

# THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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**ABSTRACT**--This study intended to explore the perceived role of leadership in professional assistance of secondary school teachers. five secondary schools from public sector and five from private sector were randomly selected. ten teachers including newly inducted and experienced from each school were purposively selected for data collection. a questionnaire for survey, tpas was developed to collect data for teachers' professional assistance. to find out relationship between various research variables chi-square test for independence was used. results revealed significant role of school heads in teachers' professional assistance although secondary school teachers were found to be more facilitated by their heads for their instruction. the present study suggests an active, and more facilitating role of school heads in teachers' professional and emotional aspects of assistance. further, active and effective leadership practices of professional assistance by heads for quality performance of teachers are required in order to uplift the overall education.

**Key Words**-- Professional Assistance; Leadership Practices; Professional development; Quality teachers' Performance; Quality learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

A poor-quality educational system has been considered as an important reason for poverty and slow development in developing countries. Pakistan faces the problem of poor-quality education, with lack of good schools, trained teachers, proper infrastructure, well equipped laboratories, and updated curriculum etc. Rowan, Correnti and Miller (2002) advocate that teachers' role is most important among the variables for improving quality education through student achievement. Researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Rietdijk, Willeke, Grace, Marcus, Garrett & Caro, 2013) reported that often they struggle for their survival in their profession due to lack of professional support by their heads. According to Ross, Vescio, Tricarico, and Short (2011), School heads' key role cannot be ignored in developing a healthy environment for the teachers by supporting and encouraging their efforts, open communication, teamwork and continuous learning. School leaders can provide professional assistance to the teachers to improve their performance by adopting specific strategies including guidance for decision making about time management and others and supports to grow on the job. In many developing countries current economic situation and budget allocations for education in generally and support for teacher's

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professional development by school leaders in specific is non-existent. More over creativity and openness to multiple new options, role required for individual and school growth are essential elements for quality education therefore school leaders training in this area for the promotion of culture of mutual respect and innovation is necessary . The present research was based on the fact that school growth depends on empowered teachers who are committed to school's overall success, put effort for enhancing productivity within the class and outside of it, and do sharp professional disposition. Professional assistance includes all those activities and efforts which train and facilitate teachers to adapt to diverse learning and teaching contexts to improve the educational experience in the school. The purpose of professional assistance is to provide help to teachers before and during their teaching in the school for quality performance (Kennedy, 2016). Traditionally, professional assistance is provided by heads and senior teachers. Jackson and Davis (2000) stress on the instructional leadership for high quality teachers and schools. In Pakistan, the role of heads in professional assistance especially at secondary level has not been explored empirically. This paper attempts to highlight relevant aspects of teachers' professional assistance by school leaders.

Due to fast changing trends in teaching and learning process. Teaching becomes more crucial. Teachers need a lot of preparation and skills to meet the increasing demands of the students and society. They are facing a lot of pressures to meet up these demands. They need more support not only in their instructional strategies but also for awareness regarding institutional policies and expectation. Their personal and emotional aspects also required to be addressed. This study is based on the key assumption that within a school these are the heads who can facilitate, support and provide assistance to them and prepare them for their jobs. It has been believed that teachers' quality performance cannot be obtained without facilitation and providing them adequate professional assistance. On this believe the present study was planned to identify type and extent of professional assistance is being provided by the heads in secondary schools.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The review of related literature revealed that teachers' competencies, what they know and are able to do significantly affect the students' learning. Students are in direct contact with teachers, who interpret and shape instructional objectives and speculative ideas into classroom practices and develop the environment for learning. Their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions have direct and stern implications for the success of their students.

In Pakistan, people believe that when a person cannot find any other job, he or she becomes a teacher. World Bank, (2011) and many other agencies supported this opinion and reported that in Pakistani culture, teaching is considered as a simple and relaxed job that anyone can do and needs no professional training and academic qualification (Quraishi, 2003). Such perceptions towards teaching profession are adversely affecting teachers' performance. Relevant literature indicates that, by and large, in developing countries due to this misconception, competent and motivated teachers are also being overlooked (Fazal,S;Khan,I & Majoka, ,2014; Kennedy, 2016). Teaching is challenging profession—for both experienced and beginner teachers. It is a

profession that requires the ability to be responsive to the changing learning needs of students and schools as dynamic learning organizations.

To face these challenges of this new era, teachers need professional assistance in the form of facilitation, guidance, counseling, mentoring, training and professional development. Aslam (2003) opined in his study, by improving basic teaching skills, the teaching system may be improved, resulting in the betterment of the whole educational system. Knowledge of basic teaching skills and teacher training is necessary for quality education. Memon (2007) presented the case from Pakistan and opined that quality of education cannot be uplifted without improving teachers' quality of teaching. International agencies also seconded this opinion. UNESCO (2011) reported that there is lack of support for teachers from schools in Pakistan. As a result, teachers in Pakistani schools often lose motivation. It is argued that professional assistance of teachers is necessary to deliver and sustain quality education in schools.

Teachers' professional assistance includes having knowledge of latest and national curriculum, updated skills to deal with classroom management and discipline, dealing with students having special needs, skills to handle individual differences, incorporating technology during lessons, personalizing student programs, synchronizing extracurricular activities and being accountable to the heads, parents etc. These duties require consideration and expertise either teachers are experienced or newly appointed. Hobson, Ashby, Malderez & Tomlinson (2009) reported primarily three areas in which beginning teachers need assistance as professional, instructional, and personal & emotional. Newly inducted teachers need to be assisted to move from the initial orientation stage of professional development through the improved professional practice stage. Teachers need mentoring and assistance in lesson planning and pedagogies, curriculum planning, student behavior management, improving professional practice, their ways of learning to improve teaching practice, what do they do to make it work better, their reflections, for teaching and developing a professional learning community.

Generally, professional assistance and professional development both are taken interchangeably but actually these are different concepts. To get quality performance from teachers it is imperative to differentiate both terms. Professional assistance includes all the formal and informal activities and efforts which train teachers adopt to facilitate their jobs while professional development is purely formal term. Both are contextual, situational, and based on need analysis.

Gender issue also matters in need analysis for teachers' professional assistance. Research studies has been reported difference in variables related to their skills, attitude, behavior, job satisfaction, job commitment etc. The same case is for their needs, their professional development and assistance needs are also different. Li (2016) recommend that a different focus in designing any professional development program may be warranted. It should be developed to take into account the particular needs of female and male teachers in order to help facilitate equality and effectiveness of professional development programs. School heads are those who continuously can assist their teachers. In co-institutes, needs of male and female teachers for professional development and assistance are different. Females need more assistance in emotional and instructional dimensions.

School heads role is traditionally considered as "booking agent" who "book" the professional development activities including workshops, trainings and refresh courses, set it up, and quit. But now trend is changing. The

heads' role in implementation of professional development is not only to facilitate the ongoing practice and application process in the classroom (Lindstrom & Speck, 2004) but in the absence of such specific programs, they themselves adopt different strategies to provide professional assistance in different domains to their teachers. They use different tactics to increase teacher empowerment, automatically teacher morale will increase. Terry (2000) observed that Locus of control was transferred from heads to teachers in schools where teachers were empowered. To Whitaker (2003) an environment where teachers learn from other teachers would be an option for heads to increase their productivity. Eliezer and Efrat (2017) says that this environment will permit teachers to deliberate student performance, curriculum, and instruction with other teachers as well as, provide inspiration and provisions. Collaborations and Interactions between teachers and principals or teachers and peers that revolved around instruction lead to improve instruction that impacts student learning. These informal interactions between school leaders and teachers also fall in the category of professional assistance, because these reflect the culture of the school where professional assistance is an important component of the school culture

School leaders has been often interpreted as School Heads or principles, they can provide professional assistance to teachers and facilitate them in their teaching, expertise, classroom setting, and planning by observations. According to DuFour and Mattos (2013) during these pre-class Observations the principles discuss the content and lesson plan with teacher while in post class observations, he/she shares views about teachers' performance and provide them feedback.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

The population of the study consisted of all the public and private secondary schools located in Lahore. Hundred teachers from ten randomly selected schools were the sample of the study. Further fifty teachers purposively involved in the study were from the five public secondary schools and 50 teachers were from 5 private sector schools. Self-developed instrument was used in the form of questionnaire which probed into job experience, gender, type of the schools and various dimensions of perceived professional assistance. The professional assistance questionnaire had three parts each on 4 point Likert scale.

First part was related to Instructional area which consisted of statements about professional assistance in Identifying, lesson planning and pedagogies, assessing and recording.

Second part was about Professional area which consisted of statements related to Formal opportunities, plans and processes, roles, rights and duties.

Third part was about Personal and Emotional area which consisted of statements about ethical provision, well-being and reassurance.

Pilot test was conducted to find out reliability and validity of the questionnaire. For this purpose it was distributed among 50 teachers from purposively selected schools. Experts in the area acknowledged its face and content validity while Reliability was found to be 0.82.

### **IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

Descriptive statistics were calculated to find out the extent and type of professional assistance perceived by secondary school teachers. All the data were analysed through SPSS. To present the results of the entire group of secondary school teachers as well as results from their sub-groups cross tabulations were used. Cross-tabs are a quantitative research method appropriate for analyzing the relationship between two or more categorical variables. These tabs examine relationships within the data that might not be readily apparent when analyzing the overall survey responses. Cross tabulations of professional assistance in various areas and different demographic variables were carried out. Furthermore, chi square test was applied to identify the association between professional assistance and demographic variables.

### ***Professional Assistance and Gender***

It is revealed that out of 50 males (8%) men do not get professional assistance in instructional area, while (46%) get it after a week or so, (26%) get training after two weeks and (20%) get professional assistance in instructional area on a monthly basis. As to the females, out of 50 respondents, (24%) of the female respondents do not receive professional assistance in instructional area, (46%) get after a week or so, (18%) get after two weeks and (12%) get professional assistance in instructional area on monthly basis.

**Table 1:** Professional Assistance in instructional area (*f*)

<b>Professional assistance</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>After a week</b>	<b>After two weeks</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Men	04	23	13	10
Women	12	23	09	06
Total	16	46	22	16

It was found that out of 50 men respondents, (30%) men do not get professional assistance in professional area, (16%) get after a week or so, (16%) get after two weeks and (38%) get professional assistance in professional area on monthly basis. Out of 50 women respondents, (18%) women do not get professional assistance in professional area, (18%) get after a week, (14%) get after two weeks and (50%) get professional assistance in professional area on monthly basis.

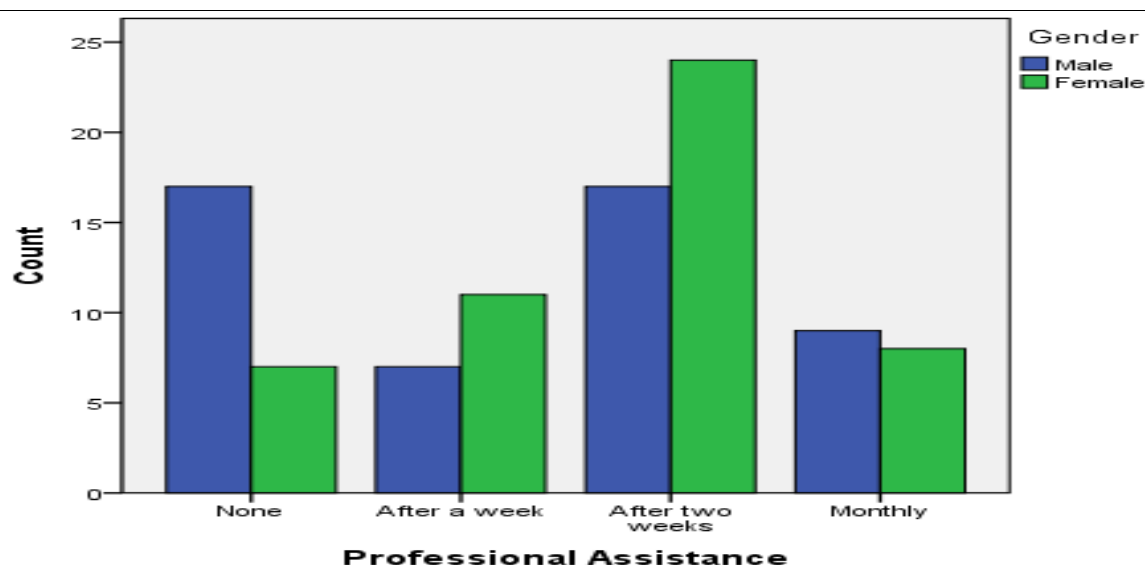
**Table 2:** Professional Assistance in Professional area (*f*)

<b>Professional assistance</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>After a week</b>	<b>After two weeks</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Men	15	08	08	19
Women	09	09	07	25
Total	24	17	15	44

Data analysis shows that out of 50 men respondents, (22%) men do not get professional assistance in emotional area, (14%) get after a week or so, (48%) get after two weeks and (16%) get professional assistance in emotional area on monthly basis. Out of 50 women respondents, (26%) women do not get professional assistance in emotional area, (22%) get after a week, (34%) get after two weeks and (18%) get professional assistance in emotional area monthly.

**Table 3:** Professional Assistance in Emotional area (*f*)

Professional assistance	None	After a week	After two weeks	Monthly
Men	11	07	24	08
Women	13	11	17	09
Total	24	18	41	17



**Figure 1:** Multiple Bar Chart

A multiple bar chart has also been constructed to visualize the professional assistance (gender wise)

Chi-square test for independence was applied in order to test whether there is any association between gender and professional assistance. The test indicated that there is no significant difference between professional assistance of male and female teachers  $\chi^2 (3, n = 100) = 6.310, p < 0.05$ .

#### ***Professional Assistance and Type of Schools***

Results showed that out of 50 public secondary school teachers, (10%) teachers do not get professional assistance in instructional area, (44%) get after a week or so, (26%) get after two weeks and (20%) get professional assistance in instructional area on monthly basis. Out of 50 private-secondary school teachers, (22%) teachers do not get professional assistance in instructional area, (48%) get after a week or so, (18%) get after two weeks and (12%) get professional assistance in instructional area on monthly basis.

**Table 4:** Professional Assistance in Instructional area (f)

Professional assistance	None	After a week	After two weeks	Monthly
Public	05	22	13	10
Private	11	24	09	06
Total	16	46	22	16

It showed that out of 50 public secondary school teachers, (34%) teachers do not get professional assistance in professional area, (6%) get after a week or so, (10%) get after two weeks and (50%) get professional assistance in professional area on monthly basis. Out of 50 private secondary school teachers, (14%) teachers do not get professional assistance in professional area, (28%) get after a week or so, (20%) get after two weeks and (38%) get professional assistance in professional area on monthly basis.

**Table 5:** Professional Assistance in Professional area (*f*)

<b>Professional assistance</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>After a week</b>	<b>After two weeks</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Public	17	03	05	25
Private	07	14	10	19
Total	24	17	15	44

It is showed that out of 50 public secondary school teachers, (26%) teachers do not get professional assistance in emotional area, (14%) get after a week or so, (42%) get after two weeks and (18%) get professional assistance in emotional area on monthly basis. Out of 50 private secondary school teachers, (22%) teachers do not get professional assistance in emotional area, (22%) get after a week or so, (40%) get after two weeks and (16%) get professional assistance in emotional area on monthly basis.

**Table 6:** Professional Assistance in Emotional area (*f*)

<b>Professional assistance</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>After a week</b>	<b>After two weeks</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Public	13	07	21	09
Private	11	11	20	08
Total	24	18	41	17

***Professional Assistance and Experience of secondary school teachers***

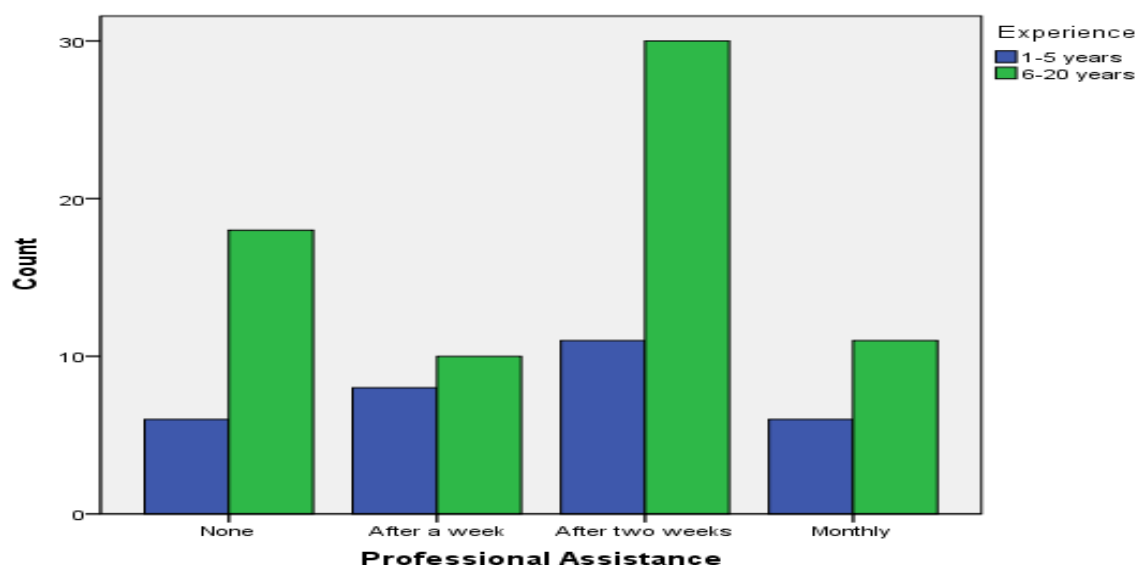
It is identified that out of 31 newly inducted teachers with (1-5 years) experience, (19.4%) do not get professional assistance, (25.8%) get after a week or so, (35.5%) get after two weeks and 6 (19.4%) get professional assistance on monthly basis. Out of 69 experienced teachers with (6-20 years) experience, (26.1%) do not get professional assistance, (14.5%) get after a week or so, (43.5%) get after two weeks and (15.9%) get professional assistance on monthly basis.

**Table 7:** Professional Assistance of newly inducted and experienced teachers (*f*)

<b>Professional assistance</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>After a week</b>	<b>After two weeks</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Newly inducted(1-5)	06	08	11	06

Experienced (6-20)	18	10	30	11
Total	24	18	41	17

The following bar chart is presenting the above mentioned patterns.



**Figure 2:** Multiple Bar Chart

Chi-square test for independence was carried out in order to test whether there is any significant difference between professional assistance of experienced teachers and newly inducted teachers. The test indicated that there is no significant difference between professional assistance of experienced teachers and newly inducted teachers  $\chi^2 (3, n = 100) = 2.405, p < 0.493$ .

Further, It is found that out of 14 newly inducted male teachers, (35.7%) do not get professional assistance, (7.1%) gets after a week or so, (28.6%) get after two weeks and (28.6%) get professional assistance on monthly basis. Out of 36 experienced male teachers, (33.3%) do not get professional assistance, (16.7%) get after a week or so, (36.1%) get after two weeks and (13.9%) get professional assistance on monthly basis.

**Table 8:** Professional Assistance of newly inducted and experienced teachers (Men) (*f*)

Professional assistance	None	After a week	After two weeks	Monthly
Newly inducted(1-5)	05	01	04	04
Experienced (6-20)	12	06	13	05
Total	17	07	17	09

It is evident from data analysis that out of 17 newly inducted female teachers, (5.9%) do not get professional assistance, (41.2%) get after a week or so, (41.2%) get after two weeks and (11.8%) get professional assistance on



monthly basis. Out of 33 experienced female teachers, (18.2%) do not get professional assistance, (12.1%) get after a week or so, (51.5%) get after two weeks and (18.2%) get professional assistance on monthly basis.

**Table 9:** Professional Assistance of newly inducted and experienced teachers (Women) (*f*)

<b>Professional assistance</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>After a week</b>	<b>After two weeks</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Newly inducted(1-5)	01	07	07	02
Experienced (6-20)	06	04	17	06
Total	07	11	24	08

## V. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the role of leadership in professional assistance of secondary school teachers. Based on the findings above, it is clear that professional assistance in Pakistani schools is being provided by the external agencies and to a certain extent by heads. Professional assistance of teachers is considered only limited to instructional and professional areas while emotional area is most neglected. The study shows that some steps may be taken by the government and policymakers for the improvement and promotion of education and teachers' standards. Many policies introduced to bring improvements in quality of teaching. However, in the beginning each seems to work, but none of these seem to improve teachers' quality in the long term. Some authors believe that quality of teachers may be improved by targeting the main characteristics of teachers e.g. their academic qualification, training and experience etc. Another approach adopts like on the job training of teachers, making the best use of existing resources and regular monitoring and assessment. Importance is also given to monitor the performance and quality of teachers and training institutes, and to the training of school heads in the area of professional assistance. A number of studies support the idea that these steps can improve the quality of teaching. However, there is not much information on what might be the impact of these policies and how they could be monitored. It may be concluded that all the policies and steps taken up till now may be effective in different situations, but unless these steps are followed consistently, a long term impact may not be possible. In addition, there should be annual evaluations of teachers' professional assistance practices to remove the weaknesses.

By encouraging schools to hold quality learning programs, teachers can be motivated to perform better and compete with each other, and at the same time, school heads and senior teachers may also wish to participate in these learning practices. Heads should play their role by encouraging teachers to take part in trainings and developing a healthy, sympathetic relationship with them. Schools and training institutes should include active teaching methodologies and approaches in their curriculum. Governments should also give awards and certificates of appreciation to heads of schools who take steps to provide better quality of teaching to their students and

training to their teachers. This will encourage all schools to perform up to the mark. Trainers and training institutions also need a regular check. The example of the USA may be followed, where cameras in schools and class visits keep everyone alert. There should also be a need analysis for professional assistance. More training colleges are required and these need to be open for teachers at all levels. More research to evaluate different types of professional assistance and its impact on teachers' performance will further identify areas for improvement.

The most important is heads own role in routine, it should not be limited to just observing classes, strict supervision and writing teachers' performance evaluation reports. The school improvement efforts need improvement in terms of asking the right question. The question isn't, how can they monitor or assess teachers? But how can they assist teachers to get better performance from them. New era requires a changing role of school heads for success of their schools.

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