LECTURERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A DETERMINANT OF CLASSROOM PRACTICES

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigates lecturers' professional development as a contributor to classroom practices based on extant literature related to the present study and theory underpinning it. This review contains a portion of the variables proposed in the present study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the recent millennium, educators and educational stakeholders across the globe are interested exploring ways in making changes in higher learning institutions. Staff Professional Development could be defined as holistic and sustained approach to improving teachers' effectiveness in making students' higher achievers (National Staff Development Council, 2009). Many studies have demonstrated various factors determining lecturers' classroom practices. Some previous studies identify staff professional development as one of the variables which contribute to classroom practices. Guskey (1986) stresses that educational professional development encompass structured activities in enhancing educators' professional skills, keeping them to-date or supporting changes in educational environment. He further defines professional development as a systemic attempt that brings forth changes in the classroom.

Studies have demonstrated that the main perceived professional

development or competence that contribute to the perceived quality of effective classroom change are namely, human competence (Schnonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010), technology competence (Hansen, Henning-Thurau, & Wochnowski, 2000), teaching competence (Cabrera, Colbeck, & Terenzini, 2001) and evaluation competence (Wong & Moni, 2014).

Fortunately, many organizations support and encourage the development of their staff due to the fact that professional development makes the staff well-rounded in their field (Lebeau, 2008) and many others do not.

In light of abovementioned assertions, this study proposes to determine the causal relationship between lecturers' professional development and classroom practices in Saudi Arabia in accordance with the related theory and the existing literature.

1.2.1   Statement of Problem

Little studies document competences as a prerequisite for classroom practices (Berman & Ritchie, 2006; Diperna, 2004; Jones et al., 1995). As-Subai'ee (2009) identifies that most of the staff are not confident to use modern teaching aids namely, computer and internet in teaching. An-Nuh (2006) asserts that most Saudi teachers lack the use of modern technologies in the lecture rooms. As-Shahrani (2013) emphasizes the replacement of traditional lectures with modern method to produce effective teaching and learning. Al-Hakami (2004) reported that, students complaint that most of their lecturers lack competences such as human relation, evaluation, content knowledge or knowledge competence, lecturers' motivation of the students.

Accordingly, Ar-Rawaf (2007) found out that most of the failures in the female teacher colleges are about evaluation as the prevailing method in the colleges focus on exam achievement only. At the same time, Shahata and Abal Khail (2001) found the importance of improving university teaching method and evaluation. Furthermore, As-Sulaiman and As-Somaadi's (2008) study found out that academic problems among the teachers' colleges in Saudi Arabia cling on staff's incapability of using teaching aids, teaching methods, and evaluation. Al-Yawar (2009)

asserted that male and female students at the open Arabic
university in Jeddah face many obstacles which affect their
learning. These obstacles range from administrative obstacles such
as lack of attention to students, not responding to their complaints,
academic obstacles such as evaluation, teaching methods, and
environment obstacles such as lack of teaching aids in the
university.

1.2.1.1   Research Objectives
The major objectives of the present study are as follows:
1. To determine the lecturers' classroom practices
2. To determine the lecturers' professional competence.
3. To determine relationship between professional competence and
lecturers' classroom practices.

1.2.1.2   Research Questions
1. How many factors determine lecturers' classroom practices?
2. How many factors determine lecturers' professional
competence?
3. What is the relationship between lecturers' professional
competence and their classroom practices?

1.2.2   Research Hypotheses
The current study hypotheses are as follows:
H_1: Lecturers' classroom practices have a statistical significant
relationship with professional competence.
H_0: Lecturers' classroom practices do not have a statistical
significant relationship with professional competence.
H_2: Variables designated for improving lecturers' classroom
practices framework are statistically and significantly related to
measure lecturers' classroom practices.

1.2.2.1   Contribution of Study
It is expected that this present study will add to the body of

knowledge in testing the theory of Guskey (1986) on professional development in Arab environs, particularly, on classroom practices in Al-Baha University. The researcher hopes that, the present study will add an insight to teaching and learning in many higher learning institutions in various Muslim countries and other learning institutions across the globe.

1.2.2.2   Significance of Study

The present study will benefit the administrative staff at the Al-Baha University and in specific the academic teaching staff. The study shall be of benefit to the educational policy makers in the High Ministry of Education in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study will be of important to the authority of Al-Baha University to professionally enhance the staff and their classroom practices. The study would benefit in promoting staff who use effective classroom practice to motivate others. This study will also improve the students' learning outcome while improving teaching methods for the faculty members in Saudi universities.

1.2.2.3   Theoretical Framework

The current study is based on Guskey's (1986) framework of professional development and empirical studies that found the causal relationship between staff professional development and classroom practices as an outcome of students' learning. This framework emphasizes that the continuous professional development programs influences teachers' classroom practices via students' learning outcomes which brings about teachers' belief in teaching. The model is as follows:
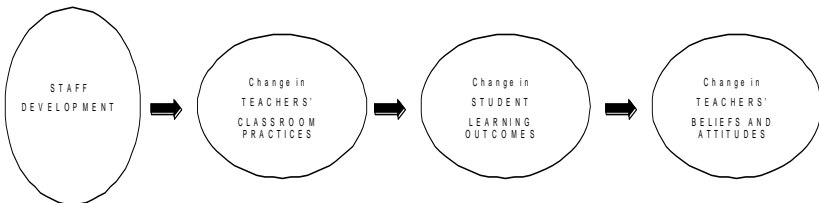

Figure 1: Guskey's Professional Development Model (1986)

1.2.2.4 Conceptual Framework

Staff Development
1. Teaching competence
2. Human competence
3. Evaluation competence
4. Technology competence

Classroom Practices
1. Teaching method
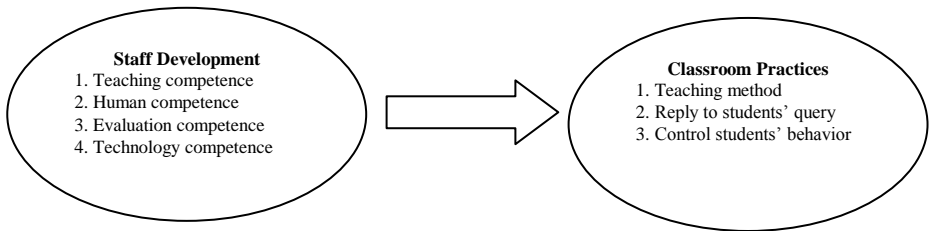2. Reply to students' query
3. Control students' behavior

Figure 2: The Research Study Framework

This study framework proposes that, staff professional development brings about effective change in classroom practices

1.2.2.5 Limitation of Study

The present study is limited by time, place and sample size. With regard to time, it is proposed to be conducted within 2014 -2015. In terms of place, it will be conducted in Al-Baha University in Saudi Arabia. In terms of sample, the sample will be withdrawn from the all twelve faculties in the said university

1.2.3 Literature Review

The review of literature for this study is tabulated in Table 3.1

Table 1: Studies on Professional Development and Classroom practices

Professional Development			
Variable	**Author & Date**	**Findings**	**Gap**
Teaching competence	Bhargava & Pathy (2011)	Teaching competence has strong relationship with effective teaching	Sample is too small
	Ahmad, Said, Zeb, Rehman, Ahmad & Khan (2013)	Reflective teachers have a big difference in their classroom than non-reflective teachers	Non Arab study

Human Competence	Schnonert-Reichl and Lawlor (2010)	Positive relationship was found between teachers' competence and classroom practice as most of the teachers reported that they were able to integrate the mindful attention exercises within their classroom	Participants are elementary school students
	Niemiec & Ryan (2009)	human competence and autonomy provided by the educators has strong implication on both classroom practices and educational reform policies	No mention of participants
Technology competence	Keengwe (2007)	Technology support was a predictor of classroom learning	Only ANOVA is used
	Laal (2000)	The use of internet contributes to teaching and learning	Not large sample and study is too old
Evaluation competence	Wong & Moni (2014)	Students' appraisal of teachers improves classroom teaching practices	Clinical study
	Ololube (2008)	The more the teachers become positive in evaluating the students the more they are effective in their teaching	African study
Classroom Practices			
Reply to students' query	Tawarah (2013)	Classroom questions were considered an important skill in teaching	Position paper
Control of students' behavior	Ratcliff, Jones, Costner, Savage-Davis, Hunt, (2010)	The more the teachers interacted with their students on instructional matters, the more the students engaged in learning	Western study

Table 3.1 above showed few literature explaining the causal Relationship between the variables of professional development And classroom practices. The Table also shows the gap in the previous studies.

1.2.4   Research Design

The present study is a quantitative study. The design of survey questionnaire will involve the use of primary data that are sourced from the previous study which will be administered to the sample. The scale of questionnaire for data collection follows a six-point Likert type scale.

1.2.4.1 Method

This study proposes to use factor Analysis, multiple regression, correlation and ANOVA as a statistical technique to analyse the data that will be collected from the sample.

1.2.4.2 Population, Sample, and Sampling technique

The target population of this study will be all lecturers (1,231) in Al-Baha University. This statistics is known through the director of employees at the Al-Baha University. Additionally, this statistics can be known via the Al-Baha university website. The sample to be need for this study will be 297 for academic teaching staff based on the determining sample size table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The samples shall be selected using random sample.

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