Gives insight into school	
			*Growth of professional confidence	

6. Results

6.1 If kindergarten teachers in local or private kindergartens find the professional development programs, they take part in effective and impactful on their teaching practise.

When interviewed about the impact of the of professional development programs on their teaching practise a pattern of positive and negative experiences began to emerge with a frequency of 34 positive and 19 negative responses from the interviews. (See fig. 2)

Interviewees highlighted the specific elements that made the professional development effective and impactful on their teaching practise. KJEINT004 noted that the experience and knowledge the trainer helped them to recall and use the training in their classrooms “...there was a trained, a special trainer who came, a qualified trainer, who came to talk about jolly phonics and how we can use it now in schools and I still remember a lot from that program...”, whilst KJEINT001 supported the need for practical way to apply the knowledge “...I they also gave us ways to apply that in our classroom, so it was on, you know mindfulness, yeah, so you really left that session feeling good, yeah, and it was it was practical...”.

Interestingly, when asked in the survey if the subject matter was appropriately targets at kindergarten teachers and their teaching practice, 40 respondents with *sometimes*, less than 20 respondents with *always* and less than 10 with *never*. (See fig. 3)

Suggesting three possible reasons for these conflicting results. The first that the interviewees were just being polite and felt freer to answer on the survey, the second that whilst there are positive experiences they are in the minority and more needs to be done to improve the application of the PDP, or finally, that although the professional development provided might be interesting it is not always relevant to the kindergarten age group.

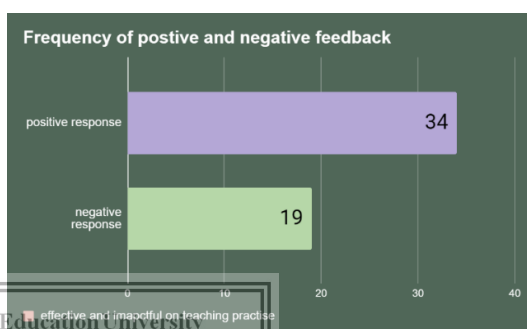


Figure 2

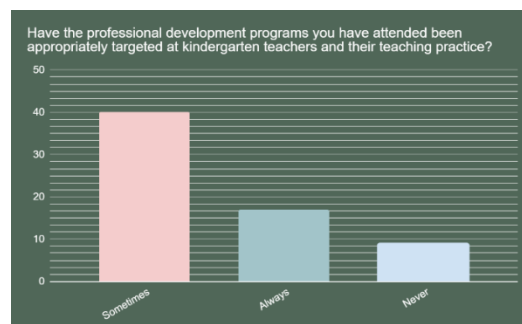


Figure 3

6.2 If they find the PDP relevant to a kindergarten environment i.e., is it focused on ECE, is the subject relevant etc.?

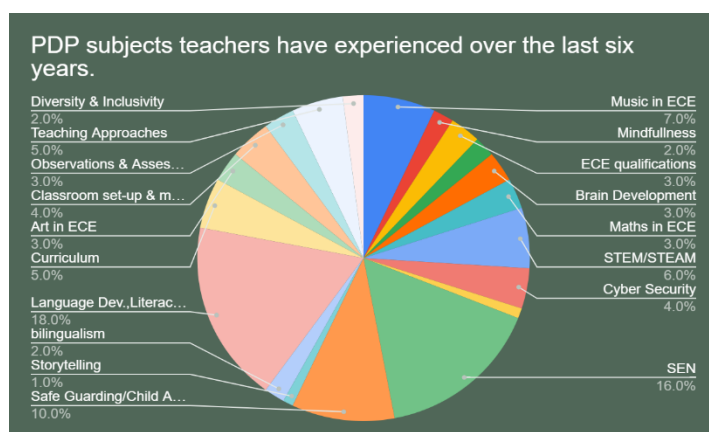


Figure 4

Teachers were asked in the survey about the relevancy of the subjects they experienced over the last six years. Figure 4 analyses the subjects ECE teachers have experienced over the last six years. It shows a wide range of subjects with the most common being

Language Dev., Literacy & Phonics followed by *Special Educational Needs*, then *Safeguarding/Child Abuse*.

During the interviews with the participants, there was a frequency of 16 positive references and 10 negative references (Fig.5)

Within the interviews, participants discussed how the subject was linked and specifically

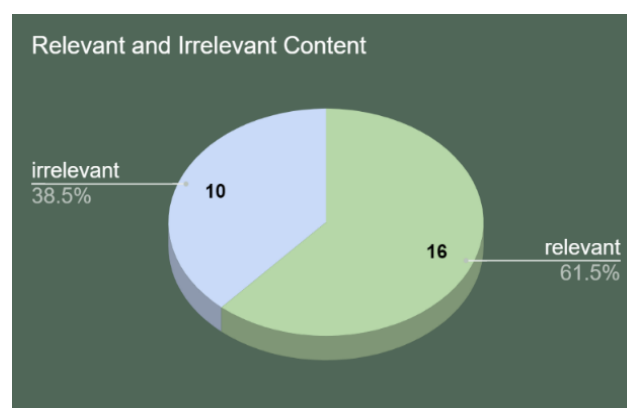


Figure 5

targeted to ECE discussed by KJEINT010 “Well, it’s **connected to all the ages** in kindergarten, so she did **specifically touch on how every level** benefits from the same approach.” and, gave practical advice on how to use the knowledge in their daily practise as stated by KJEINT011 “...she helped us with topics like challenging behaviour children, **how to** deal with curriculum planning and lesson planning, **how to** make it more interactive when engaging the children, so it has been a very **positive experience** for me.”

In comparison teachers that had negative experiences alluded to the age group the subject was targeted at was for older children as one interviewee put it: “...it’s certification for ECT but then the professor that lecture at the time he was **teaching stuff that’s for bigger kids** it’s **not applicable** well the job my field...” KJEINT008. Another interviewee mentioned that even though the subject was interesting it wasn’t relevant to daily practise as KJEINT001 stated

“...you can use that stuff with your kids, team building is important, but at the same time it's **not very much geared to your specialty in the classroom** so much...” KJEINT001. Interestingly, interviews who are specialist teachers who also took part in professional development programs also found that the subjects were not relevant to them, “...That’s right, not really **relevant for me**, but just fun...” said KJEINT014 who is a specialist teacher. KJEINT005B also pointed out the number of professional development programmes that teachers are required to complete a year can affect the relevance of the subject. “...So therefore, that's a lot of development that they have to cover, so therefore it’s yeah, there's some developments that they just they just need to fill in the spot, and some of them are just the topics because we have to do for three to four times a year...” KJEINT005B also suggested that the professional training isn’t necessarily relevant because the profession development subjects reflect what’s ‘on trend’ even though its not relevant or applicable “...and also sometimes what's a trend yeah that year. The trending that then they'll do it even though if it's not interesting or relevant to our actions should be relevant but maybe are interesting and they still have to do it.”

The negative responses appear to reflect the results of the teacher’s survey in which 40

respondents *sometimes* found the professional development programme subjects relevant to the kindergarten environment, with only 17 finding them *always* relevant and 9 *never* finding the programs relevant. Taken together, these

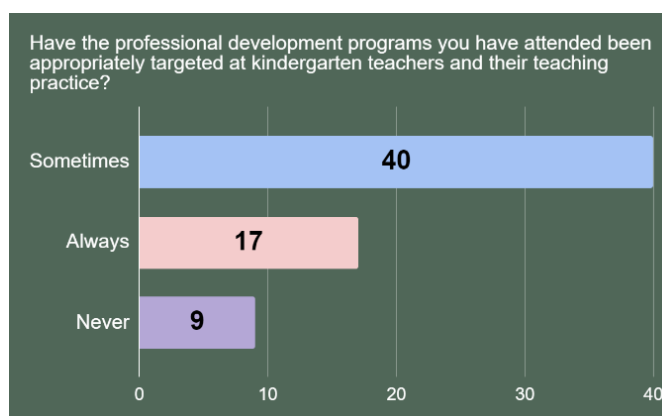


Figure 6

results suggest that there is an association between the delivery, scheduling, lecturers’ knowledge, and the positive and negative experiences of participants, which relates to the next research query on the appropriate and supportive way the professional development programmes are delivered.

6.3 If the PDP are delivered in an appropriate and supportive manner.

Figure 6 shows that the majority of professional development programmes experienced by the



Figure 6

participants are provided by their schools. However, when asked how many professional development programmes participants had taken part in over the last six years, local government school (fig. 7) provide more than international private schools and local private schools. (figs.8 & 9)

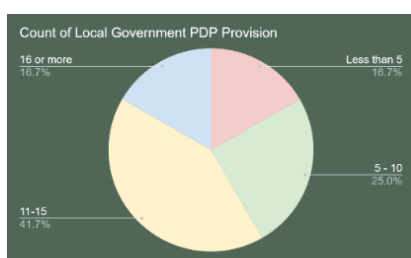


Figure 7

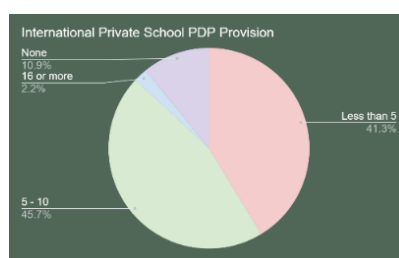


Figure 8

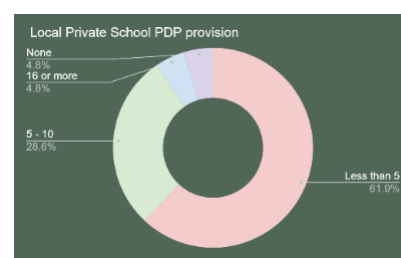


Figure 9

This area of investigation revealed a variety of aspects that teachers considered when discussing the appropriate and supportive way in which professional development is provided both positive and negative feedback. These covered scheduling, quantity, the support of from the school financial to access, considerations for specialist teachers, experience and knowledge of the trainer/lecturer to relate the relevant subjects to daily practice, and suggestions for future training, that included more autonomy for teachers to choose their own professional development in areas they are interested in. Examples you can see in the tables 1 and 2 below. I think it is important to note that there was more negative feedback with a frequency of 34 times than positive feedback at a rate of 23 times.

Table 1: Positive feedback

Positive Responses -Delivery	Examples of interview feedback	
	KJEINT012	"...in fact our school give us many different small programme, I think quite useful... "
	KJEINT008	"I really believe that experience and knowledge from the lecture on the lecturer's part , it really shines when they deliver . It's very evident that they are knowledgeable and very experienced . They are able to have fun presenting it, yeah, and that's those are the memorable ones that they really stick . You really remember what they teach you . You have so much fun learning about something.
	KJEINT004B	"I think if it's once a year with everyone that's there, but then nothing, The school should also allow teachers to find the course that they...that they are interested in and then they can always sponsor them or suggest you know some courses they can take online like, just provide the options and the access. "

Table 2: Negative feedback

Negative Responses -Delivery	Examples of interview feedback	
	KJEINT001	"... but like you know if you're doing...if you're trying to learn after a full day in school where you've exhausted your brain emotionally, physically , all of those things, even if the content might be good, it might be really useful, but our ability to absorb is gone. "
	KJEINT002	...but I would say information overload and, also that the fact that when we do days like this there's very little like coming back to it or reviewing it... they give you the information now and you need to remember it from this one day for the rest of all time.
	KJEINT002	"I will say they're just repeating some kind of theories or knowledge is we can search on Google.... "

In figure 6 you can see more clearly the positive responses from the interviews and the areas that they fell under. When teachers were discussing the appropriate and supportive manner, the knowledge and experience of the lecturer is an important factor in their positive experiences with professional development and, whilst a lack professional development scores the highest in figure 7, lecturers' knowledge is the next highest factor. This also suggests that the lecturer has a large impact on the professional development program and how it is received by the teachers and what they do with the knowledge that is shared.

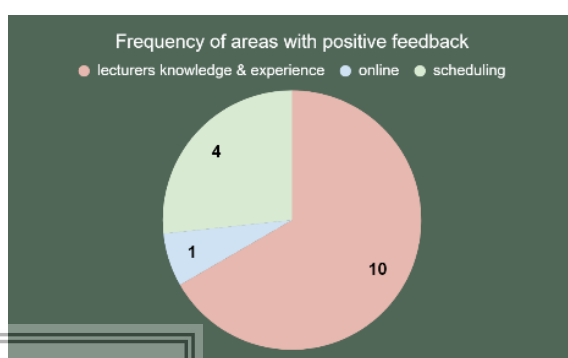


Figure 10

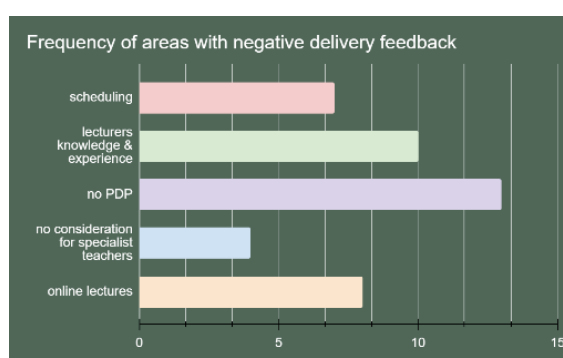


Figure 11

From the teachers survey the highest scoring factor in Figure 8 was also a negative one in how the school provides professional development programs. The majority of responses fell under *No support, professional development is completed outside school hours* with *Uses the professional development days allotted by the EDB* closely following.

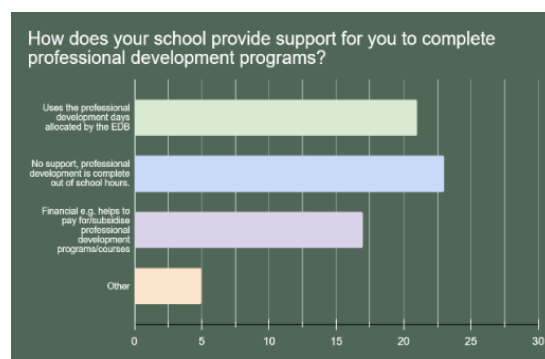


Figure 12



Figure 13

When the teachers were asked in the survey how they felt about the quality of the professional development you can see that *Very good* and *Average* responses were almost equal, with *Average* being slightly higher. This could support the idea with that when the teachers are experiencing professional development, there is relevance and effectiveness in some professional development some schools, but the way the professional development is delivered and organised by the school along with the negative factors discussed previously are playing a part in the results not leaning more toward *Excellent* and *Very good*. In other words, there is room for improvement in way professional development programmes are provided and supported in schools.

6.4 If the level of PDP access/provision is a factor in their decision making when choosing a job.

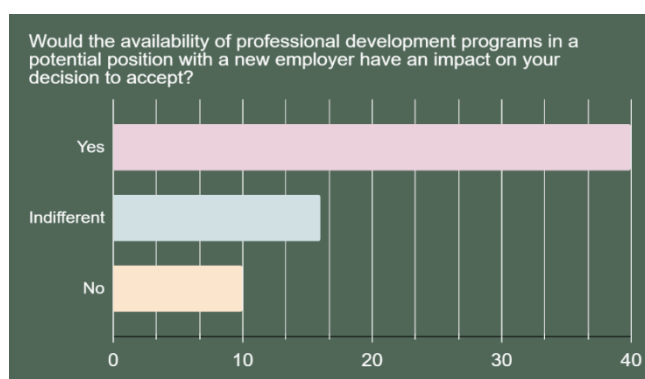


Figure 14

When asked if they took the provision and access to professional development would be a factor in their decision to accept the offer of a potential new employer, participants responded with the strong result of *Yes* (Fig. 14). This is an important factor to note. Teachers are telling us

that the value the importance of PDP and role it plays in their professional development and how in turn, how it influences the development of the school.

6.5 What subjects would teachers like to have specifically targeted in their professional development.

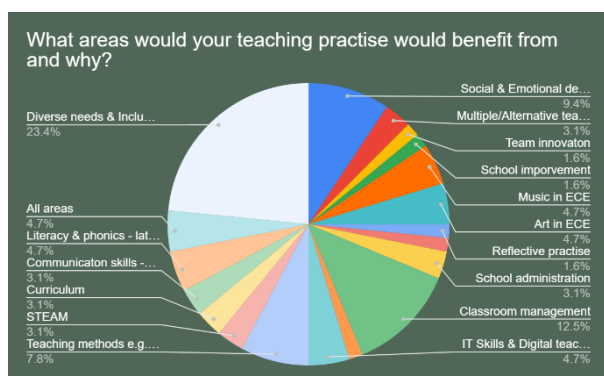


Figure 15

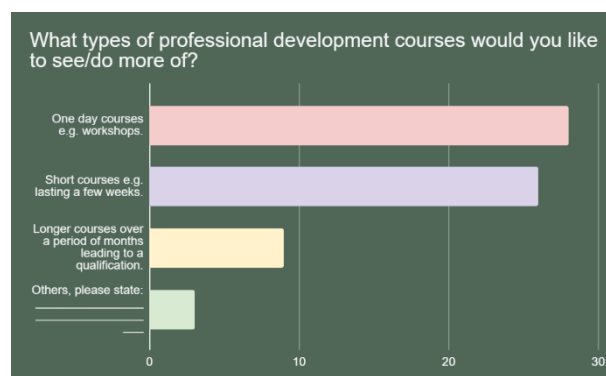


Figure 16

The responses of respondents to the question *What areas would your teaching practise benefit from and why?* can be seen in figure 15, with *Diverse Needs & Inclusivity*, *Classroom management*, *Social & Emotional Development* being the most requested. It should also be noted that the reasons for more professional development programs in these areas included *'I'd benefit more from practical advice and hands on activities, experience that other teachers have been doing...'* and one respondent stated *'Practice demonstration is preferred. Too often the theories don't apply to daily teaching.'* other participants also stated that access to updated research and methods would benefit their teaching practise.

Figure 16 reveals the type of professional development programmes the participants would prefer to do more of in the future. Taken together, these results suggest that participants demonstrate an awareness or self-reflection into the areas they need to develop/update in their daily teaching practises and the methods in which they would like to update their knowledge with a preference for one day and short courses emerging as the strong preferences.

7. Discussion & Implications

This exploratory research set out to discover the Effectiveness of Professional Development Programs (PDP) for Kindergarten Teachers in Hong Kong. According to the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide issued by the Education Bureau, it asserts that schools bear the responsibility to provide effective professional development programs that empower and assist teachers in their continuous professional growth and enhance their teaching practices. This in turn would support and inform the school's curriculum. By conducting a series of face-to-face interviews and collecting surveys from participants in kindergartens both international and local we found out the following information to the research questions.

Teachers value effective, useable programmes that can be applied to their teaching practise, they understand the importance of PDP the role it plays in their professional development and how in turn, it influences the development of the school's curriculum, teaching, and child development. Schools that do not provide any professional development or do not select appropriate subjects, scheduled times etc., run the risk of losing wonderful teachers who place a value on PD when considering career moves. The calibre of the lecturer registered highly in the positive and negative aspects of the professional development experiences of the participants. The knowledge and experience of a lecturer can significantly influence the teaching practices of teachers. When a lecturer presents content in a practical and relevant manner, it can have a direct and positive impact on the teaching practices of the participants. Conversely, if the lecturer fails to deliver the content effectively, it can potentially harm the teaching practices of the participants. Scheduling of professional development also featured in the concerns. Participants stated that it is difficult to focus after a long week or timing of the professional development programme impacted on the retention of the programme content. An interesting suggestion was also suggested by several of the teachers to solve the problem of scheduling. That is, to make professional development on a flexible schedule that allows teachers to be responsible to pursue their own interests relating to

their teaching practices. This could be a solution to specialist teachers expressed frustration about having to attend programmes that are irrelevant to them.

Leading on to relevant content that is practical and applicable has been a thread that runs through all of the teachers concerns. Teachers expressed frustration with irrelevant or impractical or unapplicable subjects. Whilst some professional development programmes were interesting and delivered well, they were not relevant to the age group. Therefore, the content relevance needs to be enhanced so that they are effective and impactful on teaching practises.

8. Conclusion

To conclude, this exploratory research set out to investigate how effective teachers found the professional development programmes they take part in.

I believe that the results show that teachers do have effective and impactful experiences with professional development, and that they do want and value quality, appropriate professional development programmes. The results in figure 15 show that teachers are aware of areas they need more support in or are interested in updating their knowledge into the latest research. However, the negative responses also show that there are improvements to be made. One of the largest factors relating to positive and negatives experiences is the delivery of the lecture. When the lecturer is knowledgeable and understands how to apply the subject to early childhood environments the experiences were positive, if the lecturer was not knowledgeable or experienced then the experience became a negative one. There appears to be a need for more consistency in this area.

Whilst government funded schools provide the most professional development for their teachers, it is not always relevant to their teaching practise or delivered in a relevant manner. In comparison private schools provide less or no professional development for their staff, suggesting that there needs to be a more standardised approach to the provision of professional development.

Overall, there appears to be room for improvement in the way professional development is provided for kindergarten teachers so that when asked what the teachers think about the quality of professional development, they receive the results will not be in the majority of average instead it will be very good or even excellent! As stated before there is an understanding of the value of professional development and a need, want and willingness on the part of the teachers to take part in relevant, practical and implementable professional development programmes.

Limitations

The limitations to this study include a small number of respondents, meaning the data pool might not have been large enough. The presence of the interviewer might have had an impact on the responses of the participants because they might say what they think I want to hear instead of actually what they think. Language barriers also might have played a role as English was the second language for most of the kindergarten teachers that completed the survey and who were interviewed which may have limited their understanding of and/or participation in the study.

Future research can include:

Future research could involve a larger participant group conducted over a longer period of time and conducted by multi-lingual researchers. Explorative research into the introduction of flexible professional development so that teachers can follow their own interests and specialist teachers could be taken into consideration. Also, the inclusivity of professional development programmes for teachers who are none Chinese speakers. Kindergartens do employ international teachers, and this could also be a line of research into the availability of professional development that includes them.

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