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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Early Childhood, Teacher Education, Challenges, Professional Motivation</p>	<p>This qualitative study explores the issues and challenges faced by childhood early teachers in Punjab, Pakistan, in relation to their professional motivation and early childhood teacher education. Phenomenological research design was employed to explore subjective experiences of early childhood teachers in relation to the research problem. A purposive sample of early childhood teachers who have experience teaching in early childhood education setting in Punjab, Pakistan was selected for the study. Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary method of data collection. A qualitative content analysis was employed to identify the themes and patterns within the data through NVIVO 14 software. The study found that early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan face a range of challenges that impact their professional motivation, including inadequate training and professional development opportunities, low salaries, and a lack of recognition and support from the parents and the wider community. The study highlights the need for policy makers in Punjab, to address challenges faced by teachers and to provide them necessary support & resources to enable them to provide high-quality early childhood education.</p> <p> 2023 Journal of Social Sciences Development</p>
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<p>DOI</p>	<p>https://doi.org/10.53664/JSSD/02-01-2023-03-26-43</p>

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood teacher education pertains to the process of preparing and training individuals to become capable teachers who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to teach and care for children aged from birth to eight years old. The early years of education are crucial for a child's development, and studies indicate that children who receive high-quality early childhood education have higher chances of succeeding academically and socially. Therefore, the value of early childhood education cannot be overstated, and role of early childhood educators in shaping

future of young learners is immensely important. However, despite significance of early childhood education, there are several challenges and issues that impact professional motivation of early childhood educators (Attanasio, Cattan & Meghir, 2022). This wage disparity further discourages individuals from pursuing early childhood education as a career choice, ultimately impacting the quality of education and care provided. One of the primary obstacles in early childhood teacher education revolves around insufficient financial support and resources. Early childhood educators often receive lower salaries compared to counterparts in other teaching sectors, which can diminish motivation and dedication to profession.

This wage disparity can also discourage individuals from considering early childhood education as a career choice, ultimately impacting the quality of education and care provided to young children (Gray-Lobe, Pathak & Walters, 2023). Another issue concerns the lack of recognition and respect for early childhood education as a profession. The perception that early childhood education is a "low-skilled" field has resulted in inadequate investment in training and professional development opportunities for early childhood educators. Consequently, this can lead to diminished motivation and enthusiasm for the profession, resulting in a decline in the quality of early childhood education. While some countries mandate the bachelor's degree in early childhood education, others only require a high school diploma or certificate. In this connection, quality of work environments, such as staff-to-child ratios, physical space, and available resources, can have a significant impact on educators' motivation and job satisfaction. Several factors affect the recruitment and retention of these educators, and this review delves into these important issues. This lack of collaboration can lead to a sense of disconnection from the profession, reducing motivation and commitment. This lack of consistency can result in variations in quality of early childhood education provided and can also demotivate the educators who may feel undervalued due to their limited formal qualifications (Håland, Hoem & McTigue, 2019).

Besides, the early childhood education profession lacks diversity. Studies indicate that a diverse teaching workforce contributes to improved outcomes for the children, fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment. However, majority of early childhood educators are female, and there is insufficient racial and ethnic diversity within the field. This can lead to feelings of isolation and undervaluation among educators, consequently diminishing motivation (Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2016). Consequently, this lack of the investment diminishes motivation and enthusiasm for the profession, leading to a decline in quality of early childhood education. Early childhood teacher education plays vital role in delivering high-quality early childhood education and care. However, educators may find themselves working in isolation, with limited opportunities to collaborate with colleagues or engage in professional learning communities. Still, challenges and issues faced by early childhood educators, including financial support, recognition, qualification consistency, and diversity, significantly impact their professional motivation (Tembo, 2021). By addressing these concerns and fostering supportive and inclusive environment for early childhood educators, we can cultivate a motivated and dedicated workforce that ultimately enhances the outcomes for young learners.

Problem Statement

Early childhood education is essential for holistic development of children. However, the quality of early childhood education depends on the quality of teachers and their professional motivation. In Punjab, Pakistan, several challenges and issues affect early childhood teacher education and professional motivation. One of the significant challenges is the shortage of qualified and trained teachers. Due to lack of resources and funding, many teachers are not adequately trained, which affects the quality of education they provide. The low salaries and lack of recognition and support from government and communities demotivate teachers, affecting their professional motivation. Another challenge is the lack of awareness among parents and communities about importance of early childhood education. This results in low demand for qualified teachers, leading to a shortage of jobs and low salaries for early childhood teachers. The problem statement revolves around issues and challenges nearby early childhood teacher education and professional motivation mainly in Punjab, Pakistan. In this context, there is famous absence of professional development opportunities for early childhood teachers. This lack of access to training and development programs hinders their ability to enhance their skills, consequently affecting their motivation and job satisfaction. Thus, the goal is to identify and address these issues in order to improve quality of early childhood education in Punjab, Pakistan.

Rational of Study

The significance of early childhood education in fostering the holistic development of young children cannot be overstated. However, the quality of early childhood education relies heavily on the competence and professional motivation of teachers. In Punjab, Pakistan, various challenges and issues impact early childhood teacher education and professional motivation, subsequently affecting the quality of education provided to young children. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine and address these challenges and issues, aiming to enhance the quality of early childhood education in Punjab, Pakistan. The findings of this study hold significant implications for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in Punjab, Pakistan. By identifying the challenges and issues associated with early childhood teacher education and professional motivation as well as proposing appropriate solutions, this study can contribute to the improvement of early childhood education quality. Furthermore, the insights gained from this study may also be applicable to other countries and contexts facing similar challenges and issues in early childhood teacher education and professional motivation.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the challenges and issues in the early childhood teacher education in Punjab, Pakistan.
2. To explore the factors that affect the professional motivation of early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan.
3. To examine impact of professional development opportunities on early childhood teacher motivation and job satisfaction in Punjab, Pakistan.
4. To propose potential solutions to address challenges and issues in early childhood teacher education and professional motivation in Punjab, Pakistan.

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges and issues in the early childhood teacher education in Punjab, Pakistan?
2. What are the factors that affect the professional motivation of early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan?
3. How do professional development opportunities impact early childhood teacher incentive and job satisfaction in Punjab, Pakistan?
4. What potential solutions can be proposed to address challenges in early childhood teacher education and professional motivation in Punjab, Pakistan?

Theoretical Framework

1. The ecological systems theory as proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests that the individuals are influenced by environmental systems, include microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems. This theory will be used to explore the various factors that impact early childhood teacher education and professional motivation in Punjab, Pakistan, including individual, family, community, and societal factors.
2. “The self-determination theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985) advises that individuals are motivated by three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This theory will be used to explore the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that affect professional motivation of early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan.”
3. “The Job Demands-Resources Model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) suggests that the job demands and job resources impact job outcomes, including job satisfaction, engagement, and burnout. This model will be used to explore the impact of professional development opportunities on early childhood teacher motivation and job satisfaction in Punjab, Pakistan.”

The above frameworks guide the research design, data collection, and data analysis of the study. The ecological systems theory used to explore the challenges and issues in early childhood teacher education in Punjab, Pakistan, including the shortage of qualified and trained teachers, lack of resources and funding, and low salaries. The self-determination theory used to explore the factors that affect the professional motivation of early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan, including intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as passion for the teaching, recognition, and support from the government and communities, and salary. In this connection, the job demands-resources model used to explore the impact of professional development opportunities on early childhood teacher motivation and job satisfaction in Punjab, Pakistan. Thus, the use of these frameworks provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding of early childhood teacher education and professional motivation in Punjab, Pakistan, and identify potential solutions to improve the quality of early childhood education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explores the latest research on challenges and issues impacting professional motivation of early childhood educators, considering the significance of early childhood education as a crucial phase in a child's development. The quality of care provided during this period has a

lasting impact on child's long-term outcomes. It is essential to have highly motivated and skilled early childhood educators. There is absence of uniformity in qualifications necessary to become an early childhood educator.

Financial Support and Resources

Insufficient financial support and resources pose a significant challenge in early childhood teacher education. Numerous studies indicate that early childhood educators often receive lower salaries compared to their counterparts in other teaching sectors, resulting in diminished motivation and commitment to their profession (Swick & Williams, 2013). This wage disparity further discourages individuals from pursuing early childhood education as a career choice, ultimately impacting the quality of education and care provided (Watt, 2014). Additionally, the lack of adequate resources, including materials and funding, creates obstacles in delivering high-quality education and care, that are considered as leading predictors and further affecting the motivation of early childhood educators (Schlomer et al., 2016).

Recognition and Respect as a Profession

Another significant issue impacting the professional motivation of early childhood educators is the inadequate recognition and respect for the early childhood education profession. The perception that it is a "low-skilled" field has resulted in limited investment in the training and professional development opportunities for educators (Swick & Williams, 2013). Consequently, this lack of investment diminishes motivation and enthusiasm for the profession, leading to a decline in the quality of early childhood education. Additionally, the absence of respect and understanding regarding the complexity of the work performed by early childhood educators hinders meaningful partnerships with families and community members, that are considered to further affecting the motivation (Hansen et al., 2015).

Consistency in Qualifications

A notable concern in early childhood teacher education is absence of uniformity in qualifications necessary to become an early childhood educator. Requirements range from a bachelor's degree in early childhood education in some countries to a high school diploma or certificate in others. This lack of consistency results in variations in the quality of early childhood education provided and can also lead to a sense of undervaluation among educators who may lack formal qualifications (Hill & Stremmel, 2016).

Diversity Among Early Childhood Educators

There is also a lack of diversity among early childhood educators. Research shows that a diverse teaching workforce can lead to better outcomes for children, as it can provide a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment (Hansen et al., 2015). However, many early childhood educators are female, and there is a lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the profession. This can result in a lack of motivation among the educators who may feel isolated and undervalued due to their identity (Watt, 2014).

Burnout

Early childhood educators often face high levels of stress and burnout due to the demanding nature of their work. The constant need to care for and educate young children, along with administrative

tasks and parent communication, can be overwhelming and lead to feelings of exhaustion and frustration (Hill & Stremmel, 2016). This can ultimately impact their motivation to continue working in the field.

Lack of Collaboration

Collaboration and teamwork are essential for providing high-quality early childhood education. However, educators may find themselves working in the isolation, with limited opportunities to collaborate with colleagues or engage in the professional learning communities. This lack of the collaboration can lead to a sense of disconnection from the profession, reducing motivation and commitment (Hansen et al., 2015).

Workplace Conditions

One of the primary issues in early childhood teacher education is the working conditions of early childhood educators. The quality of work environments, like staff-to-child ratios, physical space, and available resources, can have a significant impact on educators' motivation and job satisfaction. Research shows that low staff-to-child ratios can lead to high levels of stress and burnout among childhood educators (Leibowitz et al., 2019). Inadequate physical space and limited resources can make it challenging to offer high-quality care and education, leading to frustration and reduced motivation (Elicker & McMullen, 2021).

Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development opportunities are essential for maintaining and enhancing knowledge and skills of early childhood educators. Research shows that opportunities for ongoing training and development can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation (Buettner & Jeon, 2020). Still, many early childhood educators report a lack of access to professional development opportunities, particularly in rural or low-income areas (John et al., 2020). This lead to feelings of stagnation and reduced motivation among educators.

Compensation and Benefits

Compensation and benefits are critical factors that influence the motivation and retention of early childhood educators. Research shows that low pay and inadequate benefits can lead to high levels of turnover and low morale among early childhood educators (Shoaf et al., 2021). Furthermore, the lack of benefits, such as health insurance and retirement plans, and in this connection can make it difficult for educators to support themselves and their families, leading to the financial stress and reduced motivation.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are essential for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all children and families. However, the early childhood education workforce is predominantly female, and there is a lack of the racial and ethnic diversity among educators (Moye et al., 2021). In this connection, this can create barriers to meaningful engagement with families and children from diverse backgrounds, leading to a lack of motivation among early childhood educators who may feel undervalued or unsupported.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted interpretive paradigm to examine the challenges and issues in early childhood teacher education and professional motivation in Punjab, Pakistan. This approach facilitated the comprehensive understanding of the experiences and viewpoints of early childhood teachers concerning the research problem. Employing the phenomenological research design, the study delved into the lived experiences of the participants, specifically focusing on their subjective encounters related to professional motivation and the obstacles encountered in early childhood teacher education. Semi-structured interviews constituted the primary method of data collection, enabling a flexible and adaptable exploration of the perspectives and experiences of the early childhood teachers (Becker & Schad, 2022). The study focused on the early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan as the population. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a sample of teachers who had experience teaching in the early childhood education settings in the region. The data collection process involved conducting a total of thirty semi-structured interviews with these teachers. However, data saturation was reached after the twenty-seventh interview (Denieffe, 2020).

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method in this study. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the selected sample of early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. The participants, referred to as (P), provided their consent for audio-recording, and the interviews were transcribed verbatim for further analysis. Qualitative content analysis was employed to analyze the data collected from the interviews through NVIVO 14 (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This analytical approach facilitated the systematic identification of themes and patterns within the data, enabling a rigorous examination of the issues and challenges pertaining to early childhood teacher education and professional motivation in Punjab, Pakistan. The study followed ethical guidelines for conducting research involving the human subjects. Prior to their involvement, participants provided informed consent, and measures were taken to safeguard their privacy, maintain confidentiality, and preserve their anonymity. Participants were assured of their voluntary participation, with the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any adverse consequences.

DATA ANALYSIS

Research Question 1:

What are the challenges and issues in the early childhood teacher education in Punjab, Pakistan?

Description

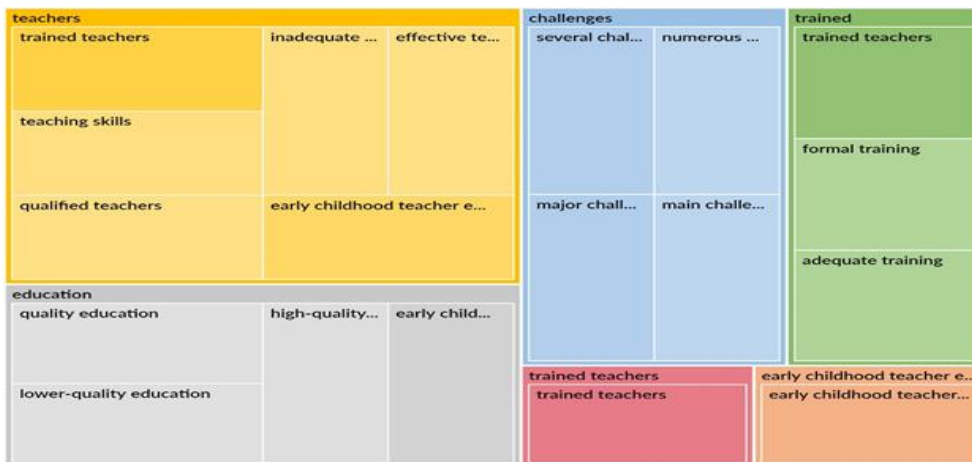
In response to the question about the challenges and issues in early childhood teacher education, the interviews with early childhood teachers in Punjab revealed several challenges and issues they face. One of the main challenges is the language barrier, as many young children in the region may need to be fluent in Urdu or English, making it difficult for teachers to communicate effectively. Few participants reported that the limited resources, such as inadequate teaching materials and facilities, also pose a challenge, making it difficult for teachers to provide a high-quality education. Some participants revealed that lack of professional development opportunities is also an issue, as

teachers may need help to stay up-to-date with best practices in early childhood education. A few participants described that cultural differences between teachers and parents could challenge establishing productive and collaborative relationships. These challenges highlight the need for more significant support and resources for early childhood teachers in Punjab. Following are some details of the interviews.

I have been working as an early childhood teacher in Punjab for the past 8 years. I have worked in both public and private schools. One of the biggest challenges we face is the shortage of qualified and trained teachers. There are not enough trained teachers to meet demand for early childhood education in Punjab. Lack of resources and funding makes it difficult to provide quality education to children. Classrooms are often overcrowded, and we do not have enough materials to facilitate learning. Lastly, the salaries for early childhood teachers are very low, which makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers in the field (P05).

I think the biggest challenge is the lack of resources and funding. We don't have enough books, toys, and other learning materials to engage our young learners. Moreover, we lack adequate training and professional development opportunities to improve our teaching skills (P08). Biggest challenge is lack of qualified and trained teachers. Many teachers do not have formal training or certification in early childhood education. Moreover, the low salaries and lack of recognition for early childhood teachers also demotivate them (P17).

Figure 1 Research Question 1 Auto coded Themes NVIVO



The shortage of qualified and trained teachers is a major challenge. Additionally, lack of resources and funding for early childhood education, as well as low salaries and inadequate recognition for teachers, also impact their motivation and job satisfaction (P19). As an early childhood teacher in Punjab, Pakistan, I have faced numerous challenges that have affected my professional motivation. One of the biggest challenges is the shortage of qualified and trained teachers in this field. Many teachers in early childhood education are not trained properly, which can negatively impact the development of young children. Additionally, there is a lack of resources and funding in many

schools, which makes it difficult to provide the necessary materials and tools for effective desired teaching and learning (P23).

I have always had a passion for working with young children and helping them to develop their full potential. I believe that early childhood education is the foundation for a child's future success, and I wanted to be a part of that process. However, I have faced many challenges in this field, including a lack of resources and support, which can impact my motivation as a teacher (P27). One of biggest challenges is the shortage of qualified and trained teachers in this field. This can result in lower-quality education for children, which can negatively impact development. Additionally, there is a lack of resources and funding in schools, which makes it difficult to provide necessary materials and tools for effective teaching. These challenges can lead to lower motivation and job satisfaction for teachers (P29).

Research Question 2:

What are factors affect professional motivation of the early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan?

Description

In response to the question about factors that affect the professional motivation of early childhood teachers, interviews with early childhood teachers in Punjab revealed several factors that affect their professional motivation. A few participants described that one of main factors is low salaries, which can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and low morale. Some participants revealed that a lack of recognition and respect for profession could lead to a lack of motivation among early childhood teachers. Participants reported that teachers might feel deterred by lack of support from parents or the wider community. Another factor highlighted by participants was high workload and job stress, which can negatively impact motivation levels. Some of participants were of the view that a lack of prospects for professional development and career growth can leave teachers feeling stagnant in careers. Overall, these factors can combine to reduce motivation levels among early childhood teachers in Punjab, highlighting need for more significant support and recognition for profession. Following are some details of the interviews.

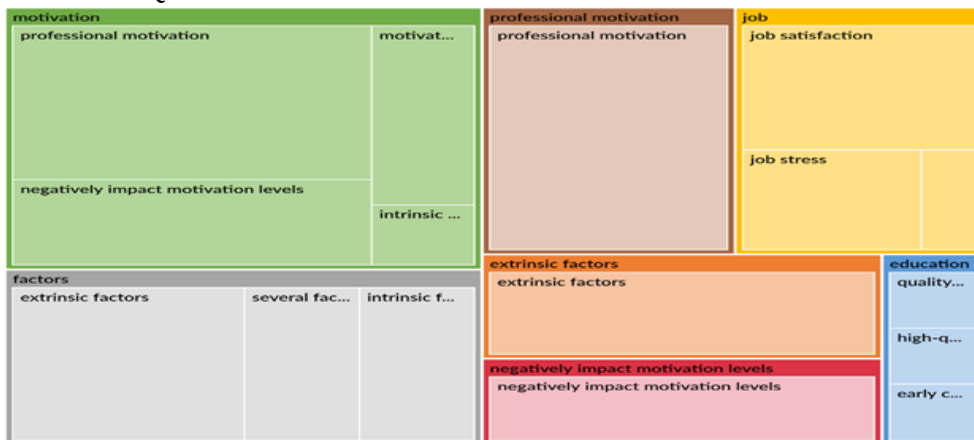
In my experience, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a role in the professional motivation of early childhood teachers. Passion for teaching and desire to make a difference in the lives of young children are important intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic factors such as recognition and support from the government and communities, and salary also play significant role. When teachers feel valued and supported, they are more motivated to continue in the profession (P11).

I am passionate about teaching and I believe that the early childhood education is crucial for the development of young children. Seeing my students learn and grow gives me immense satisfaction and motivation to continue teaching (P17). Intrinsic factors such as a passion for teaching, love for children, and job satisfaction play an important role in motivating teachers. Extrinsic factors such as recognition, support from the government and communities, and adequate resources and funding also impact the motivation of teachers (P20).

The lack of resources and funding makes it challenging to provide a quality education to young children. As teacher, it is frustrating when you know that you could be doing more for your students

if you had necessary resources. This can lead to lack of motivation and job satisfaction, especially when teachers are not recognized or supported for efforts (P23). Lack of support and recognition from government and communities can have a significant impact on teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Teachers are often undervalued and not recognized for hard work, which can lead to a lack of motivation and a feeling of being underappreciated. Without support from the government and communities, it can be difficult to access the resources and funding necessary to provide high-quality education to children (P26).

Figure 2 Research Question 2 Auto coded Themes NVIVO



Research Question 3:

How do professional development opportunities impact early childhood teacher motivation and job satisfaction in Punjab, Pakistan?

Description

To examine the influence of professional development opportunities on early childhood teacher motivation and job satisfaction, the interviews conducted with early childhood teachers explored this aspect. Participants shared their perspectives on how professional development opportunities, such as workshops, training programs, and conferences, affected motivation and job satisfaction. According to accounts, access to such opportunities was highly valued and had a positive impact on professional engagement. Participating in professional development events provided teachers with valuable knowledge, skills, and fresh perspectives that they could apply to enhance their teaching practice. This, in turn, bolstered their confidence and sense of effectiveness. Additionally, the opportunity to attend these events allowed teachers to connect with their peers, fostering a sense of community and support within the profession. The participants emphasized that providing childhood teachers with professional development opportunities can influence their motivation, job satisfaction, and ultimately, the quality of education they offer. The following details provide further insights from the interviews.

Professional development opportunities are essential for early childhood teachers to stay current with the latest teaching methods and techniques. When teachers are given opportunities to learn

and grow in their profession, they feel more competent and confident in their ability to teach young children. This in turn leads to increased job satisfaction and motivation to continue in the profession (P03).

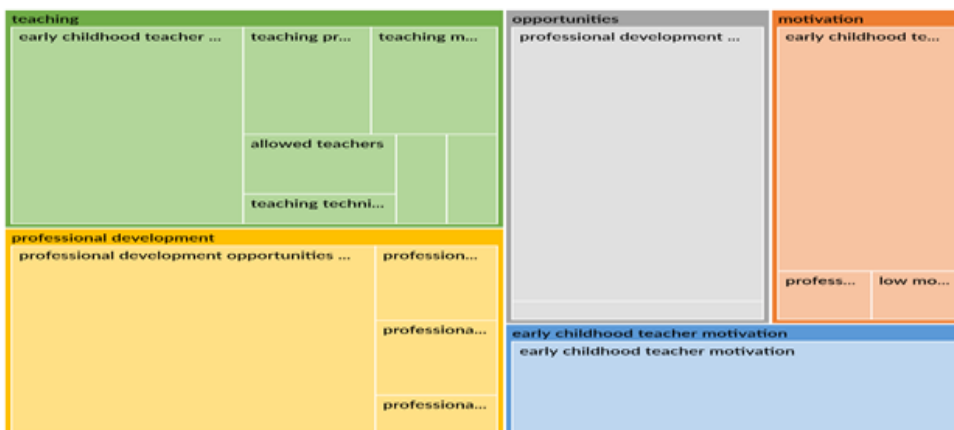
Yes, I have attended some professional development programs in the past. They helped me to improve my teaching strategies and techniques. I feel more confident and motivated to teach after attending such programs (P09). Yes, the professional development opportunities can improve the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers. These programs can help the teachers to enhance their teaching skills, gain new knowledge, skills and expertise, and feel more confident in their role as educators (P13).

There are several factors that can impact the professional motivation of early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. One of most important is salary. Many teachers in Pakistan are not paid enough to support themselves and their families, which lead to job dissatisfaction and low incentive. Other factors include lack of recognition for work, limited opportunities for professional development, and a lack of support from the government and communities (P21).

Professional development is essential for teachers to stay up-to-date with the latest teaching techniques and methods. It can also help teachers feel more confident and competent in their roles. When teachers feel that they are continuously improving and developing their skills, it can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation (P25).

I stay motivated by reminding myself of the importance of my role as an early childhood teacher. I also try to stay informed about new teaching methods and techniques by attending professional development workshops and conferences. Finally, I find it helpful to connect with other teachers and share experiences and ideas (P29).

Figure 3 Research Question 3 Auto coded Themes NVIVO



Research Question 4:

What potential solutions can be proposed to address the challenges and issues in early childhood teacher education and professional motivation in Punjab, Pakistan.

Description:

In response to the question about solutions to address the challenges and issues in early childhood teacher education and professional motivation, the participants suggested potential solutions to address challenges and issues faced by teachers in region. A few participants recommended that one solution is to provide teachers with greater access to professional development opportunities, such as training programs and workshops. This would help teachers stay up-to-date with the latest teaching practices and increase sense of efficacy and confidence. Some of participants suggested providing teachers with better resources, including teaching materials and facilities. This would enable teachers to provide high-quality education and create supportive learning environment for young children. The participants suggested that increasing teacher salaries and providing more job security could help improve teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Some participants described that greater recognition and respect for profession could help elevate early childhood education's status and attract more talented individuals to field. The participants also emphasized the need for greater collaboration between teachers, parents, and different education stakeholders at the local and national levels.

This would help to create a more supportive and collaborative environment for early childhood education in Punjab. Generally, participants highlighted the need for a multi-faceted approach to addressing early childhood teachers' challenges in Punjab, Pakistan. Participants also suggested that providing mentorship programs for early childhood teachers could be a potential solution to support their professional development and help them navigate the profession's challenges. A few participants revealed that collaboration between early childhood education programs and local communities could help to address cultural barriers and increase parent engagement in children's education. Increasing public awareness and advocacy efforts around early childhood education's importance could help increase public funding and support for profession. Participants suggested that developing a standardized curriculum and assessment system for early childhood education could help to ensure quality and consistency in education provided to young children. Inspiring technology and digital tools in childhood education provide teachers with new ways to engage and support their students, particularly during remote or hybrid learning environments. Following are some details of the interviews

I believe that increased funding and resources are essential to improve quality of early childhood education in Punjab. This includes funding for teacher training and development, and resources such as classroom materials and technology. Better recognition and support for teachers can go a long way in improving motivation and job satisfaction. This can be achieved over public recognition and support from government and communities. Lastly, providing more professional development opportunities for early childhood teachers can help them stay current and improve their skills, leading to greater motivation and job satisfaction (P4).

The government should allocate more resources and funding for early childhood education. They should provide more training and professional development opportunities for teachers. Moreover, providing better salaries and recognition for teachers can improve motivation and job satisfaction (P10). The government should invest more in early childhood education by providing adequate

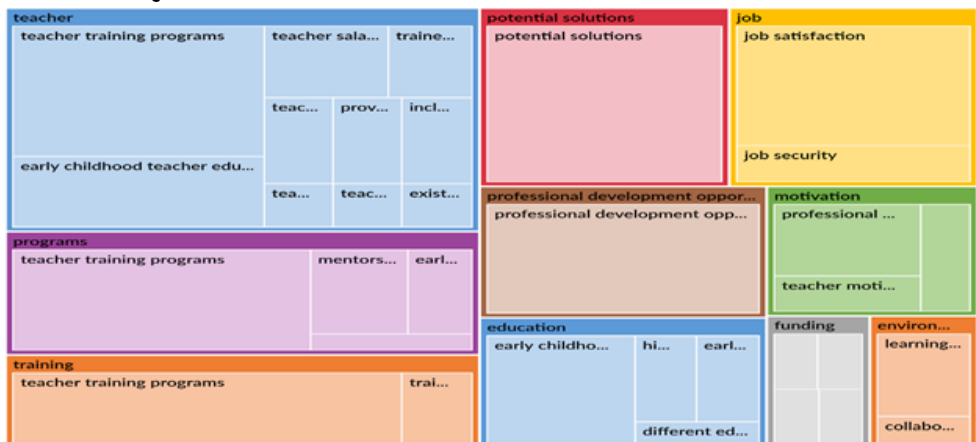
funding and resources. They should establish formal certification and training programs for early childhood teachers. Moreover, providing better salaries and recognition for teachers can improve their motivation and job satisfaction (P16).

There needs to be more investment in early childhood education in Punjab, Pakistan. This includes increasing funding and resources for schools, providing training and professional development opportunities for teachers. Teachers need to be recognized and supported for their work, which can increase motivation and satisfaction (P20). One solution would be to increase funding and resources for early childhood education in Punjab, Pakistan. This be achieved by allocating more government funds towards education and increasing private sector involvement in field. Moreover, providing more opportunities for teacher training and professional development help to improve the quality of education and increase teacher motivation.

Finally, recognizing and supporting the work of early childhood teachers can improve their morale and job satisfaction, which can ultimately lead to better outcomes for children (P23). One solution would be to increase awareness about the importance of early childhood education and the role of teachers in this field. This can help to promote greater recognition and support for teachers. Also, providing more resources and funding for early childhood education can help to improve the quality of education and increase teacher motivation. Finally, more opportunities for professional development and training can help teachers to stay up-to-date with the latest teaching techniques and methods (P27).

One solution would be to increase the availability of teacher training programs and ensure that they are accessible to a wide range of individuals. This can help to ensure that there are enough qualified and trained teachers in the field. Additionally, providing incentives such as scholarships and loan forgiveness programs for individuals who pursue a career in early childhood education can help to attract more individuals to the field. Finally, creating more and more opportunities for professional development and training can help to improve the skills and knowledge of existing teachers (P30).

Figure 4 Research Question 4 Auto coded Themes NVIVO



DISCUSSION

Early childhood education is a critical foundation for a child's academic and social success in life. Therefore, it is essential to have qualified and motivated early childhood teachers to provide high-quality education to young children. In Punjab, Pakistan, there are various challenges and issues that hinder the professional motivation of early childhood teachers. This discussion explored these challenges and issues and propose potential solutions to address them. One of primary challenges in early childhood teacher education in Punjab is the shortage of qualified and trained teachers. According to a report by the Punjab Education Foundation, around 40% of teachers in Punjab's government schools lack necessary qualifications (Sethi, 2021). This shortage of qualified teachers is particularly significant in early childhood education, where teachers require specialized training to understand the unique needs and developmental stages of young children. Another challenge faced by early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan is the lack of access to quality professional development opportunities. According to Hussain and Qayyum (2021), early childhood teachers in Pakistan have limited opportunities for professional development, which can lead to a lack of the motivation and job satisfaction.

Professional development opportunities are critical for teachers to stay up-to-date with the new research, trends, and teaching methods, which can improve their effectiveness in the classroom and enhance student learning outcomes (Hussain & Qayyum, 2021). Another challenge in the early childhood teacher education in Punjab is lack of resources and funding. Early childhood education requires specific resources, such as play-based learning materials, child-sized furniture, and other developmentally appropriate tools. However, due to a lack of funding and resources, many early childhood teachers in Punjab struggle to provide the necessary resources to create a stimulating and likable learning environment. Low salaries are another significant issue affecting professional motivation of early childhood teachers in Punjab. Many teachers in region are paid poorly, which can lead to job dissatisfaction and demotivation. As a result, some teachers may not be motivated to provide high-quality education to their students. Factors that affect the professional motivation of early childhood teachers in Punjab include intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors such as passion for teaching and a desire to make a positive impact on children's lives can motivate teachers to provide high-quality education.

Extrinsic factors such as recognition, support from the government and communities, and salary can also impact a teacher's motivation. Research shows that when teachers feel valued and recognized for their work, they are more likely to remain motivated and committed to their profession (Gunter & Hall, 2018). Professional development opportunities can also have the positive impact on early childhood teacher motivation and job satisfaction. When the teachers have access to training and development programs, they feel more confident in their ability to teach and are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. Research shows that professional development programs that focus on developing teachers' skills and knowledge can improve student outcomes and enhance teacher motivation (Younas et al., 2019). To address this challenge, it is important for the government and educational institutions to provide more opportunities for the professional development for early childhood teachers in the Punjab, Pakistan. This can include workshops, conferences, and training

programs that focus upon topics such as child development, classroom management, and teaching strategies. In addition, technology can be leveraged to provide online courses and training modules that can be accessed remotely, making it easier for the teachers to participate in the professional development opportunities.

Overall, early childhood teacher education faces several challenges and issues in Punjab, Pakistan, including a shortage of qualified and trained teachers, lack of resources and funding, low salaries, limited access to professional development opportunities, and lack of recognition and appreciation. Addressing these challenges and issues requires collaborative effort from government, educational institutions, and other stakeholders. This shortage of qualified teachers is particularly significant in early childhood education, where teachers require specialized training to understand the unique needs and developmental stages of young children. Childhood education needs specific resources, like play-based learning materials, child-sized furniture, and other developmentally appropriate tools. Due to a lack of funding and resources, many early childhood teachers in Punjab struggle to provide the necessary resources to create a stimulating and engaging learning environment. As a result, some teachers may not motivate to offer high-quality education to students. By providing more resources and support for early childhood teacher education, we can improve the quality of education provided to young children and support the professional motivation and job satisfaction of early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The study on early childhood teacher education in Punjab, Pakistan revealed several challenges and issues that affect professional motivation of early childhood teachers. These challenges include the shortage of qualified and trained teachers, lack of resources and funding, and low salaries. The study also found that intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as passion for teaching, recognition, support from the government and communities, and salary affect professional motivation of early childhood teachers. Additionally, study found that professional development opportunities have a significant impact on early childhood teacher motivation and job satisfaction. So, it is essential to provide more professional development opportunities to improve the quality of early childhood education and professional motivation of teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. To address challenges and issues in early childhood teacher education and professional motivation, study suggests some potential solutions. These include increased funding and resources, better recognition and support for teachers, and more professional development opportunities.

These solutions will not only improve the quality of early childhood education but also improve the professional motivation of early childhood teachers. Study highlights the importance of addressing the challenges and issues faced by early childhood teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. By doing so, we can improve quality of early childhood education and ensure that every child in Pakistan receives best possible start in life. In addition to challenges and issues identified in study on early childhood teacher education in Punjab, Pakistan, there are several other factors that can impact professional motivation of teachers. These factors include socio-cultural context of region, the availability of training and development opportunities, and the level of teacher support and supervision. In many parts of Pakistan, socio-cultural context can create additional barriers to effective early childhood

education. For example, in some areas, there is a lack of awareness about the importance of early childhood education, leading to low demand for trained early childhood teachers. Additionally, social and cultural norms may place restrictions on the participation of young children in early childhood education, particularly for girls.

To address these challenges, it is vital to engage with communities and families to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education and role of trained early childhood teachers. By involving families and communities in the process, we can promote a culture of support for early childhood education and improve access to the qualified and trained early childhood teachers. Moreover, providing ongoing training and development opportunities is critical for maintaining the professional motivation of the early childhood teachers. Thus, these opportunities can include workshops, conferences, and mentorship programs, all of which can help teachers stay up to date with the latest research, teaching techniques, and best practices. Providing support and supervision to early childhood teachers is also essential for maintaining their motivation and ensuring that they are delivering high-quality education to young children. In this regard, supervision can include the regular classroom observations, feedback upon the teaching performance, and opportunities for the professional growth.

Recommendations

1. The shortage of the qualified and trained teachers, lack of resources and funding, and low salaries are significant challenges facing early childhood teacher education in Punjab, Pakistan. Therefore, the government should prioritize allocation of funds to early childhood education and provide adequate resources, like books, toys, and other learning materials, to support effective teaching and learning.
2. The study found that professional development opportunities can have a positive impact on motivation and job satisfaction of early childhood teachers. Thus, it is recommended that government and other stakeholders offer regular training and development opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs, to support ongoing professional growth and development.
3. Early childhood teachers play a critical role in shaping the future of young children, yet they often receive little recognition and support for their work. Thus, it is recommended that the government and other stakeholders increase recognition and support for early childhood teachers through initiatives such as awards and incentives, career advancement opportunities, and better working conditions.
4. The socio-cultural context in Punjab, Pakistan, can create additional barriers to effective early childhood education. Therefore, it is recommended that stakeholders engage families and communities to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education and the role of trained early childhood teachers.

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