

Analyzing the School Leadership Development Program in Pakistan: Insights from Head Teachers and Master Trainers' Experiences

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Abstract

School leaders are considered as the backbone of the educational organizations. They have to perform multiple responsibilities such as managing teaching and non-teaching staff. For that purpose, it is a prerequisite for the head teachers to be equipped with a distinctive body of knowledge, skills, and behavior. The School Leadership Development Program (SLDP) was a training program launched by the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED) in collaboration with the British Council, for head teachers to enhance the leadership capabilities of school leaders of the secondary schools in Punjab. The essential purpose of this study was to determine the level of satisfaction, engagement, and relevance of SLDP to the professional requirements of the head teachers. Mixed-method research was applied to analyze the perceptions of head teachers through a questionnaire. Master trainers, lead trainers, and policy makers' perceptions were revealed through semi-structured interviews. Master trainers were sole personnel who had lived experiences regarding the satisfaction, engagement and relevance of the SLDP to professional requirements of head teachers and to examine what was the reaction of head teachers during the SLDP. 449 head teachers were selected from 2480 head teachers of the selected districts of Punjab. Master trainers and lead master trainers were selected to cross checking the perceptions of head teachers. The findings showed that head teachers were satisfied with SLDP, were engaged during the SLDP training sessions, and perceived that SLDP was relevant to their professional responsibilities. The results highlighted the need for policy requirements for institutionalized continuous training programs for head teachers to improve the quality of education in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Head Teachers, School Leadership Development Program, Satisfaction, Engagement, Relevance of Training*

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1. Introduction

Heads and principals are considered as the backbone of educational organizations. They play an immense role in organizing the staff and faculty, executing educational programs, managing the budget, and leading initiatives to improve school performance and learning outcomes (Wallace Foundation, 2013). They are increasingly required to possess a distinctive combination of knowledge, skills, attitude, and behavior (Day et al., 2000). Henceforth, their training and development become indispensable in shaping the competencies needed for developing schools effectively.

In developing countries, students' achievement and school performance depend on various factors, including the quality of curriculum and instructional practices, the number of qualified teachers, and the quality of school head teachers (Khan, 2017). World Bank (2022) disclosed that nearly 40% of the secondary schools in Pakistan cannot attain international benchmarks. Due to this, researchers documented it and attributed this situation to ineffective school leadership (Farooq & Sardar, 2015). The quality of education in Pakistan is deteriorating, highlighting the need to improve the training programs for teachers and most importantly, head teachers (Bukhari et al., 2021).

Crowther et al. (2002), Chapman (2005), Mathibe (2007), and Nasreen et al. (2020) emphasized the need for more research on training programs for head teachers worldwide. Regardless, Hutton (2013) and Petkova (2011) highlighted that the current professional development programs are inadequate, inconsistent, and insufficient. Rapid changes are happening worldwide that are affecting this important relationship as the question of quality education and sustainable schools is being raised by the community and parents.

The School Leadership Development Program (SLDP) was the first program launched in 2019, by the Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED) in collaboration with the British Council, for head teachers. The School Leadership Development Program was aimed to enhance the leadership capabilities of 15,000 school leaders of the secondary schools in Punjab. Its goal was to enhance their competencies to meet future challenges and enhance the quality of education and performance of secondary schools in Punjab by targeting training modules emphasizing competent school leadership and management.

The satisfaction, engagement of the head teachers during the SLDP training sessions and relevance of the SLDP are considered crucial aspects in determining the overall effectiveness of the SLDP and the long-term impact of the training program. The engagement of the participants reflects how well participants are involved in the training activities.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to;

1. explore the perception of the head teachers about their level of satisfaction and engagement with the School Leadership Training Program (SLDP) and its relevance to their training needs.
2. examine the gender differences regarding satisfaction, engagement and relevance of the SLDP to the professional responsibilities of the head teachers.
3. investigate the difference of satisfaction, engagement and relevance of the SLDP to the professional responsibilities of the head teachers based on their administrative experiences.
4. explore the perceptions of the master trainers about the satisfaction and engagement of the head teachers during SLDP and its relevance to the professional requirements of the head teachers.

1.2 Research Questions

This research aspires to answer the subsequent research questions considering Kirkpatrick's Evaluating Training Effectiveness Model:

- Q1. What was the level of satisfaction of the participants with the school leadership development program?
- Q2. How well the head teachers were engaged during the school leadership development program?
- Q3. To what extent did the school leadership development program effectively address the participants' training needs?
- Q4. What was the perception of the master trainers, lead trainers and policy makers about the satisfaction and engagement of the head teachers during SLDP and its relevance to the professional requirements of the head teachers?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant gender difference in the perceptions of secondary school head teachers' regarding satisfaction, engagement and relevance of SLDP in Punjab.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of more experienced and less experienced head teachers of secondary schools regarding their satisfaction, engagement and relevance of SLDP training.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is beneficial for head teachers in identifying the satisfaction and relevance of training that offers insights on how both head teachers and master trainers can address the issues through effective planning and strategies. It

also provides school leadership with up-to-date data about the training, enabling them to grasp the current situation and make more informed decisions for the future.

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

1. The Punjab province was only selected as this program was only implemented in the Punjab province to train head teachers of secondary schools.
2. This study was delimited to public secondary schools in Punjab since the School Leadership Development Program was offered to government school's head teachers.

2. Literature Review

LaPointe and Davis (2006) stressed that head teachers are necessary for promoting excellent teaching and learning in schools, and their knowledge and skills must be significantly broad enough to fulfill the school management responsibilities. School leaders must develop interpersonal skills to make just decisions and mentor the staff members. Waniganayake et al. (2015) claimed that the role and responsibility of school leaders were adequately acknowledged in the 1920s. At the initial stage, the responsibility of the school leaders is recognized as the school manager, managing the school facilities and being concerned about the pupil discipline. Research accompanied by Hutton (2013) concluded that the primary duty of school leaders is to manage the school's daily activities and operations.

The National Education Policy 1998-2010 and 2009 encouraged the prominence of the professional development of school head teachers in Pakistan. It is also acclaimed for enhancing the effectiveness of in-service and pre-service training systems by organizing both types of training for the school teachers, teachers' mentors, and school administrators by clustering the schools and other strategies. The National Educational Policy 1998-2010 underlined the professional development of educational management at different levels (Khan, 2017). The National Educational Policy also stressed the requirement for reorganization in all the fields such as pre-service and regulation of qualifications, skill development, teachers' fringe benefits, career progression, and position and administration and governance of the teaching personnel.

Mehmood (2011) claimed that Pakistan faced very critical and unsystematic infrastructure in the early days of its establishment. So, 80 % of the population in Pakistan needed access to valuable schools. After getting the freedom, educational authorities did not realize that teaching and instruction are separate from school administration. They did not provide a planned system of head teachers to enhance their professional competencies (Joubish & Khuram, 2011). Although they provide dispersed efforts to enhance the professional capabilities of the school head teachers,

they are disengaged and need to be more relevant to their context and funded by any donor agencies. The Academy of Educational Planning and Management was established in 1982 and developed a training wing for the professional development of educational administrators.

Most head teachers come from the teaching cadre and need leadership and management skills. So, it becomes difficult for head teachers to maintain quality education in schools. Chapman (2005) contended that a coherent and comprehensive training program is essential for enhancing Pakistan's quality education. Head teachers either attain inadequate or no professional development opportunities, and educational policies must clearly define the significance of the professional development opportunities. Consequently, head teachers need a better comprehension of concepts such as vision development, assessment and evaluation, sharing and delegation of authority, shared decision-making, school and community relationships, and pedagogical methods (Khan, 2010).

Dr. Donald Kirkpatrick (1924-2014) proposed a four-level evaluation model for writing his dissertation. He was also a professor at the University of Wisconsin at that time and emphasized teaching administration and supervisor programs at the University of Wisconsin. He wanted to know whether training programs could make a difference for the programs' participants, so he developed four levels of training evaluation. Kirkpatrick applied the four levels to assess his training program, namely reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Without the support of any company, marketing, or promotion, various training professionals individually adapted and used this to fulfill the requirements of the organizations at the 50th anniversary of the Kirkpatrick model that was celebrated in 2009. In the last five decades, various situations in organizations and schools have changed. So, Kirkpatrick enhanced the four steps to achieve the subsequent purposes in 2010, such as integrating the disremembered or ignored teaching of Kirkpatrick, improving mutual misinterpretations misuse of the approach, and explaining how the model used innovative talent enhancement and performance.

Kirkpatrick presented a four-level evaluation model to represent a sequence of modes to assess the training program. Every step is essential and has effects on next level. As an evaluator moves from one step to a subsequent level, the evaluation procedure becomes more challenging and time-consuming. He identified four levels for evaluating the effectiveness of the training program (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). The literature states that this evaluation model is frequently used in educational and technical training (Reio et al., 2017). Now Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model reflects a business standard in HR and training societies. This model was later redefined and rationalized in 1998 by Kirkpatrick in his book *Evaluating Training Program*. Evaluators in all kinds of organizations use this

Kirkpatrick evaluation model to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. Various research findings indicated that 81% of HRD officials gave few levels of significance to assessment, and over half 67% applied the Kirkpatrick evaluation model (Miller, 2018).

Kirkpatrick's evaluation model provides a direct system and its language is appropriate to the desired learning outcomes. This model makes an easy training evaluation procedure by providing an easy-to-apply and guaranteed standard to evaluate the training and program effectiveness. Kirkpatrick emphasized that the data about the four levels are most worthwhile for attaining descriptive information (Bates, 2004). Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2007) contended that if the whole financial situation faced an emergency, then the government would first cut the budget for training and professional development. The new world Kirkpatrick model can assist the evaluator in developing an effective training evaluation strategy for the program in order to enhance the performance of the organization and improve the organizational results.

At the first level of evaluation, the evaluators measure the reactions of the participants towards the program, in other words, it can be named as participants' satisfaction. Positive response guarantee participants attain the highest from the leadership development program. So, a positive reaction to any training program does not ensure that learning has occurred or that enhances the performance of employees. Kirkpatrick emphasized that various institutes administer the significance of level 1 (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

According to Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2007), evaluating the reactions of participants is essential for only two purposes. Firstly, it is important to identify the feelings of the participants (Head Teachers) about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction because they are the patrons of the training program. The second cause is to secure how the participants feel and do not care about it. There are three basic aims of any training program such as to i) firstly, enable the participants to attain the knowledge relevant to the profession ii) empower the participants to gain skills and enhance their current skills iii) facilitate the applicants to transform their attitude.

The previous studies showed that effective training program is essential; to develop effective training program that may have a positive impact on the attitude and knowledge of the school leaders, that directly led to improved student performance. The study also showed that there was a poor link between the internship program and curriculum of training program. It seems difficult to determine the impact of training programs on students' outcomes because there were other factors that influence their performance (Alladatin et al., 2023).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design used in this study was descriptive, which aims to provide an accurate account of outcomes and offer a detailed view of the situation being studied. According to Calderon (2006), the descriptive design is a purposive procedure for collecting, analyzing, and tabulating data to investigate the practices and processes of a program and interpret the results using statistical tools. This design determines the existing situations of any program, which can be described by using mixed-method research, quantitative and qualitative research (Rillo & Alieto, 2018). The mixed-method research approach combines inferences and interpretations of information gathered from qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Clark & Creswell, 2017).

The research design used in this study was appropriate for exploring the perceptions of head teachers. A convergent parallel design was used to comprehensively examine the research phenomenon. The initial data collection phase involved the quantitative data through a questionnaire alongside the collection of qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with master trainers, lead master trainers, and the coordinators of the SLDP. In conclusion, the mixed-method research approach, and employment of a convergent parallel design and methodological triangulation, ensured a comprehensive and accurate evaluation of the School Leadership Development Program. This approach allowed for a broad exploration of the research problem, enhanced the validity of the results, and facilitated a deeper understanding of the program's effectiveness.

3.2 Population of the Study

Total population of the study was 2480 male and female head teachers of the nine randomly selected districts of the Punjab province. All the master trainers and lead master trainers of the nine selected districts constituted the population of the study for collecting qualitative data.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The total respondents were 449, out of the total population (2480) head teachers of the selected districts. Krejcie and Morgan (1970); and Ajay and Micah (2014) provided a sample table and identified that this was an appropriate sample size to examine the quantitative data regarding school leadership training. In this study, 211 male and 238 female head teachers were selected as a study sample. Total eleven master trainers, lead master trainers were selected for gaining the qualitative data. In the first step, using a stratified sampling technique, nine administrative divisions of the Punjab province were taken as strata to be allowed to participate in this research. In the second step, one district was selected randomly from each stratum (division). In the third step, male and

female head teachers of the selected district were selected based on the availability of the respondents, who participated in the training and were selected as a study sample. A detailed list of probable participants was taken from the CEO's offices in every district and the invitations were sent through phone calls or messages to ensure their participation.

Table 1

Sample of the Study for Quantitative Research

S#	Districts	Population	Sample
1	Sargodha	390	74
2	Chiniot	78	50
3	Rawalpindi	468	51
4	Sialkot	309	41
5	Lahore	382	45
6	Multan	213	55
7	Layyah	182	45
8	Sahiwal	260	39
9	Bahawalpur	198	49
	Total	2480	449

A total of 449 respondents sent their responses from 550 respondents and the response rate was 81%. An 81% response rate is commonly considered excellent in educational research, particularly those studies that involve human subjects (Holtom et al., 2022). Participants of the research were designated through a purposive sampling technique to conduct semi-structured interviews. In this technique, the researcher deliberately recruited the elements with specific features and lived experiences of the research phenomenon (Kothari, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

3.4 Research Instruments

Questionnaire was consisted upon 22 research items that were relevant to constructs (satisfaction, engagement and relevance of the SLDP). For example the items included I was satisfied with the training sessions, I am satisfied with training methods of the instructors, the training material was presented in clear and systematic way. I was fully engaged during the whole training sessions. The training content was relevant to job responsibilities. The examples given by the trainer were relevant to school management etc.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the master trainers, lead master trainers, and coordinators of SLDP to accumulate data on the content, satisfaction of the participants, knowledge and skills acquired during training, competencies gained through SLDP, organizational outcomes, and future insights for SLDP. The interview was consisted on the following questions such as how much the participants were satisfied with the training sessions? What was the

reaction of the participants during the whole training session? Was the participants engaged during the training program? Was the training program relevant to the professional requirements of the head teachers?

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

For quantitative data, expert opinions and peer reviews were sought to enhance the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Pilot testing and expert opinion were taken into consideration to delete the objectionable items or irrelevant items from the instrument to highlight poor items of the instrument before administering it to selected sample. Cronbach's alpha and alpha coefficient of consistency was used to investigate the internal consistency of all items. The reliability score of the questionnaire was 0.80.

For qualitative data, O'Donoghue and Punch (2004) described the need to study the wide-ranging literature on relevant content to attain content validity of the interview. So, the researcher ascertains experts' opinions in relevant fields of interest. The researcher studied various theories, models of training evaluation, and prior research instruments on training effectiveness to confirm the instrument's validity. A few skilled personnel in the relevant area were also consulted to ensure that the interviews presented related information on relevant themes in the present research.

3.6 Data Collection

Structured Questionnaires were administered with the head teachers to assemble the relevant data regarding the related indicators. Different techniques were utilized for gathering data through questionnaires such as some questionnaires were conducted by personally visiting the head teachers, some questionnaires were administered by electronic messages (email & WhatsApp).

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher employed the following procedure for a mixed method convergent parallel design: (i) collecting quantitative data, (ii) collecting qualitative data, (iii) analyzing the quantitative data, (iv) analyzing qualitative data, and (v) interpreting how the qualitative data and quantitative data interrelate and contradict in mixed method questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Quantitative data were examined through SPSS, concentrating on descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were coded and analyzed by applying thematic analysis using Nvivo software.

The Kirkpatrick training assessment model's first indicator is referred to as "participants' reaction towards SLDP". The first-level participants' reactions toward SLDP consisted of three variables such as satisfaction of the participants, engagement of the participants, and relevance of training. The study participants were requested to express their viewpoints regarding their level of satisfaction

with the school leadership development program, their perception of engagement during the SLDP, and the relevance of the SLDP. These opinions evaluate the reaction of the participants and provide perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the SLDP.

Table 2

Perceptions of the Head Teachers towards 'Satisfaction of the Trainees' with SLDP Training

No.	Description	SA %	A%	Un%	D%	SD%	M	S.D	Level
1	Training content	26.5	69.9	2.4	.2	0.9	4.20	0.57	High
2	Training facilities	17.6	73.3	6.9	1.6	0.7	4.05	0.60	High
3	Expectations from trainers	18.9	72.2	7.8	0.4	0.7	4.08	0.58	High
4	Interesting sessions during training	25.6	61.0	11.6	1.1	0.7	4.09	0.68	High
5	Clear and systematic training material	0.9	66.8	8.2	3.8	0.3	3.24	1.22	Moderate
6	Satisfaction from teaching methods	23.4	63.0	10.9	2.4	0.2	4.06	0.67	High
7	The whole training session was satisfactory	17.4	67.7	11.6	3.1	0.2	3.98	0.65	High
*Overall percentage and mean score		18.6	67.7	8.48	1.8	3.38	*3.95	0.71	High

Note: 1.00 to 1.80 (very low level); 1.80 to 2.61 (low level); 2.61 to 3.42 (moderate level); 3.43 to 4.23 (high level); and 4.23 to 5.00 (very high level) (Alkharusi, 2022). SA (Strongly Agree); A (Agree); UN (Undecided); D (Disagree); SDA (Strongly Disagree, M (Mean) & S.D (Standard Deviation).

Table 2 indicates the overall satisfaction of government secondary school head teachers with the school leadership development program. Descriptive statistics showed that the majority of the head teachers articulated a high level of satisfaction with the several points of the SLDP. Satisfaction of the participants with the training content was significantly high (M = 4.20, SD = 0.57), and 96.4% of the head teachers agreed or strongly agreed. Likewise, training facilities

($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.60$) and satisfaction with the training methods ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.67$) also reported at high level of satisfaction. Nonetheless, the satisfaction of the participants with clear and systematic training material was rated at a moderate level ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.22$) with only 67.7% of the participants agreeing. The overall mean score of satisfaction was rated at a high level ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.71$) and 83.6% respondents perceived that the majority of the head teachers of secondary schools were satisfied with SLDP.

Table 3

Perceptions of the Head Teachers Regarding Their 'Engagement' during SLDP Training

No	Description	SA %	A%	U%	D%	SD%	M	S.D	Level
1	Motivation for learning	21.4	67.5	10.0	0.9	0.2	4.08	.60	High
2	The training environment was stimulating	20.0	60.8	16.9	1.6	0.7	3.98	.70	High
3	The training environment was appropriate for discussions	22.9	62.4	12.5	1.6	0.7	4.05	.68	High
4	Sufficient time allocated for each activity to be involved during training	25.8	63.0	8.9	2.0	0.2	4.12	.65	High
5	Sufficient time to remove boredom	17.4	61.7	16.7	3.6	0.7	3.91	.73	High
6	Fully engaged during the whole training session	24.7	63.0	9.6	2.4	0.2	4.09	.67	High
7	The way of imparting the training was interesting	23.4	65.0	8.9	2.4	0.2	4.08	.65	High
	The overall mean score of the Level of Engagement	22.2	63.3	11.9	2.07	0.41	4.04	.67	High

Table 3 displays head teachers' level of engagement in the school leadership development program. Descriptive statistics showed that participants of the study rated a high level of engagement with several features of the SLDP. Motivation for learning was reported at a high level of engagement ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.60$) with 88.9 % of head teachers agreeing and strongly agreeing with the statement. Similarly, sufficient time allocated for training activities also received positive feedback from 88.8% of head teachers ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.65$), and 80.8% of head teachers perceived that the training environment was stimulating and reported at a high level ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.70$). Furthermore, 79.1% of head teachers believed that SLDP provided sufficient time to eliminate boredom ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.73$). The overall mean score of the engagement among head teachers was reported at a high level of $M = 4.04$ ($SD = 0.67$) and 86.6% head teachers perceived that they were fully engaged during the whole training sessions.

Table 4
Perceptions of the Head Teachers towards “Relevance of Training”

S#	Description	SA %	A%	U%	D%	SD %	M	S.D	Level
1	The content was relevant to the job	31.2	61.7	4.7	1.3	1.1	4.2	.72	High
2	The content was sufficient for managing and teaching process	20.0	64.4	11.4	4.2	0	4.0	.72	High
3	Perform my Job Effectively	25.4	63.0	9.4	1.8	0.4	4.1	.63	High
4	The content was relevant to school activities and tasks	25.8	65.5	6.7	2.0	0	4.1	.69	High
5	Examples were relevant to school management	21.8	64.6	10.9	2.4	0.2	4.0	.67	High
6	Improve to resolve the problems while organizing the duties	23.6	65.5	8.5	2.2	0.2	4.1	.69	High
7	The training was according to my professional requirements	24.1	63.9	8.5	2.7	0.9	4.0	.71	High
8	Objectives were relevant to job needs	26.5	64.8	7.6	0.7	0.4	4.1	.62	High
Overall mean score of ‘Relevance’		24.8	64.1	8.46	2.2	0.4	4.1	.68	High

Table 4 highlights the perception of head teachers regarding SLDP training's relevance to their professional needs. The results showed that majority of the head teachers perceived that the content of the training was relevant to their professional responsibilities. The majority (92.9%) of the head teachers agreed that the content of the training was relevant to their job and its mean score was at a high level ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.72$). Likewise, 84.4% perceived that the content was sufficient for managing and teaching process and reported at a high level ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .72$), 88.4% believed that they perform their job effectively and rated at a high level ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .63$). Moreover, 91.3% head teachers agreed that content of the training was relevant to school activities and task ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .69$), 91.3% believed that objectives were relevant to their professional needs and rated at high level ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .68$). The overall mean score of relevance was 4.10, ($SD = 0.68$) which reveals that SLDP was highly relevant to the professional needs of the head teachers. So 88.97% result showed, that head

teachers perceived, SLDP training was relevant to their professional requirements.

Table 5

The overall mean score of participants' Reaction towards SLDP

Participants' Reaction towards SLDP			M	SD	Level
Level	1	Satisfaction of trainees	3.95	0.71	High
	2	Engagement of trainees	4.04	0.67	High
	3	Relevance of training	4.10	0.68	High
Overall mean score of 'Participants' Reaction'			4.03	0.68	High

Table 5 represents the overall mean score of the effectiveness of the school leadership development program. So, the descriptive statistics pointed out that the average score of participants' reaction towards SLDP was at a high-level $M = 4.03$ ($SD = .68$). So, it means that head teachers of the secondary school reacted positively to the School Leadership Development Program in Punjab. The perceived overall mean scores of knowledge, skills, and attitudes attained by head teachers from the SLDP training were at a high level of $M = 3.53$ ($SD = .76$). It means that head teachers who participated in this training program gained more knowledge and enhanced their management skills after attending SLDP training sessions.

Table 6

Gender differences in perception of Head teachers towards "participants' reactions towards SLDP" after participating in SLDP

Variables	Male		Female		T	P	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Satisfaction	27.91	2.70	27.59	2.79	1.22	.22	0.11
Engagement	28.56	3.61	28.15	3.48	1.22	.20	0.11
Relevance	62.45	7.32	60.68	8.15	2.40	.01	0.22

$p < 0.05$

An independent sample t-test was applied to evaluate whether there was a significant difference between the reaction of male and female head teachers towards SLDP training as the data concerned with comparing two independent groups. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the satisfaction of male head teachers ($M = 27.91$, $SD = 2.70$) and female head teachers ($M = 27.59$, $SD = 2.79$), $t(449) = 1.22$, $p > .22$, the effect size in satisfaction, as measured by Cohen's d was $d = 0.11$, indicating a small effect. Male head teachers' engagement ($M = 28.56$, $SD = 3.61$) during SLDP sessions was not greater than female head teachers ($M = 28.15$, $SD = 3.48$), $t(449) = 1.22$, $p > .20$, and the effect size in engagement as measured by Cohen's d was $d = 0.11$ indicating a very small effect. The results of relevance reveal more male head

teachers ($M = 62.45$, $SD = 7.32$) than female head teachers ($M = 60.68$, $SD = 8.15$) perceived that SLDP training was relevant to their professional requirements, $t(449) =$, $p < .01$ and the effect size in relevance of training as measured by Cohen's d was $d = 0.22$ indicating a small effect.

Table 7

Reactions of Head Teachers Based on Administrative Experience

	1-5 Years		6-10 Years		11-15 years		16-20 Years			
Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Satisfaction	27.79	2.54	27.88	2.62	27.79	2.17	26.95	4.62	1.35	.25
Engagement	27.83	3.38	28.60	3.52	28.70	3.06	28.09	5.02	1.71	.16
Relevance	60.74	8.19	61.47	7.66	62.57	6.43	61.32	10.15	1.17	.31

$p < 0.05$

A One-way ANOVA was applied to evaluate the perceptions of head teachers based on administrative experience (independent variables) regarding satisfaction, engagement, and relevance of training (dependent variables) as data was concerned with comparing more than two independent groups. This shows no statistically significant effect of administrative experience on satisfaction $F(3, 448) = 1.35$, $p > 0.25$, engagement during SLDP training $F(3, 448) = 1.71$, $p > 0.16$, and relevance of SLDP training $F(3, 448) = 1.17$, $p > 0.31$. The effect size regarding satisfaction as measured by Cohen's d , was $d = 0.03$ indicating a small effect, the effect size regarding engagement as measured by Cohen's d , was $d = 0.22$ indicating a small effect, and the effect size regarding the relevance of training as measured by Cohen's d , was $d = 0.09$ indicating a small effect.

Qualitative Analysis

Research Question No.4 What was the perception of the master trainers, lead trainers and policy makers about the satisfaction and engagement of the head teachers during SLDP and its relevance to the professional requirements of the head teachers?

Figure 1
Head Teachers SLDP training Experiences

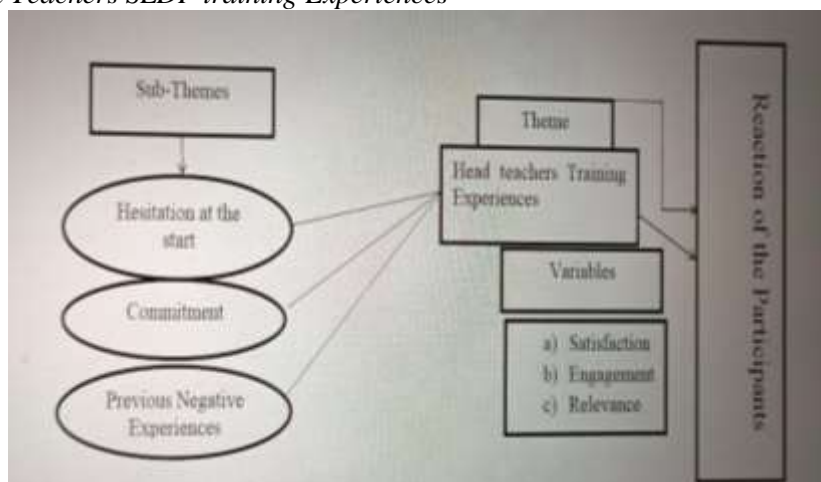


Figure 1 highlights the themes emerged after coding the qualitative data. The main theme of the study was head teachers training experiences and sub theme was emerged as hesitation of the participants at the beginning, previous negative experiences and commitment of the participants during the whole training program. The main variables of the study were satisfaction, engagement and relevance of the training program. The following data analysis was based on the figure 1.

The secondary school head teachers were reluctant to participate in the training program in the beginning. They were not reactive and still passively listening to the content. They did not participate in any healthy activity and complained about the uselessness of this training program. Participant 1 noted, *“At the start of the training, head teachers were submissive and not ready to learn, but after the training, they came to know that it was fruitful for gaining the latest management knowledge and skills”*.

Although all head teachers were satisfied and engaged during the training at the end of the session, at the initial phase they were reluctant to attend due to previous experiences with training programs conducted for various personnel such as ECE, PLT, etc. Participant 11 noted, *“At the end of the sessions, head teachers actively participated in the presentation activity or any "ball throwing" or "hot seat" activity. Another said, “Head teachers fully understood the worth of the training program by the end” (Participant 8).*

Participant 8 noted, *"They actively participated in discussions during the training and asked more questions about how to tackle administrative obstacles during job responsibilities"*. They were passionate about learning new management skills and mechanisms to tackle the problems they faced during their working hours. One master trainer expressed his point of view, saying, *"I have 12-13 years of teaching and administrative experience and conducted different training such as SLDP, PLT, etc. However, all the head teachers were keenly observing the techniques and motivated. This training was developed according to the needs and realities of the head teachers"* (Participant 5). *At the start of the training program, senior head teachers got angered to be nominated for participation in the activity, but with time they changed their attitude. When I changed the presentation techniques and also took feedback after one session, their behavior was modified* (Participant 10).

Participant 8 reported that *some head teachers appointed teachers for the training and did not participate in the training themselves* (Participant 8). *Although all the head teachers were satisfied with the training program offered by QAED, they considered this program effective for learning new knowledge and skills.*

The theme regarding head teacher training experiences addressed the research question of what was the level of satisfaction of the participants with SLDP training and also what was the level of engagement of the participants during SLDP training. Satisfaction and engagement were the most important indicators to measure the effectiveness of school leadership development programs that significantly impact on acquiring the latest knowledge and skills by head teachers of the secondary schools.

Head teachers' experiences reflect the transformational and distributive leadership theories because head teachers were reluctant to participate in SLDP. They prompt that there were various hidden agendas behind these SLDP trainings. Resistance to accept the modification is an essential element of the distributive and transformational leadership theories. The results also highlight that participants of the SLDP showed confrontation to join and be fully involved during the training. If participants are fully engaged during the training then it can effectively increase the school's performance and students' accomplishment (Fullan, 2020).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The reactions of head teachers towards the School Leadership Development Program (SLDP) were predominantly positive. Participants reported high levels of satisfaction, engagement, and relevance concerning the training. Specifically, head teachers expressed satisfaction with the master

trainer's presentation style, the content of the training modules, and the overall training environment. The reactions such as satisfaction concerning training modules (materials), training facilities, and training environments, quality of the trainers, time management, and relevance of the training are consistent with the findings of the research and support the opinions of Warwu (2021) and Sahni (2020).

The results of this study showed that trainees were satisfied with the training environment, quality of the instructors, training materials, and training duration. They showed that SLDP training was based upon international standards and that all the trainers were skillful and experienced. The results of the study were consistent with the results of Hassan et al. (2006) conducted research at NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) in Malaysia and Yusoff et al. (2006) conducted research at SBA (School Based Assessment) in-service training program for teachers that indicated the participants of the training were satisfied with the overall training programs. Iqbal et al. (2011) conducted a study at training institutes including the National Institute of Science and Technical Education, the National Institute of Banking and Finance, and the Pakistan Planning and Management Institute to gain the perceptions of trainees. These studies indicated that the duration of the SLDP training was also sufficient and the results of this research were consistent with the findings of the study by Saks and Burke (2012). The result of this study showed that participants perceived that the duration of the SLDP training program was adequate to complete the training session.

Batool et al. (2024) identified that majority of the school leaders were satisfied with the SLDP and found that it has a positive impact on the skills of head teachers. Haiou et al. (2025) showed that leadership development programs in Malaysia had a significant impact on the performance of school leaders and they were pleased to participate in further training programs. Similarly Ismail et al. (2024) studied the satisfaction of school leaders to online learning training program and highlighted that school leaders were pleased with the e-NPQEL.

The findings indicated that head teachers felt their expectations were met, as they found the training content relevant to their administrative responsibilities and school management strategies. They also perceived that the training activities were designed to maintain engagement and eliminate boredom during sessions. The results regarding the relevance of the SLDP content were supported by Ramachandran (2010) who examined the effectiveness of the training programs attended by various company employees working in the government sector and Wakama (2018) studies on the adequacy and relevance of the professional development for administrators in Nigeria.

These findings were consistent with Sittar et al. (2022) research findings that the School Leadership Development Program was effective in improving the performance of the head teachers. Hammad and Bush (2021) investigated the Principal Leadership Training (PLT) in Oman and showed similar results that this training was adequate to meet the needs of the school principals. The heads of the schools opined that the training was adequate to prepare them for leadership roles. Okoko et al. (2015) examined the principal preparation program in Nairobi and affirmed these results which were similar to a greater extent to other studies conducted in Canada, the USA, and South Africa asserting the importance of training for improved leadership practices. On the contrary Webber et al. (2014) reported that there were some areas in which head teachers were not adequately prepared in the area of time management in Kenya.

The study showed that SLDP emphasized relevant experiences that participants needed in their school for effective performance of their roles. The participants felt that the training program was addressing their particular requirements and the challenges they were facing. This perceived relevance made them fully engaged and satisfied. Harvard Business Publishing (2023) published a report highlighting the significance of relevance in leadership development programs. Training programs that regulate training with participants' existing professional requirements showed considerably greater satisfaction. Furthermore, Ely et al. (2010) emphasized the importance of content-relevant training to participant requirements was more effective in improving participant satisfaction and engagement.

The findings highlighted that there were no differences between the satisfaction and engagement of male and female head teachers towards the SLDP training program. These results were similar to Trelova and Olsavsky (2017). They showed that there was no significant gender difference regarding satisfaction and engagement during training. Male and female principals had similar perceptions towards the causes of satisfaction and engagement such as fear of failure, shortage of time, non-systematic training, and insensitive techniques used by trainers. It may be due to SLDP was equally accessible to both male and female head teachers and provide flexibility during the training program.

The findings of this study highlighted the significant difference between the perceptions of male and female head teachers regarding the relevance of the SLDP training. These results were consistent with Underdahl et al. (2014) that there was a significant difference between the perceptions of male and female head teachers perceived in a different way regarding leadership responsibilities. However, these diversions cannot be implemented in the relevance of the

training but these can be applicable to measure the societal perceptions of male and female head teachers about the relevance of the SLDP.

Green (2023) conducted a study on “the perceptions of principal preparation program from the perspective of non-reappointed principal” and highlighted that the administrative experience of the school leaders cannot change their perception regarding satisfaction, engagement, and relevance of training programs. These research findings were consistent with the research in that there was no difference between the perceptions of head teachers based on their administrative experience.

The results of the interview schedule highlighted that most of the master trainers and lead master trainers were experienced and skillful personnel. They had 10-12 years of teaching and training experience and conducted various trainings such as PLT (Promotion Link Training), SLDP, and ECE (Early Childhood Education) training programs. They claimed that most of the head teachers of secondary schools were not willing to learn during the initial phase of the training programs. They showed negative gestures to the master trainers and were reluctant to take training sessions because they alleged that these training programs had negative connotations and had hidden agendas for arranging these training programs by British Councils (Riddell, 2010). They purported these training programs developed inadequate learning activities during the whole training program. A few head teachers were involved and engaged during the whole training program but a few head teachers were not ready to participate in training activities such as “Ball throwing”. Consequently, when the training sessions proceeded further they became more satisfied and took interest in the whole training program. All the master trainers gave confidence to the head teachers to satisfy that the training programs were worthwhile for their professional responsibilities. They become more engaged and satisfied during SLDP training program.

Head teachers and master trainers/ lead master trainers expressed that modules of the SLDP training program were relevant to fulfilling the professional duties and included the content pertinent to problem-solving skills, team building, community and school linkages, ICT integration, managing resources, and conflict resolution. The interviewees said that financial management was also a module that was not sufficiently delivered by the master trainers because they did not have any expertise in financial management so head teachers faced difficulty in comprehending the content of the financial management.

Findings of this study concluded that the SLDP effectively met the expectations of head teachers and contributed to their professional development.

The participants' reactions to the School Leadership Development Program (SLDP) were predominantly positive. Heads reported high satisfaction, engagement, and relevance concerning the training. They expressed contentment with the master trainer's presentation style, the training content, and the overall training environment, which facilitated discussions about their administrative challenges. Initially, some head teachers were not satisfied, but their satisfaction improved significantly by the end of the training sessions, indicating a positive shift in their reactions over time. They recommended organizing further training sessions on new modules for the head teachers.

6. Recommendations

Based on findings of study, following recommendations were drawn:

1. Research indicated that some head teachers did not participate in training themselves and appointed their second-in-command to attend the SLDP training. So there is a requirement to establish a proper monitoring system from CEO office and improved coordination between QAED, CEO offices, and other educational bodies to enhance the overall impact of the training programs.
2. It is recommended that findings from empirical research be incorporated to identify essential training needs and effective delivery methods to maintain a sustained focus on professional development. Research findings may be utilized in designing and implementing training programs to significantly enhance their effectiveness and relevance, and to enhance the quality of professional development opportunities for head teachers.
3. Future researchers may examine the impact of innovative and context-specific training methods compared to traditional approaches.

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