Navigating the Essence of Effective Professional Development for Thai University Teachers

Chantima Pathamathamakul, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand

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Abstract

This study explores university teachers' preferences for professional development (PD) types, perceptions of PD, and the characteristics of effective PD within the Thai higher education context. Conducted at a science and technology research university, the study involved teachers who had completed the mandatory PD program for faculty members. The research participants included 32 faculty members (33%) who completed an online survey and 28 (29%) who participated in both the survey and in-depth interviews. In the survey, teachers rated their preferences for diverse types of PD, which reflected characteristics that support professional learning according to prior literature. Findings revealed a strong preference for workshops, teaching and learning scholarships, and educational conferences. However, the single-item questions assessing teachers' perceptions of PD indicated a disconnect: while many faculty members expressed high interest in PD and acknowledged its role in improving teaching skills, they perceived it as less critical to their teaching careers. This discrepancy may be influenced by institutional policies regarding pedagogical qualifications and their perceived relevance for academics in research-focused universities. Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews identified four key characteristics of effective PD: a focus on pedagogical and technological knowledge, reflective observation of exemplary practices, job-embedded activities, and relevance. The study recommends addressing cultural challenges associated with the hierarchical structure of Thai academia while recognizing teacher professional learning in various formats and platforms.

Keywords: professional development, professional learning, university teachers, university teaching

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Introduction

Faculty members face a variety of challenges in delivering quality teaching that is responsive to societal changes, as well as the need to develop 21st-century student competencies. In countries where pedagogical qualification is not necessarily required at universities, attending pedagogical development is often dependent on teachers' own initiative and interest (Murtonen et al., 2024). Promoting professional teachers in higher education typically involves a structured and intentional process of planned activities, experiences, or professional development (PD) programs. In recent years, PD for university teachers has increasingly strived for recognized standards in teaching and learning in higher education (Hibbert & Semler, 2015). Institutions increasingly offer their academic staff formal pedagogical training or teaching preparation programs, potentially linked to performance evaluations or job requirements (Noben et al., 2020). Whether being compulsory or voluntary, the pedagogical training of university teachers, Vermunt et al. (2019) interestingly noted that many models of teacher PD assume that participating in a well-designed initiative would lead to teacher outcomes, without consideration of how teachers learn.

In Thai higher education, many Thai universities have established directives and initiated changes from conventional content-based to output-based education. Nationwide, outcome-based education (OBE) has been adopted as an education reform strategy to depart from competency-based learning, and internationalization has been implemented in several aspects. Through the implementation of the Thailand Qualification Framework for Higher Education (TQF) initiated by the Office of the Higher Education Commission, faculty members are expected to be a key element in developing and improving teaching quality. In line with the diffusion of OBE into mainstream teaching, competency-based professional development is implemented to ensure that the teaching performances of faculty members meet quality criteria. Many institutions delegate a Professional Standards Framework (PSF) for teaching and learning to faculty members to ensure that teachers receive proper preparation and competence development at each career stage.

Studies on professional development for Thai teachers primarily focus on the adoption of related innovations in education, aiming to address challenges where teachers' previous knowledge of teaching methods may not be suitable for the current educational situation. For example, many training programs for educators involve STEM education to meet the demands of a nation's STEM-educated workforce. Although PD did not originate in the university's teaching landscape, its emergence reflects some common concerns among teaching staff at the primary and higher education levels. For instance, a recent study by Pojanapunya et al. (2024) examined the impact of a large-scale training program in Thailand and provided recommendations focusing on fostering collaboration and broader educational initiatives in order to sustain continuing professional development. Another study by Meesuk et al. (2021) found the substantial impact of the implementation of the PLC on both teachers and students, and suggested that extraneous procedures such as financial processes and documentation that go beyond the teacher's responsibilities could pose challenges in executing the PD.

This study aims to identify teachers' perspectives on effective PD that could reflect their intention to learn through structured learning experiences. Then, the research question was posed: What are the characteristics of effective professional development for university teachers? Furthermore, teachers may seek more targeted forms of PD for specific purposes, taking into account the variety of teaching experiences they may encounter at different stages

of their career. Therefore, additional research questions included: How do university teachers have preferences for PD types and perceptions of PD, and how do their perceptions of PD vary across different teaching experience ranges?

Literature Review

Definitions of professional development (PD) vary. However, all are concerned with the education and learning of adults and aim to produce positive change in participants' beliefs, knowledge, skills, or behaviors (Nguyen, 2022). In education, Doyle et al. (2018) defined PD as "structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes." Different perspectives on teacher PD result in articulating its effectiveness differently. Scholars agree that effectiveness depends on the internal connection between various elements of instructional development (e.g., duration and goals), needs to improve the teaching practice and ultimately impact students' learning. and that results are strongly context-dependent (Ilie et al., 2020).

Some studies that examined the elements of effective PD included a review by Doyle et al. (2018), which identified five key characteristics of PD programs that increase teacher knowledge and skills. The components include a focus on the subject matter and how students learn it; active teacher participation; coherence with reforms and policies; program duration; and collective participation of teachers from the same school, grade, or department. In Hubers et al.'s study (2020), essential characteristics of PD include five characteristics related to the program's content, such as focusing on pedagogical content knowledge and student learning processes, and three characteristics related to the context, such as organizational and individual factors. Other reviews by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) identified specific components of high-quality professional learning for teachers, including a content focus, active learning, collaboration, modeling of effective practices, coaching and expert support, feedback and reflection, and sustained duration. Stevens et al. (2023) suggest that PD integrate research-based learning and evidence-informed innovation. The approach would enhance the sense of ownership among teachers, utilize their practice-based knowledge, and lead to educational innovations.

Other studies, particularly those focusing on novice teachers, have accounted for the influence of teaching experiences when designing professional development for teachers. In the study of six Swedish universities, Ödalen et al. (2018) found that teachers with different levels of previous teaching experience perceived that the pedagogical training course they had completed had different relevance to their teaching. Teachers with between one and three years of teaching experience said the training had a large or very large relevance for them, while the least satisfied group was teachers with more than three years of teaching experience who might perceive that PD courses offer the necessary skills they already have. A recent study by Kálmán et al. (2019) found that novice teachers (with two years or less experience) had a low participation rate in formal pedagogical training but a high preference for informal ways of sharing teaching practices. While more experienced teachers prefer PD activities for experimenting with approaches or trying out new teaching methods, According to Meizlish et al. (2017), a new faculty program has a positive impact on teaching beliefs, teaching preparation, student evaluation, and engagement with the teaching center in new teachers' early careers rather than in more experienced cohorts. While researchers study the professional development of new teachers in various ways, the central focus of literature is on the transfer of teacher learning to improve students' learning.

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative data was obtained through a survey, while the qualitative data was obtained from in-depth interviews.

Participants

The study included 99 teachers who completed the mandatory PD program for new faculty at a university between the 2016 and 2020 academic years. In order to obtain the necessary contact information with respect to the privacy of the faculty members, the author asked for permission to access the institutional database and only requested access to an e-mail address from the registration records.

The author approached the research participants by e-mail, explaining the research purpose, the data collection process, and the protection of their privacy and confidentiality. By clicking on the embedded link to the online questionnaire in the email, the prospective participants consent to participate in the survey. To contain the participants for the in-depth interview, there was a question asked for their consent to participate in the interview session. Only those participants who gave permission would have additional appointments to schedule the face-to-face or online interview. Finally, 32 teachers only consented to participating in the online survey, while 28 teachers consented to both the online survey and in-depth interviews. This resulted in response rates of 32% and 28% for each respective group. The author, guided by Malterud et al. (2015), was cautious to ensure that the small sample size included key informants who held relevant information in line with the study's aim.

Table 1
Demographics Characteristics of the Respondent Teachers

Age (years)	Number	Percent
< 30	1	3.12
30-39	18	56.25
≥ 40	13	40.63
Higher education teaching experience (years)		
< 2	5	15.6
3-5	9	28.1
> 5	18	56.3

Questionnaire

The questionnaire uses the Thai language and consists of two sections: demographic information, perceptions of PD, and preferences for PD types. The demographic information included age and number of years of teaching in higher education. To collect teachers' perceptions of PD, teachers were asked to rate their interest in PD to improve teaching skills, the need for PD to improve teaching skills, and the importance of PD in their teaching career using a 1–10 scale, where a higher score indicated a higher degree of their perception.

In order to understand teachers' preferences for different types of PD, the questionnaire asked teachers to rate the extent to which they preferred different PD types on a 1-3 scale, with one representing "not at all" and three representing "strongly." The development of seven items incorporated core features of effective PD, with the exception of duration. All items reflect varying degrees of characteristics that support professional learning, including collective

participation, coherence with the teacher's work, content focused on the required knowledge and skills, and an active learning experience (Boeskens et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Doyle et al., 2018). The questionnaire provided brief descriptions in Thai for each item.

Each single item of PD types was validated by using content validation to ensure that it accurately measured the targeted construct as defined in this study context (Halek et al., 2017). The author engaged three experts—two professional development experts and one professional development designer—in confirming the appropriateness of seven items of PD types or activities and the descriptions of each item that informed by related literature.

Semi-structured Interview

The interviews used open-ended questions to understand the respondents' view on the characteristics of effective PD for university teachers. Teachers were asked: What features of a teacher professional development program effectively motivate you to participate? The follow-up questions were guided by the concepts of teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) to further explore the details of PD in case the teachers' answer touched on the PD attributes but left some rooms for the interviewer to delve into the how and the why of the prior answers.

Data Collection

This study collected data from a questionnaire through the online platform, while the interview was conducted face-to-face or via Zoom, with an average interview duration of 60 minutes. The collection period was four months, and reminder emails were sent two weeks and three weeks after the original approach.

In parallel with the data gathering, the author roughly analyzed the results and noted that teachers who completed different badges mentioned specific differences in their responses. When the answers' detail and richness repeatedly emerged, the author used data saturation to justify the number of interviewees. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the university.

Data Analysis

For quantitative data, the author used descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, median, mean, and standard deviation. Each question on perceptions of PD was tabulated as a different item. The chi-square test was analyzed to find teachers' preferences for PD types across different teaching experiences, and the Mann-Whitney U test to find an association between teaching experience and perceptions of PD.

For qualitative data, individual teachers were the unit of analysis. The author examined the interview transcripts using the thematic content analysis method. To generate themes for the content, the author and research assistant noted patterns related to the characteristics of effective PD for university teachers. The data coding process applied the concepts of teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) to explore the connections of meaning in the identified patterns. The coders demonstrated strong agreement (0.80-0.90) according to Cohen's kappa, and they addressed any discrepancies through clarification.

Results

Difference Between Teaching Experience and Preference for Professional Development Types

The median preferences were higher for workshops, doing a teaching and learning scholarship, and attending education conferences (Mdn = 3.00). On average, teachers' preferences for peer classroom observation (M = 2.06, SD = .759) and mentoring were quite low (M = 2.06, SD = .801).

In Table 2, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed to evaluate whether preferences for PD types differed by teaching experiences. The results indicated that teachers with more than five years of teaching experience had significantly higher preferences for participating in the education conference than those with fewer teaching experiences (U = 57.00, p = .04).

Table 2

Difference Between Teaching Experience and Preference for PD Types

PD Types	Teaching experience years	N	Median	Mean	SD	*Z*	*P*
Workshop	≤ 5	14	3.00	2.64	.497	-0.99	.319
	> 5	18	2.50	2.39	.698		
	Total	32	3.00	2.50	.622		
Mentoring	≤ 5	14	2.00	2.07	.829	-0.18	.854
	> 5	18	2.00	2.06	.802		
	Total	32	2.00	2.06	.801		
Peer observation	≤ 5	14	2.00	2.21	.699	-0.97	.329
	> 5	18	2.00	1.94	.802		
	Total	32	2.00	2.06	.759		
Class observation	≤ 5	14	2.00	2.21	.893	-1.22	.220
	> 5	18	3.00	2.56	.705		
	Total	32	2.00	2.41	.798		
Sharing forum	≤ 5	14	2.00	2.21	.579	-0.41	.675
	> 5	18	2.00	2.28	.752		
	Total	32	2.00	2.25	.672		
Education conference	≤ 5	14	2.00	2.14	.535	-2.91	.004*
	> 5	18	3.00	2.78	.647		
	Total	32	3.00	2.50	.672		
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning	≤ 5	14	2.20	2.29	.611	-1.69	.091
	> 5	18	3.00	2.67	.686		
	Total	32	3.00	2.50	.672		

*p < .05

Difference Between Teaching Experience and Perception of Professional Development

The median opinion of the three aspects was rated at a high level. While teachers rated their need for PD at a high level (M = 8.60, SD = 1.18) and reported high interest in professional development (M = 8.40, SD = 1.36), they were less likely to acknowledge its importance to their teaching career (M = 8.10, SD = 2.02). The standard deviation was high, indicating that teachers' opinions varied.

On average, teachers with more than five years of teaching experience reported higher interest (M = 8.72, SD = 1.23) and perceived need (M = 8.61, SD = 1.09) for PD than teachers with less teaching experience (M = 8.00, SD = 1.47 for interest; M = 8.57, SD = 1.34 for perceived need). However, respondents with less teaching experience reported a slightly higher perceived importance of PD to their teaching career (M = 8.14, SD = 1.83) than the others (M = 8.06, SD = 2.21). However, the Mann-Whitney U test as shown in Table 3 indicated teachers' perceptions were not statistically significant between teaching experiences, $U = 93.50$, $p = .203$ for interest in PD; $U = 118.50$, $p = .759$ for perceived need for PD; $U = 123.00$, $p = .905$ for importance to the teaching career.

Table 3

Difference Between Teaching Experience and Perception of PD

Perception of PD	Teaching experience Years	N	Median	Mean	SD	*Z*	*P*
Interest in PD	≤ 5	14	8.00	8.00	1.47	-1.274	.203
	> 5	18	9.00	8.72	1.23		
	Total	32	8.00	8.40	1.36		
Need for PD	≤ 5	14	8.50	8.57	1.34	-.306	.759
	> 5	18	8.00	8.61	1.09		
	Total	32	8.00	8.60	1.18		
Importance of PD	≤ 5	14	8.00	8.14	1.83	-.120	.905
	> 5	18	8.00	8.06	2.21		
	Total	32	8.00	8.10	2.02		

Characteristics of Effective Professional Development for University Teachers

Findings from in-depth interviews revealed the pattern of teachers' preferences for specific characteristics that would make up effective PD in university teaching—the paragraphs below present four major components that teachers embrace.

Pedagogical and Technological Knowledge Focused

As university teachers who generally lack a teaching background, PD should address the need for guidance on teaching-related techniques. They preferred clear examples of general techniques suitable for diverse class sizes over specific strategies for a particular subject area.

Introducing fundamental knowledge and basic skills of learning psychology helps prepare the participants for a teacher mindset that teachers might never know exists or do not consider before becoming teachers. Many teachers reported having difficulty understanding their students early in their teaching careers. Teachers would like to understand their students' individual differences through the lens of learning psychology. Some teachers expressed concerns about communicating with or advising students. In addition, PD should encompass teaching techniques that keep pace with evolving trends in education. This will equip teachers with the necessary skills to instruct effectively. PD should assist in informing teachers to be ready for the changing landscape of technology-enabled teaching as well as adult learners. As Teacher 13 exemplified, "online teaching techniques and teaching for working adults were necessary for changing contexts of higher education."

A quarter of the teachers interviewed (n = 7, 25%) expressed a need for the PD program to demonstrate and provide hands-on experience using teaching and learning support tools.

Some teachers are familiar with traditional lecture-based instruction and seek guidance on incorporating teaching and learning support tools into their practice. They expected the PD program to demonstrate how these tools could enhance lecture-based or active learning approaches. Teachers emphasized the role of technology and appropriate tools in enhancing student engagement. Utilizing diverse tools can facilitate student learning and communication between teachers and students.

Reflective Observation of Exemplary Teaching Practices

Teachers suggested incorporating classroom observation into the mentoring program to observe the teaching practices of highly qualified teachers. PD designers may also seek recommendations from educational professionals who have observed or worked with the teacher, or they may consult the faculty to approach any other relevant data demonstrating the quality of teaching experiences.

Observing qualified teachers' teaching can be more beneficial for some teachers than the traditional approach of having a mentor observe them. While individual experiences may influence teachers' perceptions and may not apply to all mentoring relationships, it is crucial to carefully implement observation-based professional development. Many teachers shared how they struggled to prepare and did not conduct their teaching in a natural classroom setting when their mentors came to observe the class. Teachers' perceptions of mentoring's judgment also influence their belief that their teaching aligns with the mentor's guidelines. Teacher 23, for example, expressed, “I feel pressured and afraid of doing something wrong, or I thought it was not wrong, but the mentor's eyes said it did not work. It felt like teaching in front of the committee.”

Teachers addressed diverse preferences for exposure to teaching strategies during their observations. Observing different classroom environments provided insights into various approaches to engaging students. Also, observing experienced teachers in related disciplines would be more likely to enhance the practicality gained in pedagogical approaches from the observation. For example, Teacher 14 described the benefits of classroom observation in related fields as the experience of “watching what teachers teach and how they teach.”

Teachers also expected for the integration of reflective practice and knowledge sharing among themselves. After observing experienced teachers, a forum should be held for participants to discuss and share their observations. Teachers could organize sharing as a small discussion group, where they exchange ideas, ask questions, analyze their teaching methods, and make adjustments to enhance student learning.

Job-Embedding

Teachers' work environments should recognize PD as on-the-job learning. Teachers defined job-embedded PD as continuous learning opportunities that encourage dialogue and discussions about pedagogical knowledge, with a focus on improving the quality of teaching. Rather than being a one-time event, formal and informal PD organizations can foster peer support. In this respect, individual teacher learning could evolve into a collaborative learning experience where teachers are more likely to engage in discussions with their peers. Teachers might start accepting that their teaching may have room for improvement. Similarly, opportunities for teachers to share experiences and exchange ideas prompted teachers to ask themselves what-if questions, such as, “What if I do not give a pure lecture but allow the

students to construct their knowledge?" (Teacher 17). Likewise, teachers learn from one another through discussions, which "help teachers, particularly those new to teaching, to evaluate their performance and know what needs improvement" (Teacher 13). Enabling dialogue between teachers also expands the likelihood of transferring learning to actual teaching.

Teachers also addressed collaborative teaching experience as an essential aspect of job-embedded PD. For instance, incorporating mentoring into the team-teaching course environment would increase the accessibility of mentors, enabling them to provide feedback for on-the-job learning. This approach would establish a connection between professional development and daily teaching practice. In this regard, teachers felt that PD experiences would be more applicable to their students and subject matter.

Relevance

Designing PD should relate the content and delivery to the needs of teachers and involve teachers since the design stage of the program. Teachers suggested surveying participants' needs prior to launching any professional development program. In addition to the survey, PD designers might conduct a short interview so that the prospective participants can address their needs and interests concerning the nature of teaching and their teaching situation. This approach was deemed necessary, particularly for those who possess prior teaching experience and specific problems or concerns.

Some teachers suggested that the PD program should not have a one-size-fits-all approach and should offer advanced content or alternative options for experienced teachers. This means that the design of the PD program should take into account the various issues that teachers may encounter at different stages of teaching. By analyzing the emergent issues, the program can be designed in a modular format, with some topics taught before the start of teaching to help teachers plan and design courses and others taught after several weeks of teaching to provide opportunities for teachers to observe, receive feedback from students, and apply new techniques. For example, topics related to outcome-based education, lesson planning, course syllabus design, and learning management systems can be taught before teaching. In contrast, more advanced topics such as classroom management, student engagement, consultation, and learning assessment can be taught after several weeks of teaching.

In cases where PD includes mentoring activities, another option is to explore the needs of teachers before pairing them with mentors. When the program incorporates the participants' opinions into the mentor selection process, mentoring becomes an integral part of the relationship between teachers and their mentors. Some respondents reflected on how they received mentoring beyond teaching observation feedback.

Discussion

Both the survey and the interview consistently revealed that the respondents had a strong interest in PD, which offers pedagogical knowledge. Teachers' preference for pedagogically focused PD is consistent with the effective characteristics of PD that many studies have previously proposed (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Doyle et al., 2018; Hubers et al., 2020). Comparing teachers' preferences by teaching experience indicated that teachers with fewer or higher experiences reported their preference in the PD types similarly. The

exception is found in higher preferences for participating in the education conference among teachers with more than five years of teaching experience. More experienced teachers may find education conferences a useful PD for improving the quality of teaching and learning, while others with less teaching experience may prioritize conferences within their field. Generally, teachers may frame the purpose of the conference as focusing on sharing and discussing the specialized topics within their discipline. Furthermore, university academics may expect to benefit from creating connections, building on their research, and enriching their career when engaging in a conference event. The finding that showed experienced teachers' interest in learning from academics and practitioners across educational fields through conferences may be further studied to understand teachers' learning intentions and the relevance of this PD type to their job focus.

Meanwhile, teachers with different teaching experiences expressed a similar interest in SoTL's teaching development. Teachers' preference in SoTL could relate to the characteristics of its systematic research-informed approach (Dunn et al., 2018; Stevens et al., 2023). In this study, different teaching experiences do not affect their interest in conducting inquiries to investigate their teaching practices with the aim of optimizing student learning and improving course experiences. The finding, however, is inconsistent with the study of Kálmán et al. (2019), which found that university teachers with more than two years of teaching experience were more likely to be open to research on teaching and were more likely to be experimenters in innovating higher education teaching. This study would argue that having fewer or more years of teaching experience should not determine teachers' engagement in teaching and learning research. Teachers, in the early or later years of their teaching career, may find a scholarly approach to reflect their teaching practice interesting. As Meijerman et al. (2024) noted, the motivation to start a SoTL project does not always originate from an experienced problem; it can also be an interest, a heartfelt mission, a frustration, or an insecurity. Viewing from the motivational aspect, teachers may view SoTL more engaging as undertaking PD that benefits student learning motivates teachers internally (Doyle et al., 2018). In addition, teachers' ideas that PD should be a job-embedded approach align with SoTL as a connection between professional development and daily teaching practice.

The results support other research indicating teachers have a less positive view of peer classroom observation and mentoring compared to other methods of PD (Hibbert & Semler, 2015). At least in this study, teachers with fewer or more teaching experiences reported lower interest in mentoring, observation, and sharing forums. To some extents, learning development through these PD types is socially constructed. Previous studies suggest integrating a collaborative approach to enhance teachers' learning experiences. However, engaging teachers in collaborative development requires a professional culture that supports these practices (Boeskens et al., 2020). Teachers may perceive conventional observation as evaluative and stressful, rather than receiving peer learning. In the Thai educational context, PD may come across normative practices that promote a social hierarchy in interactions between individuals of varying social statuses (Ungsuchaval et al., 2024). This societal factor, which influences feedback in the learning process, is consistent with the findings of Areemit et al. (2020), who found that the hierarchy and collectivism in Thai societal culture influence the learning culture and the unidirectional top-down feedback conversations between teachers and learners. In the situation of PD, following the more experienced teacher's lead could portray the younger teacher as humble and obedient, fostering a smooth and connected relationship but hindering teacher learning through social construction and collaboration.

This study also found that teaching experience had no affect on their perception of PD. Teachers, regardless of their experience level, exhibit a similar level of interest in PD, perceive a need for it, and place significant importance on it in their teaching careers. Many universities in Thailand, including the setting of this research, are currently striving to make their teaching and curriculum innovative for competency development. The implementation of professional development policies aims to engage faculty members in the acquisition of new educational and learning concepts. Teachers' perceived need and interest in enhancing their teaching skills may stem from their likelihood to adhere to the educational trends and established policies of the institution. Whether enforced by rules and regulations, the faculty members are, to a greater or lesser extent, required to redesign curriculum, teaching, and assessment practices. For university teachers who do not have an educational background in teaching, this may draw interest and instill a sense of obligation to adhere to the institution's professional development policy.

Although there is no significant difference, the results showed that the group with less than five years of teaching experience rates the importance of PD in their teaching career higher. It could be that the university under study requires new faculty members with less than two years of teaching services to complete an induction program, a requirement that impacts contract renewal and sets a time limit for advancement to a higher rank. Furthermore, the institution expects the group with less than five years of work experience to successfully complete the process of verifying teaching competence at a higher level. The institution's policy, currently in the process of developing and delegating career promotion standards for its teaching staff, aligns the verification of PSF with the attainment of higher academic ranks, despite not yet reinforcing the latter. Therefore, the group of teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience, who are the primary target of PD that the university will enforce, sees PD as more important to their teaching career. However, the high interest and perceived need in PD, particularly among teachers with more than five years of teaching experience, may indicate that their longer experience in the education transformation process, compared to those with more than five years, leads this group of teachers to view PD as an interesting and necessary activity for their teaching career.

Conclusion

Teachers' preference for PD types addressed a need for pedagogical and technological knowledge guidance. Prioritizing workshops, conferences, and support for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) can help university faculty development meet the teachers' practical needs for up-to-date pedagogical and technological knowledge. Traditional practices like classroom observation and mentoring can be reframed to emphasize reflection and professional growth through a supportive and collaborative approach. Regardless of the years taught, teachers can be at different career stages, and the number of years in teaching does not determine how they think about PD. Teachers' views on pedagogical development, on the other hand, are more likely to concern various aspects of their academic roles, diversity in the professional field, and different job focus (e.g., research or teaching).

It is important to take into account the limitations of the current study. In the survey results, the sample size is relatively small and is not generalizable. The sample specificity of teachers who completed the mandatory PD program for new faculty at a university may limit the availability of the samples. In the meantime, the sample teachers are key informants who have the relevant experiences of teacher professional development provided at the university, their rich-textured information can elicit recall bias, which could influence the findings.

Another limitation of the study is that the participants' faculty affiliations are anonymous. Therefore, the study does not consider disciplinary differences, which could enhance understanding of the teaching context when interpreting the findings.

Conducting cross-sectional studies for future research to broaden the scope across multiple settings or populations could enhance the robustness of the findings. Further, the study may use methodological triangulation to gain more comprehensive and increased valid data while reducing research bias. Further research may explore how institutions can recognize and value PD in promotion and tenure processes. In an educational and learning landscape where innovative platforms for lifelong learning emerge (e.g., micro-credentials), how does PD for university teachers benefit from the new learning ecosystem?

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this manuscript, I used Quillbot–AI-assistive technology-to improve language, readability, and proofreading.

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Contact email: chantima.pat@mail.kmutt.ac.th