Professional Development and Leadership Skills: a case study of UIB training courses

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Abstract
This paper presents the results of a post-training survey organized by Kenzhegali Sagadiyev University of International Business (UIB) within the Development of Teachers Training for Leadership (DeSTT) project. The survey aimed to assess the effectiveness of the training provided to teachers within the DeSTT project and used a combination of sentiment analysis and content analysis to analyze the responses of participants. The results of the survey indicated that most of the participants provided positive feedback regarding the training, suggesting that it was effective in enhancing their knowledge and skills. This paper contributes to the growing body of research on the importance of professional development for teachers and highlights the value of using sentiment analysis and content analysis to assess the effectiveness of training programs.

Keywords*: professional development, leadership, education, DeSTT*

1. Introduction

Professional development training for teachers is an essential aspect of the education system. It not only helps educators improve their skills and knowledge, but it also has a positive impact on student learning. In recent years, the need for professional development training for teachers has increased, as education policies and curricula have undergone significant changes.
A series of online training sessions were held at the Kenzhegali Sagadiev University of International Business (UIB) from September to December 2021 as part of the Erasmus+ CBHE program's "Development of Skills and Teachers Training for Leadership/DeSTT" initiative.
Instructors from the National Center for Professional Development "Orleu" (NCPD "Orleu"), Atyrau University, Yessenov University, and KazNPU participated in the training. The training curriculum was created and administered by a group of DeSTT project trainers.

Each thematic training was held for two days simultaneously in two groups—in Kazakh and Russian—in accordance with the agreement with the NCPD "Orleu." A total of 36 hours were spent in the online classroom.

The following topics were approved for training: Improving teachers' public speaking skills for leadership; Digital tools for effective management in the education field; Developing teachers' stress tolerance and preventing psycho-emotional burnout; Emotional intelligence and leadership; Inclusive education in Kazakhstan; My leadership potential. The training sessions were performed using the Microsoft Teams platform and each one was worth 1 ECTS. The curriculum and the substance of the training are protected by copyright and reviewed by prominent Kazakhstani scientists and specialists.

The training was provided in an interactive way. Participants in the training exchanged thoughts, information, and experiences. The interactive training mode encouraged participation in a variety of online role-playing games, exercises, quizzes, case analyses, and small-group discussions.

Post-training surveys with both closed- and open-ended questions were carried out using Google forms once the training was over. Participants were required to rate the training and trainers on a 5-point scale for interest and utility in closed-ended questions. The open-ended questions were intended to gauge how the participants felt about the training, the outcomes, the originality of the project, and any potential issues they may have run into.

The survey's findings show that instructors think the training is beneficial and think the trainers are competent speakers. Additionally, as participants claim, training improves leadership abilities, and teachers anticipate that students would possibly practice and implement what they have learned. The course provided participants the chance to apply the learned material through practical exercises. It's significant to retain and implement the received knowledge into practice once training is over.

In this paper, we will explore the importance of professional development training for teachers and the challenges of providing it. We will also discuss the results of participants' impressions of training and opinions towards the DeSTT project. By examining these issues, we can identify ways to improve professional development training for teachers and better support their growth and development.

2. Literature review

Professional development training can take many forms, including workshops, seminars, and conferences. These types of training can provide teachers with the opportunity to learn new teaching methods, gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, and stay up-to-date on the latest research in education. Professional development training can also help teachers develop skills in areas such as classroom management, assessment, and technology integration (Hughes, 2005; Yurtseven et al., 2020). Furthermore, Kennedy (2016) outlines the importance of professional development for improving the quality of education and examines the various types of professional development programs that are available to teachers.

The benefits of professional development training for teachers are numerous. It can help teachers feel more confident and competent in their roles, which can lead to improved job satisfaction and retention (Woods, 2004). Professional development training can also help teachers improve their instructional practices, leading to better student outcomes (Martin et al., 2010). Additionally, professional development training can help teachers stay engaged and motivated in their work, which can result in a more positive school culture and learning environment for students (Liu et al., 2019).

Professional development for instructors is essential for improving the quality of education and for staying up-to-date with the latest teaching methods and technologies (Davis and Rose, 2007). Participating in professional development opportunities allows instructors to gain new skills, expand their knowledge base, and enhance their ability to effectively engage and educate their students.

Leadership skills are also crucial for instructors, as they are often called upon to take on leadership roles within their schools or organizations. Strong leaders are able to motivate and inspire their teams, manage conflicts and challenges, and effectively communicate their vision and goals (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Redick et al., 2014; Sohmen, 2013).

One professional development opportunity that instructors can take advantage of is attending conferences and workshops. These events provide a great way to learn about new teaching strategies, network with other instructors, and gain insights from experts in the field. Conferences and workshops can also be a valuable source of inspiration, as they allow instructors to see how others are tackling common challenges and to learn from their successes and failures (Crosby and Bryson, 2005).

Another way for instructors to improve their professional development is through online learning. Online courses and webinars offer a convenient and flexible way to gain new skills and knowledge without having to travel (Pedroso, 2021). These opportunities can be especially useful for instructors who are unable to attend in-person events due to time or budget constraints.

In addition to attending conferences and workshops and engaging in online learning, instructors can also improve their professional development by collaborating with other instructors. Collaborating with colleagues allows instructors to share ideas, resources, and best practices, which can lead to more effective teaching and learning (Krajcik et al., 1994). Collaboration can also provide a sense of support and community, which can be especially helpful for instructors who may be feeling isolated or overwhelmed (Arnold and Ducate, 2006).

Developing leadership skills is also an important part of an instructor's professional development. There are many ways to improve leadership skills, including attending leadership training programs, seeking out mentorship opportunities, and participating in leadership development initiatives within one's organization.

One key aspect of effective leadership is the ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Strong leaders are able to articulate their vision and goals in a way that is compelling and

inspiring to others (Murray, 2017). They are also able to listen to the concerns and ideas of their team members and to respond to feedback in a constructive and supportive manner.

Professional development for teachers is an important issue in the field of education and has been the subject of much research in recent years. In Kazakhstan, professional development programs for teachers have become increasingly common, as the government and educational institutions seek to improve the quality of education in the country.

One of the key challenges facing Kazakhstan in the area of teacher professional development is the need to address the specific needs and context of the country. Kazakhstan has a unique educational system and cultural context, and professional development programs for teachers must take these factors into account in order to be effective.

There has been a growing recognition in Kazakhstan of the importance of providing teachers with ongoing support and professional development in order to enhance their skills and expertise. This has led to the development of a range of professional development programs for teachers, including workshops, seminars, and online courses.

The literature on professional development for teachers in Kazakhstan highlights the need for tailored, context-specific programs that address the unique needs and challenges of the country (Fimyar and Kurakbayev, 2016; Nuriyev et al., 2018; Wilson et al., 2013). By providing teachers with ongoing support and professional development opportunities, it is possible to improve the quality of education in Kazakhstan and enhance the skills and expertise of the country's teachers.

Overall, professional development for instructors is essential for improving the quality of education and for staying current with the latest teaching methods and technologies. By taking advantage of professional development opportunities and working on their leadership skills, instructors can become more effective and engaged in their work, which ultimately benefits their students and their organizations.

3. Methods

As it was mentioned we sought to analyze the feedback from training participants and the skills obtained after workshops. From September to December 2021, several workshop sessions were organized by Kenzhegali Sagadiyev University of International Business. These sessions were held online via the Microsoft Teams platform.

After each workshop session participants were asked to fill out a post-training questionnaire via Google Forms in Kazakh and Russian language. These answers were further translated using the Google Sheets formula "google translate", which allows to automatically translate of the text data. The translated text was then manually checked for adequacy.

The questionnaire contained open-ended and close-ended questions, including Likert scale questions. In this paper, we focus on qualitative analysis, therefore, we analyzed the answers to open-ended questions. The questions indicated in the survey are provided in Appendix.

Overall, 190 answers were received and after data cleaning (removing empty strings and incomplete data) 187 answers were selected for analysis (N=187).

We analyze the obtained feedback as text data using the R programming software. Sentiment analysis (SA) was carried out to check the type of received feedback: positive or negative feedback. SA is the algorithmic handling of text's subjectivity, opinions, and sentiments (Medhat et al., 2014). Sentiment analysis is a branch of natural language processing that involves identifying and extracting subjective information from text data using computational methods. In recent years, it has grown in popularity as a tool for companies and organizations trying to correctly and rapidly gauge the sentiment of their audience or target market.

Initially, we cleaned the data and formatted the data sheet, so the program could read the data sheet. Further, we used the "syuzhet" library package which enables us to conduct sentiment analysis. Finally, in order to visually depict the results we utilized the "barplot" function. Moreover, the "word clouds" function was used for the content analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

Sentiment and content analysis of the post-training feedback enabled us to develop central topics and keywords, which are useful to further course content development. Mainly, this sentiment analysis is used to identify the mood of the target group. One of the advantages of sentiment analysis is its ability to automatically classify text data into predefined categories, such as positive, negative, or neutral. This can save organizations time and effort by eliminating the need for manual data labeling and categorization. According to the sentiment analysis, most of the feedback was identified as positive. Precisely, such sentiments as "joy", "trust" and "anticipation" also represent a high amount of the answers (Figure 1).

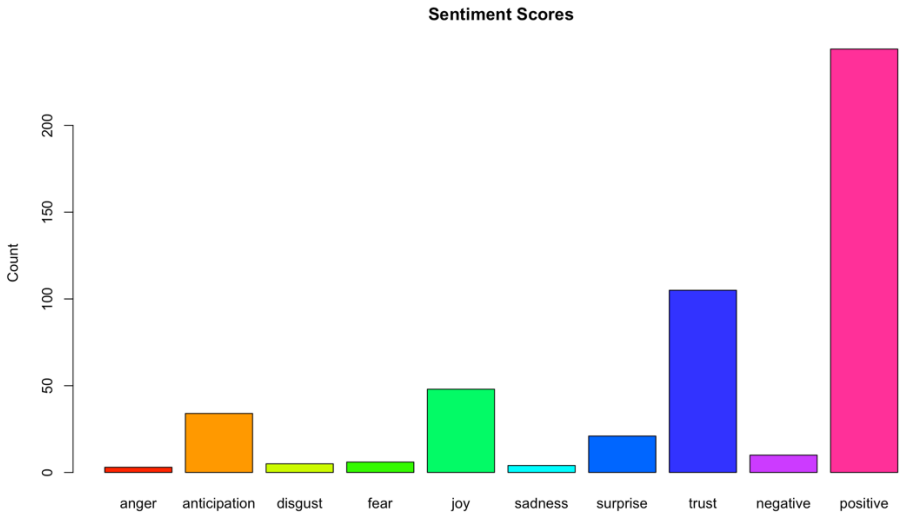


Figure 1. Sentiment analysis results of participants
Note: The plot was conducted by authors using the R program. The bar plot includes answers to the following question "Indicate your overall impression of training".

The word frequency analysis of the participant impressions depicts that mostly following keywords are the most frequent: "interesting", "useful", "informative", "positive", "relevant", etc. The visual representation (word cloud) is presented in Figure 2.
Based on this analysis, it is clear that the participants found the event to be engaging and informative. The use of words like "interesting", "useful", and "informative" suggests that the participants were interested in the topic and found the information presented to be valuable. Additionally, the use of words like "positive" and "relevant" indicates that the participants had a positive overall impression of the event and found the information to be relevant to their interests.
One possible explanation for the high frequency of these positive words is that the event was well-organized and delivered valuable information to the participants. It is also possible that the participants were genuinely interested in the topic and found the information presented to be engaging and relevant to their lives. Overall, the word frequency analysis suggests that the event was well-received by the participants and provided them with valuable information and insights. This is a positive outcome for the organizers of the event and indicates that their efforts to provide a high-quality experience for the participants were successful.



Figure 2. Word cloud of the participants' impressions.
Note: Complied by authors using world clouds online tool.

Additionally, respondents were asked to provide their opinions regarding the DeSTT project and its impact on leadership skills. The following answers can be outlined:
"The possibility of developing competencies and training teachers in the field of leadership";
"The project contributes to the learning by the teacher/teacher of its own leadership qualities and their implementation in the process of pedagogical activity using tests, practical classes, and materials represented by coaches.".
"This project enables teachers and teachers to expand their capabilities to reveal their creative and professional potential, instill leadership skills and qualities, and use them both in professional activities and in any life situation."
The results of the word frequency analysis are presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Word cloud of the participants' opinions regarding the DeSTT project and leadership skills
Note: Complied by authors using world clouds online tool.

Based on the responses provided by the respondents, it is clear that the DeSTT project is seen as a valuable tool for developing leadership skills in teachers. The use of words like "leadership qualities" and "development" suggests that the participants recognize the importance of these skills and see the DeSTT project as a means of enhancing them.

Furthermore, the emphasis on "teacher" and "practical" in the responses indicates that the participants see the value of this project in its ability to provide teachers with hands-on, practical training in leadership skills. This emphasis on practical training suggests that the participants believe that the DeSTT project is effective in helping teachers to put their leadership skills into practice in their daily work.

Overall, the word frequency analysis of the responses suggests that the DeSTT project is seen as a valuable tool for developing leadership skills in teachers. The emphasis on practical training and the recognition of the importance of leadership skills indicate that the project is well-regarded by the participants and seen as an effective means of enhancing these skills.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that professional development for teachers is a valuable tool for enhancing their skills. The participants in the post-training survey overwhelmingly gave positive feedback, indicating that the training content was effective. This study contributes to the existing literature on the topic and provides valuable insights that can be used to improve future professional development training programs. Further research could include a quantitative analysis of the data to provide a more in-depth understanding of the impact of professional development on teachers' skills. Overall, this study supports the

importance of investing in professional development for teachers to improve their skills and enhance the quality of education for students.

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