

Dynamics of Professional Growth: A Study of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivators in CPD Programmes at A Community College

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study investigates the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators influencing lecturer engagement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes within a community college setting. Data were collected from 36 lecturers through structured surveys, capturing both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The analysis reveals several key motivators, including teaching passion, career advancement aspirations, and institutional incentives, which shape lecturer participation in CPD. Notably, intrinsic factors, such as personal satisfaction, commitment to educational quality, and on-going professional growth, emerged as strong drivers of engagement. Extrinsic motivators, including financial rewards, recognition, and career progression opportunities, were also influential, highlighting the diverse motivational landscape that supports lecturers' involvement in CPD. Findings suggest that CPD programmes that strategically align with these motivators can foster enhanced engagement, professional growth, and a more supportive educational environment. This study underscores the importance of designing CPD initiatives that cater to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to optimize educator participation and improve learning outcomes. Insights from this research offer practical implications for creating responsive CPD frameworks that support educators' evolving needs in dynamic educational contexts.

Keywords: Continuing Professional Development, Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Lecturer Engagement, Mixed-Methods Research.

Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is crucial in the evolving educational landscape, particularly within community colleges. It enhances educators' professional skills, extending beyond skill enhancement to include updating knowledge, abilities, and personal qualities essential for their duties. CPD has been shown to be intricately linked to educator motivation, educational reform, pedagogical methodologies, and psychological well-being (1). Despite extensive research, significant gaps remain in understanding the specific intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that drive lecturers to engage in CPD programmes. Existing studies often explore CPD in isolation without sufficiently addressing how these motivational factors interplay and influence lecturers' engagement and perceptions of CPD's relevance and utility in their professional advancement (2, 3). This study seeks to fill these gaps by elucidating the complex dynamics of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and their impact

on CPD effectiveness within community colleges. By understanding these relationships, this research aims to contribute to the design and implementation of more responsive and tailored CPD initiatives. Participation in CPD is influenced by intrinsic motivators, such as teaching passion, career advancement ambitions, and a commitment to improving student learning, as well as extrinsic factors like incentives, recognition, and prospects for professional growth (4-6). The relationship between personal and organisational characteristics and teacher motivation has been highlighted in prior research (7), while Self-Determination Theory has provided a complementary framework for understanding these dynamics (8). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory further differentiates between motivators, which drive satisfaction (e.g., professional growth), and hygiene factors, which prevent dissatisfaction (e.g., institutional support) (9-11). Together, these theories offer valuable perspectives for examining

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how intrinsic and extrinsic factors interact to shape CPD participation. Understanding CPD participation requires an appreciation of broader cultural, institutional, and policy contexts. Malaysia's unique educational environment, characterised by cultural diversity and evolving regulations, presents both challenges and opportunities for CPD (12). For instance, teacher autonomy (the control educators have over their professional development) has been shown to significantly enhance CPD engagement (1). Moreover, the integration of digital tools and online platforms has been identified as a significant enabler of flexible and accessible CPD opportunities, aligning with modern educational trends and addressing the evolving needs of educators and learners (13). This study investigates the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators driving CPD participation and the interaction between these factors. By addressing these dynamics, the research contributes to the development of CPD frameworks that align with educators' motivations, fostering professional growth, institutional effectiveness, and improved teaching outcomes. The findings aim to offer practical implications for designing adaptive, culturally responsive, and technology-enhanced CPD programmes, ensuring they meet the diverse needs of educators and the broader educational ecosystem (14, 15).

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing lecturers' participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) within community colleges. The mixed-methods approach ensures the dual advantage of capturing broad, generalizable trends through quantitative data while delving into individual narratives and personal motivations through qualitative insights. This design offers both breadth and depth, enabling an in-depth examination of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators driving CPD engagement among lecturers and contributing to the development of more effective and responsive CPD programmes.

Quantitative Component

The quantitative aspect of the study employs structured survey instruments designed to systematically collect data on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators influencing CPD participation. Closed-ended questions were scored on a Likert scale (1–5), enabling participants to rate their agreement with statements related to personal and professional development. Statistical techniques, including correlation analysis, regression modelling, and descriptive statistics, were utilised to evaluate the strength and significance of various motivational factors. These analyses provided objective insights into key motivators such as personal growth, recognition, and career advancement, which shape lecturer engagement in CPD activities.

Qualitative Component

To complement the quantitative data, the qualitative component explores nuanced perspectives through open-ended survey questions and semi-structured interviews. This method was designed to reveal underlying narratives, personal interpretations, and emotional connections associated with CPD engagement. Open-ended responses provided rich contextual insights into unique motivations, challenges, and personal reflections, while interviews facilitated a deeper exploration of individual experiences. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and key themes, offering a detailed understanding of the complex reasons influencing lecturers' CPD participation. Together, these methods ensure a holistic exploration of CPD motivators.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was used to select participants from a community college in Malaysia. The inclusion criteria included: (a) lecturers currently employed at the college, (b) active participation in CPD programmes within the last 12 months, and (c) willingness to share insights into their motivations and experiences. A total of 36 lecturers participated, representing diverse demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and years of teaching experience. This sampling strategy ensured a balanced representation of perspectives, enriching the findings and highlighting the broader applicability of the results within similar educational contexts.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection adhered to a rigorous protocol that seamlessly integrated quantitative and qualitative components. The survey questionnaire, informed by a comprehensive literature review, included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The quantitative section focused on assessing the prevalence and perceived significance of various motivational factors, while the qualitative section captured personalised insights and narratives. This dual data collection strategy provided complementary perspectives, enabling a well-rounded understanding of CPD engagement. The integration of measurable data with contextual insights ensured that the research addressed both statistical trends and individual nuances effectively.

Reliability and Validity Assessment

The reliability and validity of the survey instrument were established through pilot testing with a subset of participants ($n = 5$) before the main data collection phase. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency across survey items. The instrument demonstrated strong reliability, achieving a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.86 (16, 17). Content validity was ensured through consultations with subject matter experts, who verified the alignment of survey items with the study's objectives and theoretical framework (18). Minor adjustments were made based on feedback from the pilot phase, ensuring the instrument's robustness.

Integration and Analysis of Findings

The mixed-methods design's inherent strength lies in its ability to synthesize quantitative and qualitative findings into a cohesive analytical narrative. Quantitative results provide empirical evidence on motivator impact and frequency, while qualitative findings bring in-depth insights into lecturers' personal experiences and perceptions. This integrated synthesis allows for methodological triangulation, enhancing the study's validity and reliability by confirming findings through multiple data sources. Through the amalgamation of statistical trends and thematic narratives, the research yields a nuanced understanding of the complex motivational dynamics shaping CPD participation. This approach facilitates a multi-dimensional exploration of both intrinsic and extrinsic

motivators, making it possible to draw well-rounded findings and actionable insights. The adoption of a mixed-methods research design provides a robust framework for examining the multi-faceted motivators behind lecturer involvement in CPD. By combining quantitative data precision with the depth of qualitative insights, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of motivational dynamics that could inform more responsive CPD programs within community colleges (19, 20). The mixed-methods approach, with its meticulous methodology and transparent research procedures, contributes valuable insights to educational research, underscoring the importance of addressing both measurable outcomes and contextual nuances in studying professional development engagement (21, 22).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was secured from the institutional ethics board to ensure the study's compliance with ethical research practices. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Additional measures, such as anonymisation of data and assurances against professional repercussions, were implemented to mitigate potential ethical concerns, including power dynamics between researchers and participants.

Results

Demographic Overview of Study Participants

The study analysed data from 36 lecturers engaged in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) at a Malaysian community college, exploring the motivational dynamics influencing their participation. The demographic profile of participants highlights significant diversity, with a majority being female (75%) and within the 40–49 age group (66.7%). Most participants held lecturer positions (69.44%), with substantial teaching experience ranging between 11–20 years (78%), reflecting a cohort with considerable professional depth and expertise. As summarised in Table 1, these demographics provide a vital context for understanding the findings. The high proportion of experienced lecturers and female participants

suggests that CPD programmes should address specific motivators relevant to these demographics, such as career advancement opportunities and flexible learning options

tailored to their schedules. This representative demographic profile forms the basis for analysing CPD motivators and tailoring programme recommendations accordingly.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Lecturers in CPD Programs

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	9	25%
Female	27	75%
Age		
40 - 49	24	66.7%
30 - 39	11	30.6%
Below 30	1	2.8%
Academic Position		
Lecturer	25	69%
Senior Lecturer	9	25%
Assistant Engineer	1	3%
Deputy Director of Academic	1	3%
Years of Teaching/Lecturing Experience		
11 - 20 years	28	78%
Less than 5 years	4	11%
5 - 10 years	3	8%
More than 20 years	1	3%

Key Research Findings

Intrinsic Motivators for CPD Engagement:

Intrinsic motivators emerged as a significant driver for CPD participation. Key factors included a passion for teaching, a commitment to educational excellence, and the personal satisfaction derived from their roles. Quantitative analysis highlighted the importance of intrinsic motivators, as shown in

Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4. The belief in continuous learning scored a mean of 4.64 (SD = 0.8), reflecting its perceived importance. Teaching passion achieved the highest mean score of 4.69 (SD = 0.62), indicating strong dedication to professional excellence. Personal gratification scored 4.47 (SD = 0.81), underscoring the emotional rewards lecturers derive from their teaching roles.

Table 2: Statistics for Belief in Continuous Learning

Item	Mean	SD
Continuous learning is essential for personal and professional growth	4.64	0.8

Table 3: Depth of Teaching Passion Statistics

Item	Mean	SD
Continuous learning is essential for personal and professional growth	4.64	0.62

Table 4: Personal Gratification Statistics

Item	Mean	SD
I find personal satisfaction in being an effective educator	4.47	0.81

Qualitative insights complemented these findings. A total of 29% of participants highlighted a commitment to teaching and professional growth

as their primary motivator, while another 29% emphasised the positive impact on students. These results suggest that CPD programmes aligned with

intrinsic values, such as fostering a passion for teaching, can substantially enhance engagement and effectiveness.

Extrinsic Motivators for CPD Engagement:

Extrinsic motivators also played a crucial role, including financial incentives, career advancement opportunities, and public recognition. As summarised in Table 5, financial incentives scored

a mean of 4.19 (SD = 1.06), reflecting diverse perspectives on their importance. Table 6 highlights career advancement as the most influential extrinsic motivator, with a mean score of 4.42 (SD = 0.84). Similarly, public recognition, as detailed in Table 7, scored a mean of 4.25 (SD = 0.91), underscoring the value of acknowledgment in motivating participation.

Table 5: Statistics for Financial Incentives in CPD Participation

Item	Mean	SD
Financial incentives for CPD participation are important to me	4.19	1.06

Table 6: Statistics for Career Advancement Opportunities in CPD Engagement

Item	Mean	SD
Opportunities for career advancement motivate me to engage in CPD	4.42	0.84

Table 7: Statistics for Lecturers' Valuation of Public Recognition in CPD

Item	Mean	SD
Public recognition and acknowledgment of my CPD efforts are meaningful to me	4.25	0.91

Qualitative data added depth to these findings. Career growth was the most frequently cited extrinsic motivator (44%), followed by financial incentives (28%) and recognition (15%). These results highlight the importance of designing CPD programmes that address diverse extrinsic needs to maximise participation.

Interplay of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivators:

The analysis highlights a synergy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that enhances CPD engagement. For instance, a strong correlation

exists between the desire for continuous learning and career aspirations. Lecturers who value personal development are often equally motivated by career advancement opportunities. As summarised in Table 8, this synergy is evidenced by data showing a mean score of 4.64 (SD = 0.8) for continuous learning and 4.42 (SD = 0.84) for career motivation. These findings suggest that CPD programmes integrating both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators can enhance overall engagement and effectiveness.

Table 8: Comparative Analysis of Continuous Learning and Career Advancement Motivation in CPD

Item	Mean	SD
Continuous learning is essential for personal and professional growth	4.64	0.8
Opportunities for career advancement motivate me to engage in CPD	4.42	0.84

Qualitative insights further illustrate the dynamic interaction between teaching passion and recognition, as lecturers who feel strongly about their teaching are also likely to value public acknowledgment. This interplay indicates that CPD programmes should aim to harmonize both personal and professional growth aspects to maximize their appeal and impact.

Synthesis and Implications: The findings demonstrate that successful CPD programmes must balance intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Aligning programme content with educators'

professional goals, personal values, and institutional objectives can foster a supportive environment that promotes lifelong learning, professional advancement, and personal fulfilment.

Discussion

This study reveals that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators play pivotal roles in shaping lecturers' engagement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes. By examining these motivational dynamics, the findings provide critical insights for designing effective CPD

initiatives tailored to the needs of community college educators. Intrinsic motivators emerged as central to sustained CPD participation. Lecturers' passion for teaching, commitment to lifelong learning, and the sense of personal gratification derived from their roles were consistently highlighted. Quantitative data underscored the importance of these factors, with teaching passion receiving the highest mean score (4.69, SD = 0.62), followed closely by continuous learning (4.64, SD = 0.8) and personal gratification (4.47, SD = 0.81). These findings align with prior research that links intrinsic motivators to long-term professional growth and engagement (1, 4). Qualitative insights further validated these results, with 29% of participants citing a dedication to teaching and professional development as their primary motivators. This evidence suggests that CPD programmes which foster intrinsic values such as opportunities for reflective practice, innovative teaching methods, and mastery of professional skills can substantially enhance lecturer engagement. Extrinsic motivators also played a significant role in influencing CPD participation, particularly for mid-career lecturers seeking tangible rewards for their efforts. Career advancement emerged as the strongest extrinsic motivator (mean score: 4.42, SD = 0.84), underscoring its importance in addressing lecturers' professional aspirations. Financial incentives (4.19, SD = 1.06) and public recognition (4.25, SD = 0.91) were also valued, albeit to varying degrees across participants. Qualitative data corroborated these findings, with career growth identified as the most influential extrinsic factor (44%), followed by financial incentives (28%) and recognition (15%). These results are consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which identifies external rewards as essential for sustaining engagement but highlights the need for intrinsic motivators to drive long-term participation (12). The emphasis on career progression highlights a gap in structured pathways to promotions and advanced roles within CPD frameworks. Addressing this gap could attract a broader range of participants and enhance the appeal of professional development initiatives. A key insight from this study is the synergy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. For instance, participants who prioritised personal development also valued

career progression opportunities, as evidenced by the strong correlation between continuous learning (mean score: 4.64) and career motivation (mean score: 4.42). This interplay underscores the importance of integrating intrinsic and extrinsic motivators into CPD programme design. Tailored initiatives that simultaneously foster teaching passion, recognise professional achievements, and offer tangible rewards can create a more holistic and engaging professional development environment. The findings also have broader implications for CPD design in resource-constrained environments, such as Malaysian community colleges. Institutions should prioritise the dual focus on intrinsic motivators, such as teaching excellence, and extrinsic rewards, such as clear career pathways and public acknowledgment. Additionally, leveraging technology to expand CPD access through digital platforms, webinars, and online resources can address logistical barriers and accommodate lecturers with demanding schedules (13). Collaborative learning opportunities should also be emphasised, as peer discussions and shared experiences enrich CPD activities while fostering a supportive professional community (4). Finally, aligning CPD initiatives with institutional objectives can further enhance their effectiveness and relevance. Linking professional development activities to goals such as improving teaching quality and supporting innovative pedagogies reinforces lecturers' sense of purpose and demonstrates the tangible impact of their efforts on broader educational outcomes (15, 23). The findings demonstrate the need for CPD programmes to balance intrinsic and extrinsic motivators effectively. By addressing personal values, professional aspirations, and institutional goals, CPD initiatives can create a more supportive and impactful framework for lecturer engagement. These insights contribute to the growing discourse on CPD strategies, offering actionable recommendations for fostering lifelong learning, professional growth, and educational excellence in community college settings.

Recommendations

To optimize CPD program design and encourage lecturer participation, the following recommendations are proposed:

Adapting CPD Programs to Integrate Technology: Developing flexible, technology-

integrated CPD programs can improve accessibility, allowing lecturers to engage with content at their convenience. Online learning platforms, webinars, and digital resources can facilitate continuous learning, especially for lecturers with demanding schedules. The Malaysia Digital Education Learning Initiative (MyDEL) emphasizes the role of digital tools in enhancing CPD accessibility, showing how technology can help overcome barriers related to time and location (13).

Promoting a Culture of Professional Growth: Institutions should foster an environment that values and supports professional growth. Recognizing CPD achievements through awards or public acknowledgment can enhance motivation, particularly for those influenced by extrinsic factors. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, recognition serves as a powerful motivator in professional settings, contributing to job satisfaction and engagement (12). Additionally, research by Han and Yin highlights the role of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, such as recognition, in promoting sustained CPD participation (1).

Aligning CPD Initiatives with Institutional Goals: Aligning CPD initiatives with institutional objectives, such as enhancing teaching quality or fostering innovative pedagogies reinforces the relevance of CPD to lecturers' professional roles. This alignment strengthens lecturers' sense of purpose and achievement within their institutions. Studies highlight that professional development is most effective and relevant when aligned with institutional goals (15, 23).

Offering Structured Career Advancement Pathways: Establishing clear pathways for career progression as part of CPD initiatives can effectively address lecturers' aspirations for growth. Structured professional development activities linked to promotions or advanced roles enable institutions to attract a wider range of participants. Research demonstrates that providing such opportunities significantly influences educators' motivation for CPD participation, as career advancement is recognised as a key extrinsic motivator (2, 3).

Encouraging Peer Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing: CPD programmes that facilitate networking opportunities and peer learning foster a collaborative environment conducive to professional growth. Platforms

enabling lecturers to share experiences, best practices, and insights enrich the CPD experience while building a supportive professional community. Research highlights the significant benefits of collaborative learning in CPD settings, demonstrating that peer collaboration enhances motivation and fosters professional development (4).

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators influencing lecturers' engagement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes within community colleges. The findings highlight the central role of intrinsic motivators, such as a passion for teaching, commitment to lifelong learning, and personal gratification, in sustaining CPD engagement. These factors underline the importance of personal values in driving professional development. Additionally, extrinsic motivators, including career advancement opportunities, financial incentives, and public recognition, significantly enhance lecturers' participation. Career progression emerged as the most impactful extrinsic motivator, reflecting the aspirations of mid-career lecturers for growth and acknowledgment within their institutions. Understanding the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators is essential for designing CPD initiatives that address the diverse needs of educators. Effective programmes should integrate personal aspirations with professional goals, fostering a culture of lifelong learning, professional advancement, and personal fulfilment. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to evaluate the sustained impact of these motivators on lecturer performance and student outcomes. Comparative analyses across diverse educational contexts and cultural settings could provide additional insights into the generalizability of these findings, contributing to the broader applicability of CPD strategies. In closing, the dual focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators is critical for fostering meaningful CPD engagement. By aligning programme content with lecturers' values and institutional objectives, CPD initiatives can support educators in achieving their personal and professional aspirations, ultimately contributing to a more innovative and effective educational landscape.

Abbreviations

CPD: Continuing Professional Development, SD: Standard Deviation.

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Author Contributions

Ms. Sivanewary Sivaraja conceptualised and designed the study, conducted the data collection and analysis, and drafted the manuscript. Mr. Manoharan Nalliah provided critical guidance, reviewed the methodology, and contributed to the manuscript's revision. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sarfraz Aslam supervised the study, provided feedback on the manuscript drafts, and ensured alignment with the academic standards of publication. Dr. A. Shorouk revised and edited the manuscript in accordance with the reviewers' comments and the journal's submission guidelines.

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest related to the content of this manuscript.

Ethics Approval

This study did not require ethical approval based on its design and scope. It adhered to all ethical research principles, including voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality of participants' responses. For future studies involving a broader scope, ethical approval will be sought from the appropriate ethics committee.

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