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## Shape up or ship out? A Comprehensive Literature Review on Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes, and Experiences with Continuing Professional Development

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### Abstract

Teachers' engagement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is critical for enhancing educational quality, yet participation varies significantly. This comprehensive literature review synthesizes research to identify the key factors that facilitate or hinder teachers' involvement in professional growth. Drawing upon foundational adult learning theories such as Andragogy, Social Cognitive Theory, and Experiential Learning, this review analyzes empirical studies from diverse international contexts. The findings reveal that teacher engagement is determined by a complex interplay of internal and external factors. Key personal facilitators include strong intrinsic motivation, high self-efficacy, and a belief in the practical, classroom-level applicability of the training. Externally, a supportive school culture, characterized by collaborative peer relationships, accessible resources, and strong administrative leadership, is essential. Conversely, significant barriers include irrelevant program content, excessive workloads, lack of time, and insufficient institutional support. Ultimately, this review confirms that for CPD to be effective, it must be designed with a deep understanding of the adult learner - making it relevant, collaborative, and empowering. Future research should incorporate administrative and student perspectives to build a more holistic understanding of how to best support teacher development.

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## Introduction

Teachers' professional development stands as the essential factor which enables better classroom teaching methods and student learning success. While the purpose of professional development is to enhance teacher competencies, these initiatives often fail to produce the expected improvements in student academic outcomes. Research indicates that teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and prior experiences are key determinants of their engagement with professional learning opportunities. The exact process of how these elements affect classroom environments in regular schools and which teachers they affect remains unknown. The research investigates which elements promote or prevent teachers from taking part in their professional development activities. The research draws from multiple studies to analyze how teacher beliefs and their attitudes and prior experiences influence their participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and how continuous learning helps teachers enhance their teaching methods and achieve better student results.

Despite the essential nature of CPD for developing teaching practice, teachers exhibit varied levels of engagement. Teachers who want to learn more about teaching will attend workshops and coaching sessions and join inquiry groups whenever they have the opportunity but some teachers only participate when their institution demands it. The research aims to identify factors, which cause teachers to participate differently in professional development activities because this knowledge will help us understand their learning beliefs and teaching attitudes and professional experiences.

The review examines how teachers perceive their professional development through their professional beliefs which include their opinions, their professional standards, and their assessment of their professional development. These beliefs affect how much they dedicate themselves to their work, their drive to study, and their desire to acquire knowledge. Teachers' professional development attitudes stem from their complete perspective about ongoing educational growth. Teachers develop positive or negative or neutral attitudes which determine their reactions when they encounter fresh educational possibilities. Positive attitudes create enthusiasm which supports ongoing development but negative attitudes reduce motivation which leads to slower advancement. The development of learning spaces which support teacher development requires knowledge about these specific beliefs. Teachers' experiences also play a key role. Positive learning experiences build teachers' self-assurance and desire to learn, whereas negative or unhelpful experiences diminish their willingness to engage. The understanding of belief systems and attitude patterns and personal experiences enables developers to create professional development programs which provide substantial assistance to teachers based on their individual requirements.

The following research questions guided the review:

- *What does the literature reveal about how teachers' beliefs and attitudes facilitate or hinder their engagement in CPD?*
- *How do teachers' prior experiences with professional development shape their current participation?*
- *What role do institutional and systemic factors play in shaping teacher engagement in CPD?*

## Literature Review

As teaching and learning continue to change, it is important to understand how teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and actions shape their involvement in continuing professional development. This review looks at what current research shows about these connections. It brings together key theories and findings from empirical studies to help explain how these factors interact and influence teachers' growth.

### The Theoretical Framework: Translating Theories into Practice

Research has established several theories that have implications for education, academic motivation, and learning behavior. The traditional theories of learning take several main directions that can provide insights about the processes underpinning adult learning (see Figure 1) (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). *Behaviorism* as one of the earliest theories states that learning occurs as a result of external stimuli. It can only continue if a person is externally motivated (Driscoll, 2014). According to behaviorists, learning is measured by observable change in behavior. In contrast to behaviorism, *humanism* demonstrates a holistic view on learning and highlights that it is self-initiated, self-directed, and evaluated by the learner (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Maslow, 1987). The third direction - *cognitivism* - posits that learning is a mental process and occurs differently in various stages of human development (Driscoll, 2014). Among well-known cognitivist research, Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning states that individuals are able to connect new information with the knowledge they already possess. Gagne's instructional design theory is still widely used nowadays (Driscoll, 2014). It breaks down the learning instruction into nine events aiding the acquisition of certain learning outcomes by providing specific conditions for their achievement (Gagné, 1970). Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning outcomes is used for curriculum design and mapping learning outcomes (McLeod, 2025).

**Adult Learning Theories**  
adapted from Merriam & Bierema (2014)

Behaviorism	Cognitivism	Humanist	Social learning	Constructivism
<b>Locus of learning</b> Stimuli in external environment	<b>Locus of learning</b> Internal cognitive structuring	<b>Locus of learning</b> Affective and cognitive needs	<b>Locus of learning</b> Interaction of person, behavior, and environment	<b>Locus of learning</b> Internal construction of reality by individual
<b>Learning process</b> Changes in behavior	<b>Learning process</b> Internal mental process	<b>Learning process</b> A personal act of fulfilling potential	<b>Learning process</b> Interaction with and observation of others in a social context	<b>Learning process</b> Construction of meaning from experience

Figure 1. Adult Learning Theories (adapted from Merriam & Bierema (2014))

Apart from the cognitive learning outcomes, Bloom identified affective and psychomotor types. *Constructivism* argues that learning occurs when a person creates meaning from their experience (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). According to constructivists, learning for adults is "the construction and exchange of personally relevant and viable meanings" (Candy, 1991, p.275). One theory that supports the interaction between teachers' beliefs and

continuing professional development is Albert Bandura's "Social Cognitive Theory" (1989). This theory emphasizes observational learning, social experiences and interactions, reciprocal determinism, and self-efficacy (Nickerson, 2023) in shaping behavior and development.

In the context of professional development, teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching are instrumental in shaping their engagement with and response to such initiatives. This ultimately impacts the effectiveness of their continuous professional advancement. Bandura's social cognitive theory offers a conceptual framework for understanding this process by highlighting how observing others can be a tool for professional development. It emphasizes the significance of modeling and mentorship. For example, teachers can gain knowledge by observing their colleagues who excel in areas, which offers them an example of effective teaching practices. Professional development also depends heavily on social interactions, such as those that occur in workshops, professional learning communities, and collaborative learning environments. Teachers gain new insights and improve their professional abilities from these interactions. According to Bandura's theory of reciprocal determinism, teachers' personal motivations, beliefs, and active participation in the learning process also influence their development, along with external factors like training programs. Another significant concept highlighted in Bandura's theory is self-efficacy - the belief in one's ability to perform one's tasks. In terms of development, initiatives should aim to boost teachers' confidence in acquiring and applying skills, which ultimately enhances their effectiveness in the classroom. Lastly, the theory emphasizes how the environment impacts behavior and underscores the importance of fostering learning environments for growth. Schools and educational institutions should foster a culture of learning while providing resources, time, and support for professional development opportunities.

The Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) which David Kolb developed in 1984 describes a learning process that consists of four stages (McLeod, 2025). The model consists of four stages which start with Concrete Experience (CE) followed by Reflective Observation (RO) then Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) and finish with Active Experimentation (AE). The process shows that learning effectively requires continuous movement between these stages instead of being a single occurrence. The CPD philosophy supports this approach because it enables teachers to develop their skills through continuous learning opportunities which help them adapt and enhance their professional abilities throughout their teaching careers. The method allows teachers to actively develop their skills through reflection which helps them improve their teaching methods by using their actual classroom experience. Teachers actively participate in workshops and training sessions during the experience phase to create learning foundations. Teachers enter the observation phase to study their teaching practices while they analyze their classroom experiences against their current teaching methods and their established beliefs and attitudes. Teachers in the conceptualization phase analyze their reflections and teaching experiences to create new concepts which help them improve their beliefs and connect professional development theories to practical teaching methods. Teachers begin the experimentation phase after gaining new understanding and improved beliefs, which they use to teach through experimental approaches and teaching methods. The ELT model of Kolb plays a crucial role in development because it determines how teachers process and use their acquired knowledge and practical experience.

Another theory that underscores adult learning is "Andragogy," introduced by educator Malcolm Knowles in

1968. This theory emphasizes the characteristics of adult learners and their motivations for learning. According to this theory, adults are self-directed learners motivated by the relevance and applicability of what they learn to their personal (Colman, 2023) and professional goals. Teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences shape how they perceive the value and relevance of growth opportunities. Aligning development with adults' experiences, interests, and needs can increase engagement and promote professional growth. One effective way to do this is by connecting the content of continuing development programs with the challenges teachers face in the classroom. For example, when introducing a teaching methodology, demonstrate its relevance in improving teaching practices. Teachers should be encouraged to apply the knowledge and skills they acquire in their training to their lessons afterward.

Self-directed learning (SDL) has been researched since the 1950s. It is viewed in literature as both an attribute of a learner and a process of learning (Merriam et al., 2013). As an attribute, it reflects an individual's intrinsic motivation and readiness to take charge of their own educational journey. This characteristic is often associated with qualities such as curiosity, independence, and a proactive mindset (Loeng, 2020). Individuals with a strong self-directed learning attribute tend to be more confident in their ability to seek out resources, set goals, and assess their progress. They are often driven by a desire to learn for personal growth or professional advancement, viewing challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles. This intrinsic motivation is crucial for lifelong learning, as it empowers individuals to continuously seek knowledge and adapt to new situations throughout their lives.

As a process, self-directed learning involves a series of steps that individuals take to guide their own learning experiences. This process typically includes identifying learning needs, setting specific goals, sourcing appropriate materials, and evaluating progress. It emphasizes active engagement, where learners take responsibility for their education by choosing what and how they want to learn. This process can vary widely from person to person; some may prefer structured approaches, while others thrive in more fluid environments. Additionally, the process encourages reflection, enabling learners to assess what strategies work best for them and make adjustments as needed. By actively participating in their learning process, individuals not only acquire knowledge but also develop critical skills such as problem-solving, time management, and self-regulation.

## **Related Literature and Studies**

After reviewing the literature, Table 1 was created to summarize the findings. The body of literature regarding teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and experiences on CPD is substantial, incorporating research from various backgrounds and perspectives. For example, Zhang, Admiraal, and Saab (2021) conducted a study investigating the relationship between personal and institutional factors among teachers and their motivation to participate in professional development activities. 472 Chinese educators participated in the survey and responded to the questions. The research findings indicate that teachers who are driven by intrinsic elements, such as personal interest and satisfaction, exhibit a greater desire to participate in professional development activities and attain favorable learning outcomes. In contrast, regulated motivation is more prone to lead to unfavorable consequences. Multiple studies have demonstrated that teachers' inclination to participate in professional development initiatives is significantly impacted by a range of psychological and personal traits and their perception of their work

environment. McMillan, McConnell, and O'Sullivan (2016) proposed a motivation model that categorizes components into three distinct groups: personal, school-related, and system-wide. The model explains how these factors affect teachers' motivation. Teachers are driven to participate in professional development programs because of internal motivations that correspond with their personal needs and professional goals. Various elements, such as school policy and interpersonal relationships, might benefit teachers' inclination to participate in educational activities within the school setting. However, because teacher participation in professional learning activities is voluntary within a system, tangential factors like mandatory professional learning activities can positively influence controlled forms of teacher motivation at the system level. This is something that the study should have taken into account. The study conducted in Holland by de Vries et al (2012) discovered that teachers who are more student-oriented are more likely to commit to professional development. They also established no relationship between the subject matter and teachers' motivation to attend PD.

A number of studies confirm a crucial role of professional development design and features as a factor affecting teachers' attitudes. Garet et al. (2001) conducted a study among mathematics and science teachers in the USA exploring their definition of a high quality professional development program. According to them, an effective PD has a number of characteristics like being intensive, continuous, focused on content knowledge, and delivered in the form of active learning (Garet et al., 2001). Another American research by Torff and Sessions (2008) demonstrated that teachers' attitudes towards the professional development initiatives offered by schools' districts, post-secondary institutions, and non-profit professional organizations depend on the length of their teaching career. New teachers hold more positive views about PD events than those later in their career (Torff & Sessions, 2008). These findings are supported by other studies (Hürsen, 2012).

Table 1. Summary of the Findings

<b>Author (s)</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Methods used</b>
Dayagbil & Alda	2024	1,063 teachers (Philippines)	<i>Factors:</i> Professional growth Self-advancement Improving teaching practice Improving student outcomes Promotion	Quantitative (questionnaire)
Irgatoğlu, A.	2021	271 university instructors of the English language (Turkey)	<i>Factors:</i> gender (women - more positive) <i>Barriers:</i> Lifestyle (busy) Previous experiences (Trainers' competencies)	Quantitative (questionnaires)
Lopes, J.B. & Cunha, A.E.	2017	a longitudinal single-case study - 1 teacher	<i>Factors:</i> Employer support Personal attributes	Action research

Author (s)	Year of publication	Subjects	Findings	Methods used
Beach, P.	2017	15 elementary teachers (Canada)	<p><i>Factors:</i></p> <p>Quality of resources (credibility)</p> <p>Students' needs</p> <p>Instructional goals (applicability of knowledge)</p> <p>Keeping up with best practices accessibility (Online sources- more accessible)</p>	Qualitative (retrospective think aloud)
Prenger, R., Poortman, C.L., Handelsaltz, A.	2017	276 teachers from 23 professional learning communities (Netherlands)	<p><i>Factors:</i></p> <p>Shared goals and clear outcomes within an institution</p> <p>A collective focus on students' results</p> <p>Intrinsic and external motivation</p> <p>Trust</p> <p><i>Barriers:</i></p> <p>Limited social support in the workplace</p>	Mixed methods: quantitative (questionnaires) & qualitative (case study interviews)
Louws, M.L., Meirink, J.L., van Veen, K., van Driel, J. H.	2017	309 secondary teachers (Netherlands)	<p><i>Factors:</i></p> <p>Relevance to the taught subject</p> <p>Current national policies and societal discussions in education</p> <p>School policies</p> <p>Individual factors</p>	Quantitative (questionnaire)
Ehlert, M. & Souvignier, E.	2023	43 primary school teachers (Germany)	<p><i>Factors:</i></p> <p>Practicality and applicability of knowledge/skills</p> <p>Provision of ready to use</p> <p>Financial (is it sponsored?)</p> <p>Cooperative learning</p> <p><i>Barriers:</i></p> <p>Resistance to innovation (overload)</p>	Qualitative (interviews)
Ajani, O.A.	2022	3 department heads, 5 teachers (Nigeria)	<p><i>Barriers:</i></p> <p>Activities do not meet teachers' classroom needs</p>	Qualitative (semi-structured interviews)

Author (s)	Year of publication	Subjects	Findings	Methods used
Dinata, U., Bukhori, M., Nur' Afif, S., & Atmaja, B.	2022	43 English educators (Iran)	<i>Factors:</i> Developing teachers' abilities, filling in the gaps in formal education	Qualitative (interviews)
Coldwell, M.	2017	500 teachers (England)	<i>Factors:</i> PD engagement - career connection Working culture - connection to PD effect on career Personal ambitions	Mixed methods: quantitative (surveys) & qualitative (interviews)
Power, K. & Goodnough, K.	2019	6 teachers (Canada)	<i>Factors:</i> PD increased competence, relatedness, autonomy in learning	Ethnographic case study
Zhang, X., Admiraal, W., Saab, N.	2021	472 teachers (China)	<i>Factors:</i> Level (teachers' prior experience with learning activities, teaching experience, self-efficacy and conceptions of learning) The school level (work and emotional pressure, colleague support and principal leadership)	Quantitative (questionnaire)
Ouchaib, I.	2024	214 teachers 21 teachers	<i>Barriers:</i> Lack of relevant CPD activities, Irrelevance of content for pedagogical needs, Overwhelming workload The high cost Institutional unresponsiveness to teachers' needs	Mixed methods: quantitative (surveys) & qualitative (interviews)

## Methodology of Literature Selection

This review draws from multiple academic sources that study teachers' beliefs, attitudes toward professional development, and CPD experiences. It combines essential theoretical frameworks with research evidence that stems from various educational settings. The research investigates which teacher values and mindsets, and their previous experiences and institutional environment determine their readiness to participate in professional development activities.

The evidence base includes peer-reviewed articles together with scholarly books and empirical studies that focused on CPD and teacher motivation and adult learning. The research included terms which examined teacher beliefs, attitudes, professional development needs, motivational factors, self-efficacy levels, and their challenges when participating in continuing professional development. Additionally, the research analyzed studies conducted in China, Canada, Nigeria, Turkey, Germany, Iran, England, and the Netherlands to understand different cultural perspectives. Research studies from 2008 to 2024 which used quantitative and qualitative methods were selected to maintain modern significance.

The researchers chose studies which investigated how personal elements together with institutional aspects and system-wide components affect professionals' participation in CPD programs. The selection focused on empirical studies which studied teacher motivation, their beliefs, attitudes, and their previous professional development experiences. The researchers excluded all studies which did not focus on teacher participation in CPD and all articles which were not relevant to teacher CPD engagement.

Screening began with abstract reviews which led to full-text assessments to verify that the studies matched the research questions. The research included studies which investigated motivational factors and leadership backing and teamwork possibilities and obstacles that stem from time limitations, work demands, administrative challenges, and social pressure from colleagues. Details from the selected studies appear in Table 1 which presents author information along with participant numbers and essential variables and experimental approaches. The researchers conducted an analysis which identified persistent patterns that appeared throughout the data. The research data showed that personal factors including self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation and beliefs about CPD value appeared throughout the study. The quality of teacher-student interactions and teachers' commitment to their work are directly influenced by institutional conditions, including leadership quality, school culture, resource access, and collaboration. The study documented also how system-level factors which included policy requirements and required activities affected the situation. The research data was organized into three categories, which included staff beliefs about CPD, their professional development background, and their work environment. It used cross-country analysis to discover shared trends between countries while showing where different results occurred.

## **The Synthesis of the Findings**

The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of professional development for teachers, highlighting the interplay of personal, institutional, and external factors that shape their experiences and attitudes towards ongoing learning and improvement. The following factors attitudes, beliefs, and experiences are linked to factors and barriers to PD participation.

### **Attitudes and Beliefs**

Teachers often exhibit mixed attitudes towards PD. While some are enthusiastic and view it as an opportunity for

improvement, others may feel overwhelmed by the demands of their current workload, which can lead to a negative attitude towards participating in additional training. One of the main factors contributing to teachers' willingness to participate in PD is their belief that the skills and knowledge obtained in the PD event are practical, transferable to the classroom setting, match their students' needs, and are applicable in their day-to-day work. These findings go in line with Knowles' principles of Andragogy: relevance and applicability of PD material make learning personal. Many teachers believe that PD is essential for their growth and effectiveness in the classroom (Beach, 2017; Dayagbil & Alda, 2024). However, some may feel that the PD offered does not align with their specific needs or teaching contexts, leading to skepticism about its value (Ajani, 2022). The quality of resources and the competence of instructors also play an important role in fostering positive attitudes toward PD participation (Irgatoğlu, 2021). These factors build teachers' trust in the value of the CPD, reinforcing the belief that their time is well invested and that they are keeping up with best practices.

Teachers' conceptions of learning, their self-efficacy and self-improvement are another driving force of PD participation. In alignment with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, teachers' personal motivation plays a critical role in their participation in PD. Those who feel a sense of agency and ownership over their professional learning are more likely to engage actively in PD opportunities (Power & Goodnough, 2019; Zhang et al., 2022). Conversely, teachers who feel mandated to participate without input may resist these opportunities. Teachers who view learning as a lifelong process are more likely to attend PD sessions. They see these opportunities as essential for staying updated with new teaching methods and educational research. If teachers believe that learning is about acquiring fixed knowledge, they might be less inclined to attend PD, perceiving it as unnecessary if they feel they already possess the required knowledge. Teachers with high self-efficacy, or confidence in their teaching abilities, are more likely to engage in PD (Zhang et al., 2022). They believe that they can effectively implement new strategies learned during PD, which encourages attendance. Teachers with low self-efficacy, however, might avoid PD due to a lack of confidence in their ability to apply new skills or because they doubt the impact of PD on their teaching effectiveness.

Another key belief motivating teachers to pursue professional development is that PD benefits their career and can facilitate their promotion (Coldwell, 2017). When PD is directly linked to career advancement opportunities, such as promotions or salary increases, it provides a clear incentive for participation. Teachers are more likely to attend PD sessions if they see a direct benefit to their career trajectory. Furthermore, PD programs that are aligned with career progression often focus on developing skills that are essential for higher-level positions. This alignment makes PD more relevant and valuable, encouraging teachers to attend in order to gain the necessary competencies for advancement.

## **Experiences**

Apart from PD corresponding teachers' classroom needs, teachers' engagement in PD relies on their experiencing support in the workplace (both peer and leadership). This includes resources accessibility, financial support, collaboration practices, shared goals and outcomes. Collaboration with peers can positively affect teachers' attitudes towards PD (Zhang et al., 2022; Ehlert & Souvignier, 2024). Engaging in PD with peers allows teachers

to share experiences and insights, making the learning process more dynamic and relatable. When teachers have opportunities to learn from one another and share experiences, they are more likely to view PD as a valuable and enriching experience. Collaboration fosters the creation of supportive networks among teachers. These networks provide emotional and professional support, encouraging teachers to participate in PD as they feel part of a community that values growth and development. In addition, working with peers facilitates the exchange of diverse ideas and teaching strategies. This exchange can lead to innovative practices and solutions to common challenges, making PD more appealing and relevant to teachers' needs.

A workplace environment that supports professional development also enhances teachers' PD experiences which is aligned with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. When teachers feel supported by their administration, they are more likely to take risks and try new teaching strategies (Lopes & Cunha, 2017; Louws et al., 2017). Access to resources, such as time, funding, and materials, is crucial for teachers to engage in PD. Leaders who ensure these resources are available demonstrate their commitment to teachers' professional growth, thereby increasing motivation. Acknowledging teachers' efforts and achievements in PD can enhance motivation. When leaders publicly recognize teachers' commitment to professional growth, it reinforces the value of PD and encourages continued participation. Allowing teachers the autonomy to choose PD paths that align with their personal and professional goals can boost motivation. Leaders who encourage innovation and experimentation in teaching practices create an environment where teachers feel empowered to grow. Leaders who articulate a clear vision for professional growth and development can inspire teachers to engage in PD. By linking PD to broader school goals and student outcomes, leaders can help teachers see the impact of their development efforts.

School and national policies significantly affect teachers' professional development. These policies can enhance teachers' participation in PD by offering necessary support and resources (Ouchaib, 2024). Supportive policies ensure the provision of sufficient resources for PD activities. This encompasses funding for workshops, seminars, and courses aimed at skill enhancement. Availability of resources increases the likelihood of teacher participation in PD. Allocating specific time in the school schedule for PD enhances participation rates. Time constraints from teaching duties often hinder participation, thus dedicated PD time can mitigate this issue. Incentives from national and school policies, including salary increases and career advancement, can stimulate active teacher engagement in PD. Recognition of PD efforts can elevate teacher morale and promote ongoing professional development. Involving teachers in PD program planning ensures relevance and alignment with their needs. When PD is applicable to their practice, teachers are more inclined to participate. Policies that promote a supportive school culture can positively influence PD involvement. A culture prioritizing continuous learning can inspire teachers to pursue PD opportunities. Effective policies aim to diminish barriers to PD participation, such as financial, access, and logistical issues. By overcoming these obstacles, policies can foster a supportive environment for teacher engagement in PD.

Conversely, time constraints, a lack of administrative support, and insufficient resources can significantly hinder teachers' ability to engage in PD activities. Teachers may express frustration over the limited time available for PD due to their teaching responsibilities (Prenger et al., 2017; Ouchaib, 2024). Another cause of negative experiences is stress resulting from either peer pressure or the policies and regulations. Teachers facing peer

pressure may experience heightened anxiety, especially if they feel judged or compared to their colleagues. This stress can lead to burnout, reducing their capacity and willingness to engage in additional PD activities. Peer pressure can create a fear of judgment or failure, discouraging teachers from trying new approaches or participating in PD. If teachers worry about being criticized by their peers, they may avoid PD opportunities that require them to step out of their comfort zones. On the other hand, policies and regulations often impose additional responsibilities on teachers, such as administrative tasks or compliance with new standards. These demands can consume time and energy that teachers might otherwise dedicate to PD, making it difficult for them to participate actively. When policies dictate PD requirements that do not align with teachers' personal or professional goals, motivation to engage can decrease. Teachers may feel that mandated PD is irrelevant or unhelpful, leading to disengagement. Peer pressure can lead to a culture of conformity, where teachers feel compelled to follow the majority rather than pursue innovative or personalized PD opportunities. This pressure can stifle creativity and reduce engagement in meaningful PD.

## Research Gap

While the existing literature provides a strong foundation, several research gaps need to be addressed to develop a more complete and actionable understanding of teacher professional development. Future research should expand beyond teacher self-perception to include the perspectives of administrators and students. Incorporating these viewpoints would help validate the impact of CPD on classroom practices and student learning, providing a more holistic and triangulated measure of its effectiveness. Furthermore, there is a significant need to explore the systemic and managerial problems that hinder effective professional development. This includes a deeper investigation into the role of school administrators and national bodies like the Ministry of Education in either creating barriers or facilitating meaningful, needs-based learning experiences for teachers. Such research could identify the specific leadership practices and policies that are most conducive to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Another crucial area for investigation is the comparative effectiveness of different professional development models. Future studies should move beyond general participation and dissect the specific impact of various activities, such as workshops, coaching, or professional learning communities, on both teacher performance and tangible student outcomes. Broadening this analysis through comparisons with other regions or countries could yield particularly nuanced insights, highlighting how different cultural and systemic contexts shape professional development needs and practices, especially within specialized areas like inclusive education.

## Limitations

While this review provides a comprehensive synthesis of the current literature regarding Teachers' engagement in CPD, several inherent limitations must be acknowledged. The primary limitation of the review is reliance on self-reported data that introduces social desirability bias. Teachers may over-report their level of engagement, for example, to align with professional expectations or school policy. The lack of objective observational data or longitudinal tracking of classroom practice means that "engagement" is often measured by perception rather than verified behavioral change.

Secondly, the search was restricted to English-language publications, which may introduce a geographic bias and exclude significant findings from non-English speaking contexts. Another limitation is a publication and selection bias. While efforts were made to include diverse perspectives, the reliance on peer-reviewed journals inherently filters the available data through a specific editorial lens. Finally, a significant challenge in synthesizing the collected literature was the high degree of methodological diversity among the primary studies. Variations in sample sizes and measurement tools made direct comparison difficult. Consequently, the conclusions drawn in this review represent a thematic synthesis rather than a precise statistical meta-analysis, requiring cautious interpretation when applying these findings to specific practical settings.

## Conclusion

This literature review has synthesized a broad range of research to explore the critical factors that shape teachers' engagement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The evidence overwhelmingly indicates that a teacher's decision to participate in and benefit from professional growth opportunities is not a simple choice but a complex interplay of internal beliefs, personal experiences, and external environmental factors. The findings confirm that teachers' intrinsic motivation driven by a genuine desire for self-improvement, high self-efficacy, and a belief in the practical applicability of new knowledge is a powerful predictor of active engagement. However, these internal drivers are profoundly influenced by the context in which teachers work. The research consistently highlights that a supportive school culture, characterized by collaborative peer relationships, accessible resources, and strong administrative leadership, is essential for fostering a positive disposition towards CPD. Conversely, a lack of support, irrelevant program content, and excessive workload act as significant barriers, leading to teacher disengagement and skepticism. Ultimately, for professional development to be effective, it must be designed and implemented with a deep understanding of the adult learner. It must be relevant, collaborative, and respectful of teachers' experiences and professional autonomy, aligning with the core principles of andragogy and experiential learning. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, creating CPD that is not merely a requirement but a meaningful, empowering, and integral part of a teacher's career journey is paramount. Future research should focus on the specific impact of different CPD models and incorporate administrative and student perspectives to build a more holistic understanding of how to best support the educators who shape our future.

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