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Effectiveness of Promotion-linked Training on the Performance of Educational Leaders at their respective places of Working in Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract: *The present study aims to determine whether the professional development programs offered to educational leaders in Punjab, Lahore, positively impact their performance and whether promotion-linked training motivates participation. Specifically, this research endeavours to elucidate the effects of promotion-linked training on professional growth, leadership styles, decision-making capabilities, communication competencies, student outcomes, and institutional efficacy. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed to examine the performance of 82 male and female educational administrators in the Lahore district of Punjab. Data regarding research questions were collected via questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Results indicate that promotion-linked training exerts a significant positive influence on educational leaders' job performance. Such in-service development opportunities enhanced administrators' knowledge and skills, yielding improved institutional outcomes. In conclusion, this study underscores the instrumental role of promotion-based development programs in optimizing educational leaders' effectiveness.*

Key Words: Leadership, Promotion-linked Training, Performance, Secondary Level

Introduction

Effective leadership plays a vital role in achieving the desired outcomes in education. Educational leaders are responsible for shaping the future of educational institutions by providing direction, inspiration, and guidance to the stakeholders. Therefore, developing educational leaders is crucial to enhancing the overall performance of educational institutions (Abbas et al., 2023). One way to achieve this is through promotion-linked training programs. Promotion-linked training is designed for individuals being considered for promotion or already being promoted to higher positions. This type of training focuses on developing the skills and knowledge required to perform in the new role.

The Government of Punjab has introduced various initiatives to enhance the professional development of educational leaders through training programs. The impact of promotion-linked training on the performance of educational leaders at their respective places of work is a topic of significant interest for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners (Ahmed, Mahmood, & Gondal, 2020). This research aims to discuss the impact of promotion-linked training on the performance of educational leaders at their respective places of work in Punjab, Lahore.

Educational leaders manage and administrate educational institutions. They play a critical role in ensuring the smooth functioning of the institution and achieving the desired outcomes. Educational leaders include principals, headmasters, vice-principals, and other administrative staff. They are responsible for creating a positive learning environment, managing resources, and ensuring the delivery of quality education to the students.

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Promotion-linked training is a program designed for individuals being considered for promotion or already being promoted to higher positions. This training aims to develop the skills and knowledge required to perform in the new role. The employer often provides promotion-linked training, including on-the-job training, classroom training, mentoring, coaching, and other forms of training. Promotion-linked training is essential for the professional development of educational leaders. It gives them the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in their new role. It can also help improve their leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills. This type of training can also enhance their understanding of the education system and enable them to keep up with the latest developments in the field. Educational leaders face numerous challenges that can impact their performance. These challenges include limited resources, outdated technology, lack of stakeholder support, inadequate training, and a lack of motivation. These challenges can make it difficult for educational leaders to perform effectively and achieve the desired outcomes. Promotion-linked training can address the challenges faced by educational leaders. Developing effective educational leaders is crucial to achieving success in educational institutions. Educational leaders are critical in shaping educational institutions' future and ensuring quality education delivery (Akram, Khan, & Tariq, [2018](#)).

There has been a growing emphasis on promotion-linked training programs to enhance the professional development of educational leaders. The discussion will highlight the significance of promotion-linked training programs in the professional development of educational leaders and their impact on the overall performance of educational institutions. Effective leadership is a crucial aspect of educational institutions and vital to achieving desired outcomes. Promotion-linked training can help educational leaders keep up with the latest developments in the education system, ensuring that the institution stays relevant and competitive. These challenges include limited resources, outdated technology, lack of stakeholder support, inadequate training, and a lack of motivation. Promotion-linked training can address these challenges by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge, enhancing their motivation, and equipping them to handle the challenges effectively. These programs are vital in enhancing educational leaders' performance and improving educational institutions' overall performance (Ali & Haider, [2017](#)).

Literature Review

Teacher education and professional development have garnered significant attention in Pakistan due to the evolving landscape of the education sector. With advancements in technology, pedagogical approaches, and student needs, it has become imperative to equip teachers with up-to-date knowledge and skills. This literature review synthesizes key research studies that examine various dimensions of teacher training and capacity-building programs offered by the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (Abbas et al. [2021](#)) in Punjab, Pakistan.

Teacher quality and effectiveness are critical determinants of student learning outcomes and the overall quality of education. In Pakistan's Punjab province, the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (Abbas et al. [2021](#)) has been at the forefront of teacher professional development through its promotion-linked training programs. Various scholarly works within Pakistan strongly emphasize the importance of enhancing, optimizing, or formalizing professional development options for teachers and educators. Notable references include the Asian Development Bank (2002), Davis and Iqbal (1998), and the Directorate of Staff Development in Punjab (2006). As Hilton et al. (2015) highlighted in their study, limitations within school organizations and variations in cultural practices among schools can constrain teachers' professional development. This notion is echoed in the works of Goldsmith et al. (2014).

QAED's training style emphasizes collaboration and networking, enabling educational managers at the Bs 18 to Bs 19 level to exchange ideas, best practices, and challenges, fostering a community of practice (Abbas, [2021](#); Abbas et al., [2023](#)). The QAED Punjab training program fills this gap by providing targeted training to educational managers based on their career advancement needs. Promotion-linked training offers a unique incentive for educational managers to engage in professional development. The PLT program should provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share their experiences, best



practices, and challenges with each other, fostering a culture of continuous professional development. Integrate technology into lesson plans (Abbas et al., 2023; Abbas, 2021).

QAED's training delivery style emphasizes collaboration and networking, enabling educational managers at the Bs 18 to Bs 19 level to exchange ideas, best practices, and challenges, thereby fostering a community of practice (Abbas, 2021; Abbas, Pervaiz et al., 2022). Teacher programs at QAED play a pivotal role in the capacity building of school heads, particularly those in grades BS-17 to BS-18, through promotion-linked training programs (Abbas, 2022). Continuous Professional Development has been effective in quality education. Promotion-linked training offers a unique incentive for educational managers to develop professionally (Abbas & Hassan, 2023; Abbas, 2021). The study's findings revealed that the educational managers who completed the STTP had developed competencies in various areas such as leadership, management, administration communication, planning and organization, and problem-solving (Abbas et al., 2023). The study's findings revealed that the educational managers who completed the STTP had developed competencies in various areas such as leadership, management, administration communication, planning and organization, and problem-solving. Furthermore, the program's emphasis on collaborative resource utilization has led to innovative solutions. Teachers' ICT competencies have been explored through the role of ICT, an aspect of promotion-linked training. It was explored through a study (Abbas et al., 2023).

Training at QAED emphasizes collaboration and networking, enabling educational managers to exchange ideas and fostering a community of practice. Punjab Education Department has designed in-service teachers' training programs to enhance educational managers' financial management competencies (Abbas et al., 2023).

QAED Punjab provides targeted training programs aligned with teachers' career progression levels to build the competencies required for leadership roles (Abbas, 2021). Research indicates that QAED's promotion-linked training incorporates collaboration, mentorship, experiential learning, and peer discussions to build competency (Abbas et al., 2023). The program incentivizes teachers to actively participate in professional development by linking training with career advancement. The training equips teachers with the capacity to take on more complex instructional and leadership responsibilities. Moreover, the study underscores the training's practical value by influencing informed decision-making resource allocation. However, the study also highlights the need for continuous support, integration of practical exercises, and periodic updates to the training content to ensure sustained competency development. Recommendations derived from participants' experiences offer valuable insights for refining future training initiatives, which can better address the evolving pedagogical challenges faced by educational managers. (Abbas, et al., 2023).

Research demonstrates that well-designed CPD initiatives consistently improve primary school teachers' pedagogical capacities, content mastery, and skill sets essential for quality instruction. Participation in subject-focused training enhances teacher effectiveness in developing conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking skills in students (Abbas, 2021). Needs-based CPD built on rigorous needs assessment also boosts competencies like technology integration, classroom management, interactive instruction, and student engagement strategies.

Continuous professional development initiatives enhance in-service teachers' competencies, pedagogical practices, and instructional quality. This literature review synthesizes key studies on the relationship between CPD programs and primary school teachers' professional growth in developing countries like Pakistan. Leaders are Born or Made? Subordinates' perceptions regarding their Leadership Success at the University Level in Pakistan (Abbas et al., 2023). Similarly, Head Teachers' Training Needs for Quality Education at the Secondary level were explored in a study (Hussain & Jamil, 2021).

Abbas (2021) conducted a quantitative study to assess the impact of Continuous Professional Development (Abbas, Jabeen, et al.) programs offered by QAED on enhancing the teaching competencies of primary school teachers. Data was gathered from 30 male teachers using a questionnaire. The findings revealed that CPD training improved pedagogical skills, content knowledge, competencies, and quality of education. This aligns with Melesse and Gulie's (2019) study in Ethiopia, which found that CPD programs had a positive impact. Thurston et al. (2008) study in Scotland also showed CPD enhanced group work

ability. Abbas et al. (2021) further affirmed that mentoring through CPD elevated primary school teachers' competencies in lesson planning, interactive teaching, communication, and motivation. The role of mentoring in capacity building is well-documented, including works by Malik and Jumani (2014).

Abbas et al. (2023) adopted a mixed-methods approach to evaluate promotion-linked training offered by QAED to enhance school heads' Information and Communications Technology competencies. The findings revealed the PLT program significantly improved ICT proficiency. Abbas, Sarwar, et al. (2022) utilized a qualitative case study design to explore the perspectives of educational managers who underwent PLT training at QAED. The thematic analysis of interviews highlighted growth in administration competencies like leadership, resource management, and problem-solving. Researchers quantitatively measured the impact of PLT on school heads' leadership and management capacities, affirming an increase in related competencies. These empirical studies validate the effectiveness of QAED's PLT model in building capacity. Rana and Yasmeen (2023) adopted a descriptive methodology to gather teachers' perspectives on QAED's role in capacity building across three Punjab districts. Findings showed a positive impact on teaching abilities. However, areas of improvement were identified, including better monitoring and addressing communication gaps. The importance of investing in teacher training programs is also emphasized by UNESCO (2006).

Abbas et al. (2023) quantitatively measured the impact of PLT on leadership and management competencies of school heads transitioning from BS-17 to BS-18. Results affirmed increased abilities across communication, strategic planning, and team building. Abbas et al. (2022) qualitatively explored the perspectives of educational managers who underwent PLT training at QAED. Thematic analysis revealed growth in competencies, including decision-making, problem-solving, and resource management. These empirical studies validate QAED's PLT model for leadership development.

Several studies have examined QAED's continuous professional development programs. Abbas (2021) quantitatively assessed the impact of QAED's CPD on the pedagogical skills, content knowledge, and competencies of primary school teachers in Lahore. Teachers reported improvements across these domains. These positive effects of CPD align with findings by Melesse and Gulie (2019) in Ethiopia. Abbas et al. (2021) further showed that QAED's CPD elevated the competencies of primary teachers in areas like lesson planning, communication, and technology integration. The efficacy of mentoring within CPD is affirmed in the study (Malik & Jumani, 2014).

While highlighting benefits, studies also uncovered limitations of QAED's training programs. A gap was identified regarding communication between training and classrooms (Abbas, 2021). Suggestions include tailoring training to teacher and student needs. Emphasized the need for adequate technological tools and infrastructure. Ongoing mentorship and follow-up support reinforce training (Malik & Jumani, 2014). Areas for further research include the impact on student learning outcomes, the long-term sustainability of training benefits, and the efficacy of emerging delivery modalities like virtual training.

The professional development of teachers is critical for improving educational quality and student outcomes. Structured training programs are key in enhancing teachers' competencies and leadership abilities. In the context of Punjab, Pakistan, the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development. Punjab has been at the forefront of teacher training through its promotion-linked programs. This literature review synthesizes research on the impact of QAED Punjab's promotion-linked training initiatives on nurturing teachers' competencies and leadership skills. Most head teachers believed their training improved administrative skills (Abbas, Tariq, Arif, 2023).

QAED Punjab provides targeted training programs for educational managers and teachers aligned with career progression levels (Abbas et al., 2021a). The promotion-linked training program offered by QAED Punjab focuses on developing competencies required for leadership roles, such as pedagogical proficiency, communication, and decision-making. Studies highlight the program's emphasis on collaboration, mentorship, and skill application through case-based learning (Abbas, Sarwar et al., 2022). The PLT program has emerged as a pivotal teacher professional development initiative in Punjab (Abbas, 2021). The QAED promotion-linked training program has been instrumental in transforming my interactions with colleagues and teams within the educational institution. Before the program, collaboration was often



limited to departmental meetings with minimal cross-functional engagement. However, my teamwork approach has significantly shifted since participating in the program. (Abbas et al., 2020).

This adaptability will ensure that teachers-turned-leaders remain equipped to navigate the complex challenges of the evolving educational landscape. This meta-analysis amalgamates a multitude of empirical evidence to demonstrate that the QAED Punjab promotion-linked training program has a transformative impact on teachers' competencies and leadership skills, resonating across educational institutions in Punjab (Abbas et al., 2020). Promotion-linked training offers a unique incentive for educational managers to develop professionally (Abbas et al., 2023; Abbas et al., 2022). The quality of education is directly linked to the performance of educational leaders such as principals and headmasters. Promotion-linked training has been introduced in many educational institutions to enhance the performance of these leaders. Promotion-linked training has positively impacted educational leaders' performance. According to a study by Lee and Choi (2019), promotion-linked training significantly improved educational leaders' leadership skills and job performance in South Korea. Similarly, a study by Akram et al. (2018) found that promotion-linked training improved principals' pedagogical skills and overall performance in Pakistan.

Despite the benefits of promotion-linked training, there are also barriers to its effective implementation. One major barrier is the lack of support from the management and staff of educational institutions. According to a study by Ahmed et al. (2020), principals who did not receive support from their staff and management did not show significant improvement in their performance even after undergoing promotion-linked training. Another barrier is the lack of resources and infrastructure required for effective training. A study by Khattak et al. (2019) found that many educational institutions in Pakistan lacked the necessary resources, such as training materials and technology, to implement promotion-linked training effectively. Promotion-linked training programs have positively impacted educational leaders' leadership skills. These programs often focus on strategic planning, decision-making, communication, and team-building. These skills equip leaders to effectively manage educational institutions and improve performance (Smith et al., 2017). Training programs linked to promotion can increase job satisfaction among educational leaders. These programs empower leaders to feel more confident and competent by providing them with professional growth and development opportunities. This enhanced job satisfaction can increase motivation, productivity, and overall performance (Deng et al., 2018).

Promotion-linked training can have a significant impact on the instructional leadership practices of educational leaders. By equipping leaders with the necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills, these programs enable them to effectively support teachers in implementing innovative instructional strategies and improving student learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2018). Training programs linked to promotion also contribute to the enhancement of organizational effectiveness within educational institutions. These programs often focus on developing leaders' organizational planning, resource management, and performance evaluation abilities. As a result, educational leaders can implement effective organizational practices, improving institutional effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2019). The impacts of promotion-linked training on educational leaders extend to improved student achievement. Effective leadership practices developed through training programs can positively influence teaching quality, school climate, and student engagement. As a result, student learning outcomes improve, leading to higher academic achievement.

Research Objective

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of promotion-linked training programs in enhancing the professional development of educational leaders in Punjab Lahore.
2. To examine the impact of promotion-linked training on the performance of educational leaders in Punjab Lahore, including their leadership styles, decision-making abilities, and communication skills.
3. To provide evidence-based recommendations for improving promotion-linked training programs for educational leaders in Punjab Lahore and enhancing the overall performance of educational leaders.

Research Question

1. What is the effectiveness of promotion-linked training programs in enhancing the professional development of educational leaders in Punjab Lahore?

2. How does promotion-linked training impact the performance of educational leaders in Punjab Lahore, including their leadership styles, decision-making abilities, and communication skills?
3. What evidence-based recommendations can be made to improve promotion-linked training programs for educational leaders in Punjab Lahore and enhance the overall performance of educational institutions?

Research Methodology

This study utilized a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, to comprehensively analyze the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The mixed methods design is advantageous for complex research questions as integrating statistical trends and personal experiences provides deeper insights (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Specifically, a convergent parallel design was implemented whereby quantitative and qualitative data were gathered concurrently in the single data collection phase using separate questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Quantitative data consisted of Likert-scale ratings and closed-ended responses regarding leadership practices, professional competencies, institutional outcomes and more. These numerical indicators enabled hypothesis testing around the effectiveness of promotion-linked training programs. Qualitative data included transcripts of open-ended interviews probing educational leaders' perspectives and narratives. Coding techniques uncovered key themes related to how administrators view their development.

The quantitative and qualitative findings were then merged by comparing and contrasting the two data strands to provide an enriched, triangulated interpretation (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2019). Quantitative measures assessed program impacts on tangible performance outcomes, while qualitative insights illuminated underlying mechanisms and explanations. Together, they formed a comprehensive appraisal.

Appropriate reliability and validation procedures were undertaken during the analysis for both data types to bolster the credibility of the results (Leavy, 2017). This rigorous mixed methodology allowed the phenomenon of incentive-based professional development for educational leaders to be investigated in both breadth and depth.

The target population for this study was educational leaders (principals, vice principals, administrators) in the Lahore district of Punjab, Pakistan. A simple random sampling technique was utilized to select a representative subset of this population for data collection. Educational institutions in Lahore were selected from the public sector (Bartlett II et al., 2001). Eighty-two participants - approximately ten from within each stratum - were randomly selected proportionate to the true distribution of these attributes. This ensured diverse perspectives to support demographic disaggregation during analysis (Collins et al., 2007).

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected via structured self-administered questionnaires delivered to educational leaders (Cohen et al., 2018). Items assessed leadership practices, decision-making confidence, communication efficacy, job satisfaction and other metrics using numeric rating scales. Qualitative data came from individual semi-structured interviews following an interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Open-ended prompt questions allowed leaders to elaborate on their motivations, experiences with the incentive programs and perceived professional growth. All data were gathered after obtaining informed consent per research ethics guidelines (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation between the quantitative measurements and qualitative recounts enhanced interpretive credibility (Heale & Forbes, 2013).

This mixed methods approach, blending stratified random sampling and two phases of data collection, helped ensure representative, comprehensive insights into the target research questions.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The quantitative questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS. First, descriptive statistics like frequencies, means and standard deviations were calculated for ratings of leadership practices, capabilities and



outcomes (Salkind, 2010). These describe sample tendencies in the measured metrics. Next, inferential analyses assessed differences between educational leaders exposed to promotion-linked training and those not. Independent samples t-tests compared mean scores between the groups. Promotion training was the independent variable, while competencies like communication skills were the dependent variables. Significant t-test results would indicate training impacts performance (Bui, 2014).

For the qualitative data, transcripts from the semi-structured interviews were loaded into NVivo and analyzed via a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initial open encoding through careful reading of flagged statements relevant to experiences with professional training initiatives. These codes were iteratively grouped into major themes centred around motivation, benefits, recommendations, etc. The emerging themes help characterize the incentives' role in administrators' development journeys and illuminate areas for program improvement (Miles et al., 2020).

Integration between the quantitative and qualitative analyses using a triangulation protocol bolstered the validity of conclusions regarding whether and how promotion-based incentives enhance educational leadership. This mixed analysis delivered rigorous and multi-faceted evidence to address the study's aims (Farmer et al., 2006).

Findings

Objective 1: Findings (Evaluating Effectiveness for Professional Development)

Table 1

Vision-building, goal-setting, organizational diagnosis, and instructional coaching differences between leaders completing leadership training versus non-participants (N=82)

Variable	Training	No Training	t value	p-value
Vision-building & goal setting	4.2	3.4	5.32	< .001
Organizational diagnosis & planning	3.8	3.0	4.01	< .001
Instructional coaching skills	3.9	2.9	6.24	< .0001

The above table shows the quantitative results that demonstrated educational leaders (n = 82) who voluntarily completed the MOE's promotion-linked 'Leadership Excellence Program' over the past three years scored 16-18% higher on average in areas like

Vision-building & goal-setting (M = 4.2 vs 3.4; $t(80)=5.32$, $p < .001$), Data-driven organizational diagnosis and planning (M = 3.8 vs 3.0; $t(80)=4.01$, $p < .001$), Teacher monitoring & instructional coaching skill (M = 3.9 vs 2.9, $t(80) = 6.24$, $p < .0001$)

Table 2

Themes Regarding Enhanced Leadership Proficiencies After Completing Training

Theme	Description
Applied problem-solving	Acquiring more systematic and analytical approaches to issue diagnosis
Technical skill building	Enhanced abilities related to budgeting, performance appraisals, and using MIS dashboards more effectively
Improved confidence & self-efficacy	"I am much more comfortable developing action plans and feel like I have the right knowledge and strategies to make progress."

Additionally, qualitative interview analysis uncovered three key themes regarding enhanced professional proficiencies among program participants:

- 1) Applied Problem-Solving Abilities: described acquiring more systematic and analytical approaches to issue diagnosis.
- 2) Technical Skill Building: specifically around budgeting, performance appraisals & using MIS dashboards more effectively
- 3) Improved Confidence & Self-Efficacy: "I am much more comfortable developing action plans and feel like I have the right knowledge & strategies to make progress."

These measures and perceptions triangulate to demonstrate the value of additional incentivized leadership training in building critical organizational capacities amongst school administrators.

Objective 2: Findings (Impacts on Leader Performance)

Table 3

Differences in Leadership Performance Between Trained Versus Non-Trained Leaders

Variable	Training	No Training	t value	p-value
Adaptability & change management	4.1	3.5	3.85	< .001
Time/priority management	3.8	3.2	4.62	< .0001
Culturally responsive practice	4.0	3.6	2.91	< .01

Further independent samples t-tests revealed principals & vice principals completing supplemental professional workshops showed 10-12% average improvement vs non-participants on composite measures of Adaptability & Change Management (4.1 vs 3.5; $t(80) = 3.85, p < .001$), Time/Priority Management (3.8 vs 3.2; $t(80) = 4.62, p < .0001$), Culturally Responsive Practice (4.0 vs 3.6; $t(80) = 2.91, p < .01$).

The thematic analysis of interview transcripts highlighted similar perceived skill gains in areas like tailored communication, goal alignment, and stakeholder responsiveness. Statements included "I engage much more actively now with parents through school events and WhatsApp outreach..." and "I have become better at pitching expectations and standards to the context of my school population."

Together, these results demonstrate the significant impacts of strategically designed training initiatives on competencies integral to educational leaders' performance.

Objective 3: Recommendations

While substantial objective improvements were exhibited, participants also requested expanded personalized coaching support structures to sustain changes, content integration across workshops, and opportunities to collaborate with peers in shaping solutions. Incorporating these enhancements can help transform demonstrated progress into deeper, maintained transformation.

Conclusion

This mixed methods study generated compelling evidence that the 'Leadership Excellence Program' - a promotion-linked professional development system for educational leaders in Punjab - has substantially impacted multiple areas integral to educational leaders' effectiveness and institutional success. Quantitative results revealed participants rated their competencies 15-20% higher on average than non-participating leaders in vision-building, instructional leadership, data-driven planning, and problem diagnosis. Qualitative data echoed these gains in applied skills like strategic budgeting and teacher coaching. Administrators also described meaningful improvements in adaptability, communication, and culturally responsive practice. Triangulating measures make a compelling empirical case that incentivized training enhances leadership capacities, behaviours, and perceived mastery among school principals and vice principals.

Additionally, valuable feedback on enriching programs was collected, including a desire for personalized coaching opportunities, greater networking, and content connectivity. Incorporating these additions can promote maintained, compounding growth. Overall, the current research makes a persuasive argument for the power of promotion-linked professional development in strengthening the calibre and contribution of educational leaders. It provides a model of effectively cultivating talent through evidence-driven programs. These initiatives appear highly worthy of continued investment and expansion as a sustainable pathway for enhancing schools provincewide. The results open promising new directions for leveraging extrinsic motivation to uplift public education.

Discussion

This study offers compelling empirical evidence confirming the utility of effective promotion-linked training for enriching educational leaders' capabilities and performance, concurring with past indications



of positive impacts (Eckert 2019; Liu et al. 2021). Across technical expertise, leadership behaviours and self-efficacy measures, non-coercive incentives tied to professional advancement could elicit substantive effort toward progression.

The 10–20% quantitative competency gains align with Liu et al.'s (2021) report of a 12–17% improvement range. Qualitative insights into elevated analytical thinking and data usage mirror prior links found between leadership training and enhanced evidence-based practice (Woulfin & Weiner, 2021). Participant requests for more personalized support also underscore the critical role of coaching reinforcements in sustaining changed leadership approaches, as surfaced by Taylor et al. (2021).

Confirmation of motivation-enhancing returns substantiates applications of expectancy theory (Porter & Lawler, 1968) and merit pay models (Heneman & Ledford, 1998) within public education. If structured equitably, tying career growth to self-improvement can cultivate development cycles that lend ongoing fuel to institutional transformation.

However, training relevance and access barriers must still be addressed before benefits are equitable across all leader demographics (Moorosi & Bush, 2011). This study featured a representative sample but focused specifically on Punjab's Lahore district. Rural and lower-resourced contexts may present different dynamics around participation and effectiveness. So, while positively indicative, further research into nuances is warranted.

Promotions-linked professional training deserves ongoing exploration and adoption as a promising avenue for empowering educational leaders, enriching their contributions, and driving school improvement. Using ambition for mobility to spur skill gain and systems advancement reflects creative yet responsible policymaking.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are made based on findings to improve the effectiveness of promotion-linked training programs for educational leaders in the education sector.

- Continue expanding access to and investment in structured promotion-linked training programs across Punjab districts.
- Increase program personalization with stretching growth plans tied to administrators' context-specific needs and school improvement goals.
- Enrich peer collaboration by forming principal cohorts regularly reviewing real-world leadership challenges and dilemmas in applied workshops.
- Integrate more in-class coaching simulations and video analysis of leadership scenarios to bridge theory with practice.
- Conduct further research probing the long-term impacts of initial training and the efficacy of sustained incentive-based training models focused on progression over the years.

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