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Impact of Faculty development program (FDP) on faculty's professional development

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE: Faculty Development Program (FDP) represents a purpose-built educational program that helps medical teachers build their competency and increase their effectiveness in curriculum delivery. Moreover, such programs offer an additional opportunity for professional growth, leadership development, and scholarly pursuits. This study explores faculty members' perceptions about the impact of FDP on their professional development.

METHODOLOGY: This is a qualitative exploratory study conducted through focus group discussions (FGDs) with University College of Medicine (UCM) faculty members who had various academic ranks. The research team employed purposive sampling to select members from UCM who had maintained membership for five years and participated in two or more FDPs annually. Thematic analysis of the transcripts was performed using manual coding and NVivo 12 software. Triangulation of data was achieved through member checking, combined with analysis by two independent researchers.

RESULTS: Thematic analysis identified three main themes: Positive Impact of Workshops (PIW) as the primary finding, with "Opportunities for Continuing Medical Education (CME) at the Workplace," "Improved Teaching Methodologies," "Better Assessment Construction," and "Enhanced Workplace Well-being" as its subcategories. Career Development Opportunities (CDO) contained five subcategories under its theme: "Motivation", Transforming Shared Passion", "Capacity Building ", " Opportunities for Enhanced Collaboration and Mentorship, and Guidance. The study participants specified Key important improvement areas (KIA), which included integrating new technologies as well as developing asynchronous content for basic-level workshops.

CONCLUSION : FDP is essential for optimal delivery of curriculum and should address newer trends and challenges of teaching and assessment to support teachers 'Professional growth.

KEY WORDS : Educational Assessment, Professional Competence, Growth, Organizational change.

INTRODUCTION

Faculty Development Programs (FDPs) in medical education are purpose-built programs designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of medical teachers, with the broad aim of delivering effective curricula and improving student learning outcomes. These programs view professional teaching ability as more than possessing subject knowledge because it requires continuous education focused on theories and educational practices [1].

Historically, it was believed that medical teachers could teach effectively after joining a medical college based on their clinical qualifications. However, there is now a shift in this perspective, and it is believed that faculty should be familiar with the basics of adult learning principles, which can improve their teaching and, consequently, medical student learning outcomes [2]. In this modern era, with rapid advancements in medical knowledge and teaching and learning practices, the need for structured FDP is more evident.

The core objectives of FDP include enhancing teaching and assessment skills, developing better leadership acumen, and promoting a culture of research. Additionally, these programs aim to provide a supportive educational environment that allows collaboration and innovation among medical teachers [3]. Literature suggests that these programs strengthen the professional identity of educators [4]. By investing in faculty

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development, medical colleges and universities can ensure that their faculty is better equipped to adapt to changes in medical education, deliver high-quality education, and more effectively engage their students.

FDPs achieve these goals through regular workshops and by developing benchmark standards for faculty learning [5]. Medical teachers reported enhanced satisfaction after attending workshops, seminars, and other modes of FDP training [6]. Additionally, FDP develops leadership skills and competencies in research, collaborative learning, mentoring, and management. The FDP has a significant impact on the personal development of medical teachers, enhancing their self-efficacy and providing an avenue for communities of practice [4]. The impact of FDPs can extend beyond individual teachers and have a significant influence on the overall academic environment, thereby promoting the institution's educational vitality [7].

While faculty development programs (FDPs) offer recognized benefits, further exploration of faculty perceptions regarding their effectiveness and areas for improvement is needed. This study investigates faculty perspectives on the impact of FDPs on their professional development. By analyzing these perceptions, this research aims to identify key themes related to the effectiveness of FDP in fostering professional growth and enhancing teaching practices. This study will contribute to understanding the critical role FDPs play in shaping competent educators who can meet the challenges of modern medical education.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory qualitative study was conducted at the University of Lahore (UOL) from September 2024 to February 2025. Ethical approval was obtained from the University ethical review board (ERC/41/24/07).

UOL is a private sector university and has an established medical and dental college Program; moreover, we have a well-established DME. We do offer a Master's in Medical Education and a certificate course in HPE, and a few more courses in assessment and research. FDP at UOL was started in 2015. It is a well-established program offering a wide range of workshops throughout the year, covering topics such as the basics of teaching and learning, assessment, professionalism, and research at both introductory and advanced levels. A diverse list of faculty trainers is associated with the Faculty Development Program at UCMD. National and international experts have trained these trainers in the field of medical education in developing and conducting workshops in their relevant areas of expertise.

We maintain a comprehensive tracking system for the Faculty Development Programs (FDP) attended by faculty members. At the beginning of each academic year, a needs analysis is conducted to identify the specific requirements for faculty workshops. Each workshop is evaluated through pre- and post-tests, along with formal feedback from participants collected via a structured proforma. This systematic approach ensures that the FDPs are tailored to meet the evolving needs of our faculty and effectively assess their impact on professional development.

In this study, participants were chosen purposefully from faculty members at the University College of Medicine (UCM) who have been affiliated with the institution for over five years and have attended at least two Faculty Development Programs (FDPs) annually and or the senior faculty serving as members of different committees (e.g. curriculum, evaluation) of the institute, and consented to be part of study was invited for FGD. However, faculty members who joined DME of UCM during their journey were excluded to limit bias.

A total of 4 FGD were conducted to maintain homogeneity within academic ranks: Demonstrators, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, and Professors. The purpose of the study was explained initially to the participants. Each FGD consisted of 6 participants, lasting for 54 to 65 minutes. A semi-structured discussion guide with open-ended questions was developed to facilitate the conversation, allowing participants to share their views freely.

These questions were reviewed and validated by experts in qualitative research and faculty development processes. A brief overview of the study's purpose and the process of the FGD was explained to the participants by the moderator, and consent was obtained. An audio recording was done after participants' consent for accurate data collection and analysis.

Interviews were transcribed, and anonymization was done by assigning participants a code (Basic sciences junior faculty BJ, Basic sciences Clinical faculty BS, Clinical sciences junior faculty CJ, Senior clinical faculty CS).

Data analysis was conducted independently by two individuals, and manual coding was performed. Qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 12) was used to code the transcripts, identifying key themes, patterns, and insights.

RESULTS

Thematic analysis was done to interpret the data, focusing on the impact of FDPs on teaching practices, professional growth, and student learning outcomes. The key findings from the FGD were summarized , highlighting participants' experiences, perceived benefits, and suggestions for improvement.

The following themes emerged:

PIW- Positive impact of workshop

Positive Impact Sub-themes include "Opportunity of CME at workplace", "Improved teaching methodologies, "Better assessment construction", "Better Workplace Well-being"

CDO- Career Development Opportunity includes "Motivation", "Transforming Shared Passion", "capacity building", "Opportunity for enhanced collaboration", "Mentorship and Guidance"

KIA- Key Improvement Areas include "Incorporation of emerging technologies (e.g., AI)" More workshops on Memory Retention and Student engagement", "Asynchronous content for basic level workshops"

Table-I: Following Table represents the subthemes with relevant verbatim.

Theme	Subtheme	Verbatim
PIW- Positive impact of workshop	Opportunity of CME at workplace	**BS6:** The faculty department organizes diverse workshops, from technical training to teaching strategies, giving us a chance to develop in areas we choose. **BS6:** The faculty department organizes diverse workshops, from technical training to teaching strategies, giving us a chance to develop in areas we choose." **BJ4:** We have all the opportunities to take workshops; if someone wants to attend, they are allowed and have Protected time for workshops.
	Improved teaching methodologies	**BS 4:**I started incorporating case studies in my classes, which really improved student engagement. Instead of just lecturing, I now start with a case scenario, and students actively participate. **BJ1:** My PBL sessions have improved, and I have learnt new techniques to conduct SGDs, how to tackle difficult students in class. **CJ1:**I really enjoyed OMP workshop, it provided me a comprehensive approach for OPD, where we are already burdened by patients.
	Better assessment construction	**BS6:**For me best workshop was table of specification, I developed my module blue print and it's so helpful. **BJ4:**My PBL sessions have improved, and I have learnt new techniques to conduct SGDs.
	Better Workplace Well-being	**CJ3:**I will give 5 stars to anger management workshop, exercise was so relevant. I literally waited for another one in series stress management. I feel it helped me a lot in improving my day today activities.
CDO-Career Development opportunity	Motivation	BS3:These workshops are really beneficial; I feel so motivated after these workshops. Your previous knowledge is refreshed and I do plan for further reading in my free time. CJ2:The workshops helped me feel more confident and motivated. They aren't just about teaching; they help in overall professional development, which is inspiring.
	Transforming Shared Passion	CS1;I attended workshop on e-portfolio, it was so good, I developed my e-portfolio. Later I explored the subject in depth and now I am conducting a workshop on develop and assessing e portfolio in undergraduate medical education.
	Capacity building	CS4: As I have done Masters in medical education, attending FDP workshop motivated me and I opted for co -facilitator and now I myself is master trainer.
	Opportunity for enhanced collaboration	CJ 6; As we are in hospitals, these workshops allowed me to interact with my basic sciences colleague and in group activity we learned a lot together, I did plan research with my colleague of community medicine.
	Mentorship and Guidance	CJ 3; I realized how much value group activities bring to personal and professional growth. One such experience with a professor stands out, as it not only enhanced my communication skills but also helped me establish a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship.
KIA- Key Improvement Areas	Incorporation of emerging technologies	BJ2; Workshops on using advanced technology for teaching would be very useful, as students know more about these things"
	More workshop on Memory Retention and Student engagement strategies	BJ2; "I feel we need more workshop about how student can enhance memory, interval repetition and at times as a junior I feel I should know to engage students in class room"
	Asynchronous content for basic level workshops"	BS 2: I personally feel now we have strong grip over basics concepts of medical education, FDP can develop a crisp online material and whenever we feel we can go and revisit, in person workshop should be on recent advances

DISCUSSION

This study revealed the valuable benefits of faculty development in medical colleges in Pakistan. The primary benefit participants reported was the opportunity for Continuing Medical Education (CME). Previous research suggests that combining Continuing Medical Education (CME) and Faculty Development (FD) can have a positive

impact on the medical practices and teaching styles of participating physicians [8]. Participants happily shared that the program offers a diverse range of topics in workshops, and they have the liberty to select workshops based on their interests. This flexibility fosters a culture of lifelong learning [9] and better prepares the faculty to adapt to the evolving demands of medical education [10,11].

The workshops lead to an enhancement of teaching methods as their main result. Participants reported incorporating case studies and problem-based learning (PBL) strategies into their instruction. PBL encourages active learning by prompting students to construct knowledge and develop competencies across various contexts [12]. Strategies such as using clinical cases have improved students' understanding and led to better patient care [13]. The adoption of interactive teaching methods helps educators enhance their students' comprehension levels [14,15].

Furthermore, participants noted improvements in assessment construction, particularly in the development of module blueprints and the use of effective evaluation tools. This aligns with best practices in educational assessment, emphasizing clear objectives and structured evaluation methods. The ability to construct robust assessments, such as the OSCE, is vital for ensuring that educational outcomes are met and students are adequately prepared for their future healthcare roles [16].

This training helps teachers engage more with students to improve student well-being, and it is an important addition to faculty workload in higher education [17]. Faculty members highlighted the relevance of these sessions in improving daily activities and overall job satisfaction. Research suggests a close link between workplace well-being and employee engagement and retention. Therefore, initiatives aimed at improving mental health and emotional resilience among faculty are crucial for fostering a supportive work environment [18].

The workshops serve as a significant avenue for career development opportunities. Participants reported increased motivation and confidence as a direct result of their engagement. This aligns with the literature suggesting that professional development activities can enhance self-efficacy and career satisfaction among educators [19]. The emphasis on holistic professional development reflects a growing recognition that effective teaching requires not only content knowledge but also personal growth and resilience.

Workshops enabled participants to collaborate on projects that helped transform mutual interests into valuable educational exchanges and mentoring experiences. Group activities among faculty members led to the creation of significant mentor-mentee connections that foster both personal and professional growth. Mentoring is a vital element for career progression and job well-being within academic institutions [20].

The analysis revealed many improvement domains in addition to the recognized positive outcomes. The main improvement opportunity identified is the need to integrate emerging technologies into workshop educational materials. Research participants requested instruction on contemporary technological teaching methods because these skills would benefit their educational practice and align with students' digital literacy proficiency [21]. Medical education transformation through technology requires ongoing faculty training, as these tools necessitate effective implementation in their teaching methods.

Additionally, there is a need for workshops for young faculty members focusing on areas such as memory retention and student engagement. This emphasis on a student-centered learning strategy follows global trends in health professional education, emphasizing the utmost importance of equipping teachers with strategies that ensure student success [21].

Finally, participants suggested that some of the basic-level workshops should be made available on the FDP platform as asynchronous content, allowing for flexibility in learning. This will help the teachers to revisit essential material at their own pace, thereby enhancing their understanding and application of teaching and learning strategies.

LIMITATION

This study may have a few inherent limitations. This is a centered study, and teachers might have hyperbolized, positive experiences, as they are part of the institute for some time, so it's difficult to generalize the findings. To address this limitation, future research can be conducted with multicenter participants to measure long-term outcomes and include the diverse participant pool, range of institutions, and faculty experiences.

CONCLUSION

Faculty development program plays a crucial role in strengthening professional development, impactful teaching, and workplace well-being among medical teachers in Pakistan. Additionally, interaction with faculty members provides an opportunity for collaboration and mentorship. Medical teachers' readiness for future health education challenges will increase when their faculty development plans integrate digital technologies in teaching, assessment, and student engagement. Moreover, faculty should have flexible learning opportunities for the basics of educational planning and assessment.

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Authors Contributions:

Saima Rafique: Substantial contributions to the conception and design of the work.
Maimoona Nasreen: The acquisition of data for the work.
Abeera Fatima: Interpretation of data for the work.
Javeria Usman:Drafting the work.
Zakia Saleem: Reviewing it critically for important intellectual content.
Lubna Biag: Final approval of the version to be published.

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